



TATIANA TIAYNEN

Babushka in Flux

Grandmothers and Family-making between
Russian Karelia and Finland



ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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1. Introduction: The Babushka in Russian Karelia and in Finnish-Russian Transnational Space

1.1 Approaching the Babushka

Motivation

This research is an ethnographic exploration of the *babushka*, which is a Russian word for “grandmother”, also informally applied to any elderly woman. Socially and culturally, the babushka has had a special value in Russia throughout history. However, few studies have been done on the subject so far, with hardly any research drawing on narratives and engagement in the lives of babushkas themselves. Therefore, my study is an initial, exploratory ethnographic journey into the lives of contemporary grandmothers, drawing on my multi-sited fieldwork research in Russian Karelia and Finland.

My primary objective is to offer a situated, historically grounded, ethnographic account of the babushka and babushka practices in the contexts of Russian Karelia and the Finnish-Russian transnational space. I intend to examine grandmothering and the role of grandmothers in family-making, both locally and transnationally. I am especially interested in noting how ethno-cultural backgrounds (Karelian, Ingrian Finnish, Russian), Soviet lived experiences, and the personal histories of mobility of the interviewed women have affected their subjectivities, grandmothering, and family practices. Finally, I aim to provide some perspectives on the changing meanings and practices of the babushka in public and private settings.

Over time the term *babushka* has acquired a special symbolic meaning in Russian culture, not least due to the babushkas’ pivotal social roles in extended households in Tsarist Russia and in the reproduction of Soviet family routines. In pre-revolutionary agrarian Russia, a grandmother could have great authority, supervising female household members as a *matushka* (a wife or a mother of the eldest man of the peasant household). However, the same babushka could shower her children and grandchildren with “healing” love (Matossian, 1992, p. 23) while at the same time

being “tyrannical” and even physically abusive towards her daughters-in-law (Farnsworth, 1992, p. 189). Babushkas as *povitukhi* or *babki* (midwives) helped women deliver babies (Dmitrieva S., 1999; Keinänen, 2003), while as *znakharki* (healers) they were revered and demanded in peasant communities in rural Russia (Glickman, 1991, p. 151).

Throughout the project of Soviet modernity, which prioritized urbanization, modernization, and a so-called transition from the “old” to the “new ways of life” (*Novyi Byt*), babushkas remained significant actors in child care and family-making, whereas babushka care gradually became a crucial feature of what is often defined as the Soviet “working mother” contract (Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 1997; Temkina & Rotkirch, 1997; Aivazova, 1998). Grandmothers tended to substitute for “ever-absent” parents working for the project of Soviet modernity. Furthermore, despite the dominant Soviet discourse banning religion and magic as “backwardness”, some babushkas continued to be committed to religious practices, especially in rural areas (Keinänen, 2002). Young Soviet mothers often sought the help of babushkas to heal their children, and some continue to this day (Lindquist, 2006). In Soviet Karelia, elderly women of Finno-Ugric origins (Karelian, Vepsian) were renowned for performing magical harm.

The word *babushka* in Russian depicts its specific cultural connotation. *Babushka* is the term for a grandmother in Russian, which is applied both in the standard, official language, and in a more informal, everyday life context (in contrast to, for example, the English *grandmother/granny*, or the Finnish *isoäiti/mummo*). Furthermore, the term, particularly when applied with reference to any elderly woman, carries various representations, such as the babushka’s *borscht* (red-beet soup) and pies, “all-seeing” and “all-knowing” babushkas, and “church babushkas”. When used in a public setting, the babushka is linked to old age, but is also often associated with love, kindness, and wisdom. In view of this multi-dimensional role, the babushka has been praised as a symbol of “stoic endurance” in Russian discourse (Ries, 1997, p. 88). On the other hand, the ambiguous and somewhat destructive powers of the babushka can be found in the figure of the legendary heroine of Russian folklore, Baba-yaga, a terrifying old crone flying through the air on a broom (Propp, 1998).

The important symbolic and social meaning of *babushka* has also made this word transnationally known. The word *babushka* in English often refers to a type of headscarf tied under the chin, which also reflects how firmly the confined image of a Russian grandmother has anchored in Anglo-American discourses. The babushka doll, commonly referred as *matrëshka* in Russian, a set of wooden dolls placed one inside the other, has become one of the most marketable and purchasable products associated with Russian culture, and is another example of transnational recognition of the babushka. The largest doll, often seen as a grandmother with future generations of dolls tucked inside her, represents family and life as a value in itself, passing through generations

of women. The singing group of elderly women from Russia, Buranovskie Babushki, which won second place in the Eurovision 2012 contest, is probably the most recent example of the transnational enactment with the image of the babushka.

Given the international popularity of the term *babushka*, as well as its strong association with the peculiarities of Russian family culture, it is surprising how little research has been conducted on the subject. Indeed, in contemporary research on Russia, babushkas are often mentioned within the first few pages of an Introduction, but only in the framework of contextualization in the Russian context (Garrard & Garrard, 2009; Zigon, 2010). There are almost no detailed anthropological, sociological, or historical studies of babushkas, with a few exceptions (Semenova, 1996; Ries, 1997; Krasnova, 2000; Novikova, 2005), which I will discuss later.

Therefore, one of the impulses behind this study is the lack of research on the babushka. In beginning to fill this gap, I intend to understand the babushka from an anthropological perspective. Who is the babushka? What concrete social practices are behind the word *babushka*? What is the connection between the babushka's cultural representations and the lived experiences of actual grandmothers? How did babushkas respond to the dissolution of the USSR in their lives and selves, given that their subjectivities were shaped in the Soviet period? How have rapidly increased migration and everyday transnationalism affected the babushka both practically and imaginably in light of the fact that the Soviet people's mobility across national borders was highly restricted? My exploration of the babushka will take place in a specific geopolitical context of contemporary Russian Karelia and Russian-Finnish transnational space, with its unique historical and cultural configurations, and the histories of translocal and transnational mobility.

When I set out in the beginning to undertake an ethnographic research, the topic was broadly and flexibly formulated. This allowed me to approach my ethnographic field research as a form of "critical theoretical practice" of a necessarily improvisational character (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 164). I soon realized that grandmothering and family narratives, as well as romanticized recollections on their own babushkas, were central in the life stories of most of my interlocutors. Importantly, my participant observation both in Russian Karelia and Finland, and especially in real-time cross-border ethnography in mini-buses, showed that babushkas can be seen as significant actors in child care and transnational family-making. It is largely due to my fieldwork experiences that the babushka as a lived experience and a specific cultural practice came to be the focus of my doctoral research. On the one hand, recognizing the continued symbolic and social importance of the babushka, but, on the other hand, encountering the outstanding differences and variations among grandmothers with regard to their age, ethnicity, spatial (urban and rural)

belonging, transnational experiences, and unique life trajectories and personalities, I became curious in apprehending the notion of the babushka from an anthropological perspective.

Babushka: Terminology

The application of the term *babushka* varies in the Russian context. As I mentioned earlier, it is applied both to a grandmother and in a more general sense to an elderly woman. The connotation of the word *babushka* might vary across families, depending, for instance, on the particular history of interpersonal relations and transnational mobility of family members. Likewise, a babushka may be a woman in her mid-forties who is juggling between her work and a grandmother's duties, or a retired grandmother in her mid-sixties who is entirely devoted to child care, or a frail great-grandmother who needs to be taken care of by other family members. Within family and kinship, the babushka as a grandmother or a great-grandmother who might be a key person in maintaining family history and the family spirit, a respected source of everyday-life wisdom, who is often called babushka by most other family members, not only by her grandchildren. Babushka may also mean a kind of matriarch who is a powerful wife, mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother, making her family by scolding, disciplining, or judging various family members.

In my research I have found it useful to differentiate sometimes between the terms *grandmother* and *babushka* as having “etic” and “emic” orientations, respectively. I tend to apply the etic term of *grandmother* when examining the social practices of grandmothing and changing women's positions as a grandmother in the family. However, I use the emic term of *babushka* to reveal cultural and subjective meanings – what the word means for “insiders” of the culture, particularly for the grandmothers themselves and their families.

There are certainly limitations in such a division, given the fluid character of culture and blurred borders between “insider”/emic and “outsider”/etic accounts, between others' and one's own culture, and between object and subject (Okely, 1996; Vered, 1999). Emic and etic accounts are interconnected and inform each other. On the one hand, the way grandmothing has been carried out in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia has been affecting the cultural representations of the term *babushka*; on the other hand, pre-revolutionary cultural meanings of the term *babushka* informed social practices in Soviet (and continue to inform social practices of post-Soviet) grandmothing. Nonetheless, I believe that the difference between *grandmother* and *babushka* is methodologically useful for my research. By emphasizing this subtle division my study also

challenges it by demonstrating the interconnectedness and interdependence of the social practices of grandmothering, babushkas' subjectivities, and imaginations of the term *babushka*.

Importantly, by using the term *babushka* I want to emphasize the linkage of the women discussed in this research to a particular cultural and historical context. Irrespective of age, they all are anchored on certain Soviet experiences, and their subjectivities, particularly the way they act as grandmothers, continue to be affected by the lived Soviet past and Soviet everyday-life values and norms. What distinguishes them from grandmothers in other cultural and national settings are exactly these Soviet and post-Soviet experiences, sometimes dramatic and harsh, sometimes enjoyable and empowering.

On the one hand, the term *babushka* embraces the lives and subjectivities of women with a rural Karelian background who had been committed to religious and magic practices throughout their lives despite their ostracism from the dominant Soviet discourse, and this would define their grandmothering messages. On the other hand, a *babushka* could also mean an urban educated woman who would be more interested in educating her grandchildren on being *kulturnyi*, one of the essential elements of the Soviet (urban) personhood. In the context of popular culture, the Soviet notion of *kul'turnost'* encompassed "cultivation, the art of being a refined and cultured person, involving everything from reading the right books to using a flush lavatory and taking off your coat in restaurants" (Kelly, 1998, p. 130). Historically it comes back to populist educational programs developed in Russia since the 1860s. In the Soviet context, it became an essential element of the Soviet urban personhood, and would also mean being publicly an atheist. At the same time, it reflected the desires of working-class people to acquire an education and appear as leading a decent life (Kelly, 1998).

Meanwhile, *babushkas* with an Ingrian Finnish background were discriminated upon and moved forcibly during Stalinist rule due to their ethnic belonging (Sunı, 1998a), and these experiences have greatly affected the way they renegotiate their national and ethnic belonging as returnees as Finland citizens or as Russian citizens in the Republic of Karelia. However, the same term is applied when considering the changing lives and selves of grandmothers with a Russian (Slavonic) background, many of whom still experience nostalgia about the "good Soviet times" and whose Soviet subjectivities inform their present lives, both in Finland and in Russian Karelia. These ethnic differences and related life trajectories may often result in the differences in their national and ethnic identities, and, thus, define what they try to convey to their grandchildren as grandmothers.

Thus, terms such as "grandmother" or "migrant grandmother" would be far too generalizing, as they neglect the different senses of ethno-cultural belonging of contemporary *babushkas* and the

effects of such belonging on their lives and selves in Russian Karelia and in a transnational Finnish-Russian space. The term *babushka* is inclusive enough to discuss the experiences of grandmothers with different ethnic backgrounds and the respective varying experiences, but at the same time it encompasses their shared Soviet past and related commonalities in grandmothering and family-making. Most importantly, this term addresses the fact that the *babushka* as a gender subjectivity and a family position has been adopted by many women irrespective of their ethno-cultural backgrounds and varying life trajectories.

1.2 Russian Karelia and Finland: Contextualization

Occupying an intermediate position on the Russian-Finnish border, Karelia has historically been an area of warlike conflicts or peaceful interactions between Sweden and Novgorod, the Swedish Kingdom and the Russian Empire, Finland and the Soviet Union, and the centuries-old coexistence and interconnectedness of Slavonic and Finno-Ugric cultures. Karelia's specific in-between location has made people's mobility across the borders an essential part of its history, which influenced people's individual and family lives.

Since 1917 Karelia has been politically divided between two national states: the Soviet Union/Russian Federation and Finland. Russian Karelia changed its name a number of times throughout its recent history in response to changing political circumstances. Called the Olonetskaya Guberniya during the Russian Empire, it was named the Karelian Autonomous Republic of the Soviet Union (The Karelian ASSR) in 1923 after the October Revolution in 1917, and was incorporated into the Karelo-Finnish SSR in 1940, again to be named the Karelian ASSR in 1956. The latest change in naming happened symbolically after the Soviet collapse, when the Republic of Karelia was created out of the Karelian ASSR in 1991. In my research I apply the term "Russian Karelia" to mean mainly what is now called the Republic of Karelia, namely, Karelia on the Russian side of the border (except for its part that belongs to the Leningrad Oblast, the Karelian Isthmus) to distinguish it from Karelia (Karjala) located in Finland, the regions of South Karelian and North Karelia.

As my research discusses grandmothering and family practices particularly from a perspective of transnational mobility, I have found it useful to apprehend if and in what way mobility was a significant factor in grandmothers' lives, to be able to trace continuities or ruptures with their contemporary life experiences. However, it is important to distinguish between mobility within the national state and that across national borders. Whereas the term *transnational* refers to

the crossing of state borders, the term *translocal* works well when discussing moves within the Soviet space, a political entity that was (and remains, in the Russian Federation) ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse (Novikova, 2005; Hirsiaho, 2008). Translocal mobility remains prominent in contemporary Russia, where about half of the population live in a region other than the one in which they were born (Heleniak, 2001, p. 531).

Some scholars apply the terms *transnational* and *translocal* interchangeably, as all moves are in principle *translocal* (Zhang, 2007, p. 54). However, I suggest maintaining this distinction in this research, as it underlines the differences in the conditions of mobility between and within the state borders, and depicts a specific history of mobility in the Soviet Union. In the Soviet period, national borders had tremendous political significance, dividing the world into capitalist and socialist (communist) countries. Transnational mobility was and continues to be subjected to a much stricter control than translocal moves within national borders, while cross-border regulations significantly shape the practical ways grandmothers maintain their transnational families. Of course, both translocal and transnational moves can be of different character: voluntary, enforced (forced), or mixed. Sometimes, the line between the different conditions of mobility is subtle, as institutional power informs even those types of moves, which may well appear as voluntary but could have been politically and ideologically encouraged or imposed, such as work-related migration in the Soviet and post-Soviet space (Lonkila & Salmi, 2005).

Histories of Translocal Moves

Histories of translocal moves within the Soviet space, and particularly in Russian Karelia, are a less examined area of research in ethnographies of mobility (Chapter III). Therefore, when discussing these moves in my research as they are refracted in the life stories and subjectivities of grandmothers, I enter a terrain that has not yet been conceptually developed. Thus, the brief analysis below is not an attempt to reconstruct the histories of these moves with the aim of providing new conceptual insights. Rather, my task here is modest: to offer a contextualization, namely, to discuss those empirical and theoretical aspects of mobility that help to grasp the regional specificity of Russian Karelia and are significant when examining the effects of these moves on grandmothers' selves and lives.

In the nineteenth century, the ethno-cultural composition of Russian Karelia was quite diverse as the outcome of centuries-old people's moves, and the coexistence and interaction of the Slavonic, Karelian, Vepsian, and Finnish populations. This ethno-cultural diversity continued to

shape what can be referred as the regional history (Lähteenmäki, 2007) of Russian Karelia, which was further transformed during Soviet times, particularly as the result of transnational and translocal moves of both voluntary and enforced character.

Within the Soviet space during the early socialist building, translocal mobility often had an enforced character (Uehling, 2004; Hirsch, 2005). Entire ethnic groups that were seen as “enemy nations” were resettled to remote parts of the Soviet space. For instance, in the chain of enforced translocal moves, during the Civil War in Russian Karelia (1918-1920)¹ thousands of Karelian peasant families were forcibly moved from the borderland to the regions of virgin lands both within and far beyond Russian Karelia. Some Karelian peasants, predominantly from northern Karelia, supported a separatist movement claiming independence for Karelia (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, pp. 427-428; Laine, 2002, p. 11), and Bolshevik authorities wanted to block these tendencies by forcefully moving the potentially unreliable population from the “vulnerable” Russian-Finnish border zone.

When the relationships between the Soviet Union and Finland became tense in the 1930s, the Red Finns who came to Soviet Karelia to contribute to building socialism were also put in a category of “unreliable elements” alongside many Karelian peasants in the borderland. They were accused of espionage in favour of Finland (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 486). The Karelian and Vepsian population – both linguistically and culturally close to Finns – were often ranked as “suspicious” by the Soviet authorities. Generally, both in the Russian Tsarist national policies and after the Bolshevik Revolution, the border regions with non-Russian populations were seen as potential threats by the central authorities (Laine, 2002, p. 15). Thus, the Soviet policy of “dekulakization”, aimed at destroying relatively affluent and well-endowed peasants, called kulaks, as a class enemy of poorer peasants (“liquidation of the kulaks as a class”), had a clearly ethnic component in Russian Karelia, particularly aimed at non-reliable Karelians. The “vulnerable” border zone was to be cleaned of “anti-soviet” elements. Some male heads of household were executed as part of the implementation of the kulakization policy.

Another type of translocal move of a less enforced and often unavoidable character was linked to evacuation during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945),² when people were evacuated from Russian Karelia to distant places across the Soviet space. By 1945 the population of Russian Karelia was approximately 196 000, three times less than the pre-war situation (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 662).

The third massive type of people’s move within the Soviet space was “internal” work-related migration (Lonkila & Salmi, 2005), which had a somewhat mixed character. In Russian Karelia this type of move was connected to the “industrial model” of economic development of the

North, which was orientated to the large-scale, labour-intensive extraction of “cheap” natural resources (forest and iron-stone mining) that the population of Russian Karelia could not fill (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 705; Pashkov A. M., 2007). Therefore, thousands of prisoners of various social, ethnic, and national backgrounds were moved to Karelia in the 1930s. Of all industrial objects built in the 1930s, 40% were made by prisoners, and the town of Medvezhegorsk was founded as a prisoners’ town in 1938.³ In the prisoners’ case, the translocal move had an enforced political character, particularly given that some prisoners were victims of Stalinist repression.

There were also work-related moves that appeared to be strongly encouraged by so-called recruiting committees. For instance, in Soviet Karelia a committee on recruiting labour force was behind the moves of people from the Volga region, Ukraine, Belorussia, and Siberia, who came to Russian Karelia to work in the forest industry. Likewise, Ingrian Finns, after they were deported to Siberia during the war, were recruited to Soviet Karelia to fill the shortage in labour force at the end of the 1940s. In discussing work-related migration, it is important to remember that there was a rule within Soviet labour policy of assigning work places to new graduates, which in effect meant that they could have been sent anywhere. In addition, Soviet army officers could also have been resettled by an order anywhere else – to a neighbouring town, the nearby countryside, or far away from their places of abode.

Some grandmothers in my research had experiences of these moves. They were either sent to work somewhere where they got married, or they were moved because their husbands, such as army officers, were re-located due to their jobs. This is also the way some grandmothers happened to come to Karelia, for example, from Mordovia⁴ or Arkhangelskaya oblast, Severodvinsk,⁵ or moved within Karelia, for example to Valaam.⁶ This type of move was certainly not discriminatory (such as in the Ingrian case); however, it was not voluntary either but rather mixed. Thus, work-related translocal moves were part of the Soviet economy, and Soviet Karelia was thought to function as an integral part of it. Large numbers of people were recruited, moved, and re-located from one region to cover labour force needs in another region.

The available official statistics of the contemporary ethnic composition of the Karelian population bears traces of long-term people’s mobility both within the Russian (Soviet) space and across national borders: Russians⁷ (76,6%), Karelians (9,2%), Byelorussians (5,3%), Ukrainians (2,7%), Finns (2%), Vepses (0,7%), Tatars (0,4%), Poles (0,4%), Chuvash (0,2%), Gypsies (0,2%), Lithuanians (0,1%), Jews (0,1%), and the Mordvas (0,1%) (Kareliyastat, 2006, p. 29). Currently the Republic of Karelia is part of the Northwest Federal District of the Russian Federation, having the longest (700 km) Russian border with the European Union (Finland). The population of Russian

Karelia amounts to about 697 000 people, of whom 75,5% live in the urban area (Kareliyastat, 2006, p. 25). The post-Soviet collapse also resulted in increased migration from Chechnya and Dagestan, as well as some former Soviet republics, such as Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, the official statistics do not reflect these migration flows, partly because of their illegal character and partly because the official residence of many migrants remains elsewhere.

It is worth emphasizing that one of the outcomes of mobility during the Soviet period was an increase of the Slavonic population (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians) and the drastic reduction of the Finno-Ugric population in Russian Karelia, which now constitutes 11,9 % of the current population compared with 42,5% in 1926 (Kareliyastat, 2006, p. 29; Goskomstat, 2002, p. 44). Behind this policy of Russification was a strategy aimed at increasing populations other than Finno-Ugric in Soviet Karelia, the latter seen as potentially “unreliable” due to their ethnic closeness to Finns living in Finland. Thus, this change in the ethnic composition reflected the long-evolving process of Sovietization; encouraging migration of people with Slavonic backgrounds from other parts of the Soviet Union to Russian Karelia made it easier for the Soviet authorities to manage the potentially “unreliable” Finno-Ugric element that was associated with the danger of separatist movements and religious “backwardness”.

The policy of homogenization of the Soviet population and of making a “loyal Soviet subject” undoubtedly bore fruit in that the dominant discourse within which Soviet female subjectivities, mothering, grandmothering, and family practices were forged remained the Soviet working mother contract. Soviet subjectivities informed by this gender culture continue to influence the grandmothering and family practices of majority of the women I interviewed. However, the effects of these policies were somewhat more complex. For instance, because the Finno-Ugric population was more likely to be concentrated in rural areas, the religious and magic practices remained quite prominent amongst them. Therefore, some grandmothers of a rural Karelian background continued to be committed to religious practices in Soviet times, and this has affected their grandmothering and family practices. Furthermore, the different ethnic backgrounds of the interviewed grandmothers have informed the ways they see themselves as individuals, their relationship to transnational encounters, and their experiences of the past and the present.

The context of translocal mobility is important for my research from three perspectives. Firstly, it helps in understanding that, prior to transnational grandmothering, many women had experiences of translocal living, translocal families, and translocal grandmothering, i.e., grandmothering at a distance and across different stages of their lives (as granddaughters, mothers, and finally as grandmothers themselves). Secondly, grandmothers of elder and younger generations with different ethnic backgrounds recollect these enforced and voluntary moves in different ways,

which in turn affects their subjectivities and grandmothing messages. Thirdly, some grandmothers have actually come to Russian Karelia as the outcome of these moves.

Transnational Mobility in the Soviet Period

Transnational mobility during Soviet times was very restricted, and large-scale migration across borders happened mostly in cases of civil wars or military conflicts. For instance, after the October Revolution of 1917, during the Civil War in Karelia (1918-1920), some Karelians moved to Finland to escape the Bolshevik regime. At the same time, the so-called Red Finns (supporters of communism) from Finland (after the Civil War in 1918), the United States, and Canada came to Russian Karelia, encouraged by opportunities to contribute to building a new socialist society. The occupation by Finns of Soviet East Karelia during the Continuation War (1941-1944)⁸ had a considerable impact on the everyday lives of people in these territories. It also had an ethnic component, as people with Finnish, Karelian, and Vepsian background were privileged as “national” populations ethnically close to Finns, while those who had Slavic (Russian) belonging, so-called “non-national”, were somewhat more discriminated against (Kulomaa, 2006, p. 42). There was segregation in food provision, education, and medical care between Karelians and Russians. Babushkas of different ethnic backgrounds recollect these transnational encounters often in opposite ways.

Mobility across national borders was highly constrained during the Cold War, with the Iron Curtain dividing the world politically into communist and capitalist blocks. The mobility of people across national borders was also controlled by the passport system, in which citizens were obliged to have two passports: an internal one for use within Russia and a passport for travel abroad (“foreign passport”, *zaganpasport*). To have relatives abroad was immediately considered by Soviet authorities as a sign of potential unreliability, and mattered when a person was hired.

Even when people were travelling as tourist groups there was always somebody incognito from the KGB in these groups spying on what people were talking about and how they behaved “there”. Upon their return, some tourists might have been called to the KGB to write a report about their trip, and this practice also encouraged reporting on others in the group.⁹

The system of having two passports continued into post-Soviet Russia. However, if during Soviet times most people never actually had a “foreign passport” (like most grandmothers of this study did), in post-Soviet Russia the authorities issuing “foreign passports” were overloaded by work due to suddenly increased travel abroad and migration. Migration during Soviet times was

almost impossible, and if it happened it was often as political asylum. Mid-life and elderly people who are now either migrants themselves or involved in transnational interactions lived most of their adult lives in the Soviet space, and their subjectivities have been shaped by their Soviet life trajectories. For instance, in the post-colonial space mobility between national states for decades was more or less a common practice, especially for relatively well-to-do social groups. In contrast, Soviet citizens could move only within the Soviet space; few could also visit countries of the communist bloc. Most Soviet people did not have any tangible access, either through travelling or through media, to “capitalist countries”, and they were kept ideologically protected from “capitalist propaganda” by the Soviet state.

Keeping this in mind, intensive transnational mobility across the Finnish-Russian border is a relatively new phenomenon against the decades of restrictions during Soviet times. However, it should be also kept in mind that cultural, political, and economic interactions had been maintained between Finland and Russia, and Russian Karelia in particular, during Soviet times. This history of relationships became an enabling as well as an emotionally charged aspect in current transnational grandmothering and family-making (see below). In this context, the histories of translocal moves constituted a kind of background that helped women to adjust to transnational family lives in their post-Soviet lives.

Ingrian Finns and Their History of Mobility

The histories of translocal and transnational mobility of Ingrian Finns is a particular case of enforced and voluntary moves. These histories of mobility are significant in my research, as the majority of migrant grandmothers belong to this ethnic group, and moved to Finland as “returnees” (the Finnish term is *paluumuuttajat*) on the basis of their Ingrian belonging.

The formation of Ingrian Finns as a social and ethnic group needs to be seen as the result of centuries-old people’s moves across the Finnish (Swedish)-Russian borders. When the Treaty of Stolbova was concluded after the war between the Swedish Kingdom and Russia in 1617, a large number of Finns from Savo and the Karelian Isthmus moved to and settled down in Ingria, the area which nowadays is the central part of Leningrad Oblast, near St. Petersburg (Nenola, 2002, p. 56). After the Great Northern War (1700-1721) Ingria was ceded from the Swedish Kingdom to the Russian Empire according to the Treaty of Nystad. Despite residing on the Russian side of the border, Ingrian Finns remained culturally (ethnically and linguistically) close to the Finns living in Finland. Dramatic changes occurred during Stalinist rule in the 1930s to the 1950s when Soviet

policy stamped Ingrian Finns as potentially “unreliable elements” along with so-called “foreign nationalities”, Poles, Germans, Swedes, Lithuanians, Japanese, and others who were excluded from the “friendship of all Soviet nationalities” in the 1930s (Kilin, 1999, p. 254; Hirsch, 2005, p. 291). Since that time, just like other ethnic groups of “enemy nationalities”, Ingrian Finns experienced a chain of enforced moves.

When tensions between the Soviet Union and Finland grew (prior to and during the Winter War (1939), as well as the Continuation War (1941-1944)), Ingrian Finns were converted into a category of “anti-Soviet elements” as closely related to the Finns from Finland. They were subjected to a discriminative policy and to enforced moves across the huge Soviet space, so that by the end of the last century Ingrian Finns almost ceased to exist as an ethnic and social group and the Finnish language remained a mother tongue only for a few, mostly elderly people. While the First All-Union Census of the Soviet Union in 1926 recorded 114 831 Leningrad Finns (as Ingrian Finns were called), the number of people who declared their nationality as Finnish in the 2002 Russian census was 34 000.

Some women I interviewed experienced enforced moves to Krasnoyarsk Kraj (*Krasnoyarsky kray*, located in the middle part of Siberia) during their childhood and adolescent years, when 30 000 Ingrians were subjected to an “obligatory evacuation” (*obiazatel’ naia evakuatsiia*) to Siberia and the coasts of the Arctic Ocean in 1942 (Suni, 1998a, p. 22). Some women moved to Finland, when around 63 200 Ingrians remaining in the area occupied by Germany during the Second World War in 1943 were evacuated to Finland; from there most of them were returned to the Soviet Union (Nevalainen, 1990, p. 62; Nevalainen, 1998, pp. 32,39). Upon their return, Ingrians were not allowed to go home but were instead relocated to other remote parts of the Soviet Union (Suni, *Ingermanlandskie finny* (Ingrian Finns), 1998b, p. 77). Some women tried to return to Ingria (Leningrad Oblast) or to escape to Estonia, but they were forced to leave. The mobility of Ingrian Finns was limited by the law restricting freedom of movement, depriving them of the right to settle closer than 101 kilometres from large urban centres. The law was otherwise applied to released prisoners or such “socially unreliable elements” as alcoholics.

Many Ingrians (more than 20 000) were recruited to come to Russian Karelia to cover shortages in the labour force in the forest industry at the end of the 1940s. As mentioned earlier, the economy of Soviet Karelia relied on a massive labour force that the local population could not provide (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 705). This is how many Ingrian interlocutors of my research happened to come to Karelia.

The Soviet collapse radically opened opportunities for transnational mobility to people residing both in the Russian Federation and in the former Soviet republics. At the same time,

Finland, being traditionally an emigration country, in the 1980s began to receive more immigrants than emigrants leaving the country (Heikkilä & Pelttonen, 2002). The significant increase in immigration flows to Finland at the beginning of the 1990s can be seen as the outcome of the profound liberation in Finnish immigration policies. The repatriation program of Ingrian “returnees” (*paluumuuttajat*) initiated by the Finnish president Mauno Koivisto in the 1990s can be seen as a particular example of these new migration policies. Ingrian Finns had a special place in Finnish migration policy; they were seen as returning “home” on the basis of their Ingrian Finnish belonging, although none of them were actually born in Finland (Huttunen, 2002, p. 213). People with Jewish, German, and Greek roots were other major groups of ethnic-related migration in the 1990s who moved from Russia to Israel, Germany, and Greece, respectively (Heleniak, 2001; Popov, 2007). Between 30 000 and 33 000 Ingrians moved to Finland within two decades after the Soviet collapse, among them the Ingrian babushkas I interviewed.¹⁰

The above transnational (evacuation or recent migration to Finland) and translocal moves during Soviet times had an important and varied impact on the lived experiences and subjectivities of my interlocutors (transnational/translocal subjectivities, see Chapters III, V, VIII, and IX). With this general historical background of translocal moves within the Soviet space in relation to Soviet Karelia, I hope to have illustrated that contemporary Russian Karelia needs to be seen as the outcome of many moves that considerably reshaped its regional context. Alongside grandmothers who have had a long-term relationship to this place, with all its specific social processes and unique historical trajectories, there are also grandmothers who moved to this region during the 1970s to the 1990s or even in the post-Soviet period. These differences in relationship to Russian Karelia have also affected the way they experienced their migration or that of their children to Finland. Likewise, the specific history of relationships between Russian Karelia and Finland has had various impacts on grandmothers who were born in Russian Karelia and those who moved there in a post-war period. I am particularly interested in how these specific cultural and historical connections have informed transnational grandmothering and family-making between Russian Karelia and Finland (Chapter V).

History of Russian-Finnish Transnationalism: Bridges and Distances

There have been cultural and historical connections between Finland and Russia that inform contemporary transnational grandmothering in different ways. People who reside in or come from Russian Karelia have developed a certain relation to Finland. Firstly, the ethnic composition of

Russian Karelia includes also a Finno-Ugric population (Karelian, Vepsian, Ingrian Finns) and related cultural heritages, although transformed during Soviet times. Secondly, some Finns (sometimes called “red Finns”) played an important role in the building of socialist Soviet Karelia in the 1920s and 1930s. They represented the political elite of Karelia and contributed greatly to the development of the economy, education, culture, and science (Takala, 2007, pp. 193-195).

There are still many places in Petrozavodsk that remind its contemporary inhabitants of the contribution of the Red Finns to the history of Russian Karelia. For example, Petrozavodsk State University, founded in 1940, used to be named after Otto Kuusinen, the Red Finn who served as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Soviet Karelia (the head of the republic government) during 1940-1957. One of the embankments in Petrozavodsk continues to be named after another important figure in the history of Soviet Karelia, the Finnish communist Edvard Gylling, who chaired the Karelian government of Soviet Karelia during 1920-1935. Both played important roles in socialist building in Soviet Karelia.

Historiographically and politically, issues related to “red Finns” continue to be a subject of research and polemic, and various interpretations abound in both Russia and Finland. However, the important argument for this study is that on a public discursive level, the contribution of “red Finns” to the “socialist building” (*sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo*)¹¹ of Soviet Karelia is certainly not considered as something negative, but rather positive, or at least neutral. Moreover, recent local research acknowledges the contribution of “red Finns” to the development of Soviet Karelia on different levels (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001; Takala, 2007; Pashkov A. M., 2007).

There are still some places, such as pharmacies and shops, that are spelled in both Russian and Finnish, and are probably remnants from the period 1940-1956 when Russian Karelia (due to political reasons) was named Karelo-Finskaya SSR (Karelian-Finnish SSR), or possibly even earlier, when the Finnish language was adopted as one of the national languages of the republic with the support of “red Finns” in the 1920s to the 1930s (Takala 2007, p. 195).¹² From 1950 until the Soviet collapse, the Soviet Union and Finland had friendly although hierarchically based relationships. Finland had a special geopolitical role in Soviet foreign policy, and Finland remained the largest Western trading country for the Soviet Union (Androsova, 2007, p. 140).

Today Finland is increasingly seen in Russian Karelia as a “gateway to Europe” on political, economic, and socio-cultural levels. Russian Karelia is increasingly involved in the regional policies of the EU; for instance, Karelia, divided between the two national states of Russia and Finland, both practically and theoretically renegotiated as a European cross-border region (Liikanen, Zimin, Ruusuvuori, & Eskelinen, 2007, p. 9). Economically, Russian Karelia is now

more dependent on exports (primarily timber) to Finland than on the internal Russian markets (Druzhinin, 2005, p. 73).

Increased interactions in different spheres after the Soviet collapse have certainly affected everyday life assumptions and created a somewhat positive image of Finland in contemporary public imaginations in Russian Karelia. For those living in Russian Karelia, Finland is not some place that is “unknown” and “far away”: they can easily relate to Finland. In addition, increased tourist and travel accounts across the Russian Karelian-Finnish border have made “familiarity” one of the key factors of regional identity construction (Izotov, 2012). For contemporary grandmothers, who have lived in Russian Karelia throughout their lives, something that is about Finland or Finnish does sound familiar, and therefore their migration to Finland or that of their children and grandchildren was not necessarily experienced as dramatic and painful.

However, the history of neighbours is often the history of rivalries, and the history of Finland and Russia is no exception. Almost the entire history of Finland’s changing eastern frontier has been “the product of armed conflicts” (Paasi, 1996, p. xii). To Finns, as Maria Lähteenmäki suggests, the border with Russia/the Soviet Union was not experienced as “bridges where cultural co-operation begins”, and was “much more than just a narrow line crossing unpopulated peripheral forests”. Likewise, it “went beyond the line which marked the edge of the national state and the geographical territory of Finland, it was a symbol of independence, a politically, socially and culturally built and rebuilt phenomenon” (Lähteenmäki, 2007, p. 145). According to Anssi Paasi, the emergence and rise of Finnish nationalism was enhanced by a political and moral ideology that often produced the negative othering of Russians, especially after the October revolution (Paasi, 1996, p. 98). It was further boosted by the dichotomy between East and West, the geopolitical division after World War II, and its basic idea of division between capitalist and socialist states.

Ambiguous histories of Russian-Finnish relations continue to be applied in the construction of emotional and cultural distances in everyday life interactions. Thus, the dependent position of Finland within the Russian Empire as the Grand Duchy of Finland (1809-1917), the October Revolution in Russia (1917) and the Finnish Civil War (1918), histories of wars between Finland and the Soviet Union (1939-1940, 1941-1944), and peculiar relationships between Finland and the Soviet Union in a post-war period continue to be a source for “othering” Russia (Soviet Russia) and Russians in negative terms in the contemporary Finnish context (for example, by media (Jerman, 2003)). Against this background, some Russian migrants, including some of my interlocutors, sometimes feel discomfort in Finland. Some grandmothers prefer to hide their Russian belonging in a public space and encourage their grandchildren to do so (Chapters V, VIII).

On the other hand, the process of “othering” Finland took place in Soviet Karelia, especially when tensions between these two states grew. The Soviet public discourse in the 1940s and the 1950s propagated a negative image of Finns who were presented as “enemies” whom the Soviet people fought during *The Great Patriotic War* and who “collaborated” with the “fascists”. In the light of these anti-Finnish attitudes, some old grandmothers, especially those who experienced the Finnish occupation of Petrozavodsk, were afraid of what would happen to their grandchildren in Finland.

Ingrian grandmothers are a particular case in the context of Russian-Finnish transnationalism. Associated with Finns from Finland, they often experienced discrimination in Soviet Karelia, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. Now in Finland they are often seen as Russians, with the corresponding negative baggage. On the one hand, Ingrian grandmothers can be also seen as Soviet or Russian grandmothers. On the other, they are the *babushkas* who have a peculiar relationship to the Finnish cultural area due to their Ingrian Finnish belonging and related histories. Some of them are keen on teaching their grandchildren the Ingrian history, and encourage them to speak the Finnish language. These peculiarities of their Russian-Finnish transnational histories influence their grandmothering practices, as well as make a difference in the ways they see themselves as individuals in terms of their national and ethnic belonging (Chapter VIII).

Thus, the histories and contemporary realities of Russian-Finnish transnationalism provide opportunities for creating both bridges and distances. Which tendency – towards bridging or towards distancing – is more prominent in the *babushka*’s self also defines her message as a grandmother. Importantly, those grandmothers who happened to come to Russian Karelia in the course of translocal moves are to a great extent relieved from both the positive and the negative aspects of the regional histories of the Russian-Finnish transnationalism. This can also be seen as asserted in their transnational grandmothering: there is a narrower source for having any preconceived assumptions about Finland, the Finns, and Russian-Finnish interactions.

Babushkas in Post-Soviet Karelia

As an outcome of the “shock-therapy” policy,¹³ many elderly women both in Russian Karelia and elsewhere in the post-Soviet space encountered unprecedented economic vulnerability after the collapse of the Soviet regime. The feminization of poverty is an ongoing challenge of contemporary Russia, and elderly women continue to dominate the economically low strata of the population (Zaslavskaya, 2003). Even before the Soviet collapse, *perestroika* had already brought vulnerability

to the social position of elderly people, along with a "collapse of their whole cultural world" (Ries, 1997, p. 47).

Nevertheless, the skills of grandmothers in cooking from “nothing”, working at the *dacha* (a summer house with a plot),¹⁴ and pickling often helped many families survive the harsh times of deficit during perestroika and the drastic drop in people’s incomes in the 1990s. The assistance provided by grandmothers in child care was needed again when day-care facilities began to close down and as the employment rights of mothers began to be neglected in the developing private sector. This evolving social value of grandmothers in the private sphere also contributed to the public sector (through the family economy, child care, etc.). There have even been tendencies to market babushka care when either grandmothers in blood were paid by their parenting children or any elderly woman was hired informally by a relatively well-to-do family to provide child care and perform domestic work. The commercialization of care, particularly child care, has been noted as a specific feature of the changing gender contract in Russia, triggered by various structural transformations, such as the development of the market economy, increased social stratification, and changes in social policy (Zdravomyslova, 2009).

The increased involvement of babushkas in the domestic domain has made their families (applying a broad and flexible notion of family, as discussed in detail in Chapter III) one of the most important field of their lives and selves. Families have become the site of their micro-powers and vulnerabilities, inter-generational conflicts, and inter-personal tensions, but also mutual care and cooperation across generations. Likewise, the specific role of grandmothers in the family affects the way the family is imagined and constructed, whom people include in their families, and the whole fabric of family-making.

Babushkas and Transnational Grandmothering

The geopolitical location of Russian Karelia, changes in cross-border regulations, and migration policies in Finland after the Soviet collapse have also affected grandmothering and the lives of grandmothers. Since the 1990s, increased migration between Russian Karelia and Finland has led to growing numbers of transnational families in which grandmothers are often important actors, although their role remains relatively unmapped.

I use the term “transnational families” to mean “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders” (Bryceson &

Vuorela, 2002, p. 3). Both grandmothers who migrated to Finland and women in Russian Karelia whose adult children and (great-) grandchildren moved and settled on the other side of the border found themselves in a new context of maintaining family ties and family spirit across national borders. Transnational families may encompass various family members of different kinds of “relatedness” (Carsten, 2000), living in different nation-states; I approach families primarily as grandmothers define and see them, how they live and make their transnational families. In this context, “transnational grandmothering” has grown into lively social phenomena in a transnational space between Russian Karelia and Finland. It is characterized by more diverse, practical ways of carrying out child care and keeping the family together, as well as peculiar imaginable means of expressing the care and love of babushkas against the odds of separation.

Transnational grandmothering in the Russian Karelian-Finnish context is a unique case in that a lot of migrant grandmothers share an Ingrian Finnish background, whose Soviet discriminative experiences have added to the complexity of their Soviet subjectivities. The specificity of this transnational mobility is that in contrast to the dominant labour migration patterns when elderly people are left behind and their children or grandchildren migrate in search of better work possibilities, mid-life and elderly Ingrian women often took the initiative in migration to Finland, and many of them, in fact, brought or facilitated the migration of their children and grandchildren to Finland.

These experiences, and especially the re-activated memories of moves both enforced and voluntary, gained new meaning upon their migration to Finland, influencing their subjectivities and grandmothering in different ways. Migration and transnational grandmothering can also be seen as ways of coping with the economic vulnerability experienced on the Russian side of the border. Some grandmothers have been increasingly building and using various forms of “social capital”, such as religion and magic (Stark L., 2006, p. 177), to maintain and manage family relations and protect grandchildren, even across national borders. It is important to emphasize here that transnational grandmothering has become a specific feature of post-Soviet grandmothering in Russian Karelia. Both practical and imagined aspects of transnational grandmothering are significant, and raise many questions, although not much academic attention has been paid to them.

It is important to emphasize, however, that those grandmothers who migrated to Finland are not the only ones involved in transnational grandmothering. My multi-sited fieldwork research (methodology discussed in Chapter II) has been illuminating, because it demonstrated that transnational grandmothers actually reside in both sides of the Russian-Finnish border: both migrant grandmothers in Finland and those grandmothers in Russian Karelia whose families have migrated to Finland engage in sustaining transnational “familyhood” and transnational grandmothering,

although in different ways. For example, migrant grandmothers are generally financially better off than those staying in Russian Karelia, and the grandmothers of the former often includes material assistance to their children and grandchildren (Chapters IV, V). Moreover, migrant grandmothers are more prone to, and financially capable of, employing telecommunication technologies, including Internet facilities (especially women of younger generations), to maintain grandmothering across national borders, whereas for those staying put the imagined aspects of grandmothering are especially important in expressing babushka care.

1.3 Research Scope

Research Problem and Significance

In this context, my research approaches post-Soviet transformations in Russian Karelia and Finnish-Russian transnationalism anthropologically with a focus on babushkas. I analyse changes in the everyday life experiences and subjectivities of grandmothers in contemporary Russian Karelia and trace babushkas' life trajectories, grandmothering and family-making across the Russian-Finnish border. Furthermore, I draw particular attention to changes in the practices and imagination of babushkas in the context of significant postsocialist transformation and transnational mobility.

Analysing how babushkas have coped with regime change, migration to Finland, and transnational life is also an important step toward understanding post-Soviet transformations and globalization from the actors' perspectives. The research thus enters unexplored dimensions in the history of the Finnish-Russian borderland, which for centuries has been an area of cross-border interactions of different characters, and has now become a space of intensified transnational family ties. It explores the specificity of grandmothering and family-making locally, particularly in the context of urban and rural disparities. The study seeks to examine whether and how the logic of sustaining family changes across borders, and what the channels and ways of carrying out transnational grandmothering and maintaining transnational families are in a context between Russian Karelia and Finland. Importantly, I emphasize the agency of grandmothers in these processes. How have grandmothers of various generations and social, ethnic, and spatial (urban and rural) backgrounds renegotiated their positions in transnational/families in a post-Soviet context, when many of them have found themselves in the socioeconomic margins in Russian Karelia or encountered new challenges and opportunities as migrants in Finland?

Both the private and the public aspects of grandmothering have generally been neglected in Soviet studies, with occasional exceptions of brief analyses (Lapidus, 1978; Lane, 1985). Some recent studies discuss grandmothering patterns, the socializing roles of grandmothers, and inter-generational relations among women in the Russian context from sociological and psychological perspectives, drawing on data collected in Moscow and its suburbs (Semenova V., 1996; Krasnova, 2000; Saporovskaya, 2008). Although the effects of postsocialist transformations in Russia have been addressed in the anthropology of postsocialism (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999; Hann, 2002; Humphrey, 2002; Vitebsky, 2002; Jarrett, 2010) (see Chapter III), there is an overall lack of anthropological studies that focus on people's individual and family lives, especially grandmothers and generally women of a mature age, particularly with regard to the local differences across various regions in contemporary Russia. There are some excellent ethnographic accounts on babushkas that discuss the symbolic meaning of the babushka figure in the Russian discourse (Ries, 1997) and the social networks of babushkas in Soviet Riga (Novikova, 2005), but they generally lack the actor's perspective. Furthermore, these studies may be seen as reproducing the traditional, stereotyped image of babushka. This research, by contrast, challenges the traditional confined image of babushkas, discussing the diversity of their lived experiences and subjectivities.

Similarly, in transnational anthropology (Marcus, 1995a; Appadurai, 1996; Bascha, Schiller, & Blanc, 1995; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Hannerz, 1996; Vertovec, 2009), which addresses globalization from an anthropological perspective, grandmothers are rarely placed at the core of the research. Some transnational studies, when discussing age and aging, tend to represent grandmothers as "burdens" to their migrant children (Izuhara & Shibata, 2002, p. 162) or as frail parents "abandoned" by their adult children who migrated elsewhere (Vullnetari & King, 2008). Furthermore, transnational anthropology is often empirically and theoretically dominated by an Anglo-American discourse. However, my research enters a relatively unexplored geographical field (in transnational anthropology studies), by which I hope to suggest new empirical findings and theoretical implications. At the same time, my study approaches grandmothers not as "frail" aging women but as active "care givers" and significant agents in sustaining family relations in a transnational space. In my study I also discuss how aging babushkas are taken care of.

Transnational grandmothering, particularly between former socialist countries as sending contexts and European and American as receiving ones, has recently started receiving some attention in the research literature (Deneva, 2009; Nesteruk & Marks, 2009). However, these studies focus only on transnationally mobile actors, leaving aside those who stay put but whose experiences and identities are affected by others abroad. In contrast, my research discusses transnational grandmothering and the family practices of migrant grandmothers, transnationally

mobile grandmothers, and those grandmothers who stay put. In addition, the mentioned studies rely on data collected from grandmothers' relatives, not from the grandmothers themselves. By contrast, I examine the phenomenon from the actor's perspective, focusing on how involvement in the transnational life of the women on different sides of the border has changed grandmothers' meanings and practices for the grandmothers themselves and how it has affected their subjectivities.

I am especially curious as to how contemporary babushkas negotiate between grandmothers' as both "self-sacrifice" and "self-fulfilment", "traditional" and "modern" in their contemporary/ transnational lives, both mobile and staying put. The interplay of different levels of loyalties towards various family members and the negotiation between various homes and belonging, past, present, and future in their actual lives in the Russian Karelian, Finnish, and transnational contexts are significant aspects. I am also interested in everyday life discourses around babushkas, particularly going beyond the position of a woman in family and kinship: "modern" and "traditional" babushkas, urban and rural babushkas, "young" and "old" babushkas, "all-seeing" and "all-knowing" babushkas in the yard, "church babushkas". How did these discourses change travelling across the Russian-Finnish border, producing other meanings and taking others forms?

Theory and Method

My theoretical approach combines principles of transnationalism, regionalism, and historicism. Transnational anthropological studies that challenge the authenticity of national borders are increasingly revealing the complexity of people's mobility, overcoming the master narratives of nationalism and the host country's perspective that dominate many migration studies. An ethnic group or a nation is no longer viewed as being self-evidently fixed with a certain locality and state:

...the processes that position people as citizens of nations and as members of large, smaller, or dispersed units of agglomeration need to be conceptualized together. The structures of feeling that constitute nationalism need to be set in the context of other forms of imagining communities, other means of endowing significance to space in the production of location and "home". (Gupta, 2003, p. 331)

Looking at transnational processes with a focus on grandmothers and grandmothers'ing, I apply the notions of transnational families (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002) and transnational subjectivity (Vuorela, 2009). Transnational subjectivity refers to a "trajectory that combines living in different places, and makes mobility a historical trajectory of one's own, always connecting to where one is located but simultaneously keeping oneself solidly anchored in one's own story and oneself" (Vuorela, 2009, p. 170). The study considers the interviewed women's lived experiences

of Soviet everyday life and the experiences of translocal (within the Soviet and post-Soviet space) and transnational mobility. I build on the relational and imaginary character of families, which in the narratives of babushkas might include both distant and close relatives, “relativized” non-blood relatives, those who are alive and even those who are dead but are still somehow invested in the feeling of familyhood.

Alongside transnationalism I have adopted a regional perspective to approach 1) the local context of Russian Karelia with its postsocialist vestiges, 2) Karelia as a historically connected cultural area, although split between the two national states of Finland and Russia, and 3) Finnish-Russian (Karelian) cross-border regionalism (Paasi, 1996; Lähteenmäki, 2007). This approach helps provide an understanding of the peculiarities of Russian Karelia as a specific cultural area, as well as draws on its regional specificity as part of the Soviet and Russian space. For instance, three- to four- generational family ties were more likely to be persistent in Russian Karelia with its evolving scarcity of resources at all levels that indirectly enhanced the importance of a family for an individual’s survival. The other example of Karelian regionalism is that religion has been significant in the lives and selves of those grandmothers who resided in rural areas, especially among babushkas with a Karelian background. This approach also enables me to highlight the specificities of regional development of cross-border areas between Finland and Russia. For instance, for grandmothers with an Ingrian background Lutheranism often was a significant element of their ethnic belonging recollected from their childhood experiences in Ingria, and became re-activated upon their migration to Finland. Overall, the Finnish-Russian (Karelian) space with its rich histories and geographical proximity has made transnational grandmothing and transnational families a dynamic but also culturally contested social phenomenon.

The third principle in my approach is historicism. Firstly, personal histories, particularly the histories of translocal and transnational moves, as well as overall Soviet life trajectories, have been extremely important for contemporary babushkas and how they see themselves as individuals in terms of their ethnic and national belonging, as well as how they act as grandmothers and make their families both locally and transnationally. Secondly, the historical approach was indispensable for reconstructing the histories of Soviet grandmothing and family making – histories that have not yet been written, but are needed for tracing continuities between babushka practices of past and present. In this, women’s recollections of their own babushkas and families were an invaluable source.

I also analyse the interplay of public and private spheres (Kelly J., 1984), while being aware of feminist discussions on the blurred and fuzzy border between spheres. This helps me to reveal the specificities of the Soviet/Russian gender culture (Ashwin, 2000; Clements, Friedman, &

Healey, 2002; Zdravomyslova, Rotkirch, & Temkina, 2009) and family and kinship ties (Aleksandrov, Vlasova, & Polishuk, 1999). In this backdrop I try to show how grandmothers have been renegotiating their positions, gaining subtle authority at a micro-level after the collapse of the Soviet space and in the face of migration across the Russian-Finnish border. Whereas vulnerability has often been felt in the public sphere, the babushkas' strength has often resided in the family domain. Such an authority of some grandmothers may connote a *sacrificial micro matriarchy*, i.e., a structure of authority that provides women, especially mature ones, with power at the private level; the other side of this domination in family is women's self-sacrificing (in the Serbian context (Blagojevic, 1994; Simic, 1983)). Nevertheless, the narratives of some grandmothers disclose how vulnerable elderly women might feel in maintaining inter-personal relations, particularly due to their increased financial dependence upon the families of adult children. Furthermore, applying the notion of "women's everyday religion" (Keinänen, 2010), pointing to religion as a lived experience and constituting social reality (Eller, 2007, p. 9), I will show how magic, religion, and so-called "new spiritualities" (Heelas, 2009; Feleky, 2010) might have been applied by some grandmothers as "social capital" to bolster a sense of agency (Stark L., 2006) and channel babushka care.

The core methodology of my research is multi-sited ethnography predicated upon multi-sited objects of study (Marcus, 1998). I conducted my field research (ethnographic interviews and participant observation) on both sides of the Russian-Finnish border: in Petrozavodsk, the capital of the Republic of Karelia of the Russian Federation, and Tampere in Finland. Being an "insider" of the Russian Karelian context and Finnish-Russian transnational family-making processes enabled my immersion in the social field I researched. Reflexivity (Davies, 2008) and the sometimes "improvisational" character of fieldwork (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007) guided my research, allowing me to forge the theoretical framework of my thesis in a constant dialogue with ethnographic practice. This is how, for instance, the religious dimension of some grandmothers' lives was integrated in the theoretical framework of my thesis, although it was not so important when I began. I also undertook fieldwork in real-time border crossing in micro-buses by which passengers travel between Petrozavodsk and Tampere, as well as Petrozavodsk and Helsinki. This real-time cross-border ethnography turned out to be extremely informative with regard to the scale and varieties of transnational grandmothering practices. In this, I hope to have put my subjectivity both as a researcher and as an "insider" of the Russian Karelian context and transnational Finnish-Russian processes to "creative use" (Okely, 1996, p. 28).

I conducted detailed ethnographic interviews with 31 women, some of whom I met several times, on both sides of the border. Three women, namely, Vesta, a transnational grandmother; Evdokiya, a Karelian babushka; and Marja, a migrant Ingrian grandmother, gradually became key

interlocutors¹⁵ of the study. My interviews focused on the life stories of women, their childhood years, motherhood and grandmothering experiences, family life, and working experiences. The memories of the interviewed women of their own babushkas or the way they were helped by their mothers or mothers-in-law (as the interviewed women became mothers) were invaluable in analysing histories of grandmothering experiences and the constitution of the women's subjectivities as babushkas.

Objectives, Questions, Structure

With these motivations, the overarching goal of my research is to explore changes in social practices, as well as the cultural and subjective meanings of babushka in the Russian Karelia and transnational Finnish-Russian context. The thesis has three overarching objectives. Firstly, there is clearly an urgent need to fill a gap in empirical research on babushkas both from the historical and the transnational/anthropological perspectives. Therefore, my primary aim in writing this thesis is to offer a historically sensitive ethnography of babushkas in the context of postsocialism and transnationalism. This is followed by a more specific objective, which is to understand the babushka in the particular context of Russian Karelia and Russian-Finnish transnationalism with its specific ethno-cultural historical trajectories and histories of mobility. So my second aim is to analyse changes in babushka practices, grandmothers' subjectivities, and imaginations of babushkas in a specific cultural and postsocialist context of Russian Karelia and transnational space between Finland and Russian Karelia. This leads almost immediately to a third objective, which is to apprehend grandmothering practices in the context of family-making, locally, translocally, and transnationally. I aim to examine how postsocialist transformations and intensified transnational processes affected the family practices of grandmothers, particularly transnational family-making. Therefore, in this research I set out to address the following questions:

1. What are the continuities and changes in grandmothering practices across time, from Soviet to contemporary Russian Karelia, and space, in a Finnish-Russian cross-border context?
2. What is the role of grandmothers in family-making in Russian Karelia and transnational families across the Finnish-Russian border?
3. How have subjective and cultural meanings and understandings of the babushka changed in the context of postsocialist transformation in Russian Karelia and Finnish-Russian mobility?
4. How is a religious or spiritual dimension manifested in grandmothers' selves and in their grandmothering and family practices?

5. How have the ethno-cultural (Ingrian Finnish, Karelian, Slavic) and spatial (rural and urban) backgrounds, lived Soviet experiences, and personal histories of moves of grandmothers affected their subjectivities as well as grandmothering and family practices?

To answer these questions Chapter II starts with an analysis of my field research in a multi-sited context of Russian Karelia and Finland. Chapter III explains theoretical framing of my research from key interdisciplinary premises to more concrete concepts and insights from the anthropology of postsocialism (especially Russia) and transnational anthropology, folklore, and historical, regional, and gender studies. With this I hope to illustrate how my approach builds on but also differs from existing research, the gaps in which my thesis aims to fill. Chapter IV then undertakes a historicized analysis of grandmothering and family-making to trace changes and continuities in babushka practices from Soviet to contemporary Karelia, particularly highlighting some differences linked to the women's age, ethno-cultural belonging, urban and rural disparities, the effects of translocal moves, and grandchildren's age.

The next four chapters constitute the main empirical body of my study. Chapter V provides a "thick" ethnographic description (Geertz, 1973) of transnational grandmothering and the role of transnational babushkas (migrant grandmothers, transnationally mobile grandmothers, and grandmothers staying put) in making their transnational families. I particularly discuss "talking family", now a daily routine enabled by new telecommunication technologies, coupled with narrating and imagining family histories as the important mechanisms in nourishing familyhood across Russian-Finnish borders, especially strengthened by frequent visits. I also indicate some cultural bridges and distances in a transnational context between Finland and Russian Karelia that influence how grandmothers of different ethnic backgrounds and related life trajectories see themselves as individuals, and in turn define their grandmothering message.

Chapter VI focuses on the babushka as a family position – as a daughter, as a mother of a son and/or a daughter, and as mother-in-law – discussing the micro-powers and vulnerabilities of grandmothers through the lens of three- to four-generation family ties. I hope to illustrate some more ambiguous aspects of grandmothering to balance the image of a loving and caring babushka by showing that the position of a grandmother may also give a space for exerting the babushka's powers over other junior family members. I will also offer some ideas of how the micro-powers and representations of babushkas have changed in such public settings as the urban yard and the Orthodox Church in post-Soviet Karelia and in a receiving context of Finland. Chapter VII then underscores the religious or spiritual selves of contemporary babushkas, discussing how religion,

traditional magic, and “new spiritualities” are applied by some grandmothers in their social practices. I will highlight the effects of rural and urban living, translocal and transnational moves, and ethno-cultural differences.

Chapter VIII examines the Soviet female subjectivities of contemporary babushkas that, I suggest, have strongly informed the women’s grandmothering and family practices. I will trace the connections between the Soviet, translocal, and transnational subjectivities of grandmothers to proceed in detail with the Ingrian grandmothers who constitute the majority of migrant babushkas in Finland. With this focus I hope to illustrate that the personal histories of translocal and transnational motilities in conjunction with their Soviet discriminative experiences have considerably shaped how they see themselves as individuals and grandmothers being migrants in Finland. In this, the migration to Finland was a serious trigger for renegotiating their sense of national and ethnic senses of belonging, of home, a difference that became explicitly sharp when compared with the life stories of Ingrian grandmothers staying put in Russian Karelia.

Finally, Chapter IX discusses the findings and conclusions of the research on a more abstract level by distinguishing between Soviet legacies, individualization, and neoliberal and neotraditional trends in the practices and family-making of contemporary babushkas. I also discuss how the subjectivities of grandmothers shape these practices and babushkas’ messages to their grandchildren.

2. Approaching Babushkas in the Field

2.1 Doing Ethnography in a Multi-sited Home Setting

Multi-sited and Localized Ethnographies

What remains unique in social and cultural anthropology and makes it different from other related disciplines is its methodology. Ethnographic fieldwork increases understanding of “taken-for-granted social routines, informal knowledge, and embodied practices” that cannot be obtained either through “standardized social sciences research methods or through decontextualized readings of cultural products” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 36). Although fieldwork continues to be seen as the major constituent element of the anthropological tradition, the tradition itself is being re-interpreted and reconstructed (Marcus, 1995b; Appadurai, 1996; Gupta, 2003; Vertovec, 2009) as a response to the increased “interconnectedness of the world” (Hannerz, 1996, p. 8). Likewise, the notion of the field has been re-interpreted and enlarged (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Marcus, 1998; Falzon, 2009; Hannerz, 2010).

Ethnographic research is increasingly conducted with multiple sites of observation and participation, involving interdisciplinary work and enlarging the scope of research (Marcus, 1995a). In this context, multi-sited ethnography advocates the adaptation of long-standing modes of ethnographic practices to more complex objects of study, drawing on multiple sites of observation with cross-cutting dichotomies such as the “local” and the “global” (Marcus, 1995a; Burawoy, 2000). Likewise, the notion of the field expands, meaning not only long-term involvement with people in a given context, but also analysing government documents, observing the activities of governing elites, and tracing the internal logics of transnational development agencies and corporations (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 37; Ong & Collier, 2005). As a consequence of questioning and transgressing the boundaries within anthropology, particularly in fieldwork research, there is a space for renegotiating and deconstructing the dichotomy of “home” and “field”, “entry” and “exit” from the field, our culture and others’ cultures, the legacies established by the colonial anthropology.

In the context of renegotiating these boundaries and enlarging objects of study in contrast to what the classical localized anthropological tradition stood for, the hallmark of social or cultural anthropology primarily lies in its methodology, namely, fieldwork (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Davies, 1999; Vered, 1999; Hann, 2002; Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007). In my research I pursued ethnographic fieldwork as a method that draws on a variety of qualitative research techniques, especially engagement over an extended period of time in the lives of those being studied, combining interviewing and participant observation (Davies, 1999). In this context, the long-term engagement with my interlocutors, the grandmothers of this study, and my own physical experience of being part of their everyday lives, enabled me to observe and understand things that, for instance, interviews alone would never have delivered. Therefore, when drawing on women's narratives in subsequent empirical chapters, one should be aware that these interviews played only a partial role in developing my understanding of the phenomenon.

Multi-sited ethnography often implies moving around and "following" horizontally, which means that there is little time for staying put and "following" vertically (Falzon, 2009). In this context, this methodology was criticized for its inability to achieve depth in time or "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) enabled by conventional participant observation. This inevitably leads to a difficult methodological choice in "making the cut" (Candea, 2007). A response to the "lack of depth" charge can be seen in the claim that space "transforms and makes" just as time does, and the aim of multi-sited ethnographies may serve to reflect on the "spatial depth" (Falzon, 2009, p. 9). George Marcus suggests that one of the difficulties in the acknowledgement of multi-sited ethnography and the enlarged scope of objects and techniques within traditional anthropological thinking lies in the colonial and Western heritage of classical anthropology. Multi-sited ethnography challenges the very core of the anthropological tradition: the exploration and construction of Otherness. In contrast, multi-sited ethnography, orientated on process and connections, shifts the classical anthropological focus on subject as the other to "the realm of the already known" (Marcus, 2009, p. 184). Marcus also maintains that some sites are more strategic than others for intensive investigation, and, therefore, some should be treated "thickly" and others "thinly", depending on the design of the project and research questions it seeks to answer (Marcus, 2009, p. 185; Marcus, 1998).

Multi-sited ethnography in my research had a number of specificities that can be seen as enabling "thick" ethnographic descriptions of grandmothers and family practices, both of them in the local context of Russian Karelia, in the transnational context between Finland and Russian Karelia, and in case of migration with Finland as a receiving context. On the one hand, my fieldwork research combined long-term living in two sites, in Russian Karelia (in Petrozavodsk)

and in Finland (in Tampere), which enabled immersion in both contexts and developing deeper understandings of local, translocal, and transnational processes, particularly in the ways they loom in the lives and subjectivities of grandmothers. On the other hand, my real-time cross-border ethnography in mini-buses that take passengers across borders, between Petrozavodsk and Tampere, and between Petrozavodsk and Helsinki, was invaluable in capturing the dynamic and scale of transnational family processes in the particular context of Russian Karelia and Finland. This ethnographic practice enabled me to grasp the “spatial depth” of the phenomenon. Thus, my fieldwork research can be seen as combining the elements of the classical localized fieldwork research and multi-sited ethnography.

Multi-sited ethnographies define their objects of study through different techniques: follow “the people”, “the thing”, “the metaphor”, “the plot, story, or allegory”, and “the life or biography” (Marcus, 1995a). In my research project, “following” the people, the metaphor, and the life proved to be the vital components of my ethnographic exploration of the babushka. Firstly, I “followed” babushkas and grandmothers across space, particularly across national borders between Russian Karelia and Finland. Secondly, I “followed” changes in the metaphor of the babushka or how symbolic meanings of the babushka have changed in the context of post-Soviet transformation and transnationalism. Thirdly, I “followed” the grandmothers’ life trajectories across time, through their recollected encounters of lived experiences that greatly inform their contemporary lives. Another site of my ethnographic exploration can be seen the history itself, as I traced the history of babushka practices in the Soviet period that has not yet been analysed. According to Michael Burawoy, global ethnographies should be necessarily grounded in local histories (Burawoy, 2000).

Perspective as an Insider: Challenges and Opportunities

The ethnographic method is largely premised on the presence of the researcher’s body and personality in the field-site. This is essential for understanding the process of knowledge production in my research, the way in which the theoretical and empirical framing of grandmothers’ lives and selves have been forged in a continuous dialogue between theory and practice (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007). According to Allaine Cerwonka and Liisa Malkki, bodies and emotional landscape do matter in the ethnographic fieldwork, and need to be seen as enabling knowledge production, in contrast to what the positivist ideal suggests, i.e., erasing the researcher’s subjectivity for the purpose of pure objectivity (2007, pp. 37,38). Judith Okely also maintains that if a study presupposes interactions of two human beings, the specificity and individuality of the one who is a

researcher/observer are necessarily present, and “must be therefore acknowledged, explored and put to creative use” (Okely, 1996, p. 28).

In my fieldwork research, being an “insider” of the local and translocal contexts (for instance, translocal living between urban area and dacha, in the countryside) in Russian Karelian and of the transnational Finnish-Russian processes, as well as in the knowledge production processes itself, enabled establishing long-term relationships with my interlocutors. My ethnographic research practice both here and there appeared as a “way of being in the world” and also a “matter of living” (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 178). In this, the way Cerwonka and Malkki describe the processes of understanding in the anthropological knowledge production was extremely useful:

Understanding does not often occur in a single, lightning-bolt moment (the proverbial light bulb over the head), nor is it a matter of a deliberate linear accumulation. It requires analytical movement, not stasis. And it forces the recognition that we only understand from a point of view that reflects our social, cultural, historical, affective location. Recognizing the nature of understanding does not lead logically to a relativist approach in which all responses are equally ethical and productive. Rather, this recognition invites us to be more deliberate in our approach and allows for more dialogues about the effects and possibilities of our engagements in a knowledge production. In comparison with treating method as a formula and approaching theory and empirical research as separate activities, a processual approach to knowledge production yields more complex, ethical, and life-affirming research. (2007, p. 37)

If some researchers, as Charlotte Aull Davies suggests, face challenges of projecting their own cultural assumptions on the social realities they analyse (Davies, 1999), the challenge for me as an “insider” of a particular context was often to articulate practices and cultural meanings that appeared as self-evident or to unpack what can be interpreted as the “cultural unconscious”, “the routinized and taken-for-granted aspects of our thought and behaviour” (Alasuutari, 2004, p. 15). The ethnographic approach comes alongside developing ethnographic sensitivity, particularly through articulating the “cultural unconscious”, local and global, that may lie in the very core of a phenomenon. Tentatively speaking, for me it is scrutinization of the routine, the “basic element of day-to-day social activity” (Giddens, 1984), both as a historicized practice and as a mode of thinking and reasoning with deeper cultural meanings that is enabled by an ethnographic approach in studies of local, translocal, and transnational processes. In the context of doing ethnography at home, the challenge for me was to articulate the babushka and family practices that routinely could have gone unnoticed by me as an “insider” on the context.

As I mentioned earlier, many recent anthropological studies question the division between “home” and the “field”. One of the strategies to reconstruct this division by those who do

ethnographies in a home setting is to start from an assumption that “home” is a place of differences (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 33). Reconceptualization of “home” and “away” when exploring close to “home” or neighbouring contexts may result in finding a home that had not been known before (Caputo, 1999). Likewise, what “home” and “us” mean for an ethnographer may be much more complex than it appears (Dyck, 1999). In this context, my fieldwork both in a localized context of Russian Karelia and multi-sited ethnography in a transnational Finnish-Russian context was sometimes full of surprises; for instance, the marketing of babushka care was an interesting and unexpected finding for me both in a local context and among Russian migrants in a receiving context of Finland.

Furthermore, the boundary between “home” as stationary and field as a journey, which had long persisted in anthropology, has been increasingly shaken in the context of transnational mobility. Not only have objects of anthropological studies and participant observation become mobile and spatially dispersed (Falzon, 2009, p. 9), but also for many academics “home” has become increasingly “peripatetic” and multi-sited (Vered, 1999, p. 8). Amit Vered argues that “it is becoming a virtual truism to note that the distinction between ‘home’ and ‘away’ has become blurred by the transnational contexts in which anthropologists and their ethnographic subjects now move” (Vered, 1999, p. 15). In transnational fieldwork home appears “partial” and reminds of a “selective positioning” (Knowles, 1999). In the course of my fieldwork, the very notion of home has changed for me; starting my ethnographic research with Russian Karelia being my home at that moment, I ended up in settling in Finland, which is now home for my nuclear family with transnational family connections. Therefore, I would emphasize “home” as my familiarity with and being part of the local, translocal, and transnational processes, enabling my “natural” immersion in a particular context in-between Russian Karelia and Finland.

2.2 Collecting and Interpreting Data

My Fieldwork in Russian Karelia, in Finland, and In-between

By starting my fieldwork in Russian Karelia, in the city of Petrozavodsk in October 2006, I entered the realm of the already-known for me. Being already part of the local context, my primary task was to become more aware of the surrounding social realities, with a particular focus on babushkas, and to re-activate existing social ties to find my interlocutors. Among my first interlocutors was, for instance, a babushka, Galina, from my childhood yard; being our “neighbouring” babushka, she

sometimes took care of me when I was a child. In this context, my childhood memories of babushkas, particularly in a general sense (for instance, “all-seeing” and “all-knowing” babushkas occupying benches in an urban yard), grew into a subjective ethnographic field of its own, which I have tried to make reflective use of in framing the babushka phenomenon historically. I also met some of my interlocutors through family and friends. Further on, in the empirical chapters, I will provide more detailed accounts of how I approached and interacted with some grandmothers in my research.

In finding my interlocutors I made deliberate efforts in activating my social self to talk to women, potential interlocutors of my research, wherever and whenever I had chance to do so – standing in a queue in a shop, post office, bank, or bus stop; waiting for a bus to go to dacha or while in a dacha village, buying fresh vegetables from babushkas selling their products outside supermarkets; walking with my son outside or waiting for our turn in a public clinic; talking to “church babushkas” in Orthodox Churches. All possible places, public and private, became multiple sites of my participant observation and participation with my increased reflexivity as a researcher. If I happened to talk to a grandmother without doing a recorded interview, I always asked if I could refer to this case in my research. In this context, participant observation, which has constraints in many contemporary multi-sited studies in providing a holistic description of a phenomenon (Hannerz, 2010, p. 74), was enabled by my actual living in Petrozavodsk, which created the opportunities usually associated with classical single-site long-term research.

I conducted ethnographic interviews with 20 women in October-December of 2006, October-December of 2007, and January-February of 2008. Two of my interlocutors in Petrozavodsk had Ingrian backgrounds. Interviews were often built as life stories: I asked women to tell me about their life from their childhood up till now. In many cases, interviews easily flowed into a “naturally occurring” conversation (Davies, 2008, p. 94), when women were more likely to choose, on their own, what to talk about. I found this improvisational feature of the ethnographic practice (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007) to be extremely enabling in the process of my study, as it allowed me to better sense the women’s concerns and accordingly tune the theoretical framework of my research.

Given the interconnectedness between “the word and the world” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 51), this informal way of conducting interviews helped me to understand what constitute contemporary grandmothers’ lives now, how important grandmothereing experiences for them are. I was interested to hear what women chose to talk about and what they wanted to remember, as the memories are particularly selective in their character, and dependent upon the present: they are an “activity in the present”, an important part of the process of belonging or construction of the self (Jermain, 2006, p.

118). Women's recollections of their own babushkas, grandmothering experiences, or being a babushka in a general sense loomed largely in the women's narratives; this was the major motivation behind the focus of this research on the practices and imaginations of babushkas. I often felt that many of my interlocutors treated me as a daughter or a granddaughter (depending on their age); thus, not only my belonging to the same cultural and transnational context, but also my gender and age affected my position as a researcher-interlocutor. Some women often seemed to be willing not only to share their stories with me, but also to teach and advise me, which I would also interpret as something that reveals their subjectivities as babushkas.

When talking of grandmothers one should be aware of the fact that this category of women is highly heterogeneous in terms of age (a woman might become a babushka in her late thirties or early eighties), social strata, and ethnic background, as well as unique life trajectories that, in turn, also affect the way grandmothering is carried out and experienced. Most grandmothers of my study belonged to the low-income group in Russia, which, however, does not reflect the women's real years of education and paid employment. Paradoxically, relatively well-educated babushkas with many years of work experience found themselves on the economic margins after the Soviet collapse. This paradox reflects a distinctive feature of postsocialist transformations in contemporary Russia, characterized by an imbalance between the levels of income, particularly the level of pension reward, and the levels of education and work experience.

The number of recorded interviews significantly exceeds the number of interviewed women, as I interviewed some women twice or more and afterwards maintained contact, continuing to be updated about changes in their lives. Two women, a Karelian babushka named Evdokiya and a transnational grandmother, Vesta, became key-interlocutors in my fieldwork in Petrozavodsk. I recorded three interviews with Evdokiya and twelve with Vesta, although our communication went far much beyond the recorded way of interacting, which, of course, also helped me to understand their lives and selves better. In fact, it was my daily communication with Vesta that in many ways inspired me to trace grandmothers' life trajectories across national borders, as I could see how intimately and through sharing daily routine, both practically and in imagination, she is connected with her two daughters and their families, including her four grandsons, now residing in Finland. I could observe the daily routines of an active transnational babushka, Vesta, regularly commuting between Finland and Russian Karelia in making her transnational family. I hope that my daily interactions with Vesta helped me to achieve depth when analysing the different aspects of transnational grandmothering and family processes across national borders. When I met Vesta, my localized ethnographic research stopped being local or translocal (between urban and rural spaces in

case of Evdokiya who lived all her life in the Russian Karelian countryside), and crossed national borders between Russia and Finland to be continued by my fieldwork in Finland.

I interviewed twelve migrant women, seven of whom had an Ingrian background, in March-April of 2007 and March-July of 2008 in Tampere. Again I met some women more than twice, while Marja became a key-interlocutor of my research in Finland. Moreover, my friendship and family ties were reactivated in finding first interlocutors for my research in Finland. Furthermore, local nongovernmental organizations (NGO), such as those organizing language courses for migrants, national cultural (Russian, Ingrian) associations, and the Tampere Orthodox Church became sites both for observation and participation, and for meeting potential interlocutors of my research.

When quoting, I also refer to the year a grandmother was born to orient the reader with regard to a babushka's age, for instance "(Aleksandra, born in 1937, 2008)". I did not conduct "official" interviews with some women whom I met, but I refer to our conversations and their practices in my research with their permission, specifying that I draw on my fieldnotes when quoting; for instance, "(Anfisa, born in 1949, 2009 fieldnote)". My position as an "insider" considerably facilitated both the ways I approached migrant grandmothers and the development of my understanding of the phenomenon. For instance, I shared my Ingrian Finnish background with Ingrian babushkas and could easily relate to their personal histories of enforced mobility during Stalinist rule and recent migration to Finland, as these issues were also discussed in my transnational family setting. In addition, I shared the experiences of multi-local presence and transnational mobility with those grandmothers who were involved in transnational family-making.

In both Petrozavodsk and Tampere I was often invited to visit the women in their homes to conduct an interview. Thus, I could observe how the women organized their homes, how they displayed photos of their children and grandchildren, and of other relatives as well, close and distant, alive and dead. I took some pictures of how some grandmothers placed paintings and icons, family catalogues and old newspapers with articles containing information about their relatives or themselves, which have become a part of their family history archives. From the perspective of transnational families, it was interesting to see how some women spared bedrooms/places for family visitors who now reside abroad, carefully keeping photographs and other objects that might reproduce a presence of the person who has been physically far away. A sense of togetherness is reproduced not only through correspondence, greetings, telephone calls, and thinking across the borders, but "it is anchored in the presents, pictures, photos that become talismans of home and belonging" (Vuorela, 2002, p. 76).

Sometimes, I observed how the women interacted with other family members, particularly with their husbands who often also participated in the interviewing process, although most of the women I interviewed were either divorced or widowed. Conversations often took place in the kitchen, “the most sacred place in Russian/Soviet society” for talk, where “over tea or vodka [with grandmothers, it happened to be only tea], people could speak their minds, tell their stories, and spill their souls openly” (Ries, 1997, p. 21). Often I was warmly served hot tea and cakes, and could indeed feel the warmth and love that is conveyed by some grandmothers, and is often linked to the babushka in the Russian imagination.

A specific site of my participation and observation consisted of the mini-buses that take passengers between Petrozavodsk and Tampere, and between Petrozavodsk and Helsinki. In this context, mini-buses soon became a lively site of my participant observation: I talked about my research in Finland with people whom I met during my trips, and they, in turn, would tell me why they were going to Tampere (Helsinki) or to Petrozavodsk, and whom they were visiting. It was illuminating to observe the dynamic of the trip: how people interacted among themselves, how they positioned themselves in terms of their national belonging when crossing the border on the Finnish and the Russian sides. Seeing anthropology as “the art of possible” (Hannerz, 2010, p. 77) (misquoting the Prussian statesman Otto von Bismark), I tried to use the opportunities provided by this frequent travelling to develop a better and broader understanding of the phenomenon I was researching.

Assuming that multi-sited studies entail built-in assumptions about segmented lives, where some aspects (work, ethnicity, or something else) are more central than others in the line of inquiry (Hannerz, 2010, p. 75), I would emphasize that babushkas and family were central in my participant and observation in mini-buses. I could observe which family members (grandmothers, adult daughters and sons, grandchildren) would be travelling to Russian Karelia and/or to Finland; I asked them whom they were visiting there, how often they commuted across borders, etc. Thus, conducting participant observation in micro-buses was especially important in a sense that it provided a feeling of scale and varieties in transnational grandmothering practices from the perspective of various family members. As multi-sited ethnographies inevitably are the product of knowledge bases of varying intensities and qualities (Marcus, 1995a), my cross-border ethnography can be described as the intensive site that illustrated the impressive scale of family-making in this distinctive context. During one of my trips, I also met an interlocutor of my research, Riita, with whom I happened to share a seat; our conversation lasted ten hours, until she reached her destination in Finland.

Thus, my multi-sited field work combined the sites that could have been seen as providing the qualities, depth, and “thick” accounts of the researched phenomenon and the sites offering “thin” but intensive and dynamic pictures of the phenomenon. Importantly, this combination of different techniques enabled me to see the phenomenon of transnational babushkas from different sides of the border.

According to Steven Vertovec, transnationalism has different effects on people who (a) travel regularly between specific states, (b) mainly stay in a receiving country but keep connections to a place of origin, and (c) have never moved but whose locality is considerably influenced by the activities of others abroad (Vertovec, 2004). My fieldwork showed that transnational babushkas are on both sides of the Russian-Finnish border. They are part of a transnational family space and contribute to transnational family-making, although in different ways. Consequently, I distinguish between 1) *migrant grandmothers*, who moved permanently from Russia to Finland, 2) *transnationally mobile grandmothers*, who travel regularly between Russian Karelia and Finland, particular with the purpose of providing child care, and 3) *grandmothers staying put*, who reside in Russian Karelia but have children/grandchildren and other relatives in Finland. Among the interlocutors of my research, twelve women whom I interviewed in Finland can be seen as migrant grandmothers, two (including Vesta, whom I mentioned as a key-interlocutor) are transnationally mobile grandmothers, and three can be seen as grandmothers staying put. As I mentioned earlier, the diversity of practices and certain patterns in transnational grandmothereing have also been revealed through my cross-border ethnography in mini-buses.

Interpreting Data

Ethnography demonstrates how one might use theory and ethnographic material to think one through the other, and thus avoid imposing prefabricated, theoretical models on the rich complexity of everyday life (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 19). Thus, the process of data analysis took place both during the fieldwork and later in reading and re-reading through the data (Davies, 2008, p. 246). I tuned both the ways of conducting the interviews and participant observation, and the theoretical framing of the research. The very focus on the babushka can be seen as a result of this continuous dialogue between my fieldwork practice and the search for better theoretical framing, as well as my theorizing around religion and magic.

The process of re/negotiation between theory and practice is embodied in my field notes, my “own private gold mine” (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 80), containing the results of my

participant and non-participant observations as well as interviews intertwined with theoretical and methodological comments.¹⁶ Through a process of continually moving back and forth between the data, I have tried to open other dimensions of the researched object, asking new questions to the seemingly same data material; the reader is never the same, although the content remains the same (Vuorela, 2006, p. 43). As the new contexts come up and the new research dimensions appear, the researcher might ask new questions to the “old” material (Vuorela, 2002, p. 46).

In my research, I approached narratives, including the women’s narratives and my ethnographic narration itself, taking into consideration four aspects suggested by Martin Cortazzi when doing narrative analysis in an ethnographic research (Cortazzi, 2001). Firstly, I considered the women’s narratives as providing the meaning of their experiences, directly or indirectly giving interpretations and explanations of the events that happened to them. Thus, I could explore what women saw as central and meaningful in their lives, especially in interpreting their Soviet subjectivities, informing their contemporary grandmothering and family practices. Secondly, I saw the narratives as “the representation of voice”, that is, the sharing of the experiences of a particular group. This aspect of the narrative analysis was particularly illuminating in the ways migrant women with an Ingrian Finnish background wanted to be heard when narrating their dramatic experiences linked to the history of Ingrian Finns as a group during Stalinist rule and as a special group of “returnees” in Finland, migrating to “home” in contrast to migrants with other ethnic backgrounds.

The third aspect of narrative analysis is the “publicizing aspect of voice”, which is to give “high profiles to human qualities”, often to reveal crucial but probably “unappreciated” aspects of personal and professional lives. In this context, the care and love babushkas convey in grandmothering and family-making can be seen as significant aspects of public appreciation. The fourth aspect of the narrative analysis that Cortazzi emphasizes relates to seeing “ethnographic research itself as a story”. Taking into consideration a metanarrative level and my own co-authoring in interpreting my interlocutors’ accounts, I try to reveal some aspects of my subjectivity as a researcher and individual so that the reader may evaluate how these subjective experiences may have influenced my ethnographic narration of the babushka. In addition, trying to be sensitive when framing grandmothers’ narratives and lives, I sometimes deliberately softened some ambiguous and destructive aspects of the babushkas’ micro-powers, or the ways some women expressed their ethnic and national belongings. Rather than overdramatize, I preferred to be modest in attempts to avoid any evaluative and judgmental analysis.

Another important aspect in the women’s narratives that I paid attention to was how women talked about their past. In this analysis, I assumed that people enact memories through a number of

historically developed, materially and perceptually accessible cultural forms (language, for example), combining elements between history and the embodied nature of memory (Jerman, 2006, p. 118). Memories become present, and transitions occur in space and time (Jerman, 2006, p. 117). The past emerges when we create a relation to it; it is in the memory where the past is reconstructed, and the process of recalling is always structured by the time and place of its occurrence (Bonner & Rosenholm, 2008, pp. 10, 12). In this context, I interpreted the women's recollections of the past as a source of their identification and constituent elements of their subjectivities now in their contemporary lives. Of course, while framing the rich data material I tried to follow the reasoned selectivity, organization, and focus that any ethnographic research text necessarily entails (Davies, 2008, pp. 232, 238).

3. Theoretical and Interdisciplinary Contextualization of the Babushka

3.1 Interdisciplinary Premises

Although aware of the increasingly blurred borders between disciplines in contemporary knowledge production in the social sciences and the humanities, I have found it useful to tentatively refer to different fields to identify which interdisciplinary premises my study relies on and which bodies of literature and discussions it can potentially contribute to. In this, my major field remains social anthropology, which, according to George Marcus, unavoidably draws on interdisciplinary engagement in its “rereading” and reinterpretation of the anthropological tradition (Marcus, 1995b).

Negotiating between History and Anthropology

When framing theoretically any research, one usually relies on the epistemological and methodological world of her discipline. I received my training as a historian at Petrozavodsk State University, with a particular interest in Nordic gender history, whereas I developed my understanding of social anthropology in the school of transnational anthropology at the University of Tampere. This academic training transgressed the academic Russian-Finnish borders and has influenced the ways I approached the babushka phenomenon in this study, in the sense that the process of negotiation between history and anthropology marked the whole analytical process.

During this process, I came to recognize that there are many more commonalities between those two disciplines than I used to think before. Tentatively speaking, if history scrutinizes the diversity of ways of life across time, social anthropology tends to apprehend this diversity across space. Both historical and anthropological knowledge productions are subjective and partial in providing accounts of the past and the present. The final product in the form of a piece of research is a combined result of the chosen methodological and theoretical framing, academic and cultural subjectivity of the researcher (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007; Davies, 2008; Repina, Zvereva, & Paramonova, 2004). Of course, these two approaches frequently converged and continue to do so, for instance, in historical anthropology (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Feller, 2005; Dube, 2007). In

history, Lucien Febvre, calling for a “methodological revolution in history” alongside Marc Bloch (Repina, Zvereva, & Paramonova, 2004, p. 225), was among the first to advocate incorporating an ethnographic perspective in historical writing. He suggested reconstructing the daily lives of people of the past, “performing timeless acts, going through the eternal circle of human life”, to “look into the very hearts of men” of sixteenth-century France (Febvre, 1977, p. 72, first published in 1944).

However, both history and anthropology risk the danger of constructing the Other, reproducing hierarchies of belonging and/or exotification: in history, through reconstruction of the past by drawing on the values and norms of today, often referred to as anachronism; in anthropology, by approaching and analysing Others’ culture on premises of the taken-for-granted “normality” of one’s own (cultural) background. Thus, both require sensitivity not to violate the sources (documents, letters, memoirs, recorded interviews, etc.) provided by interlocutors of the past and the present. As mentioned earlier, I have tried to be reflexive of this metanarrative level of my research, particularly when interpreting my interlocutors’ accounts. Likewise, attempting to avoid generalized cultural accounts, I do not operate with such terms as *patterns*; instead I prefer to use the term *practices* or *routines*, for instance, grandmothing practices or babushka routines. In this context, when applying culture in the broad anthropological sense as “the whole way of life of a people” (Chris, 1993), I recognize its fluid, multi-layered character and variations within a culture and beyond. I also assume that the application of the term needs to be seen as situated and may even vary within a given single research (Barth, 2002).

Thus, anthropology, now probably being “one of the most interdisciplinary disciplines” (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 162; Marcus, 2009), has allowed me to include a historical approach to elaborate a better framing of the research phenomenon. It is worth emphasizing that, drawing on the principle of historicism, I do not rely on historical anthropology, which can be seen as a field of its own and would deserve an appropriate and detailed discussion. Rather I want to underline that the fact that I was trained to think historically has certainly affected the way I approach my research. Firstly, my background in history has enabled me to reconstruct the much-needed history of Soviet grandmothing, drawing on women’s narratives and the legislative documents and statistics of different periods (see Chapter IV). Secondly, historicism allowed me to elaborate on the notions of Soviet and transnational subjectivities (see below) to pay particular attention to the importance of personal histories (Soviet lived experiences, histories of mobility) for grandmothers now in their contemporary lives. “One has to dispense with the constituent subject, and to get rid of the subject itself... to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework” (Foucault 1980, 117). In this context, the importance of the historicity of a subject looms large when women of a mature age are at the core of the research.

Karelia: Anthropological, Folklore, and Ethnological Perspectives

By starting my journey into researching the lives of babushkas in the context between Russian Karelia and Finland and its related history, I entered a geographical terrain that has long been studied on both sides of the Finnish-Russian border. This long-evolving research interest resulted in specific institutional framing: for instance, in Russian (earlier, Soviet) Karelia the institutional research expertise in ethnographic and historical studies has been mainly formed at the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian (earlier, USSR) Academy of Sciences (Institute of Linguistic, Literature and History) and the Petrozavodsk State University; in Finland, such expertise was formed in the Karelian Institute of the University of Eastern Finland (earlier, University of Joensuu) and the University of Helsinki (Finno-Ugrian folklore studies and ethnology).

However, ethnographic studies as well as the cooperation between these research institutions on both sides of the border were predominantly driven by an interest towards folklore, pre-industrial oral traditions of the area. In her study of cultural conceptions of old women and their life practices in Finland, Sinikka Vakimo accurately points out that although women of old age were often key informants in these studies they were primarily seen as “mediators of old traditions” to study the changing forms of culture of the past (Vakimo, 2001, pp. 90-92). This folkloristic approach is partly explained by the major dividing line in ethnographic studies between the German-dominated, historically orientated, ethnological tradition of Northern and Eastern Europe and the anthropological tradition in Britain, France, and the United States. This division has persisted to the present, for instance in the disciplinary separation of ethnology, folklore, and anthropology (Siikala, 2006). In part, studying Russian and Finno-Ugrian folklore heritage was probably one of the safest ways of doing ethnography in the areas that were part of the Soviet Union, for many decades remaining all but closed to fieldwork for outside researchers (see below).

This disciplinary division between ethnological, folklore, and anthropological studies has been challenged but remains quite influential in the contemporary contexts of Finnish academia, and especially in Russian scholarship. Although folklore and ethnological approaches are not central in my study, ignoring the local ethnographic data in all their richness and extremely detailed accounts would put serious limitations on my anthropological study of the babushka in this particular context. Thus, I have found it useful to apply some recent ethnological research on the Russian folk culture of Karelia (Kurets, 2000; Kuznetsova & Loginov, 2001), for instance, when making some historical comparisons in my interpretation of the role of grandmothers in intra-familial relations in Chapter V. Of course, when distinguishing between Russian and Finno-Ugrian, I am aware of the subtlety and conditionality of such a division, which is particularly traceable in

the toponymy of what is now called the Republic of Karelia (Mullonen, 2002). I have also significantly benefited from a feminist rereading of Finnish, Karelian, and Russian Karelian rural contexts, especially concerning religion and magic (Keinänen, 2002; Keinänen, 2003; Stark-Arola, 1998; Stark L., 2006; Apo, Nenola, & Stark-Arola, 1998) when discussing the babushka phenomenon in the rural context of Russian Karelia (see *Women's Everyday Religion*).

As a “native anthropologist” I was, of course, interested in incorporating some regional studies on historical development, including interaction with Finland, (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001; Kilin, 1999, 2005; Pashkov A. M., 2007; Kulomaa, 2006; Takala, 2007). I have also included accounts of the political, social, and economic development of Russian (Soviet) Karelia (Pokrovskaya, 1978; Popova M., 1998; Druzhinin, 2005; Butvilo, 2000). In fact, the liberation of academic interaction after the Soviet collapse has resulted in a considerable increase of studies that can be seen as the result of combined transnational academic efforts to explore Karelia as a cross-border region, and a Russian-Finnish cross-border dynamic¹⁷ in general (Laine & Ylikangas, 2002; Liikanen, Zimin, Ruusuvoori, & Eskelinen, 2007; Lähteenmäki, 2007; Alapuro, Liikanen, & Lonkila, 2005; Virkkunen, Uimonen, & Davydova, 2010). I applied the above mentioned studies to elaborate a nuanced contextual background of the researched phenomenon, for instance, when discussing the historical process of making grandmothers into omnipotent figures in Soviet families in Karelia in Chapter IV or when providing historical and cultural aspects of the Finnish-Russian Karelian interactions in the context of transnational grandmothering in Chapter V.

The approach that often unites this type of research is that Karelia is seen as a specific region whose development has been marked by certain historical, ethno-cultural, economic, social, and political processes, making it is possible to distinguish some kind of regional history, regional identity, and the identity of a region (Paasi, 1996, p. 35; Lähteenmäki, 2007, p. 9). “The distinction between *the identity of the region* and *the regional identity* of the inhabitants is crucial for understanding the analytical difference between the historical construction of a region and the life histories of its inhabitants”; the latter one connotes the regional consciousness of the people living in a particular socio-spatial territory (Paasi, 1996, p. 36, italics in the original). “The identity of a region places it apart from others whereas regional identities build on a social process which is influenced, among other things, by a shared history, a sense of togetherness and uniqueness” (Lähteenmäki, 2007, p. 9). The awareness of the regional specificity offers a nuanced and sensitive approach to postsocialist and transnational transformations from a micro perspective (Alapuro, Liikanen, & Lonkila, 2005, p. 12)

In the context of my research, 1) Russian Karelia as a specific “provincial” and border region of socialist and postsocialist Russia, 2) Karelia as a cultural area historically split between

two national states, and 3) the Russian (Karelian)-Finnish space can be approached from a regional perspective. Thus, among other analytical explanations I draw on this perspective when illustrating the effects of specific ethno-cultural histories and histories of translocal moves, urban and rural disparities on grandmothering and the subjectivities of grandmothers in Russian Karelia (Chapters IV, VIII), the peculiar conditions of transnational processes, including family-making and grandmothering, between Russian Karelia and Finland (Chapter V), or persistency in conventional ways of family-making and women's micro-powers in the family domain both locally and transnationally (Chapter VI). Importantly, the regional identities of contemporary women add to the complexities of their Soviet, translocal, and transnational subjectivities (see below, Chapters VII, VIII).

The history of Ingrian Finns has become part of both the regional history of Karelia and Finnish-Russian transnationalism (Nevalainen, 1990; Nevalainen, 1998; Suni, 1998a; Suni, 1998b; Gil'di, 2006; Takala, 2007). In the Finnish scholarship, particularly from an ethnologist perspective, the post-Soviet migration of people with an Ingrian background to Finland has enhanced an academic interest towards Ingrian Finns in the past and in the present (Nenola, 2002; Ilomäki, 1998; Kaivola-Bregenhøj, 1999). Historical, sociological, and folklore research on Ingrian Finns has been invaluable in contextualizing grandmothering and family practices of women with an Ingrian background, as well as in my interpretation of the effects of discriminative and positive Soviet experiences, translocal and transnational moves on their contemporary selves (Chapters VI, VIII).

Anthropology of Postsocialism and Transnational Anthropology

By undertaking my anthropological research on the babushka in the context of Russian Karelia and in a transnational Finnish-Russian space, I entered two substantial areas of anthropological studies: the anthropology of postsocialism, including of today's Russia, and transnational anthropology. The geographical area of studies on postsocialism is vast, with all significant differences between Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation and the Central Asian countries, Caucasus and China. Nonetheless, I found the broader premises on which these studies rely to be applicable in making one of the main arguments of my study: the histories of the "actually existing socialism"¹⁸ have come to significantly shape the contemporary changes in postsocialist countries, which have not been simple and unidirectional but peculiar and unexpected, just as the fall of the communist bloc itself (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999; Hann, Humphrey, & Verdery, 2002; Humphrey & Mandel, 2002). In this context, the regional specificity of Russian Karelia (discussed in the previous

subsection) has defined the peculiarity of postsocialist developments in this geopolitical area, unlike other regions of today's Russia, for instance Siberia, which have received particular attention in anthropology of postsocialist Russia (Humphrey, 2002; Vitebsky, 2002).

Caroline Humphrey, a prominent anthropological scholar of the socialist and postsocialist Soviet Union, suggests that the term *postsocialism* relies on three reasonable assumptions. Firstly, there can never be a sudden emptying of one social phenomenon and its replacement by another. Secondly, socialism has deeply affected practices, and political and ideological contestations. Thirdly, different enactments of socialism had a certain foundational unity, derived from the public ideology and political practices of socialism from Marxism to Leninism (Hann, Humphrey, & Verdery, 2002, p. 12). The term is especially relevant as long as the generations brought up under these regimes dominate in building public and private lives in postsocialist countries. I maintain that the term is especially applicable when studying the experiences of mid-life and older people, particularly those of grandmothers.

Analysing the processes and experiences that provide the foundation for the cultivation of moral personhood in today's Russia, anthropologist Jarrett Zigon suggests that the experiences of people are increasingly characterized by a multiplicity of "global assemblages" (a term borrowed by Zigon from Ong and Collier (2005)). Nonetheless, the moral values and understandings of older generations had been mostly shaped by their Soviet life trajectories, and their accounts are different from those of younger ones (Zigon, 2010, p. 203). Likewise, some research in gender studies argue for the continued importance of Soviet gender values in contemporary Russia, for instance, in the crucial way work (paid employment) remains the source of self-esteem and meaningfulness for many Russian women (Ashwin, 2000, pp. 2, 8; Kiblitckaya, 2000; Lyon, 2006). Applied to my study, the notion of postsocialism emphasizes that grandmothers and family practices are greatly influenced by Soviet family values and gender culture. The Soviet subjectivities of contemporary *babushkas* continue to inform these practices.

As my research discusses Russian (Karelian) actualizations of socialism and postsocialism, I prefer to apply the terms *Soviet* and *post-Soviet* in my study. Discussing the differences between the postsocialist contexts of Eastern Europe and Russia, Caroline Humphrey claims that in the first, the Soviet system was easily seen as alien, whereas in Russia it had to be acknowledged as "ours" (Humphrey, 2002, p. 54). This certainly holds true also for the terms applied by my interlocutors who commonly operated with such expressions as *Soviet*, in *the Soviet Union*, *during the Soviet times*, but rarely referred their past experiences to something called *socialist* or *socialism*. The terms *Soviet* and *post-Soviet* also work better when establishing conceptual and empirical connections with gender research on Soviet and post-Soviet Russia, when analysing grandmothers' Soviet

subjectivities (see below). Thus, I apply the term *post-Soviet* when underlining the persistence of Soviet practices in contemporary grandmothering and family-making in Chapter IV. Of course, I have greatly benefited from other anthropological research on postsocialism and especially of today's Russia, which I will discuss when introducing the theoretical framing of my study in the next section.

By tracing some grandmothers' lives from Russian Karelia to Finland and, of course, by doing my ethnographic field work in Finland and in real-time border crossing, I also entered the area of transnational studies. According to anthropologist Steven Vertovec, who has long advocated for the increased application of transnational approaches, transnationalism "describes a condition in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the laws, regulations, and national narratives they represent), certain kind of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common – however virtual – arena of activity" (Vertovec, 2009, p. 3). Vertovec emphasizes the difference between the terms *international* and *transnational*: the former refers to the interactions between national governments and the "toing and fro-ing" of items from one nation-state context to another; in contrast, the latter focuses on sustained linkages and ongoing exchange among non-state actors based across national borders – business, NGOs, and individuals.

Thus, the vast varieties of the objects of research on transnationalism are reflected in the various ways researchers theoretically, methodologically, and empirically engage transnationalism in their studies in such disciplines as anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, cultural studies, history, and others. In anthropology the term *transnational* was first applied to describe the ways in which migrants "live their lives across borders and maintain their ties to home, even when their countries of origin and settlement are geographically distant" (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992, p. IX; Low & Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003, p. 27). In their later research, Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Christina Szanton Blanc define transnationalism as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Bascha, Schiller, & Blanc, 1995, p. 7). In this context, national and ethnic diasporas have become an important focus in attempts to understand the practices of transnationalism (Brah, 1996; Knott & McLoughlin, 2010).

Nonetheless, diaspora studies, although they trace people's lives and selves back to the sending context or evaluate the impacts of existing diasporas on future movement of migrants, still have the receiving context as a point of departure: migrants' practices remain the focus of research. In contrast, I look at grandmothering from both sides of the border and in-between. The grandmothering practices of transnationally mobile grandmothers, who do not have a migrant status

in Finland but who are actively involved in family-making both “here” and “there”, or “there” and “there” (see Chapter V), illustrate that transnationalism affects people in both a sending and a receiving context, although in different ways. Not only do I trace how migrant grandmothers maintain their ties and belongings to more than one locality, I also see how transnationally mobile babushkas and even grandmothers staying put may experience the feeling of multi-locality and make their transnational families. Therefore, in my research I prefer to operate with the terms *transnational* and *transnationalism*. However, my understanding of women’s transnational subjectivities (see below) has been influenced by the idea on “diaspora consciousness” or “diasporic identity” that maintains that people may identify themselves with more than one locality or one nation (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992; Alasuutari & Alasuutari, 2009).

Anthropological enquiries related to transnationalism have gone far beyond diaspora studies, ranging from studying a diversity of global assemblages on neoliberal reforms, bioscience and pharmaceuticals, and transnational accounting (Ong & Collier, 2005), to contesting (trans)national identities in the context of the changing global configuration of postcoloniality and late capitalism (Gupta, 2003). As the nature of locality changed in “the world on the move”, both the objects and methodology of studies in contemporary anthropological research changed considerably, as the “localizing strategies” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 52) of traditional ethnography could no longer capture this spatial dynamic (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Hannerz, 1996; Marcus, 1995a; Marcus, 2009).

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai emphasizes that the contemporary world has become more “deterritorialized”,¹⁹ which profoundly changes the everyday experiences of people. Furthermore, Appadurai calls attention to what he calls “today’s cosmopolitanism” that combines the experiences of various media with various forms of experiences – “cinema, video, restaurants, spectator sports, and tourism” (Appadurai 1996, p. 64). In other words, when analysing cultural reproduction in today’s world, one cannot disregard transnational cultural flows or that contemporary lives are greatly shaped by cultural representations conveyed by media, films, novels, and travel accounts.

Nevertheless, following anthropologist Pnina Werbner, I would emphasize a “situated cosmopolitanism” that recognizes cultural plurality, as well as differences between rooted, vernacular, and elite interpretations of the term (Werbner, 2008). Furthermore, cosmopolitanism can be applied as a practice that serves as a dividing strategy for making hierarchies of belonging between urban and rural populations within a national context (Jansen, 2009). In contrast to Appadurai’s “today’s cosmopolitanism”, which draws on the contemporary Indian context, the Russian “today’s cosmopolitanism” differs from the context of postcoloniality, given the preceding history of decades of insulation from what was called the Capitalist block. However, I found

Appadurai's idea on the significant role of media, the Internet, and cinema in the contemporary cultural reproduction to be applicable in my study, particularly when discussing neoliberal trends in grandmothering. I draw on a situated application of the term in Chapter IV. Importantly, focusing on family practices, I substantially draw on the so-called "little" transnationalism, the changing dynamics of families and households, in contrast to the "great" transnationalism of state and economy (Gardner, 2002; Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002; Baldassar, 2007; Eastmond & Åkersson, 2007).

The term *transnational* has been criticized for reproducing rigid thinking in national terms and methodological nationalism, and this remains one of the challenges in studies on transnationalism (Vertovec, 2009). Firstly, by using the term *transnational* when discussing grandmothering and family-making I want to stress not only how these social practices are shaped by national border regulations, but also how women, despite the presence of national borders, create something that actually transgresses these signposts of nationalism. Secondly, it is important to admit that, although nation-states are constructed historical products, contemporary grandmothers continue to operate and think in national terms (just as many other people do), transgressing them in their lives and selves, and, thus, maintaining trans-national belongings. Thirdly, I use the terms *transnational* and *translocal* to distinguish moves across the borders, and within the Soviet and post-Soviet national context (see Introduction). Along *transnationalism* and *transnational*, I apply the terms *today's cosmopolitanism* and *global* (global change) (Ong & Collier, 2005; Alasuutari & Qadir, forthcoming), particularly when analysing the domestication of such a global trend as neoliberalism applied to grandmothering in a local context (Chapter IV).

In this context, I draw on the notion of neoliberalism²⁰ in the broad anthropological meaning, going beyond its political-economic history (Harvey, 2005). I see neoliberalism in the context of its contemporary "epochal rise" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2000) as a global culture predicated upon "market fundamentalism" that makes "the consuming citizen the guardian of her-his well-being" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2006, p. 39). The neoliberal regime of truth, which has triumphed over its socialist and communist alternatives, naturalizes the state of being *homo economicus* (Harrison, 2008, p. 209), producing neoliberal subjectivities. As David Harvey puts it, neoliberalism "seeks to bring all human action into the main of the market" (Harvey, 2005, p. 3), the babushkas' care being one of them, as I will demonstrate in Chapters IV and V.

By applying the notion of space, I draw on research by anthropologists Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga, who have focused on anthropological studies of place and space, distinguishing six thematic categories of spaces: embodied, gendered, inscribed, contested, transnational, and tactics (or, spatial tactics). The authors use the term *transnational space* to

“encompass global, transnational, and translocal spatial transformations produced by the economy of late capitalism, focusing on people on the move” (Low & Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003, p. 25). In addition to transnational space, I also apply the term *transnational family space* (or family space in a local context), seeing it as a specific setting of relations with its own logic in the case of transnational families maintained and sustained despite national borders.

It is worth emphasizing that, theoretically, transnationalism has been significantly shaped by the Anglo-American academic discourse, while empirically it has been centred on contexts of postcoloniality (Brah, 1996; Gardner, 2002; Parrenas P. S., 2001; George, 2005). Katherine Verdery, an anthropologist who has contributed to the theoretical and empirical studies of postsocialism, argues that there is still “too little” said about transnationalism in the context of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Verdery, 1998). Meanwhile, this region “provides us with fundamentally different bases for engaging both with the phenomena associated with globalization and the literature about it” (Verdery, 1998, p. 291). One of the responses to the urgent need to fill in this gap can be seen in a book published by anthropologist Michael Burawoy and his colleagues, where researchers discuss different aspects of “global ethnography” and where some empirical cases focus on postsocialist countries (Burawoy, 2000). For instance, Haney Lynne argues that postcommunist Hungarian policymakers and sociologists during the process of rapid democratization have been in many ways “co-opted” by global forces, advocating for a neoliberal welfare regime in which understandings of poverty and need have been narrowed and stigmatized, and “disciplinary welfare practices” have been asserted (Haney, 2000, p. 70). However, “little” transnationalism, particularly family practices and everyday life, is left beyond the scope of the empirical research of postsocialism in this volume.

Katherine Verdery argues that in the context of postsocialism it is more appropriate to talk about “ethnonational identities”, as the idea of “nation” has long had primarily an ethnic rather than a political sense (Verdery, 1998, p. 293). The term “nationality” (*natsional’nost’*) in a Soviet birth certificate was applied with reference to an ethnic belonging. Historian Francine Hirsch, in her book on ethnographic knowledge production in the making of the Soviet Union, also argues that ethnographers played a crucial role in exploring the diverse ethnic composition of the Soviet Union in the 1920s (Hirsch, 2005). At the same time, the ethnographers and the knowledge they produced within given methodological and ideological constraints were used by the Soviet governors to actually make Soviet ethnicities and nationalities. A standardized vocabulary of nationality, using specific terms such as *narodnost*, *natsional’nost*, and *natsiia*, to refer to ethnic groups at different stages of development elaborated by Soviet experts, long dominated Soviet ethnographic

methodology. Furthermore, she maintains that not all nationalities (ethnicities) were welcome in the “friendship of all Soviet nationalities”. Ingrian Finns were seen as one of “enemy nationalities”.

Thus, ethnicity and nationality in the Soviet vocabulary needs to be seen in the context of political entities and forces. Furthermore, the dissolution of the post-Soviet space and the emergence of the new national states have contested and politicized ethnicity as a lived experience, particularly in the borderlands (Assmuth, 2004). This peculiar connotation of what national, nationality, and ethnicity actually mean in the former Soviet context adds to the complex stories of transnational subjectivities of grandmothers, particularly grandmothers with an Ingrian background (see below). In addition, the peculiar histories and contemporary conditions of Russian (Karelian)-Finnish transnationalism influence both grandmothering and the ways grandmothers see themselves in terms of their ethnic and national belongings.

Gender Studies: Gender, Identity, Subjectivity

The last, but not least, area of studies that helped me to elaborate the key theoretical premises in my study of the babushka phenomenon is women’s and gender studies, an interest that I have been pursuing since before I started my doctoral research. I draw on empirical gender research in the postsocialist context, including Russian, as well as Finnish context in my analysis of grandmothering and family-making, both locally and transnationally, which I discuss in the next section. At this point, it is worth emphasizing that my understanding of the conditions of the constitution of the subject and such categories as gender, identity, and subjectivity (which are important explanatory tools in my study) have been significantly influenced by postmodern feminist theorizing, especially as developed by feminist philosophers Teresa de Lauretis and Judith Butler. I draw on the illusionary character of the social realities emphasized by both Butler and Lauretis. Just as imagination governs actual existence, the imaginations of babushka and how family is imagined by grandmothers are seen as part of the actual social practices and are pertinent to my analysis of grandmothering and family-making. I will discuss below the ways in which Lauretis’ and Butler’s theorizing on the nature of gender (social) relations have been useful for my interpretation of how family is made and imagined by grandmothers (*Family-Making and Transnational Families*).

Instead of assuming that identities are self-evident and fixed, Lauretis and Butler tend to see identities as process (fluid, multiple, and unstable) and constructed within discourse, though with the recognition of a possibility for subversive practices within discourse and the subject’s agency (De Lauretis, 1987, pp. 3, 11, 16; Butler, 1999, pp. 96-99). Thus, I see identities (gender, ethnic,

national) as changing in response to circumstances (for instance, when migrating and shifting location), constructed within local, national, and transnational discourses, with recognition of the subject's abilities to be aware of the possible choices offered by the dominant and alternative discourses.

In this context, I approach identity as something that can be wittingly performed, played out, and even chosen by individuals, in contrast to subjectivity, which is more a genealogical category, taking into consideration explicit and implicit, conscious and unconscious elements of the constitution of the subject. For me, subjectivity is more historically anchored; it is a product of constitution of the subject within a historical framework (Foucault 1980, p. 117). Of course, the line between subjectivity and identity may well be subtle and hardly distinguishable.

For Lauretis, Michel Foucault's theory of sexuality as a "technology of sex" is central for thinking of gender both as the product of various social technologies, such as cinema, and of institutionalized discourses, epistemologies, and critical practices, as well as practices of daily life (De Lauretis, 1987, p. 2). Likewise, Foucault's formulations of discourses is equally important for Butler when she places both gender and sex in the context of discourses by which they are framed and formed, focusing on "the subject-effect" in the constitution of the subject (Butler, 1999, p. 5). Sara Salih, who undertakes a scrutinized analysis of Butler's gender theorizing in her book *Judith Butler*, argues that seeing the subject as an effect rather than a cause is the key to Butler's theories of performative identity (Salih, 2002). Lauretis's account of subjectivity, which is seen both as a product of being subject and being subjected to semiotics, provides a more delicate resolution to the tension between the human agency and structure.

Following Lauretis's approach to subjectivity, on the one hand, I see the subjectivities of grandmothers as being shaped by their Soviet, post-Soviet, and transnational lived experiences. On the other hand, I also trace how they often make a deliberate choice in renegotiating these subjectivities in their actual lives. Thus, I see the babushka as a gender category that has been socially and culturally constructed, and I suggest that women in their actual experiences may enhance, challenge, renegotiate, and reshape this category. Although I approach gender as a social construct, I cannot fully agree with the statement that gender, as well as sex, has no inner core substance prior to the social existence, "that the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality" (Butler, 1999, p. 136). To dispute this matter, however, would require much longer philosophical discussions. It seems enough to point out that, finding the constructionist approach to be a useful explanatory tool for developing the understanding of the babushka as a historical, social, and cultural product, I believe

that there is something that is given and that exists prior to the social existence, which also defines which choices are made by women, particularly in their roles as babushkas.

Following Janet Elise Johnson and Jean C. Robinson, who provided a detailed research analysis of gender under socialism and postsocialism (or “postcommunism”, the term they apply), I have adopted a subtle and flexible notion of gender that refers to “the recognition that many characteristics and behaviours, often assumed to be a result of a biological sex, are political, social, and cultural creations” (Johnson & Robinson, 2006, p. 2). They also suggest that after the 1990s more gender ideologies seemed to develop, a tendency they call “gender multiplication”. A similar observation in postsocialist Russian context is articulated in Sara Ashwin’s interpretation as the emergence of a “new pluralism for gender relations to play out” (Ashwin, 2000, p. 2). Arguably, this gives Russian women and men more opportunities and representations to live their gender, at times “the vision of gender that they believe will help them survive, if not thrive” (Johnson & Robinson, 2006).

In this context, the babushka can be seen as one of the gender strategies that women choose to live their gender as they age. Gender multiplication in grandmothering is manifested in the different ways grandmothering is carried out, and how the role of the babushka is experienced by women. Thus, I have distinguished between the Soviet, neoliberal, neotraditional, and individualization aspects of contemporary grandmothering (Chapters IV, V, and IX). By neotraditionalism or neofamilialism I refer to the tendencies that were strongly felt in many new national states formed out of the former Soviet republics where nationalism was often expressed through an imagined return to tradition (as opposed to Soviet), particularly to the traditional family ideal (Zhurzhenko, 2004; Graney, 2004). Importantly, recent research on neofamilialism emphasizes that choices that were (for instance, in some feminist research) often marked as traditional and oppressive for women can be also interpreted as an expression of free will and individual choice (Jallinoja, 2006, p. 102). In the context of the babushka, paradoxically, Soviet practices did not erase active grandmothering practices. Quite the opposite. Therefore, Soviet can be seen as part of the traditional understanding of the babushka.

Consequently, the babushka can be seen as a gender construction, or gender strategy, varying over time and place. On the one hand, the babushka appears as a gender category that in many ways has been historically and socially imposed on Russian mid-life and elderly women, as I discuss in Chapter IV. On the other hand, being or not being an active babushka is also a woman’s individual conscious choice and desire. Being a babushka can also be experienced as emotionally fulfilling, socially meaningful, enjoyable, and even empowering. Moreover, the babushka’s position

can be used as a position of power in shaping intra-familial relations, as I discuss in Chapter VI devoted to babushkas' micro-powers.

My approach to the babushka as a gender category significantly differs from the ways by which the concerns of mid-life and elderly women were shaped in some empirical research in women's studies (Rozenhal, 1990; Garner, 2001). Criticizing that the second wave of feminism reflected mostly young women's interests, such empirical research addresses the concerns of women of a mature age, but in a one-sided way. For instance, the heterosexual family emerges as something that leads to social isolation in old age as "husbands, children, or work take their lives" and prevents the establishment and enjoyment of friendship ties (Jacobs, 1990, p. 25). The independence (from family members) of aging women is seen as something that can raise the well-being of elderly women (Garner, 2001, p. 11). In this mode of thinking, grandmothers raising children are generally victimized; grandmothers in African American families is presented as physically and emotionally exhausting, leading to poor health, economic deprivation, social isolation, and alienation (Harm, 2001). However, this not the only way of thinking and representing grandmothers. For instance, Dorothy Ruiz has demonstrated that African American grandmothers have been at the core of reproduction of families that have acted as social and emotional support of their members, especially in times of need (Ruiz, 2004).

Likewise, my research offers other readings of grandmothers' experiences, where family appears as a site that makes women's lives meaningful and emotionally rich, and gives opportunities to renegotiate their micro-powers, when grandmothers turns out to be a way of empowering. It is worth emphasizing that some sociological studies are more critical towards celebrating the independence of aging women from their families. Thus, Maija-Liisa Pättiniemi (who conducted her fieldwork and research in Tampere, just as I did) argues that, although the care of the elderly in Finland and in other Nordic countries is of a high standard from an international perspective, the problem of old age care is the quality and one-sidedness of the services and the lack of humanity (Pättiniemi, 1995, p. 84). Experiences of loneliness, insecurity, and illness are apparently common amongst residents of the municipal service centre, and only a small proportion of residents felt their life was safe and secure (Pättiniemi, 1995, p. 78). Public care cannot compensate for the love and a sense of comfort that family space can provide.

3.2 Theoretical Framing

Given the symbolic and social importance of the babushka in the Russian culture and the international popularity of the term *babushka*, it is surprising how little research has been conducted on the topic so far, with almost no detailed anthropological studies. However, there is a logical explanation for this lack of research. Firstly, both in the Western and Soviet anthropology the primary concern with remote “exotic” tribal societies was a driving impulse of anthropological knowledge production for many years. Secondly, while in the Western scholarship this paradigm was gradually abandoned, the Soviet anthropology remained long committed to this narrow scope of research alongside ideological constraints. According to Chris Hann, “Western anthropologists were barely allowed a look-in” (Hann, Humphrey, & Verdery, 2002, p. 2). Likewise, anthropologists Bruce Grand and Nancy Ries argue:

In anthropology, for example, where fieldwork has always been the flagship, the former Soviet Union was all but closed to ethnographic research and regular scholarly exchanges from the early 1930s onward. The opening of borders in the 1990s brought a heady atmosphere of new possibilities: sustained conversations with specialists from across the socialist world, a return to more engaged field studies, and new access to archives. But the very drama of events also created a certain breathlessness, as the challenges of mapping such change overwhelmed more traditionally grounded historical and cultural analysis. (Grand & Ries, 2002, p.IX)

Thus, thirdly, although possibilities emerged, there were too many blind spots to be filled in, and the research was rather focused on mapping immediate, significant changes. Therefore, if during the Soviet period it was hardly possible for the babushka to become an object of research due to methodological and theoretical constraints, in the post-Soviet space the overwhelming opportunities for fieldwork research and the varieties of earlier unexplored areas did not leave much space for the babushka to become the focus of a study. As I discuss below, however, there were some important exceptions in the studies of the babushka that have come to be a source of the academic inspiration and interdisciplinary dialogue of my study.

Babushka as an Object of Study

Babushkas have received particular attention in the book *Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika* by American anthropologist Nancy Ries, a work that was recognized by the

Association for Women in Slavic Studies as one of the most insightful ethnographic studies on today's Russia.²¹ Ries elegantly reveals the everyday life discourses captured in the litany, the lament, and the first-perestroika trickster narrative, establishing connections among these forms of talk and the construction of personal and national identity, traditional Russian folklore genres, and contemporary political and media discourses.

The stories about the absurdities of life in Russia, “absurd tales” and “complete disintegration”, provide a descriptive frame for absurdity, making it possible to think, act, and survive with that absurdity. By uttering their litanies and mystical poverty narratives, many people rehearsed themselves in the very stances of passivity, ironic detachment, and victimization that have helped to ensure their continuing vulnerability to power and pain. One of the major analytical observations in Ries' research is that “the very litany which is conceived around the idea of the fatalistic stance of powerlessness left a power vacuum, readily filled by those who spoke the language of power and could deploy their own power stances” (Ries, 1997, p. 120).

I agree with Ries' observations on the reproduction of powerlessness through discursive surrendering; sometimes communication with the interlocutors of my research left me with a feeling that some women even celebrate the absurdities of Russian life. Furthermore, I draw on Ries' interpretations of Russian female self-sacrifice, and generally masculinities and femininities in Chapter VI when discussing subtle borders between the grandmothers' micro-powers and self-sacrifice. Likewise, I have made some use of her approach towards the role of litanies in the Russian everyday life talk when analysing the grandmothers' Soviet nostalgia in Chapter VIII. In drawing connections between talking family routines and the actual family-making as a social practice in Chapter V, I benefited from Ries' approach to talking as an important channel and mechanism of social reproduction.

Ries approaches the babushka as a symbol of “stoic endurance”, one of the key Russian stances in Russian discourse. The babushka emerges as the hero of the “tales on heroic shopping” in the period of deficit during perestroika (Ries, 1997, p. 53). I am referring to Ries' analysis of the babushka story that became a kind of Russian modern folk tale during perestroika in connection with babushkas' practical responses to the economic crisis in the 1990s (Chapter IV).

One of the most exciting, recent ethnographic explorations of babushkas in Soviet and post-Soviet contexts has been undertaken by the Latvian Russian-speaking researcher Irina Novikova in her article “Riian Mummokerhot” (Riga's babushkas' networks/clubs) (Novikova, 2005). The study draws on the recollections of adult daughters and granddaughters of their babushkas and other elderly women in their surroundings (most of those babushkas had passed away by the time the interviews were conducted). Novikova discusses Soviet Riga and the satellite towns in Latvia where

the Russian-speaking population was in the 1940s to the 1960s. The author emphasizes the integral role of grandmothers in the Soviet urban landscape, and sees babushka groups as an important part of the Soviet urban yard and neighbourhood (Novikova, 2005, pp. 76-77). She underlines the social value of the grandmothers providing unpaid child care Soviet families where both parents had to work for low salaries. Furthermore, Novikova underscores the special role of babushkas in keeping family networks and the spirit of familyhood in translocal families, when some members of extended families lived in Latvia while others stayed in different (remote) parts of the Soviet Union.

A Russian sociologist, V.V. Semenova, approaches Soviet grandmothers based on an enquiry of 800 respondents born during the period 1965-1967 in Moscow, most of whom either lived with their grandmothers in the same household as children or kept frequent contacts with them (Semenova V., 1996). She emphasizes the importance of grandmothers in transferring “family capital” and pre-revolutionary cultural values in those Soviet families where babushkas came from the higher stratum of the Tsarist Russia. Both Novikova and Semenova, however, in examining babushkas of the Soviet period, rely on data gathered from the grandmothers’ close relatives (children, grandchildren), not the babushkas themselves. By contrast, I focus on the narratives of contemporary grandmothers, although insights and ideas suggested in both articles have been applied in my research, both for recontracting the history of Soviet grandmothering and for discussing contemporary grandmothering practices in Russian Karelia (Chapter IV) and in a transnational Finnish-Russian space (Chapter V).

The research by Russian psychologist Olga Krasnova, however, is based on data collected from Russian grandmothers themselves. The researcher relies on questionnaires with 85 elderly people in Moscow and 123 elderly women from the suburbs of Moscow. She distinguishes between three types of behaviour among grandmothers in their relationships with their grandchildren: “formal”, “active”, and “remote”. Recognizing the useful application of the suggested typology, I also critically approach it in Chapters IV and V when discussing grandmothering practices in the local and transnational contexts. The thick ethnographic descriptions of grandmothering and family-making offer more diverse and flexible interpretations related to how women experience their role as babushkas when the suggested typology reveals its limitations. It should be emphasized that in contemporary Russian anthropological research of a general character, the important role of grandmothers in child care (even more important than that of parents) has been acknowledged (Aleksandrov, Vlasova, & Polishuk, 1999, p. 465). Nevertheless, there is a lack of specific and in-depth anthropological research on the subject.

In the Finnish context, Anu Hirsiaho undertook an analysis of the babushkas’ ways of forming their own support circles, their various ways of interacting and making sense of societal

changes in a mature age within so-called “granny club” meetings on a weekly basis for seven years in the premises of a suburban NGO in Finland (Hirsiäho, 2008). Hirsiäho applies the terms *babushka power* and *grandmother energy*; these terms were not given to the women by the NGO or Finnish authorities but were produced by the group through weekly interaction. I refer to Hirsiäho’s research when discussing migrant grandmothers’ attitudes towards work, public activity, and social networking in the receiving context of Finland (Chapter VIII).

When Finland is seen as a receiving context, it is worth mentioning that one of the most detailed studies on Finnish women of old age, where their position as grandmothers is also examined, was undertaken by Sinikka Vakimo (2001). Her study on the cultural conceptions of old women and their life practices aims at uncovering new and different perspectives of old age, offering more balanced (neither “misery” nor “romanticizing”) discourses that otherwise dominated approaches in social gerontology. Vakimo contextualizes her study as covering perspectives of various disciplines: folklore and cultural studies, cultural and social gerontology, feminist studies, underlining ethnography as a methodology. Refraining from defining agedness in terms of years, Vakimo interprets old age as a socially constructed concept. It is defined differently in different social situations and in the various signifying networks of cultural discourses. It is closely connected to the notion of gender, which is both constructed and represented. Vakimo’s interpretation of gender is in close dialogue with the ways this category appears in my research (see *Gender studies: Gender, Identity, Subjectivity*). I particularly draw on Vakimo’s interpretation of old age as a social construct and a subjectively experienced category when establishing connections between the age of my interlocutors and their grandmothering practices, as well as different meanings of *babushka* in public and family settings (Chapters IV, V, and VIII).

Vakimo talks of the representation of women as grandmothers/grannies in terms of “disparaging interpretations”: grannifying (*mummottelu*) as one of the most common cultural representations of old women today, which underrates and subjugates an old woman, and ridicules her (Vakimo, 2001, pp. 307, 365). My study suggests, as I will argue later, that alongside this underrating representation of grannies, there might be others, such as the association of the *babushka* with love and care in the Russian context.

To contextualize the practices of transnational *babushkas* in the Finnish setting, I have also applied some Finnish psychological research on maternal grandmothering, the relationships between mothers, daughters, and grandchildren (Hurme, 1988; Hautamäki, Hautamäki, Maliniemi-Piispanen, & Neuvonen, 2008). Both researches illustrate, although in different ways, the weakened ties across three generations of granddaughters, daughters, and grandchildren.

Working Mother Contract: Russian and Finnish Contexts

When discussing the babushka phenomenon in my research, I have found it to be extremely useful to refer to the substantial body of research focusing on the Russian context from a gender perspective (Atkinson, Alexander, & Lapidus, 1978; Edmondson, 1990; Farnsworth & Viola, 1992; Posadskaya, 1994; Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 1997; Temkina & Rotkirch, 1997; Ashwin, 2000). In the 1970s and 1980s, Western scholarship already emphasized the “double burden” of Soviet women (Dodge N. T., 1978, p. 223; Lane, 1985, p. 128). Without going into details, some researchers recognized that the shortcomings of the Soviet child care system were filled in by grandmothers (Lapidus, 1978; Lane, 1985).

Some researchers have suggested that the dominant Soviet gender system can be formulated as the “working mother contract” (Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 1997; Temkina & Rotkirch, 1997; Aivazova, 1998). The Soviet working mother contract can be seen as a specific feature of the Soviet gender culture that assigned women two roles: that of a worker and that of a mother. On the one hand, Soviet women had an obligatory “right” to work, which has been discussed a lot in the literature (Lapidus, 1978; Dodge N. T., 1978; Glickman, 1978; Knotkina, 1994; Filtzer, 1996; Ashwin, 2000; Kiblitckaya, 2000). On the other hand, motherhood was defined as a “noble and rewarded service to the state” (Ashwin, 2000, p. 11; Issoupova, 2000). In practice, parenthood was identified with motherhood (Salmenniemi, 2008, p. 55).

What such research often overlooks is that grandmothers were actually those who made the very functioning of this contract possible. Not only did they substitute for “ever-working parents”, but they also took care of cooking, cleaning, shopping, and other home arrangements. In other words, babushkas facilitated the “double burden” of Soviet women in the conditions of shortcomings of the public child care system and in the absence of fathers; men were either physically absent, for instance, as a result of male war losses after World War II, or they were often practically absent in child care. Thus, in attempts to fill in this gap in the analysis of the Soviet gender context, I provide a much needed history of Soviet grandmothers in Chapter IV. Furthermore, Soviet legacies considerably inform contemporary grandmothers practices, while the values of the Soviet working mother contract constitute Soviet subjectivities of contemporary babushkas (next section).

In approaching Finland as a receiving context where babushkas have migrated themselves or where their children and grandchildren reside, it is interesting to observe that the Finnish gender context provides much more continuities in the women’s lives than it may appear at first glance. With all the differences in the ideological and political framing, two pillars of the Soviet female

subjectivity – work and motherhood – have also been both the deliberate choices and necessities in the everyday lives of Finnish women. Historian Maria Lähteenmäki argues that

the activity of early 20th-century women’s organizations in the Finnish nationalist movement, early electoral rights and waged work for women, and the equal acceptance of responsibility associated with them, define a model of the socially active, working woman. (Lähteenmäki, 1999, p. 54)

She maintains that in practice the housewife idea, which used to be popular among middle-class Finnish women in the first half of the twentieth century, was never realized in Finland simply because Finland was considered too much “a poor country” to keep its mothers at home (Lähteenmäki, 1999, p. 48). On the other hand, Jaana Vuori suggests that despite the significant changes in the imaginations and practices of fatherhood in the 1980s, child care continues to be discursively constructed as primarily a mother’s responsibilities (Vuori, 2001). Within a nuclear family model, which dominates the political and social imagination and migration policies, and informs everyday practices in contemporary Finland (Oinonen, 2004; Lippert & Pyykkönen, 2012), mothers have to carry on the “double burden” of combining parenting with paid employment in their lives up till now (Lähteenmäki, 1999).

In the Russian context, the burden has been facilitated by the public child care institutions or the state, which took up a paternalistic role, and, of course, grandmothers. In Finland (just as in other Nordic countries) women have been assisted by “women friendly” policies, sometimes referred to as “state feminism” (Bergman, 2005), with all relevant parental and child care allowances and regulations. In addition, some grandmothers, especially maternal ones, could also assist in child care, especially if their daughters had full employment (Hurme, 1988). Of course, the changing role of fathers in child care and the renegotiation of the heterosexual family model (in case of co-mothering, for instance) further challenge the double burden and its configurations. It is important to emphasize, however, that in the context of migration from the former Soviet space, the Finnish gender space can be seen as providing important continuities by, on the one hand, encouraging female employment and women’s public activism and, on the other, by providing favourable conditions for mothering (Chapters VI, VIII, and IX).

Soviet Female Subjectivity

In discussing the connections between the Soviet lived experiences of grandmothers and their contemporary babushka’s practices, I apply the term *Soviet female subjectivity*, which can be seen as the result of a process through which Soviet women were interpellated with Soviet values on

work and motherhood, and other Soviet ideologies. I suggest that the term *interpellation*, adopted from French philosopher Louis Pierre Althusser and applied by Teresa de Lauretis, explains well how important the Soviet experiences of grandmothers (the fact that they were raised and lived most of their adult lives in the Soviet regime) are for understanding contemporary grandmothers and family practices locally and transnationally. Lauretis suggests that

when Althusser wrote that ideology represents ‘not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relations of those individuals in the real relations in which they “live” and which govern their existence,’ he was also describing, to my mind exactly, the functioning of gender. (De Lauretis, 1987, p. 6).

Thus, interpellation appears as a process whereby a social representation is accepted and absorbed by an individual as her or his own representation, and so becomes real for that individual, even though it is in fact imaginary (De Lauretis, 1987, p. 12). The technology of gender becomes absorbed subjectively by each individual whom that technology addresses. In this context, the Soviet working mother’s ideal can be seen as deeply interpellated by grandmothers, and it continues to shape their subjectivities, grandmothers, and family practices.

Of course, what Soviet means for each of the women might be very personal, attached to her lived experiences and the ways she settled in various places across the Soviet space, but at the same time it also implies something that unites all these women. On the one hand, the identity of a working woman forged within the working mother contract remains strong in the lives of grandmothers, even after retirement. The women’s life stories, the space and the value the (past) working life has been given in the women’s narratives, points to their importance not only “there” in the Soviet past, but also “here” in Finland in their current lives. It continues to be a source of their identification and empowerment. On the other hand, being a mother continues to be important in their lives; arguably, behind the active grandmothers often stands a mother’s wish to help her daughter to successfully combine work and motherhood. My data illustrate that maternal babushkas are especially active in transnational grandmothers (Chapter V). Thus, Soviet subjectivity (with all its variations) is pertinent to all grandmothers in my research, and is part of women’s transnational subjectivities of grandmothers involved in transnational family-making. Therefore, the way grandmothers is understood and practiced in contemporary Russian Karelia and in a transnational Finnish-Russian space is particularly affected by the grandmothers’ Soviet subjectivities and Soviet grandmothers. The history of Soviet grandmothers (Chapter IV) helps to trace these continuities in the selves and practices of contemporary babushkas.

Furthermore, I would distinguish between urban and rural Soviet female subjectivities. Some anthropological studies of Soviet and post-Soviet Russia have increasingly argued that the urban/ rural dichotomy, enhanced by prioritizing industrialization and urban space at the expense of agriculture and rural communities during socialism, is strongly felt now in the period of postsocialism (Humphrey, 2002; Vitebsky, 2002; Hivon, 1995; Shreeves, 2002). Caroline Humphrey, for instance, illustrates how this dichotomy has been challenged by “urban shamanism” in Siberia (see below). Anthropologist Stef Jansen, in his research of the post-Yugoslav context, suggests that rural/urban disparities led to the establishment of hierarchies of belonging in which urban is constructed among educated urban residents as superior, sophisticated, more “cultural” and cosmopolitan, while rural is “backward”, advocating for primitive nationalism (Jansen, 2009).

In the Soviet project of modernity, not only had these disparities created the huge gap in the living standards between urban and rural areas, but they also defined the very premises of the Soviet modern self that was constructed as an urban cultural (*kultur’nyi*) and civilized subject, in contrast to a rural one, in which female “backwardness” was often associated with religiosity and the application of magic (Chapter VII). The degree of “culturedness” (Kelly C., 1998, p. 130; Jansen, 2009, p. 83) would often mean a subtle border of rural and urban belonging. This explains the persistent need of some grandmothers to emphasize their “culturedness” (Chapters V and VII).

In a post-Soviet space, this dichotomy had been partly challenged by religious resurgence and the enhanced political role of the Orthodox Church. However, the urban/rural dichotomy and its peculiar manifestation in the Russian Karelian context (Chapters I and IV) have defined differences in the subjectivities of babushkas, as well as in grandmothing and family-making practices across urban and rural spaces in the past and in the present. Furthermore, the values of Soviet/post-Soviet urban modernity are unproblematically taken for granted when evaluating the babushkas’ role in social and cultural reproduction in Semenova’s and Krasnova’s research, in which rural or “peripheral” grandmothers appear as providing less “cultural” upbringing to their grandchildren.

Babushkas’ Micro-powers

With the babushka seen as a gender category, it is also important to remember that being a grandmother is often the most powerful position in the lifecycle of a woman. Even in the patriarchal peasant household, babushkas had power of many kinds (Chapter I). Thus, grandmothing can be seen in the context of a family position that is closely interwoven with others; a grandmother is also a mother, a mother-in-law, and a daughter. In the context of intra-familial relations, becoming a

babushka may also mean attaining a position of subtle authority or power. In my analysis of the babushka's role in intra-familial relations, I have significantly benefited from the empirical gender research in the postsocialist context of the former Yugoslavia. In my theorizing of babushkas' micro-powers I draw on Marina Blagojevic's analysis of everyday life and gender relations during the war in Serbia, in the former Yugoslavia. She suggests the term *sacrificial micro matriarchy* to mean the "structure of authority which gives power to women at the level of primary groups, where women achieve domination through self-sacrificing" (Blagojevic, 1994). Everyday life largely linked to the survival of the family has remained a "female sphere", which means that it is women who form, organize, and renew it.

In the context of pre-war Yugoslavia, Andrei Simic also argues that the apparent patriarchal nature of the family and the society as a whole was more a public than a private fact, and because of this the important affectual power of women was obscured: "women achieve this power not by virtue of being wives, but as the result of becoming mothers and, eventually, grandmothers" (Simic, 1983, p. 68). My discussion of the micro-powers of grandmothers in the family domain operates with similar understandings of power as Blagojevic and Simic have in their respective studies. Following Blagojevic's analysis, I also emphasize that there is an implicit vulnerability in the grandmothers' powers, which is particularly revealed in the way some grandmothers talk about their babushkas' experiences in self-sacrificial terms; likewise, the economic dependence of some women upon their adult children points to their vulnerable position.

In developing my understanding of babushkas' micro-powers I have also adopted some characteristics of power from the Foucauldian notion of power. Using the term *micro-power* (Foucault, 1995, p. 222), Michel Foucault points out the subtle aspect of the way depersonalized institutional power operates, stressing the "panopticism of everyday" that are inscribed in the very foundations and functioning of modern society. I argue that the subtle powers of babushkas may be inscribed in the way the three- to four-generation family functions (Chapter VI).

To describe the subtle character of babushka powers I have also benefited from communication studies by Michelle Miller-Day, who discusses interactions across three generations of women: grandmothers, mothers, and daughters. She argues that in modern society the tools for exerting one's powers in the family have become more subtle and channelled through "behavioural dominance": the way powers function may be as effective as those implied by explicit physical and verbal abuse, characterized from pre-modern households. In addition, in my interpretation of the micro-powers of babushkas I draw on some research on Russian femininities (Issoupova, 2000, p. 46; Kiblitckaya, 2000; Lyon, 2006; Saporovskaya, 2008) and masculinities (Clements, Friedman, &

Healey, *Russian Masculinities in History and Culture*, 2002; Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 2002; Ushakin, 1999; Kukhterin, 2000).

Women's Everyday Religion

On the powers of babushkas, the spiritual and religious awakening in today's Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union should be noted (Garrard & Garrard, 2009; Roudometof, Agadjanian, & Pankhurst, 2005; Rousselet & Agadjanian, 2010; Johnson, Stepaniants, & Forest, 2005). This emerged as a significant impulse that potentially empowered many women of mature age in both private and public settings. Religion, magic, and "new spiritualities" (Heelas, 2009; Feleky, 2010) have become significant in grandmothering and family-making for some interlocutors of my study (Chapter VII). I also explain this aspect of grandmothering in neotraditional terms (Chapters IV and IX).

Given the decades of suppressed religious life during the Soviet period, when religion and magic were seen as "superstition" relating to the "vestiges of the past" (*perezhitki proshlogo*) to be eradicated by the new Communist ideology, one may wonder what the sources of the contemporary religious resurgence are in today's Russia. According to some of my interlocutors, it is due to babushkas that the Orthodox tradition survived during the years of oppression. I will discuss later a phenomenon of "church babushkas" in connection to their micro-powers in a public setting (Chapter VII). The dissolution of the USSR brought many changes in attitudes towards religion and magic. Russian Orthodoxy gained new value and started to play an enormous role in making new Russianness (Howard, 2005; Filatov, 2008; Rousselet & Agadjanian, 2010; Minzarari, 2010).

Both historical and anthropological studies have given particular attention to healing and magic practices in the Russian context (Glickman, 1991; Dmitrieva S., 1999; Humphrey, 2002; Lindquist, 2006). For instance, a Russian-speaking Swedish anthropologist, Galina Lindquist, drawing on her fieldwork in Moscow, notes that the Soviet collapse was accomplished by an increased interest towards paranormal phenomena and occultism, folk medicine, and non-Russian medical traditions such as homeopathy, acupuncture, Ayur-Vedic and Tibetan medicine, Yoga, and bio-field healers, an interest that became "mass hysteria" (Lindquist, 2006, p. 35). According to Lindquist, when societal channels of agency are blocked, people turn to alternative ones, magic being one of them. She argues that when societal hope disappears, together with trust in electoral promises and utopian ideological projects, culture produces alternative ways for people to maintain their engagement with tomorrow: it offers alternative forms of hope (Lindquist, 2006, p. 9). I am

referring to Lindquist's research when discussing healing and magic in contemporary babushka practices (Chapter VII).

Likewise, Caroline Humphrey's research discusses shamans in an urban area, in the city of Ulan-Ude in Buriatia; one chapter of her book on post-Soviet everyday economies is devoted to this subject (Humphrey, 2002). She draws on her interviews and participant observations with two women who were in their fifties at that time. She explores the new form of shamanism when the city is "actualized" as a new occulted locale. Humphrey suggests that the perception of evil and misfortune in the city implies an awareness of relational flows of spirit power from outside, and it seems to resonate with the economic-political relations of the city with the countryside (Humphrey, 2002, p. 220).

In my fieldwork I found religion and magic, or a spiritual dimension, to be very important in the lives and selves of some grandmothers. Grandmothers from the countryside were more likely to practice faith in the Soviet period, though secretly. I do not make a particular division between religion and magic, official or popular religions, religion as "practiced" and religion as "prescribed" (Stark L., 2006, p. 14). Both are the product of different symbioses, Christian and pre-Christian practices (Eliade, 1982, p. 403). Instead, I approach religion, magic, and "new spiritualities" looking at their social meanings in women's lives and which terms women themselves apply when talking of these experiences (Chapter VII). Especially in transnational grandmothering, praying might appear as an important way of maintaining grandmothering across the borders, revealing the imaginable aspects of grandmothering (Chapter V). Broadly speaking, my interest in religion is anthropological, that is, in "the lived practice of the religion" or in the role of religion and spiritual being(s) and force(s) in the constitution of social relationship and social reality (Eller, 2007, p. 9).

As religion and magic are discussed in the Karelian rural context, I also draw on feminist rereading of the Finnish Karelian folklore. For instance, Laura Stark, analysing magic in the Finnish Karelian peasant realities, underlines their close connection and integrity with the social relations. She argues that "doing" magic was a key means by which individuals bolstered their sense of agency and their standing as agents in the eyes of others, whereas magic skills were seen as a valued form of "social capital" (Stark L., 2006, p. 29.177). Religion/magic in the urban and rural spaces in contemporary Russian Karelia and in a transnational space would obviously have different meanings and play different roles (Chapter VII). Nonetheless, Stark's conceptualization of magic as being interwoven with the social realities remains important for an understanding of religion/magic in the context of grandmothering and family making, as well as renegotiating babushkas' micro-powers privately and publicly. In my cases, it still can be seen as "the specific art for specific ends" aimed at "direct quantitative results" (Malinowski, 1988(1948), pp. 88-89).

Although, magic is increasingly included in an anthropological analysis of religion, the distinction that magic is more technical (working directly on the object of the behaviour) and religion is more social (depending on an indirect relationships between means and ends) is still valid (Eller, 2007, p. 118).

Religion as lived by women has been also discussed in the context of Finland, for instance by Marja Tiilikainen among Somali migrants (Tiilikainen, 2003) and by Helena Kupari with regard to elderly Karelian Orthodox female evacuees (Kupari, 2011). In my interpretation of religion, magic, and “new spiritualities” in the lives of grandmothers, I have also greatly benefited from the research of the historian of religion Marja-Liisa Keinänen, whose interests have long been evolving around the religious practices of women in pre-modern, Soviet, and post-Soviet Karelia (Keinänen, 1999, 2002, 2010). I have found it useful to draw on the notion of “women’s everyday religion” as discussed by Keinänen to emphasize how religion is lived and experienced by women in both public and private settings (Keinänen, 2010). Keinänen’s empirical context of the women’s everyday religion covers the same cultural area as my study does, in the case of rural Russian Karelia; this facilitated the process of establishing connections between the theoretical and the empirical parts of the research phenomenon (Chapter VII). Folk religion or magic, including the collection and analysis of spells and incantations, was a forbidden area of studies in Soviet scholarship; the first collection of Russian incantations in Russian Karelia was published in 2000 (Kurets, 2000). This collection also reveals the social character of various incantations meant for “specific ends”, deeply influenced by Russian Orthodoxy.

Irrespective of the ways women live their religion, combining Orthodox or Lutheran religious practices, magic, and “new spiritualities”, it is often the women’s faith that makes these practices coherent and meaningful. Wilfred Smith distinguishes between faith and belief, arguing that in the worldwide range of mankind’s history, religious beliefs have differed radically, whereas religious faith would appear to have been not constant certainly, but more approximate to constancy. Faith “shall signify that human quality that has been expressed in, has been elicited, nurtured, and shaped by the religious traditions of the world” (Smith, 1987, p. 6). Faith is more personal, and individual, and perhaps more inclusive than belief, as faith allows the coexistence and synergy of various (seemingly contradictory) religious and spiritual practices. It is faith in God, a transcendent reality, that gives some grandmothers inner strength and spiritual power. In this context, it is interesting to note that some recent studies in social gerontology recognize spirituality as an important aspect of well-being as aging (Moberg, 2001; MacKinlay, 2006). Thus, drawing on the above presented theoretical and empirical research in the anthropology, history, ethnology, and sociology of religion and magic in the Soviet, post-Soviet, Karelian, and Finnish contexts, I analyse

the ways religion, magic, and “new spiritualities” are applied in grandmothing and family-making, particularly in connection to women’s subjectivities.

Family-making and Transnational Families

Analytical concepts such as Soviet female subjectivity, micro-powers, and women’s everyday religion, which I apply for my interpretation and contextualization of the babushka phenomenon locally and transnationally, would only make sense when placed in a larger site of grandmothers’ lives. In most cases, family appears as the main site of women’s contemporary lives, a source of both empowerment and vulnerability. Therefore, it is necessary to explain how the terms *family*, *family-making*, and *transnational family* are applied in my study.

In classical anthropology, the focus has been traditionally on kinship, which was “claimed as the area of expertise central to the discipline” when studying social organization in non-Western societies. Women, however, were often unproblematically “lumped with a set of devalued terms” (Carsten, 2003, pp. 23-29). As anthropologist Janet Carsten illustrates, from the 1970s onwards the focus shifted towards the gender perspective, which can be seen as a result of an increased interest of women in anthropological studies and the emergence of feminist anthropology. Furthermore, anthropology has become more inclusive in the sense that ethnographic studies went beyond the “exotic” societies and non-Western context to enable ethnographic research in any setting. These changes in approaches and sites of studies have led to the need to re-do family and kinship studies in anthropology. At the same time, technological intervention has provided increased opportunities to shape family and kinship in the actual lives of people (Carsten, 2003). The anthropological turn has also marked recent studies in the sociology of families where subjective experiences of what family is and the diversity of family practices are increasingly addressed (Morgan, 2011; Jamieson, Simpson, & Lewis, 2011). In my approach to family I have adopted Janet Carsten’s understanding of kinship, not as something that is “given” but something that is “made” (Carsten, 2003, p. 9).

In my preference to use family as an analytical category, not kinship (as Carsten does), I primarily follow the words and notions the interviewed women applied in their narratives. It was family (*sem’ia*, in the Russian language) that women liked to talk about, and they defined those who belonged there in contrast to kinship (*rod, rodnia*, in the Russian language). Family appears as something that grandmothers make, particularly in the sense that they also choose whom they include in their families. In this context, even blood connections did not appear as decisive. I have found useful to apply the term “relativizing”, which refers to modes of materializing the family as

an imagined community with shared feelings and mutual obligations (Vuorela, 2002, p. 63). In my research, this term helps to depict the process of “relativizing” any elderly woman into a babushka of a family or how transnational grandmothers can “relativize” their neighbours when their children and grandchild reside abroad. Thus, one can “relativize” people who are not necessarily blood relatives (Vuorela, 2009b, p. 265). In contrast, kinship (*rod, rodnia*) in grandmothers’ narratives appears as something that is “given” and defined by blood connections, particularly undesirable ones. It seems that in the Soviet urban context, family (*sem’ia*) appeared as a more significant way of framing relations of relatedness (Carsten, 2000). However, when women spoke of various family members, the term “relative” (*rodstvennik*, in the Russian language) was frequently applied.

I approach family as historically and culturally varying (Segalen, 1988; Sieder, 1997). At the same time, what family is now may also vary considerably both across space and with regard to academic approaches. When focusing on family discourses, family appears “as much a way of thinking and talking about relationships as it is a concrete set of social ties and sentiments” (Gubrium & Holstein, 1990). The term “extended family” has been applied in different ways in varying contexts, for instance by historians when discussing peasant households in a pre-modern society, by historians and sociologists with regard to European families with patrilineal inheritance and consisting of a composite household, or by anthropologists in connection with the joint family (particularly in Hindu India) (Harris, 1983, p. 46). In my study I use the term “extended family” to mean a broad family landscape or three- to four-generation family ties in a contemporary context.

In sociological studies of Soviet and post-Soviet Russia, family is often uncritically assumed to be a “nuclear” family, consisting of a husband, a wife, and the children whom they act as parents of, although there might be some variations, such as single-parent families (Lane, 1985, pp. 107, 129). It has been argued that over a century the typical family structure in the Soviet Union has changed from that of large groupings of several conjugal families (consanguine unit) to the more independent or “nuclear” family. Likewise, in gender studies on Soviet and post-Soviet Russia, gender interplay is often analysed on the premises of the taken-for-granted nuclear family. This way of understanding of family realities overlooks the important role of grandmothers in the whole family fabric.

The concept of transnational families as developed by Deborah Bryceson’s and Ulla Vuorela has significantly helped me to synchronize the ways I encountered family in grandmothers’ lives and narratives with my theoretical framing of the phenomenon (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). In this context, ethnography again demonstrates how one might use theory and ethnographic material to think one through the other, and thus avoid imposing prefabricated, theoretical models on the rich complexity of everyday life (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 19). Bryceson and Vuorela

see transnational families as being of a relational character, capable of various mutations, redefining and reshaping themselves in varying contexts, and as “imagined communities” (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 3). One of the peculiarities of transnational families is that the logic of how families are imagined, and the definition it is given may conflict with the nation state’s definition of legitimate immigrant families (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 10). Thus, family indeed transgresses national borders in the ways it is made and imagined.

In her empirical research on a transnational (Asian) family dispersed in various directions around the globe, Ulla Vuorela (who in many ways pioneered transnational anthropology in Finland) illustrates how the family that is highly dispersed also appears as a “unit of an imagined and real kind”, incorporating habitus, histories, and particularly histories of mobility of a colonial and post-colonial space (Vuorela, 2002, p. 78). Family appears as multi-centred, and each new family creates its own sense of belonging and loyalties (Vuorela, 2002, p. 80).

In contrast to Vuorela’s empirical material that discusses transnational families, which partly started in the process of construction of transnational colonial elites then experienced long physical separation and deep cultural ruptures, the transnational families I discuss between Russian Karelia and Finland are the result of the recent (post-Soviet) mobility (I do not include those transnational families that emerged, for instance, as a result of moves during and after the October Revolution of 1917). Furthermore, the geographical dispersion of these families is still quite narrow and is primarily confined within the Finnish-Russian transnational context. Thus, the ways and logic of making families are different in the sense that they are based on frequent communication (enabled by telecommunication technologies) and visiting, and the reproduction of family routines across borders (Chapter V). In my analysis of transnational grandmothing and family-making in this particular context, Pirjo Pöllönen’s empirical research examining family relations in multi-cultural marriages with Russian migrant wives in Finland was an important point for comparative observations (Pöllänen, 2008, 2010).

Of course, I try to approach families as grandmothers understand them, and look at whom they include in their families (which might vary from what their children or grandchildren understand by family, and whom they see as their family). In the grandmothers’ narratives, their family often includes husbands (even those who passed away), their adult children and grandchildren, (ex)daughters-in-law, (ex)sons-in-law, cousins, their mothers and fathers, and sometimes pets. Family may appear as something that is imagined across time and space, going beyond the actual composition of a given household. Certainly, a household may symbolically contain members who are physically absent, even dead, as was also emphasized by Simic in terms of the Yugoslav families (Simic, 1983, p. 70). The way the grandmothers talk about their family

reveals what role family plays in their identification, their grandmothering experiences, their everyday life, in general.

In analysing the ways family is reproduced locally and in a transnational space, I have found it useful to draw on Butler's performativity theory, which states that gender proves to be performative, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense gender is always doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed (Butler, 1999, p. 25). Thus, gender is not something that *is*, but something one *does*, "a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Butler, 1999, p. 33). I have found Butler's theorizing on performativity useful for explaining two aspects of grandmothering. Firstly, the very role of the babushka gets more "natural" and self-evident because grandmothering is a routine that is done on a daily basis. Secondly, I see family not as something that *is*, but something one *does* or *makes* on a daily basis. In this context, I see babushkas as important actors who make their families daily, and this making is what family actually means and is for grandmothers. The line between family as a social practice and family as an imagination is very subtle, as the very imagination nourishes the actual experiences of social realities. Thus, when analysing family-making (Chapter V) I draw on this division tentatively, and primarily for the purpose of structuring the researched phenomenon.

In analysing the role of babushkas in family-making, the category of family economy needs to be clarified. In her research on everyday economies after socialism in the post-Soviet context, Caroline Humphrey advocates for an anthropological approach to studying the economic life in which actors are seen as having "some freedom and think and speak" (Humphrey, 2002), in contrast to heavy economic constructions. The feminist critique of Marxist analysis has argued for including domestic labour (child care, care for elders, cleaning, cooking) in the economic analysis, particularly when analysing various aspects of reproduction of the labouring population (Gardiner, 2000). In other words, "the mode of production and human reproduction" cannot be separated (Vuorela, 1987). In this context, I see grandmothers as significant actors in their family economies, particularly in a transnational family space, and indirectly contributing to both the national economies and social organizations of Russia and Finland (Chapters IV and V). In this analysis, I particularly draw on Humphrey's observation of the ethnography of family consumption in Moscow in the beginning of the 1990s (Humphrey, 2002, pp. 44-52).

Transnational Grandmothers and Grandmothering

As grandmothers and grandmothering in a transnational context of Russian Karelia and Finland are the focus of my research, I aim to contextualize my approach in transnational studies, particularly in transnational anthropology. Among the first researchers who focused on transnational grandmothering was sociologist Dwaine Plaza in his article on the changing family responsibilities of elderly African Caribbean-born “transnational grannies”, drawing on a sample of 180 life-history interviews collected in 1995 and 1996 from three generations of Caribbean-origin people living in Britain and the Caribbean. He concludes that despite acculturation to British norms and values, Caribbean-born grandmothers are continuing to struggle in order to carve out a niche for themselves within their families locally and internationally (Plaza, 2000).

Transnational grandmothering has also become an object of research in the context of Bulgarian Muslim migrants in Spain (Deneva, 2009) and among Eastern European migrants (including Russians) in the United States (Nesteruk & Marks, 2009, pp. 84-85). These articles, based on ethnographic fieldwork, illustrate the importance of grandmothers in child care in the Eastern European context, and how grandmothering has been challenged in the face of migration. I refer to both studies from a comparative perspective in Chapter V when considering transnational grandmothering between Finland and Russian Karelia.

In the postcommunist Albanian case, Julie Vullnetari and Russell King emphasize the “denial of the practice of grandparenting” among aging people who were left behind by their children migrating mainly to Greece and Italy (Vullnetari & King, 2008). It has been argued that actual physical distances may constitute difficulties for maintaining day-to-day family relations and providing “hands-on” care (Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding, 2007; Vullnetari & King, 2008; Erel, 2002; Bernhard, Landolt, Patricia, & Goldring, 2005; Parrenas R. S., 2010). In contrast to these studies, my ethnographic study provides more positive accounts of transnational grandmothering, which I see as partly the result of the cultural and geographical proximity of Russian Karelia and Finland, affordability and availability of transportation, and relatively easily manageable visa regulations (Chapter V).

Loretta Baldassar, Cora Vellekoop Baldock, and Raelene Wilding, in their study on transnational caregiving (observing sample groups from Italy, Ireland, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, and Iraqi and Afghani refugees in Australia and their countries of origin), argue that they try to avoid the stereotype of “the passive aged person”, concluding that the emotional and

financial support provided by parents, particularly in the early settlement stage of migration, was significant in both quantity and impact. Moreover, parents continue such support as long as they are financially able and in reasonable physical and mental health (Baldassar, Vellekoop, & Raelene, 2007, p. 211). However, they also demonstrate that as parents age they often need to be looked after, for instance, by the local siblings who take over the responsibilities of distant children (also, Baldassar, 2007). The authors also emphasize that sometimes painful choices are to be made, for instance, when a migrant son decided to stop communicating with his mother when she became demented and no longer recognized him, or when a migrant daughter made a difficult decision to stop visiting her mother as they both found the departures too painful to cope with.

In the cross-border context between Finland and Russia (as well other former Soviet countries), cross-border care (*ylirajainen hoiva*) has been discussed in some recent research (Zechner, 2008, 2010; Jokinen, Könönen, Venäläinen, & Vähämäki, 2011). Minna Zechner underlines that the geographical proximity makes it practically possible for some migrant women to travel back and forth to provide care for their aging parents, particularly those staying on the Russian side of the border. However, the travel restrictions allowing twenty-one days of travelling abroad in a year, for instance for those who are eligible for unemployment benefits, put significant limits for people's abilities to manage travelling for the purpose of providing care for frail elders (Zechner, 2008, p. 42). Eeva Jokinen and Mikko Jakonen argue that it is mostly Russian migrant women who provide "borderless care" (*rajaton hoiva*), both for those residing in Finland (particularly through their professional occupation in public care institutions) and for those staying put in Russia, fulfilling their family duties towards aging parents left behind (Jokinen & Jakonen, *Rajaton Hoiva*, 2011).

Some transnational studies tend to emphasize the challenging aspects of transnational aging. For instance, Miza Izuhara and Hiroshi Shibata examine the effect that the migration of Japanese women to Britain has on the traditional norms and practices of old-age support in transnational families. They tend to see aging parents as "burdens" to their migrant daughters in Britain, concluding that "the burden of old-age care for their parents and parents in law was significantly lessened for the surveyed women as a result of migration" (Izuhara & Shibata, 2002).

Transnational Subjectivities

Another category that helped to elaborate on how grandmothers' selves have changed in a context of transnational mobility is the notion of *transnational subjectivity*. Recognizing the fluid, multi-

layered, and constructed character of identity and subjectivity (see Gender Studies: Gender, Identity, Subjectivity), I also believe that human beings are inevitably anchored in history, particularly in their personal histories. From my fieldwork, I got a clear feeling that being anchored in their personal histories becomes even more important for individuals as they grow older, as they age. “Different layers of memory exist in our daily lives and we could not survive without access to things past in our personal histories” (Vuorela, 2009b, p. 264). I have found the notion of transnational subjectivity as perfectly combining the principles of transnationalism and historicism from the perspective of an individual (Vuorela, 2009). This notion helps provide an understanding of how the feeling of multi-locality or trans-locality, multi-local presence, “the dialectical negotiation between here and there” (Zhang, 2007, p. 54) – implying the multiple (national, ethnic, local) senses of belonging, which exist, interact, and complement each other on different levels of consciousness and unconsciousness – becomes a product of the individual’s personal histories of mobility.

In the Soviet context, as has been discussed, nationality (*natsional’nost’*) was applied to name one’s ethnic belonging. Thus, Ingrian belonging for women from the Soviet area would also overlap with their national belonging (*natsional’naya prinadlezhnost’*). In official documents up to the present, the term citizenship (*grazhdanstvo*) is used to characterize the residence of the Russian Federation. There is also a difference between the terms *russkii* (ethnically Russian) and *rossiianen* (a citizen of the Russian Federation). In everyday life, however, Russian (*russkii*) is often applied both with regard to nationality and citizenship. In the Soviet period, the term *russkii* could be also used in both meanings; however, the term “Soviet” would often refer to the Soviet person (*Sovetskii chelovek*) associated with certain qualities that all citizens of the Soviet Union would share, irrespective of their cultural and ethnic differences. Instead of Soviet nation, the term *Sovetskii narod* (Soviet people) would be more frequently applied to underline the Soviet nation’s entity. Given these specificities of the terms “national”, “nationality”, “people”, and “citizenship” in the Soviet and post-Soviet context, the former Soviet space and the Russian Federation can be seen as *transnational* (meaning multi-cultural and multi-ethnic). Thus, negotiating ethnic belonging would be also part of women’s transnational subjectivities. Furthermore, Ingrian ethnic belonging was politicized both during Stalinist rule and in the context of the recent migration to Finland. Ingrianness had to be/was played out in different ways in different contexts of the Soviet space and in contemporary Finland.

Given the experiences of translocal mobility and transnational grandmothering of some women in the Soviet/Russian Karelian space, the notion of transnational subjectivity might be also applied, though it is called *translocal subjectivity*. The notions of transnational/translocal

subjectivity helps to understand that the personal stories of the women are not so much stories of all the places they lived in, but of the ways they have settled in new places (Vuorela, 2009, p. 170). The lived experiences of the women in various places, the personal histories of mobility “rethought and reinterpreted in the intersection of individual experiences with wider frames and socio-political realities, nourish individual projects in the present” (Roberman, 2008, p. 101), “informing the process of “rewriting” and renegotiating identities, Soviet and ethnic (Feierstein & Furman, 2008, p. 105).

Anthropologist Laura Assmuth, in her research on peripheral identities in the EU borderland contexts of Italy and Estonia, suggests that local identities do not disappear with integration. On the contrary, local (ethnic, linguistic) identity may be strengthened when encountering a different cultural and national context (Assmuth, 2005). For instance, Ingrian women construct their ethnic identity as different from Russian and Finnish, claiming that they are Ingrians. At the same time, Finland can be seen as a place that stimulated the process of recollecting their local ethnic identity associated with the place where the women or the women’s parents were born, namely, Ingria (Chapter VIII).

Thus, in my analysis of the transnational subjectivities of Ingrian women, mentioned above, and in some other empirical research, discussing the identities and representations of Russian and Ingrian migrants in Finland (Jerman, 2003, 2006; Huttunen, 2002; Davydova, 2009) and Karelian evacuees (Armstrong, 2004; Alasuutari & Alasuutari, 2009) was invaluable in interpreting the ways interlocutors of my study renegotiate their ethnic and national senses of belonging. For instance, anthropologist Karen Armstrong focuses on memories of family members who were resettled as the rest of the Finnish population when the Finnish region of Karelia was ceded to the Soviet Union in 1944 after two wars between Finland and the Soviet Union. She emphasizes that the national and local “we” created through the common experience of war and circulating discourses about those experiences are expressed in the *replicated family stories* (Armstrong, 2004, p. 96). Likewise, in case of enforced translocal moves of Crimean Tatars within the Soviet space, their individual stories of exile and return are often narrated as family histories (Uehling, 2004). Similarly, it is through family narration that women renegotiate their Russian, Soviet, Ingrian, Karelian, and Finnish senses of belonging; for instance, the ethnic “we” is commonly produced in Ingrian grandmothers’ narratives by referring and placing their family narratives in the dramatic history of Ingrian Finns during Stalinist rule, particularly their forceful displacement from their place of abode, Ingria (Chapter VIII).

4. From Soviet to Contemporary Grandmothering in Russian Karelia: Change and Continuity

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse changes and continuities in grandmothering practices and in the role of babushkas in family-making in contemporary Russian Karelia in the light of Soviet grandmothering and family routines. When I set out in the beginning to undertake an ethnographic research of the babushka, it became apparent to me that the necessary historical background that I could refer to has not yet been done for various reasons. Therefore, in the shortage of direct literature on grandmothers in a Soviet context, such an analysis is indispensable for providing a holistic picture of the phenomenon. In reconstructing the historical background of the phenomenon, I draw on holism as contextualization rather than as comprehensiveness (Falzon, 2009, p. 12).

With this historicized contextualization I hope to increase an understanding of why – despite the project of Soviet modernity through urbanization, industrialization, and extension of the public sector, as well as proclaimed transition from “traditional” “old” forms of family towards “modern” “small” (nuclear) ones – the role of grandmothers in child-rearing and family-making remain so important in many Soviet families. I intend to illustrate that the Soviet social, economic, and political development was a kind of an “enablement” (Giddens, 1984, p. 173) for the survival (from pre-revolutionary agrarian Russia), transformation, and reinforcement of the babushka phenomenon.²² The historical account also allows tracing the ways in which contemporary grandmothering and family practices have been shaped and influenced by the Soviet (Karelian) family routines, and makes it possible to observe how these practices have been evolving in response to significant social, economic, and political postsocialist transformations.

In the first section of the chapter, I will examine how Soviet socialist actualization, despite praising “modern”, “new” ways of life (*novyi byt*), in fact made babushkas into primary child care givers and omnipotent family figures. Seeing Karelia from a regional perspective I will draw particularly on the specificity of grandmothering and the position of grandmothers in Russian Karelia in light of the differences between urban and rural gender contracts, and translocal mobility. In the second section, I will discuss how grandmothers faced social and economic vulnerability

after the Soviet collapse, paradoxically often rescuing their families in conditions of harsh economic crisis. In the third section, I will explore increased varieties in grandmothering practices as the effects of ongoing political and socio-cultural transformations, enactment and domestication of new understandings of grandmothering, family and child care practices, particularly through “today’s cosmopolitanism” increasingly reshaping people’s lives and selves through media, movies, travel accounts, etc. (Appadurai, 1996, p. 64). I will continue with transnational grandmothering across the Finnish-Russian border in the next chapter.

4.1 Making Grandmothers into Omnipotent Figures in Soviet Families

Babushkas and the “Working Mother Contract” up to the 1970s

The “working mother contract” was a dominant feature of the Soviet gender culture, as has been argued in gender research on Soviet and post-Soviet Russia (Rotkirch & Temkina, 1996; Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 1997; Aivazova, 1998; Ashwin, 2000; Lyon, 2006; Salmenniemi, 2008). While this contract continuously re/produced a female ideal of obligatory (“socially useful”) work in production, it also maintained an idealization of motherhood as women’s natural destiny and social duty. A Soviet woman’s everyday life was marked by a “double burden”: she was expected to combine her paid work with maternity duties (in addition to housework) (Dodge N. T., 1978; Lapidus, 1978; Lane, 1985).

Masculinity was primarily attached to the public sphere, to participation in production and political activity (Kukhterin, 2000). As far as child care and housekeeping were concerned, Soviet men were expected to “help” their wives. The Soviet state was represented as the women’s protector, as it guaranteed “assistance in having many children and for single mothers”, and supported “maternity leave” and “large networks of maternity hospitals, nurseries and kindergartens” (Zak75, 1975, p. 13). Equality between men and women was represented as a goal already achieved, and the Constitution of 1936 passionately declared: “In the USSR the task of a tremendous historical importance has been solved – for the first time in history, true women’s equality (*ravnopravie zhenshchin*) is in reality secured” (re-cited, Aivazova, 1998, p. 75). The “right to work” was declared to be the most important one, and guaranteed to women by the Soviet state (Nar75, 1975, p. 7).

The way in which the “woman question” (*“zhenskii vopros”*) was problematized in the Bolshevik state had been discursively inspired by the writings of Marx and Engels, as well as those of Lenin, Bebel, and Kollontai who saw *economic participation* or *women’s economic independence* as the key to the “full citizenship” of women (Engels, 1961). “Women’s liberation” was seen as a process that was only possible under socialism, under which women would get access to productive employment outside the home, whereas housework and child care would move from the family domain to public production (Engels, 1961, p. 78).

On the one hand, the Bolshevik state succeeded in “liberating” women by encouraging them to enter the world of waged work, represented on an equal footing with men. Women began entering the labour market on a large scale in the 1930s, and by the end of the decade 71% of Soviet women aged sixteen to fifty-nine were gainfully employed (Clements, 1991, p. 270). While women constituted 25% of the labour force in 1922, female participation grew up to 39% in 1939, rose to 56% during the Great Patriotic War as a result of the shortage of male labour, and stabilized at around 51% by the 1970s (Nar77, 1977, p. 469). Gainful employment of women was especially high in Russian Karelia, where the “industrial model” of economy demanded huge labour forces: 37,7% in 1939, 51% in 1960, and 53% in 1965 and 1970 (Nar75, 1975, 595).

On the other hand, the Soviet state obviously failed to build up a public child care system to meet the required demands in the same short space of time. Child care institutions accommodated only 23% of all pre-schoolers in 1965 (Lapidus, 1978, p. 132). Data on Soviet Karelia indicate that even fewer places were available for preschool children. Of the 88 000 children aged 0-4 and 75 000 children aged 5-9 in Soviet Karelia in 1959, only 9 700 were enrolled in kindergartens and nursery-kindergartens in 1965 (Nar72, 1972, p. 132).²³ Earlier, in 1940, only 1 900 children were enrolled in these preschools. Besides a shortage of resources to expand the public childcare system, the earlier policy of increasing outside-home child care was also slowed down because of an awareness of high child mortality in public institutions.

Furthermore, although the Soviet state propagated the idea of motherhood as a woman’s “natural” destiny, the possibilities for maintaining motherhood rights after delivery remained constrained by legislation. After giving birth to a child, a Soviet woman had the right to stay at home for only one month (and one month before delivery), and was then expected to return to her paid work. In 1956, maternity leave was increased to 112 days: 56 days before and 56 days after delivery. Women had to return to paid work quickly as the wage differentials were set up such that only a two-breadwinner family could survive. Nurseries were available only for children up to six months old (and only in very limited numbers). Thus, despite a specific policy aimed at maximizing the compatibility of female employment with motherhood responsibilities, child care institutions

continued to fall short of the actual demand until the beginning of the 1970s (Lapidus, 1978, p. 130), whereas legislation on motherhood provided little opportunity for mothers to take care of their infant children.

With these figures I want to emphasize that many studies on Soviet and post-Soviet gender culture tend to overestimate the role of the state in public arrangement of care and domestic work, and often discuss gender roles through the lens of nuclear family relations (Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 1997; Aivazova, 1998; Lyon, 2006; Jarrett, 2010; Ashwin, 2000). In contrast, I suggest that the “double burden” of Soviet women was often eased by grandmothers, who not only took up responsibilities in child care but also did domestic work: “hunting” for food in stores, cleaning, cooking, and pickling berries, mushrooms, cabbage, etc. One can also assume there was a political interest in “liberating” middle-aged women for grandmothering in view of the shortage of child care facilities. The retirement age was set up relatively early from 1967 on: fifty-five years for women generally and fifty years for women in Russian Karelia (Nar75 1975, p. 170). The earlier age for women in Russian Karelia is explained by its being ranked as a “Northern region” with severe climate conditions and, therefore, more damaging for the people’s health than in the rest of the Soviet Union.

Many grandmothers of this research were raised by their babushkas, whom they often recall with warm feelings:

My parents left for their work very early, and we climbed into their bed, and babushka gave us white bread with butter and sugar. (...) There were always vats filled with sauerkrauts, cranberries, salt cucumbers, and mushrooms in our shed. In the winter we went to the shed and cut off the frozen sauerkrauts. It was usually babushka who pickled, while the parents picked up berries and mushrooms... Every weekend and on celebrations babushka used to make a lot of pies. (Elena, born in 1950, 2006)²⁴

Both my babushkas were at home with me and my brother. My babushka, my mother’s mother lived with us. We cultivated vegetables, cooked soup from sorrel, and we also kept goats. (Lubov, born in 1954, 2006)

We had a big family ... I was the ninth child. We had a big household, although within the town. We had cows ..., pigs, chicks, we were cultivated potatoes, cucumbers. My babushka, my mother’s mother, was with us. She was my mother’s helper. She was very kind. When I came home from school she would always feed me with warm meal ... We lived very well altogether. (Irina, born in 1949, 2006)

Babushka lived with us [in a village]. She was my father’s mother. She helped my mother to keep a household. My other babushka, my mother’s mother, lived 15 km away, in a different village. She also had a peasant’s log hut (derevenskiĭ dom); she was fishing by herself. We usually spent summers at her place. We loved both our babushkas. (Vera, born in 1937, 2008)

Some interlocutors were assisted by their mothers or mothers-in-law in child care:

I was living badly. My husband was drinking, my mother-in-law treated me badly. What I have lived through, people would not even go to her grave. But it is not my character. She was cooking, she was a housekeeper (hoziaika). Not a single good word, not a single coin. I was giving her all my money. She was a mistress of the house. But she was taking care of my four children. (Marina, born in 1927, 2006)

I lived with my mother together almost all my life as a thread with a needle ... My son is a home child. He was always with my mother at home until he went to school ... She wanted to live with me, but sometimes she was harsh towards me when I wanted to go to a cinema with somebody, for example. She was maybe jealous. She did not want that a man would appear in our home. (Svetlana, born in 1939, 2008)

My data provide strong evidence that grandmothers up to the 1970s were primary child care givers and even housekeepers in some families. As these women's narratives show, this extended role of the babushka in a family could become a source of family tensions; the same woman could act as a loving and caring babushka towards her grandchildren, and, at the same time, could subordinate her daughter-in-law or constrain her daughter. According to some Russian anthropologists, elderly women were often trying to keep the "family purse" (*semeinyi koshel'ek*), which had a symbolic meaning of power in family, in their control (Aleksandrov, Vlasova, & Polishuk, 1999, p. 463); Marina's narratives above is an illustrating example of this practice.

Of course, human reality is much more complex, contradictory, and incompatible than the simple claim that the assistance of grandmothers was the solution for child care and housekeeping in Soviet families. Under socialism, as elsewhere, gender constructions and gender strategies were multiple, varying over time and place (Johnson & Robinson, 2006). Drawing on the importance of variations within any cultural phenomenon (Barth 2002, p. 27), I emphasize that there were certainly variations in Soviet grandmothers and family (gender) practices, which my data also reveal. For instance, Liliya's grandmother and father died during their deportation to Siberia, and her mother became very ill; thus, her elder brother became her "mother, father, and grandmother", taking over responsibilities for his younger siblings. Oksana explained that her grandmother prioritized her other son's family, and, therefore, helped more there with child care; this variation, however, supports the main argument of this section, as the babushka was still very much involved in child care, but in a different extended family setting.

Birth-babushkas were not the only ones who took care of their grandchildren; even a so-called neighbouring babushka (*sosedskie babushki*) could have been asked to keep an eye on a child. Elvira mentioned that her uncle and a neighbouring babushka, Anna, were very much involved in taking care of her; her paternal and maternal grandparents had passed away, and her

parents had to leave for their work early in the morning. Vesta's grandmother passed away when Vesta was a baby, and neighbouring babushkas would look after her and her siblings while her parents were at work. The latter "variation" opens up a different form of babushka practices, when an elderly woman could have been "adopted" or "relativized" into the family as a grandmother (Vuorela, 2009b, p. 265). It is also important to emphasize that, in practice, particularly due to the economic vulnerability of women of retired age and the needs of "working mothers" in child care, any elderly woman might have been adopted into a family, and started being called babushka by all other family members. As such, she would be provided for by this adopted family; when Marina's mother-in-law left her house to take care of her other son's children, another elderly woman offered to be a babushka of the family. The practice of relativized babushkas shows that family was also a matter of choice and "doing", and not determined by blood connections (Carsten, 2003).

Another factor that made elderly women "available" for grandmothing and housekeeping was their economic dependence on their adult children, especially in urban areas where there were fewer possibilities for cultivating vegetables and keeping livestock. Many elderly women received either a low pension or no pension at all: in the 1960s only one third of the women of retired age were covered by the pension system:

Babushka did not get any pension, and my father said: "Well, I will surely provide for my mother-in-law!" She was from a peasant family, and in old times she was a servant in a rich house in St. Petersburg. She was, therefore, intelligent. (Irina, born in 1949, 2006)

I had to work quite hard, sometimes double shifts. My mother's pension was too small, only 38 roubles. (Svetlana, born in 1939, 2008)

Many grandmothers of that period were born in pre-revolutionary, predominantly rural, Russia and had limited to no education. Some women never experienced gainful employment even in urban areas. Furthermore, grandmothers' availability for Soviet families increased because many families experienced severe shortages of living space, and up to four generations could live together.

Huge war losses after the Second World War considerably changed the gender population composition: the total Soviet losses constituted approximately 26,6 million people, out of which 20 million were male losses (Andreev, Darskiy, & Har'kova, 1993). Applied to family everyday life, it meant that there were many single mothers who had to raise their children on their own, as well as mothers who lost their sons in the war. This situation further enhanced interdependence and mutual support of women across generations; for instance, grandmothers would help their daughters and/or daughters-in-law raise their children while mothers had to earn a living.

Thus, I suggest that babushkas (including grandmothing in blood and “relativized” or neighbouring babushkas) providing child care and domestic work in Soviet families were a significant feature of the working mother contract and in fact made it possible for this contract to function. There was an obvious tendency towards nuclearization of the family during the Soviet period. However, family interactions, especially those involving relationships between parents and their grown-up children, connoted the logic of “three-generation families” (Aleksandrov, Vlasova, & Polishuk, 1999, p. 450). The way family was imagined and the extent to which babushkas were involved in the actual family lives of their children and grandchildren often did not correspond to the small (nuclear) family unit, and might have also empowered some elderly women with a certain subtle authority. This subtle authority was invariably held by networks of “all-seeing” and “all-knowing” babushkas that soon became perceived as an integral part of the Soviet urban landscape (Novikova, 2005) (see Chapter VI). These practices also meant Soviet women as mothers were somewhat replaced by babushkas in many practical terms. This probably opened a need to compensate for unfulfilled mothering in later periods of their lives, i.e., when women became babushkas themselves.

“Working babushkas” of the 1970s to the 1990s and Postponed Motherhood

Towards the 1970s, enrolment of children in day-care institutions grew rapidly, rising from 611 000 children in 1960 to 5 200 000 in 1970-1971 across the Soviet state (Lapidus, 1978, p. 134). By 1975, 37% of pre-schoolers were enrolled in public child care institutions (Lapidus, 1978, p. 132). The popularity of public kindergartens also grew on the everyday life level: professional care and Soviet “modern” upbringing provided by “experts” in the public child care system started being increasingly seen as essential for the successful socialization of a child. For instance, Elena told me that she placed her daughter in a nursery when the latter was one year old only because “everybody said that children had to go to a kindergarten”. With her other daughter, she was more reluctant to listen to what “other people say” and put her younger daughter in a kindergarten when she was three years old. With both her daughters, she was often helped by her mother when the children had to be picked up from the kindergarten or from school later.

Lubov and Elsa placed their children in nurseries when the children were small (between six months and one year), again helped by their mothers and mothers-in-law on weekends or on request. Klavdiya’s mother died when she was small, as with her husband’s mother; they placed their son in a nursery when he was one year old. Now “working mothers” were allowed to stay at

home with newborn babies for one year after delivery (Zak75, 1975, p. 125), and later for three years, although without additional payment. Vesta and Elena, provided for by their husbands, took care of their children by themselves until the children were three to four years old. Vesta and Elena were assisted by their mothers occasionally.

At the same time, increased construction of living houses equipped with heating and water supply systems raised the living standards of families (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 735) and reduced the intensity of housekeeping. Newly married couples got more chances to live separately from their parents in apartments of their own. In the middle of the 1980s, a large new residential area called “Drevlianka” with several thousand new flats was constructed in Petrozavodsk (Pashkov A. M., 2007, p. 105). Soviet modernization also changed the country: in 1985 nearly 80% of the population of Soviet Karelia lived in urban areas (Pashkov A. M., 2007, p. 104).

However, three-generation families residing in the same dwelling remained relatively common in the USSR: 23,7% in 1970 and 17,1% in 1989, which was still high against 1,5% in the United States in the 1980s (Semenova V., 1996). According to Semenova’s research, based on an enquiry of 800 respondents born in 1965-1967 in Moscow, one third of children lived with their grandmothers in “extended families” (*rasshirennaya sem’ia*) (including parents) by the time they started school (i.e., in the 1970s), and 45% kept regular contacts with their grandmothers, meeting them no less than once a week. This practice of living together as a three-generation family, at least for a certain period of time, is also supported by my data (Chapter VI). Some interlocutors (Anna, Elena, Inga, Lubov, Marina, Olga, Svetlana) told me that at some point of their lives they shared a living space either with their mothers/parents or mothers-in-law/in-laws; some (Irina, Olga) continue to do so up to now. Some women (Aleksandra, Marina, Vera, Antonina) who became grandmothers in 1970-1980 told me that they often hosted their adult children’s families for a number of years:

My daughter got married. She gave a birth to Alina, and divorced her husband one year later ... Alina went to a nursery when she was one year old. My daughter was working until very late in the evening in a factory, and I picked Alina up from the nursery. We were living together until Alina was six years old, then my daughter got married again, and moved out. (Liliya, born in 1932, 2006).

Semenova, emphasizing an important role of Soviet babushkas in child-rearing in the 1970s, argues that only educated babushkas, rooted in the pre-revolutionary elite, could be seen as significant channels of pre-revolutionary culture in the conditions of Soviet dominant discourse. They played a “social role of re-translators” of “family capital” of pre-revolutionary Russian

cultural values. The functions of “non-educated” babushkas (the term applied for grandmothers hailing from a working class and with a rural background) were reduced to the “emotional protection” of grandchildren from the outside hostile social interaction, to “soften” the harsh realities of life (Semenova V., 1996). I would argue, however, that my data reveal diverse and rich roles of babushkas in families. Some of them, especially from rural areas, were mediators of religious values when the dominant discourse banned such values (Chapter VII). Almost all grandmothers conveyed a responsible attitude towards work and education, the ultimate values of the Soviet modernity (Chapter VIII). Thus, reducing grandmothers’ role to the “emotional protection” would be inaccurate.

In general, despite this maintenance of the three-generation family, the changes in the public child care system, legislation on mothers’ rights, and increased living standards may have reduced the demand for grandmothers in their adult children’s families. In addition, a new generation of women became grandmothers. These women had worked in the Soviet paid labour sector for most of their adult lives, and received relatively good pensions. They were often educated, working babushkas who continued to be gainfully employed even after the official retirement age. Some scholars suggest that the late Soviet period was already characterized by increased processes of individualization (Zdravomyslova, Rotkirch, & Temkina, 2009, p. 11). On the one hand, it could mean that some working babushkas might have prioritized their personal life, involvement in public life, and their professional careers more than extended family-making and grandparenting, at least during some periods of their lives. On the other hand, working babushkas often remained in paid labour to be able to help financially their grown-up children and grandchildren.

Working babushkas tended to express their babushka care by providing financially for their grandchildren – buying clothes, expensive toys, furniture. Grandchildren spent summer holidays with their working babushkas or could spend weekends with their grandmothers (“weekend babushkas”). When building a dacha became possible for many Soviet people from 1970 – and especially after 1980 – instead of going to the countryside to their grandmothers living in the rural area (*v derevne u babushki*, as it used to be in previous years; see Peoples’ Moves and Translocal Grandmothering), children spent summer holidays at their grandmother’s dacha. Some babushkas would continue their paid employment with working the dacha, thus providing their extended families with potatoes, carrots, strawberries and homemade strawberry jam, etc.:

We built our dacha in 1975. Since that time I used to spend all summer holidays with my grandchildren at dacha. They could eat fresh vegetables, berries, everything just from the garden. I was always cooking strawberry jam, their favourite one. (Marina, born in 1927, 2006)

The 1980s was marked by the peak of the dacha boom, with almost every affluent family in the country having a dacha of their own or spending weekends and holidays at a friend's dacha. This continues to be popular in contemporary Russia. What is called dacha now varies from a modest plank summer house with a plot of 600m² (the size of a plot usually allowed by the Soviet authorities, compounded by other restrictions in terms of the size of the house) up to a huge year-round second house, resembling a palace, owned by some Russian oligarchs (Clarke, 2002; Humphrey, 2002). While for some people working the dacha is primarily a leisure activity, others argue that this is the only way that they can get high-quality (ecologically pure) produce. For some families it is an additional produce for the table; for others the dacha might be the main source of subsistence (Clarke, 2002, pp. 161-168). The role of the dacha has been also changing in response to economic situations. The dacha often remained a kind of back-up plan for many families in “the time of deficit”²⁵ of the late Soviet period and economic difficulties in the 1990s. In the early 1990s the dacha became the main source of agricultural products for many families in Russian Karelia (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 681). Based on various sets of quantitative data from different regions of Russia, Clarke argues that the more household members are pensioners, the more likely it is for the household to possess a dacha (Clarke, 2002, p. 139). This observation is also supported by my data; most women residing in Russian Karelia whom I interviewed in the course of my fieldwork had a dacha. Some worked the dacha to provide fresh and natural products for their extended families; others praised the dacha for being a perfect place to spend summer holidays with their grandchildren. One did not necessarily exclude the other, quite the opposite.

Some grandmothers chose to be entirely devoted to grandmothering, at least at some stage of their lives. Galina left her job and retired to take care of her grandson; Vesta, although she did not reach an official retirement age, resigned to take care of her grandson, financially supported by her husband. The roles of men as fathers were not renegotiated in the late Soviet period as it happened, for instance, in Nordic countries, particularly in the framework of gender equality policies (Bergman, 2005). On the contrary, some scholars point to “the crisis of masculinity” in late Soviet modernity discourse; this metaphor was applied to depict the impossibility of men playing their “traditional roles” as breadwinners of families, and the denial of their ownership rights and political freedom within the Soviet system (Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 2002). This also meant that, practically, parenting continued to be seen as a woman's responsibility; men were not expected to actively participate in family life (Kukhterin, 2000). Furthermore, Soviet women, compared with the pre-revolutionary period, were given more opportunities in the public sphere, particularly through paid employment and participation in political life (although, ideologically constrained); at

the same time, however, they preserved their “power benefits” in the private domain (Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 2002). While domination of Soviet women in the private domain has been recognized in gender research (Ashwin, 2000; Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 1997; Issoupova, 2000), nuances related to age and family position of women exerting micro-powers in the family domain remain largely unexamined. My study intends to address this gap (Chapter VI).

Thus, although the forms of grandmothering changed after the 1970s compared with previous decades, the understanding of a babushka as a significant caregiver remained relatively strong, as did the involvement of grandmothers in the family lives of their adult children. Being relatively active in their grandmothering, working grandmothers also compensated for their losses in mothering in the earlier years of Soviet gainful employment when many mothers were deprived by the state of active motherhood. In the context of the working mother contract, their motherhood can be seen as having been postponed. Family-making within the three-generation family frame remained prominent in the late Soviet period (Aleksandrov, Vlasova, & Polishuk, 1999, p. 455).

Rural Gender Contract and Babushkas

In the context of Russian Karelia, I suggest one further, important factor: distinguishing between urban and rural gender contracts. Some recent studies in anthropology challenge a view of urban space as a bounded centre contrasted with rural hinterlands, in favour of polycentric approaches (Kearney, 1995). However, some empirical research on postsocialism has illustrated that differences in gender development between rural and urban areas in former Soviet territories may have been crucial (Shreeves, 2002; Humphrey, 2002). Drawing on my data I argue that the differences in living standards as well as ways of life between urban and rural spaces were significant in Soviet Karelia and have remained significant in contemporary Karelia for many reasons. First, these differences came about partly as a consequence of the Soviet policy to favour industrialization at the cost of agriculture (Nove, 1986, p. 77). Moreover, In Soviet Karelia collectives of urban workers were prioritized at the expense of peasant workers or collective farmers (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 717; Pashkov A. M., 2007, p. 100). Second, the differences in Soviet Karelia were also linked to the Soviet defence strategy adopted in the 1920s. According to this strategy, no industry was developed in the border area of Soviet Karelia, located to the west of the railroad Murmansk-Leningrad. The Finno-Ugric population concentrated in this area was primarily occupied in agriculture and forest cutting (Korablev,

Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 442), and therefore was marginalized from the larger Soviet scheme of industrialization and modernization.

The pensions of those occupied in the agricultural sector (introduced only in 1964) constituted on average one third of pensions of urban workers. The same held true for monthly payments to collective farmers as opposed to monthly payments to urban workers. The shortages of the child care system were greater outside the large population centres: 30% of rural children of preschool age were enrolled in day-care centres in 1970, compared with 50% of urban children (Madison, 1978, p. 332). Often grandmothers or other elderly women from the neighbourhood were the only ones who could take care of the children when their mothers were working in *kolkhozes* (collective farms) or *sovkhoses* (state farms):

I had to come back to kolkhoz one month after giving birth with all my four children. I had to leave them at home. And neighbouring babushkas would keep an eye on them. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2007)

Likewise, medical services were sparsely developed in the rural areas. Living in the countryside demanded heavy work both for keeping one's own household and working in *kolkhozes* or *sovkhoses*, where a lot of work was carried out manually. After the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), when the female population in the countryside grew to five times the male population (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 681), heavy post-war restoration was often carried out by women. These urban-rural discrepancies also created an extreme gender imbalance in the rural area where the ongoing crisis of masculinity expressed itself primarily through extensive drinking and other self-destructive practices and the lack of men as such was compensated by a dominating female figure in the family. In the face of extensive migration from rural to urban areas in the 1970s and 1980s, and the aging of the rural population, this gender imbalance was replaced by a dominant figure of an elderly woman – the *babushka*.

At the same time, in prioritizing the urban space the Soviet state also subjected it to stricter ideological control, whereas the rural space of Soviet Karelia (especially the borderland comprising the Finno-Ugric population) was often overlooked. This allowed the survival of religious and folk practices, such as traditional magic. These practices, residing in the hands of elderly women in the countryside, were represented as “backward” in the Soviet dominant discourse but continued to be passed down the generations due to lack of ideological control. Interestingly, in the beginning of the twentieth century healers and “witches” in the Karelian countryside were predominantly male, but by the turn of the twenty-first century this field became totally dominated by females (Keinänen, 2003, p. 26). According to some collocutors of this research (for instance, Anna, Elena, and Elvira), and the findings of my own participant observation, *babushkas* (*babushki*, *babki*) of Karelian or

Vepsian background are renowned for practicing magic. They might be revered as healers, or might be feared for doing magical harm.

From the perspective of my study, it is also important to emphasize that grandmothers who were born in the countryside and who spent their childhood and/or adolescent years there were more likely to return to more open religious and magic practices in their lived experiences (particularly in grandmothership) after the Soviet collapse. Moreover, those grandmothers who were raised by “religious babushkas” admit that the “religiosity” of their grandmothers in many ways defined their Orthodox Christian practices now, although in their Soviet lives they often regarded themselves to be non-believers:

The main thing for me in my world-view is Orthodox Christianity. My babushka was the faithful. I remember from my childhood; when she came to visit us, she always brought me to churches. When we were in Germany [Nadezhda's father was a military officer in Soviet army in Germany], she also brought me to a church there. (Nadezhda, born in 1952, 2008)

Translocal Mobility and Grandmothership

As I have discussed, translocal moves were an inextricable part of Soviet histories of mobility, and this included translocal mobility across urban/rural spaces. Given the specific histories of people's moves across the huge Soviet space, Irina Novikova suggests the notion of translocalism as an applicable analytical category for examining those families whose members found themselves dispersed across the Soviet Union, in different labour markets, in different regions, but still within the same political regime, thus living as *translocal families* (Novikova, 2005, p. 73). In the context of this research, which will also discuss transnational grandmothership and transnational family-making across the Finnish-Russian border (Chapter V), it is important to understand that translocal moves and translocal living is something that almost all women of this study have experienced in their lives. Given the huge Soviet space, the physical distances might have been much larger than that between Russian Karelia and Finland. Thus, when examining contemporary transnational grandmothership, one should be aware of this continuity between translocal and transnational grandmothership.

An important feature of the Soviet rural everyday life was that people's mobility was highly restricted until 1974, when they were finally allowed to get passports (compared with the urban population, which was obliged to have a passport from 1932). The freedom of internal mobility stimulated the massive migration of the population, especially of younger people, from rural areas. It created a situation in which elderly parents were left behind in the countryside, whereas children

moved and settled with their families in urban areas. Often, mothers sent their children to be taken care of by their grandmothers living in a rural area, until the children reached school age; among my interlocutors, Galina and Zinaida sent their children to stay with babushkas (their own mothers). Both women explained that they could not really look after their small children because of work. This example of *translocal grandmothering* supports further that babushkas were an essential element of Soviet gender contract (especially until the 1970s).

Spending summer holidays “*v derevne u babushki*” (in the village at babushka’s) had become a quite common form of translocal grandmothering:

I remember that we spent the whole summer at babushka Pasha’s village, a sister of babushka Polja [a grandmother in blood] (...). They had a cow, and we always ate a very delicious butter, sour cream (smetana). They used to buy for us spice cakes (prjanik), and babushka gave us one per each every day. Babushka made butter by herself. I remember how she whipped it. And milk fresh from the cow with foam. (Elena, born in 1950, 2006)

This quotation again shows that the term *babushka* was used not only for a grandmother in blood, but was also extended to other elderly female relatives. The expression “*v derevne u babushki*” nowadays is applied to convey a romanticized image of a caring and loving babushka, treating her grandchildren with homemade pies and fresh milk. This powerful nostalgic imagination of “*v derevne u babushki*” in contemporary Russian discourse particularly reminds us how common this practice was during Soviet times. After the 1970s, “*v derevne u babushki*” practices were gradually replaced by “*na dache u babushki*” practices. However, those babushkas who remained living in a rural area often took their grandchildren to spend summer holidays; all Evdokiya’s nine grandchildren used to spend their summer vacations at her place in a Karelian village.

I suggest that experiences of translocal living were quite common in the USSR also because of the intensive mobility of people across the huge Soviet space, of a voluntary, enforced, and somewhat mixed character (see Introduction). Most grandmothers of the older generation (for instance, Aleksandra, Marina, and Inna) experienced translocal moves when they were evacuated during the Great Patriotic War. Grandmothers with an Ingrian background recall how they were deported to Siberia during this period when the “dead bodies were merely thrown away from the train” (Chapter VIII). Riita’s and Liliya’s grandmothers, for instance, died during this deportation.

The histories of translocal moves have received some attention in academia both in the Soviet and the post-Soviet contexts (Hirsch, 2005; Lonkila & Salmi, 2005; Uehling, 2004), as well as in Russian Karelia (Sunii, 1998b; Takala, 2007). However, there is a lack of anthropological studies that discuss translocal moves within the Soviet and post-Soviet space. For instance,

“internal migration”, which is often discussed as a work-related migration (Lonkila & Salmi, 2005, p. 683), can be seen as part of the histories of Soviet and post-Soviet translocal moves. However, in contrast to the term “internal migration”, which tends to approach newcomers in big industrial cities as “migrants” coming from elsewhere, I think that the term “translocal mobility” is somewhat more balanced, as it takes into account that an individual may think of various places as her home, particularly the one where she first arrives as a “migrant”, and translocal family ties may well constitute an important part of everyday life. For instance, although some of my interlocutors came to Petrozavodsk as “migrants” of the “internal migration”, they see Karelia and Petrozavodsk as their home. Moreover, some Ingrian grandmothers who arrived in Karelia as a result of discrimination policies and forceful moves, continue to see Petrozavodsk as their home even after they moved to Finland. For instance, Riita was born in a village in Ingria, moved to Petrozavodsk in the 1950s, and now lives in Finland; she told me that when she dies she wants to be buried in Petrozavodsk, which she sees as her home.

Many grandmothers of this study have experienced translocal moves throughout their lives; some actually came to Karelia as a result of these moves. Mari, Galina, and Aleksandra came to Karelia in the framework of work-related moves. Mari came to Soviet Karelia in the 1970s from Mordovia (located in the central part of the European part of Russia) as a wife of an officer who was relocated to Petrozavodsk; Galina came to Petrozavodsk from her village in Ryazanskaya oblast (also located in the central part of the European part of Russia) to her brother, who moved there earlier for a job. Most grandmothers of younger generations (for instance, Anna, Antonina, Elena, Irina, Olga), who were born in Petrozavodsk, had their work after graduation somewhere else than their place of abode. Anna, for example, who was born in Petrozavodsk, spent some years of her life in Valaam (*Valamo*, in Finnish), where she was assigned to work after graduation; she got married and gave birth to her daughter there. Zinaida, Oksana, Klavdiya, Vera, and Natalia moved to Petrozavodsk from somewhere else from within Karelia, also for work reasons. These personal histories of translocal moves refracted in grandmothers’ life trajectories are part of both the regional history of Soviet Karelia and the babushkas’ own translocal subjectivities.

The move of grandmothers with an Ingrian background, both migrant and staying put, to Karelia is of a more complex character. It was the result of both “ethnic cleansing” and work-related recruitment (Chapter I). After their deportation to Siberia, they were recruited to Karelia by a special recruiting labour committee established in Soviet Karelia after the war to work in the forest industry. Most often, people were moved as families and were placed in the forest near the cutting grounds to build up workers’ settlements (*rabochie posёлki*), starting from barrack-style houses and ending up with entire settlement infrastructures. These settlements were a cross-cultural

space where people of different backgrounds (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Ingrian Finns, American and Canadian Finns) lived and worked together. Most Ingrian women of this study lived in these workers' settlements when they came to Karelia. Given that they were first forcefully moved to Siberia from Leningradskaya oblast in 1942, it is a subject of discussion whether the later move to Karelia at the end of the 1940s was “voluntary” or not (Chapter VIII).

4.2 Babushkas and Their Families after the Soviet Collapse

Social and Economic Marginalization of Retired People in the Public Space

The consequences of the disintegration of the USSR, often referred to as the Soviet collapse, were deeply felt at everyday levels across the entire post-Soviet space. What was officially proclaimed as the beginning of the liberal reforms, a transition towards democratization and market economy in everyday life discourses, soon became labelled as the beginning of *polnaia razrukha* (“complete breakdown”, “collapse”). *Polnaia razrukha* was an abbreviated reference to everything that was supposedly disintegrating in Russian society during perestroika. It was a "discursive signpost" that embraced the escalation of crime, the disappearance of goods from stores, ecological catastrophe, the fall of production, the ethnic violence in the Caucasus, the “degradation” of arts, the flood of pornography, and other signs of immorality (Ries, 1997, p. 46).

The transition to a market economy in the 1990s started with two "shocks": an output fall and a burst in inflation, much greater and longer in Russia than in Central Europe. Eventually it resulted in a drop in real incomes and an increase in income inequalities. It was the elderly and the women who prevailed in the low strata of the population in the 1990s (Zaslavskaya, 2003, p. 464). According to sociologist Tatiana Zaslavskaya, most of them expressed a feeling of nostalgia about the “good Soviet times” and wished that the liberal reforms would have never occurred (Chapter VIII).

In Russian Karelia this “shock-therapy” policy resulted in real incomes being reduced in half, real wages falling down by 2,5 times, and pensions cut down fourfold (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001, p. 842). Among one-person households, 55,5% consisted of elderly people above sixty years who had an income below or equal to the level of poverty (Popova M., 1998, p. 88), and 21,4% of all families (households) in Russian Karelia had an income below the level of poverty in 1993 (Popova 1998):

It was very difficult in the beginning of 1990s. Our salaries were very low. We survived basically...through borrowing money. Once, when the situation was hopeless, I had to sell our wedding rings...I got retired in 1996, and I changed my job. I started working as a teacher in a technical school. It became easier to live financially, but it is not possible to live only on pension. (Oksana, born in 1951, 2006)

In the beginning of every year a sword of Damocles is always threatening: prices are going up. I live only on my pension; I buy no clothes, no shoes, if only second-hand. (Natalia, born in 1936, 2006)

Nancy Ries suggests that it was primarily older people who expressed great alarm at these developments. Firstly, they recognized the vulnerability of their social position. Secondly, the events of the perestroika years completely contradicted all their previous expectations: for them, perestroika brought a "collapse of their whole cultural world" (Ries, 1997, p. 47). As I will later demonstrate, such a negatively connoted generalization of the changes does not necessarily consider the Soviet discriminative experiences of some people, particularly the grandmothers of this study. For them, perestroika and the subsequent Soviet collapse partly brought about a rehabilitation of their reputation and the freedom to reveal their past and traumatic memories deeply hidden before (for example, Ingrian Finns subjected to Soviet discrimination became "rehabilitated" in the 1990s, as I discuss in Chapter VIII). Nevertheless, I would suggest that many women, who lived most of their lives during the Soviet rule, felt marginalized and insecure in the new Russia, experiencing considerable political and socio-cultural transformations. People in postsocialist societies are still struggling with the clash between deeply ingrained moralities of the previous period and the daily challenges, opportunities, and inequalities imposed by market penetration (Humphrey & Mandel, 2002):

It has changed for the worse. Before the collapse of the USSR people were better. Young people are now always drinking beer. People were different before. (Klavdiya, born in 1947, 2006)

We felt secure before; we believed that we had a future. I am very anxious about my grandchildren, my children. I don't know whether they will have any job tomorrow. (Irina, born in 1949, 2006).

In addition, everything that was associated with Soviet was publicly denied during the first years of transition. These drastic changes made grandmothers' extended families an important domain for overcoming this social and economic shock. After the financial collapse of 1998, a certain revival could be seen, but the demographic recession continues, and the standard of living remains rather low particularly when compared with other parts of Russia (Pashkov A. M., 2007, p.

107; Kurilo & Nemkovich, 2007, p. 39). Some grandmothers continue to be helped financially by their adult children, for example to make some renovations, which are quite expensive:

They will come to fix my kitchen soon (...). Oi, it will be very beautiful! [showing the drawing and explaining]. I have been searching and looking. I thought that it would be too expensive. Ivan [son] and Lida [daughter] have helped me with the kitchen. I decided not to do that panel, because it would be too expensive. But Lida came and told: No, it will be ugly. So she went and bought also that additional panel, for 2000 roubles (...). Ivan told me: pay now from your pension for the kitchen, what else needs to be done, and I will bring you money for “mnyam-mnyam” [in Russian means to eat something; informal, often applied with small babies when feeding]. (Aleksandra, born in 1937, 2008)

The powerful emotional representation of increased vulnerability among elderly women can be found in the movie *Babusya*, made by Lidiya Bobrova in 2003. *Babusya* is another soft term for babushka, the way grandchildren in their childhood used to call their grandmother in the movie. The story narrates how *babusya* sacrificed her entire life for her family, especially her grandchildren whom she brought up. She sold her house and distributed money among her grown-up grandchildren to help with their education and with arranging their adult lives. Thus, she moved to the home of her daughter and son-in-law to stay with them; after her daughter's unexpected death, her son-in-law refused *babusya* shelter, and none of her grandchildren eventually wanted to host and take care of their babushka. The story can be interpreted as the rupture between Old and New Russian values, when babushka was abandoned just as the old family traditions, mutual care and love, and Old Russia were. While the movie may reflect some tendencies in reconfigurations of family practices and marginalization of elders, my ethnographic data offer strong evidence of other, more positive accounts of both “young” and “old” grandmothers. For instance, Evdokiya, Marina, Inga, and Julija, who are no longer active in grandmothing and may be seen as old grandmothers, are warmly taken care of by their children and grandchildren. Likewise younger grandmothers, such as Marina, Elena, Irina, Nadezhda, Uljana, and Elvira, are devotedly taking care of their aging mothers.

Babushkas Rescuing Their Families

As I will discuss further, families for many grandmothers of this study often go beyond the nuclear family, to include primarily their grown-up children and grandchildren, as well as their mothers, and fathers, in-laws, aunts, sisters, brothers, etc. The babushka's role in the family is part of a larger set of family relations that imply that parents should help newly married couples, grandmothers and

grandfathers are expected to take special care of their grandchildren (practically, emotionally, socially, financially), and children should look after their aging parents; families can mobilize their resources to buy a car or a dacha (Aleksandrov, Vlasova, & Polishuk, 1999, p. 450).

After the Soviet collapse, the importance of domestic labour, such as cooking, pickling, hunting for cheap food, as well as working at the dacha (often carried out by grandmothers), increased. In her analysis of family consumption in Moscow at the beginning of the 1990s, Caroline Humphrey argues that consumption even in the middle class was largely devoted to basic necessities, and such food as potatoes, bread, cabbage, pickled cabbage, and beetroots dominated the family budget (Humphrey, 2002, p. 51).

When Vesta became a widow, her daughters' families became the only family for her. When her daughter Julija gave birth to her son, Vesta moved to their one-room flat to help with the child and domestic work. They had to save enormously during the time of crisis after 1998:

We used to buy a big sack of flour, a sack of sugar, and I baked a lot of pies, pancakes. It was cheaper to bake a lot. During autumn we went to a vegetable storehouse to buy vegetables: they were slightly spoiled, and therefore, prices were low. We stored up potatoes and vegetables. We were living together. I and Julija [Vesta's daughter] did everything around the house; he [Julija's husband] was working as a male nurse. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007).

In fact, many mid-life and elderly women were – and still are – divorced or widowed by the time they became grandmothers. The presence of a large number of single, elderly women is partly explained by the post-Soviet demographic development that was marked by an extensive mortality rate among men. The difference in the life expectancy rate among women (70,5) and men (56,6) was 13,9 years in 2001 in Russian Karelia (Goskomstat, 2002, p. 10). The population of retired women is more than double the population of retired men (55 years and above) of Russian Karelia. The older the women get, the more single women there are (Goskomstat, 2002, p. 11). Out of 31 interviewed women in this research, only 9 lived with their husbands. Obviously, single grandmothers tended even more to reside with their adult children's families both emotionally and practically, partly to "compensate" for the absence of a life partner.

In post-Soviet Karelia hunting for so-called *gumanitarka* became one of the tools in the babushkas' arsenal in saving their families. *Gumanitarka* (derived from the Russian expression *gumanitarnaya pomosh'*, "humanitarian aid") was a term used for second-hand clothes and other utensils that were sent from Western countries; these were highly demanded during the time of crisis. The first delivery of *gumanitarka* from Finland and Germany arrived in Soviet Karelia in 1990 (Pashkov A. M., 2007, p. 106). For instance, Antonina bought a bed for her granddaughter

from a *gumanitarka* shop in Petrozavodsk, whereas Liliya was in charge of distributing Finnish *gumanitarka* clothes in a Lutheran church in St Petersburg.

In fact, during perestroika, in the time of “chronic deficit” (a significant feature of the centrally planned economy in the late Soviet period) preceding the Soviet collapse, babushka skills became indispensable for the survival of families. Nancy Ries points out that the babushka appears as the hero of the “tales on heroic shopping” in the period of deficit during perestroika (Ries, 1997, p. 53). A grandmother of a family went out very early in the morning, with a string bag in hand, and came home very late in the evening with a kilo of sugar when the whole family was already in panic. This story was first discussed in the family many times, and then it was told and retold in detail to friends. Ries suggests that the babushka was thus “sacralised” through this tale’s telling and retelling, becoming a subject of a modern Russian folk tale. According to some scholars, the period of economic crisis of the 1990s demonstrated that family and social networks were the most reliable resources of survival, the generator of life strategies and identities (Zdravomyslova, Rotkirch, & Temkina 2009, p. 11; Lonkila & Salmi, 2005, p. 684).

The assistance of grandmothers in child care became needed again when day-care facilities began to close down and as mothers’ employment rights began to be neglected in the developing private sector. For example, new private employees often created a demand – and continue to do so – for mothers to return to work very soon after delivery, despite more lenient maternity leave regulations under post-Soviet law.

When speaking of the importance of grandmothers in the family economy I would also rely on the feminist critique of Marxism, which originally excluded domestic labour from economic analysis (Gardiner, 2000, p. 81). The domestic labour debate of the 1970s and 1980s clarified some important issues, particularly the following: (1) the household is a unit of production, not just a unit of consumption in industrialized societies; (2) the standard of living is not based solely on the level of wages and the commodities that wages can purchase, but is a combination of wage goods, domestically produced use-values, and public services; (3) domestic labour is an essential part of the reproduction of the labouring population; and (4) the care of children and old people needs to be taken into account when studying industrial societies (Gardiner, 2000, pp. 83, 84, 99). From this perspective, babushkas often became those who rescued their extended families in times of crisis.

However, not all grandmothers were economically marginalized after the Soviet collapse. Depending on previous work experiences and other factors, such as participation in the Great Patriotic War or political rehabilitation, the pensions of elderly women could vary. These differences in the amounts of pensions became even more significant under Putin's rule. In this context, some grandmothers became important providers for their adult children's families in

contemporary Russian Karelia, buying expensive clothes and furniture that would be otherwise unaffordable, often by minimizing their own needs (on babushkas' self-sacrifice, see Chapter VI):

My wage rates have been always low, and babushka [as Irina calls her mother-in-law, although being herself a babushka of two grandsons] has always helped us, especially now... as a participant of the Patriotic War she gets 9000 rubles as pension. (Irina, born in 1949, 2006)

Many working babushkas continued to work, although retired, not least to help their grandchildren and children financially. A significant feature is that the women who live with their husbands and, therefore, get larger incomes per household, have been more prone to help financially their children and grandchildren:

Though both I and my husband reached retiring ages, we continued to work, and got both pensions and salaries. Thus, our economic position has not changed that much, and we could also help our children. (Elsa, born in 1939, 2006)

We both had to continue working when we retired. We had to help our daughter. We helped them [daughter, husband, and their children] to buy a flat and a car in Nizhnevartovsk²⁶ when they moved there. (Vera, born in 1937, 2008)

When the girl [granddaughter] was born, everything was ready. They did not have to buy anything for her! Babushka [calling herself babushka] bought everything! And I painted a baby cot with a white colour. So that everybody assumed that it was bought from abroad!! It took me two days to paint it! (Antonina, born in 1937, 2008)

Increased involvement of babushkas in the family domain has been also linked to the crisis of masculinity, which had already started in the late Soviet period, but which sharpened immediately after the Soviet collapse, particularly due to growing unemployment rates in the conditions of cut-downs in industry. In the absence of work after the Soviet collapse, many men felt "ashamed" to do paid work that would seem less prestigious compared with the one they had in Soviet times. Therefore, many wives and aging mothers supported their husbands/sons to sustain the imagined masculinity of their men.

The mortality rate among men was especially high in the rural area of Russian Karelia. The male life expectancy rate at birth fell down from 62,4 years in 1989 to 51,7 in 1994, and reached 49,5 years in 2003 (Goskomstat, 2003, p. 40). The increased male mortality was caused partly by the problem of alcoholism (which used to dominate the male habitus in the Soviet countryside) but has reached alarming levels in the post-Soviet Karelian countryside. This problem manifested a crisis of masculinity that was already underway during Soviet times when men became deprived of their "traditional" authorities as the heads of peasant households by Soviet policy in the countryside. In the context of the post-Soviet rural gender contract, the crisis of masculinity sharpened as a result

of unemployment (which did not exist in the Soviet system of a planned economy). In the absence of sober men, the role of women in re/producing everyday life routine and sustaining the family economy became even more prominent. At the same time, as above, the assistance of grandmothers in child care and housekeeping became an important component of post-Soviet survival in the countryside. Aging mothers often became the only providers for their unemployed (drinking) sons.

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the roles of grandmothers might have been significant for the survival and lifestyle of many families in post-Soviet Karelia. Paradoxically, the harsh conditions of post-Soviet realities experienced by the majority of the Russian population also revealed the strength of babushkas when many of them directed all their energy and resources to rescuing their families. It also intensified the mutual reciprocity in families when babushkas in need were financially helped by their adult children. Migration to Finland also became a way of overcoming the economic vulnerability of mid-life and elderly women, some of whom began to rely on Finnish social welfare to assist their children and grandchildren who were undergoing economic difficulties on the other side of the border (Chapter V).

4.3 Post-Soviet Grandmothering in Russian Karelia

As mentioned above (Chapter II), grandmothers are a highly heterogeneous group in terms of age (a woman might become a babushka in her late thirties or in her early eighties), social strata, and ethnic backgrounds, in addition to the women's unique life trajectories. Most grandmothers of my study belonged to the low-income group in Russia. It is a paradox of post-Soviet realities that relatively well-educated babushkas with many years of work experience found themselves on the economic margins after the Soviet collapse.

Despite distributional inequalities, Soviet society was relatively homogeneous, providing most with access to education and work. The social differences were more subtle compared with so-called capitalist countries and the highly stratified Russian society now, with huge differences in living standards between big urban centres (for example, Moscow or St. Petersburg) and other parts of Russia. Because the project of Soviet modernity tended to reach all spheres of an individual's life, reproducing relatively homogeneous social structure and certain gender norms, the socio-cultural backgrounds of contemporary grandmothers share a lot of commonalities. Although the Soviet system ceased to exist more than two decades ago, the Soviet normative field and value system continue to inform the subjectivities of contemporary grandmothers and the way they understand their social status (Chapter VIII).

Although the grandmothers' category was never monolithic or singular in the Soviet context either, the differences in the lived experiences of grandmothers in post-Soviet Karelia have become more prominent due to the increased social stratification in post-Soviet society, more open and diverse cultural spaces, and more frequent transnational everyday life practices, particularly across the Finnish-Russian border (Chapter V). The increased operation of market, neoliberalism, Western notions of individualism, and personal/private life/space have especially led to significant differences in understanding how grandmothering is understood and practiced.

Traditional babushkas, even today, tend to build their lives around the families of their adult children, putting a lot of effort and emotions into grandmothering. For other babushkas, in contrast, grandmothering is only one, and not a decisive, part of their lives and identities. This division is subtle and contextual, and reflects two polar views of understanding of grandmothering and what and who family is. Both tendencies might easily interplay, interact, and coexist in one woman's life and subjectivity. As I will argue, however, the traditional understanding of babushka and the babushka's role in the family is the dominating one in women's narratives from Russian Karelia, often inspired by nostalgic recollections of their own babushkas. However, the actual everyday life practices of contemporary grandmothering might not necessarily follow this romanticized image of the babushka.

Post-Soviet Grandmothering Practices

I apply the term *post-Soviet* in the title of this section to underline the continuity between contemporary and Soviet grandmothering practices, as discussed above. In principle, all of the above Soviet grandmothering practices have continued to be applied in Russian Karelia. Antonina, Elsa, Oksana, and Elena told me that their grandchildren regularly spend their summer vacation with them at dacha. Aleksandra, Antonina, and Marina mentioned that it has been always a rule that they would pick up their grandchildren from school, and take care of them until parents come home from work. My data show that many grandmothers are especially active in grandmothering when the children are small. For instance, Aleksandra, Marina, Elena, and Vesta left their jobs or retired to take care of their grandchildren.

Thus, Aleksandra took care of her three grandchildren (her daughter's twins and daughter) until they were three to four years old. When a child was born in her son's family, Aleksandra was working as a lift operator, but she was also taking care of her granddaughter, while her daughter-in-law was studying:

Aleksandra: She [daughter-in-law] came from a birth clinic, and she had to write her thesis [diploma] and defend it. Everything had to be done very fast (...). I was with Milena [granddaughter].

TT (myself): Were you already retired?

Aleksandra: Yes, but I was working as a lifter. I took her with me. When I had to look around as an inspector I took her in a pram, and the other woman was working on a panel control. We were two (...). All kids were here at my place.

TT: Did you also take care of the twins?

Aleksandra: Yes, until they went to school (...), and after that. When they went to school, I dropped them there, and picked them up. Then I cooked and fed; everything was on me. Their parents were at work. (Aleksandra, born in 1937, 2008)

One of the explanations for the continued involvement of babushkas in child care is that the working mother contract is still a dominating one in Russian Karelia. It has been argued that gender multiplication takes place in contemporary postsocialist space (Johnson & Robinson, 2006). Some argue that there was a backlash in women's rights and a return to patriarchal traditionalism. For instance, in Ukraine, the Soviet ideal of the working mother has been challenged by the idea of a return to "traditional family" values (post-Soviet neofamilialism) (Zhurzenko, 2004). The "privileged" roles as mothers and preservers of national traditions are emphasized in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia (Graney, 2004).

Recognizing gender multiplication and neotraditional tendencies, I still maintain that in contemporary Russian Karelia the working mother contract is *practically* the dominating one. Not that the Soviet ideal of the working mother continues to be glorified up till now, but actual everyday life survival demands women to have paid employment.

The housewife (house manager) pattern, partly copying the ideal of the European and American middle-class nuclear family, partly appealing to restoration of the "old Russian tradition" (Russian neofamilialism), may be applied in some families, representing the so-called new middle class in Russia and, of course, people with very high incomes. However, the Russian middle class constitutes approximately only one fifth of the contemporary Russian population, and is concentrated in the big metropolises such as Moscow and St. Petersburg. Living standards in Russian Karelia, as was mentioned, remain low. Therefore, three-generation family ties remain significant for the everyday life survival of many families, and the help of babushkas continues to be required. According to some Russian anthropologists, "in all families, both rural and urban, there is cooperation across generations" which is particularly expressed through the "institution of babushkas" (Aleksandrov, Vlasova, & Polishuk, 1999, p. 465).

Olga Krasnova, relying on questionnaires with 85 elderly people in Moscow and 123 elderly women from the suburbs of Moscow, has distinguished between three types of babushka behaviour in relationships with their grandchildren: “formal”, “active”, and “remote” (Krasnova, 2000, p. 109). “Formal” behaviour of grandmothers denotes such activities as reading, walking, and watching TV, which do not require a lot of effort, but rather time; it is more like a free-time activity that is a pleasure for both grandmothers and grandchildren. “Active” behaviour indicates a deeper and more frequent involvement of grandmothers, when they have to make special emotional and physical efforts to play with their grandchildren, do homework together, and organize some special cultural activity. The “remote” type might imply that grandmothers are not only busy with the actual care of their grandchildren (including cooking dinner, doing laundry, and others), but are also working the dacha. Grandchildren spend summer holidays at babushkas’ dacha, but because grandmothers are occupied with other things, there is less room left for playing together and reading. For Krasnova, the important criteria of quality time in relationships between grandmothers and grandchildren are the frequency of visits or amount of time spent together and the so-called “cultural” and “educational” activities, such as going to theatre, exhibitions, etc. Moscow grandmothers, according to the research, provide more “cultural” and “educational” upbringing compared with grandmothers in Moscow’s suburbs (Krasnova, 2000).

While I agree with the useful application of the terms “formal”, “active”, and “remote” to depict the various levels of involvement of grandmothers in their grandchildren’s lives, I have found the ways they are distinguished in Krasnova’s research to be somewhat problematic. Both Krasnova’s and Semenova’s research (earlier) examine the quality of relationships between grandmothers and grandchildren from a particular socio-cultural perspective with certain values and norms. In Semenova’s analysis, the richness of relationships tends to be measured against the pre-revolutionary elite background of babushkas, whereas Krasnova’s framework of analysis seems to be influenced by values of Soviet urban modernity with its ideal of the “educated and cultural person” (*obrazovannyĭ i kulturnyĭ chelovek*), the qualities of *kul’turnost’* (Kelly C., 1998).

My data suggest that the dacha activity can be an unforgettable and powerful experience for both a grandmother and a grandchild, including eating a babushka’s borscht, homemade pies, and fresh vegetables just taken from a garden. Elsa told me that when she and her husband spend summer vacations with their grandchildren at the dacha, the whole dacha experience is played out as a game in which everybody has his or her own responsibilities and rights. Elena told me that it is always a pleasure to be with her three grandchildren at the dacha when she can “spoil” them with homemade pies and pancakes, as well as a plenty of fresh berries. Grandchildren are also given

some tasks about their garden. Similarly, Vera and Marina sentimentally recollected summer vacation experiences with their grandchildren at the dacha.

In my view, Krasnova's classification does not consider that just the co-living of a grandmother and a grandchild in a certain context of a daily routine without direct explicit "cultural" elements of "modern" upbringing might be quality time in itself. As Janet Carsten puts it, "the memories of houses occupied in childhood may continue to exert a vivid emotional power (at once pleasant and disturbing) even when in adulthood we may be spatially as well as temporally dislocated from the houses we long ago ceased to inhabit" (Carsten, 2003, p. 27). Therefore, seeing the dacha in a context of "formal" and "remote" grandmothering might be inaccurate.

Furthermore, Krasnova's research distinguishes between different grandmothering phases that are defined by the age of their grandchildren, the social status of elderly women, and their health condition (Krasnova, 2000, p. 108). For example, drawing on connections between the age of grandmothers and the age of children, Krasnova concludes that when children are small, babushkas, usually "young grandmothers" at the age of forty-seven to fifty-one, *formally* undertake their babushka responsibilities – reading, watching TV together with their grandchildren, "feeding" (family), and "walking" (Krasnova, 2000, p. 110). Again, from a perspective of my data, "feeding", walking babies in their prams, and changing nappies can be also ranged as *active* grandmothering.

One of Krasnova's observations is that there are different stages of grandparenthood. In addition to "young grandmothers", which is seen as the first stage of grandparenthood, she also points to a second stage when "old grandmothers", aged between fifty-eight and sixty-two years, are less involved in grandparenting and helping their families but focus on "keeping family traditions and values". The third stage is typical for grandmothers with grown-up grandchildren when they become "remote" in their grandmothering; at that stage, they need more care themselves. She argues that different types of babushkas, formal and symbolic, devoted and remote, can be in all three stages of grandparenthood. My data have shown, however, that some grandmothers took active care of their grandchildren even at sixty to seventy years of age:

Lena [granddaughter] was born in 1991. My daughter lived with me. I took care of Lena, cleaning the flat, doing the dishes, cooking. Then Olga [daughter] came back to work, and I was with Lena. We placed her in a kindergarten, she went there for three months, but she went there very badly. Why had we got the child nervous? So she stayed with me at home until she went to school. We were reading books, drawing, playing in blocks. I told her: let's clean the floor. And she was cleaning. But I did not get her used to keep things in order; she does not put her clothes in the right place. She told me: I am like my mother. (Marina, born in 1927, 2006)

When Marina started taking care of her granddaughter, she was sixty-four years old, and she was the main care provider until the child went to school, i.e., when Marina became a seventy-one-year-old babushka. Even after that, she remained active in her role as a babushka of the family: she picked the girl up from school, cooked dinners, cleaned the flat, etc. Other interlocutors of this study, Vesta and Elena, who are in their sixties, are active as transnational babushkas (see Chapter V). Svetlana, at sixty-two years of age, works as a “babushka for payment” (see next section). Therefore, I would suggest that the term “old grandmothers”, if applied, should be used as a situated category. Whether women feel “young” and “old”, whether they are active or remote babushkas, is to a great extent defined by their health conditions and individual characters. Numerical age does not seem to be an important divider; it is more informative to look at grandmothers in terms of their health, level of energy, interest, or the family situation at large. In this context, age and grandmothering as a lived experience may differ from their social representations (Vakimo, 2001), while the age range suggested by Krasnova for “old grandmothers” can be expanded.

However, the idea of different stages of grandmothering across one woman’s life style, suggested by Krasnova, is applicable for my research. The types of grandmothering can change in response to the changing life circumstances in one babushka’s life, for example, during the transition from the position of a working babushka to a retired grandmother. When Marina was a working babushka, although officially retired, she helped her younger daughter with her two granddaughters: picking up from school, dropping and picking up from music school, cooking. She also spent summer holidays with them at dacha. When her other daughter, a single mother, gave birth to a daughter, Leena (as mentioned), Marina left her job and devoted herself entirely to child care. Now, with Marina already eighty-four years old, she is more remote in her grandmothering, indeed, focusing on keeping family history alive through family narration. Likewise, Evdokiya, who is seventy-eight years old, speaks of herself as an “old” babushka; Evdokiya’s narratives convey a sense that her care as the babushka of the family at this stage of parenthood is expressed more through praying and narrating family history (see Chapter VI). In this context, their role as babushkas can be as “the family historian”, an important aspect of grandmothering that Helena Hurme mentioned in her research of maternal grandmothers in Finland (Hurme, 1988, p. 82).

The practice of relativized babushkas has been also inherited from the Soviet period. Aleksandra, who has grandchildren of her own, became a relativized babushka for a “boy” (*mal’chik*) and a “girl” (*devochka*), as she called them, who used to live at her place at different times while they were studying at the university:

TT: *This tea is very nice!*

Aleksandra: *Yes, I got it as a present. There is a student, a girl from Segezha [a city in Russian Karelia]. She is studying at the university, the third year. She brought me sweets and tea, and then went to Segezha. They were allowed to go home on New Year vacation.*

TT: *Who is that girl to you?*

Aleksandra: *Well, she is just a girl. Her brother was also here. My husband's sister lives in Segezha. And they live in a flat under her flat. So they asked if their boy could live at our place for one year, and he lived here three years.*

TT: *Was he studying?*

Aleksandra: *Yes, he is now getting university degree in Leningrad [now St. Petersburg]. And now his sestrichka [a softer version of sister]. They know me, they come to visit me, and they come for my birthday. Their mother, she is a doctor, sent me this tea, and said that it is good for my health. (Aleksandra, born in 1937, 2008)*

Olga and Lubov have grown-up children, but have not yet become grandmothers. However, they act as relativized babushkas to their nieces' children. Lubov comes and stays with the children, cooking, cleaning, playing, and singing with them. Olga usually takes her nieces' children to her place where they stay for the whole day or some days. Both women have very close relationships with their nieces and their children, and help with child care and domestic work on a regular basis. This kind of help is part of wider family networks; for instance, the children's babushka in blood can call and ask Lubov to come and stay with her grandchildren.

Irina does not have grandchildren of her own (her two daughters do not yet have children of their own), but she actually acts as babushka towards the children of her brother's son. They also call her babushka. Her brother and his wife died, so she and her husband took the deceased couple's fifteen-year-old son into their family. When the boy got married and the young family had twins, Irina became babushka of their family.

Irina spends two months a year at her adopted son's place (he lives in another city) to help with the children, and her "grandsons" (*vnuki*, as she calls them) spend summer with their babushka in Petrozavodsk. Likewise, Vera's grandson spends summer with her and her husband in Petrozavodsk, and even lived at their place for a while when going to school, while his mother stayed in Nizhnevartovsk. It has become quite a common practice for some people to have their homes in Petrozavodsk and their work in St. Petersburg, as the wages are much higher in this big urban centre. They commute between these two cities, staying the working week in St. Petersburg and coming back on weekends to Petrozavodsk. In many cases, parents, especially translocally

mobile mothers, rely on the assistance of grandmothers in Petrozavodsk. In the above practices, one can easily trace the continuity with translocal grandmothing of the Soviet period.

Scarcity of Resources and Importance of Family in Russian Karelia

Individualization tendencies already marked some people's lives in the late Soviet period, but these have become more widespread in contemporary Russia due to postsocialist transformations, particularly in conjunction with influences of transnationalism. I would assume that a new understanding of family (which connotes Western European or American nuclear family) and the confined role of a grandmother may be increasingly applied in the so-called new middle class, as discussed in recent research literature on the gender system in contemporary Russia (Zdravomyslova, Rotkirch, & Temkina, 2009). This group consciously tries to avoid living according to "Soviet standards", and informants say that they do not want to be "Soviet women" (Zdravomyslova, Rotkirch, & Temkina, 2009, p. 12). However, I also suggest that the explicit rejection of everything Soviet does not necessarily mean that the Soviet norms and values are not applied: the point of reference and evaluation remains Soviet (Chapter VIII).

According to a recent research on the new middle class in contemporary Russia, the "liberation of women from the excessive burden of home work" becomes possible through the redistribution of family roles, the "commercialization of home work" (particularly child care), the formation of a social service market, and changes in gender ideologies. A woman becomes a "manager responsible for the organization of the home" (Zdravomyslova, Rotkirch, & Temkina, 2009, pp. 8, 14). However, the same research claims that women from the new middle class are enabled to have high-paying work, as home work and child care are now increasingly carried out by other women, from economically vulnerable social strata, the so-called "new poor" where "retired women" and "low-paid intelligentsia" belong (Zdravomyslova, Rotkirch, & Temkina, 2009, p. 16). My research discusses the everyday lives of these "retired women" who came to be on the economic margins after the Soviet collapse and whom the above research left beyond its scope.

There were prominent differences in the living standards between Moscow and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and a "provincial" city such as Petrozavodsk. These differences had an impact on gender relations and the way family was maintained, particularly the distribution of resources within the family. Even in the periods of "deficit" and crisis of the planned economy the cities of Moscow and Leningrad were always better provided in terms of food, clothes, electric home appliances, cars, etc. The Petrozavodsk-Leningrad train started being called a "sausage" (*kolbasa*),

as people from Petrozavodsk used to travel frequently to Leningrad to buy sausages along with other goods, and on the way back the train would smell of sausages. After the Soviet collapse and the increased inequalities in people's incomes, social differences became especially sharp, particularly the differences between Moscow and St. Petersburg on the one hand, and Russian Karelia²⁷ on the other. There are, of course, differences related to age, social strata, ethnic belonging, and other factors within a certain urban space, particularly within Moscow (especially in the light of recent dynamic migration from within the post-Soviet space to the capital of the Russian Federation) or within Petrozavodsk, the capital of Russian Karelia.

The gradually emerging new habitus of the middle class is less prominent in contemporary Russian Karelia, where this social stratum constitutes the minority of the population. In Russian Karelia, because of the lower living standards and the permanent scarcity of resources on public and private levels, opportunities for the commercialization of care and the "liberation of women" from domestic work and care remain constrained. My study has shown rather that there is considerable continuity with the previous Soviet gender system, and the contemporary gender contract in the urban space in Russian Karelia is characterized by three-generation family ties, the working mother contract, babushka care, and the masculinity that conveys a constrained image of fatherhood. Nevertheless, relationships between women and the state have changed. Marina Kiblitckaya suggests calling the contemporary generation of working women "divorced from the state", pointing to the fact that the state is no longer an ideological and social protector of female employment (Kiblitckaya, 2000).

Contemporary grandmothing and family-making in Russian Karelia have been affected by new tendencies, triggered by postsocialist transformation, increased cosmopolitanism through media and domestication of the global trends, as well as the revival of the "old tradition", the Russian Orthodoxy. This adds to the variety of ways family and grandmothing are maintained, but the logic of making family and the understanding of the role of babushka are still to a great extent influenced by the practices prominent during Soviet times. This social inertia of the Soviet family practices, I believe, is a specific feature of Russian Karelia as a region, and probably to a certain extent characterizes the so-called peripheral urban Russia, as some recent anthropological studies have illustrated.

For instance, the continuity of Soviet gender patterns in "typical" urban Russia has been traced by Tania Rands Lyon. Relying on data collected in Saratov, a midsize city with population of one million, located on the Volga River, Lyon has demonstrated that there is a difference between the rhetoric on "housewife fantasies" and the actual lived experiences of women: forged during Soviet times, "ideas of sexual equality and the importance of work to woman's identity remain very

much a part of the Post-Soviet cultural landscape” (Lyon, 2006, p. 36). Likewise, Marina Kiblitckaya (basing on life stories of Muscovite women) argues that in post-Soviet Russia the “survival of the family” depends on the women’s work; she emphasizes women’s better skills (as opposed to those of men) in adapting in a new labour market situation, in which the decisive “pushing” factor is their primary concern and increased feeling of responsibility for their families (again, as opposed to men) (Kiblitckaya, 2000, p. 67).

Marina Blagojevic, examining the war in the former Yugoslavia and the situation it created in Serbia from a perspective of gender and everyday life, suggests that the “current everyday life is based on continuity with the characteristics of everyday life prevailing in the period of communism” (Blagojevic, 1994, p. 470). Underlining the “cyclical renewal” and “cyclical endurance” of everyday life, she also points to its “incredible adaptability” to establish itself at any level, “seeking routinization”. Under circumstances of war and deprivation by war, everyday life is exposed to shocks that make its routinization almost impossible: “everyday life becomes ‘agitated’ and may induce social changes” (Ibid.). In the Serbian context, as Blagojevic suggests, the continuity has been accomplished through a number of essential elements, one of which was scarcity, “the main determinant of everyday life in the previous system” (as well as triviality, conflictiveness, lagging, and sacrificing). Scarcity of resources (living houses, clothes, food) kept renewing collectives and the importance of belonging to a group, the family, which remained primarily a “female sphere”. The impossibility of meeting the basic necessities outside a group permanently reinforces groups and weakens individualism. The war brought scarcity to the extreme and intensified the role and importance of women in the reproduction of everyday life.

I have found Blagojevic’s analytical and explanatory framework to be useful when thinking of postsocialist changes in Russian Karelia. Of course, the war in Yugoslavia was an extreme case of transition from the previous system to the new one. It was marked by ethnic and religious conflicts, formation of new national states, a “double rupture” – post-war reconstruction and political-economic transformation – not to mention “foreign intervention” (Jansen, 2007). However, the postsocialist transformation in Russia, and Russian Karelia, accompanied by the economic crisis in the 1990s had a shock effect on people’s everyday lives. As in the Serbian case (according to Blagojevic), the drop in living standards intensified the role of women, particularly grandmothers, who often contributed to the survival of their extended families in Russian Karelia, and continue to do so as migrant babushkas in Finland (Chapter VI).

Scarcity of resources has been one of the elements through which continuity has been provided. Three-generation family ties, essential for the reproduction of everyday life routine during Soviet times, became “activated” when scarcity reached its peak in the 1990s. The scarcity

of goods, prominent during Soviet times and culminating during perestroika, was replaced by the scarcity of money in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. The continuity was particular in that old techniques and skills were applied to survive the crisis. Low living standards in Russian Karelia in many ways led to the continuity of the Soviet situation: Karelia was and remains a so-called “subsidized region” (*dotatsionnyĭ region*), i.e., a Russian Federation subject financially dependent upon the federal budget. According to Alexandr Pashkov, in Russian Karelia the “economic crisis is not over yet, the demographic recession continues, and the standard of living is rather low” (2007, p. 107). The prominent scarcity of resources in Russian Karelia slows down the individualization processes and neoliberal trends as three-generation family ties remain important for the family’s everyday survival. Thus, babushka care as expressed in child care, help in domestic work, and material help to children and grandchildren, continues to be both part and reproducer of extended family ties.

Of course, I do not aim to reduce the persistence of extended family ties to the structural explanation. Nevertheless, the scarcity of resources has been an important “enabling” (in Giddens’s meaning, (Giddens, 1984)) element in the reproduction of three-generation family ties from Soviet to contemporary Russian Karelia. Certainly, other social and cultural factors have been equally significant; for instance, the Soviet subjectivities of grandmothers can be seen as a crucial element in the social reproduction of three- to four-generation family ties (Chapter VIII). At this point, it is important to note that transnational grandmothing is an interesting indication of the continued use of grandmothing practices rooted in the Soviet (gender) culture (Chapter V). Of course, the scarcity often marks the lives of those living in Russian Karelia, and those who are economically better off (migrant grandmothers, migrant adult children of translocal babushkas and of grandmothers staying put) tend to balance the economy of the extended family by providing material assistance to economically vulnerable family members.

4.4 New Understandings and Aspects of Grandmothing

Although a lot of has been inherited from the Soviet period, grandmothing and family practices are increasingly shaped and informed by postsocialist transformations. Much of this is accomplished by a particular enactment of market, particularly in everyday life (Humphrey & Mandel, 2002); increased transnational cultural flows through cosmopolitanism in Arjun Appadurai’s sense, channelled through “cinema, video, restaurants, spectator sports, and tourism” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 64); global enactment of the culture of neoliberalism (Comaroff J., Comaroff,

Weller, & Robert, 2001); and domestication of neoliberalism as a global model (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2012) into the Russian context.

Arjun Appadurai suggests the notion of “today’s cosmopolitanism” that combines experiences of various media with various forms of experiences. However, I would like to distinguish between these two notions, to specify different cultural contexts of this kind of transnational flows. Appadurai draws primarily on a contemporary Indian context, in which the effects of transnational influences, including colonialism, have been long term and deeper. The history of colonialism continues to affect and facilitate “today’s cosmopolitanism” in India, particularly through the common application of the English language. This is not the case for Russia, which was isolated from so-called Western capitalist countries for more than seventy years.

In contrast to India, most Russians, especially mid-life and elderly women and men, do not speak English at all, while movies and programs continue to be dubbed. It is remarkable, however, that non-Russian programs, movies, and soap operas channel new understandings and images of love, family, relations between men and women, and the role of grandmothers. They are the most significant mediators of cosmopolitanism in the lives of people of a mature age who do not always feel at ease with the Internet, in contrast to younger generations.

New understandings of grandmotherhood emerged in contemporary Russian Karelia. These were also linked to the actual enactment of market reforms and increased domestication of such Western notions as individualism, neoliberalism, and freedom, which on the level of everyday life are translated into the desire to live one’s “own life”. Increased individualism and the disregard of collectivism were already features of the late Soviet period, but the collapse of the Soviet system, the emergence of the private sector, and the democratization of the public space have certainly intensified and strengthened individualization processes (Zdravomyslova, Rotkirch, & Temkina, 2009).

It has also been argued that postsocialist development was marked by gender multiplication, which points to the fact that “the market, globalization, a large civil society, and the like enable a diverse array of strategies and tactics that women and men may use to construct the version of gender that they believe will help them to survive, if not thrive” (Johnson and Robinson, 2006, p. 2). Seeing grandmotherhood as one of the gender strategies, I may conclude that the post-Soviet space offered more opportunities to negotiate among different gender constructions, ranging from neotraditional ideologies, in which the traditional babushka fits in, to the ideologies that emphasize individual (professional, social, spiritual, etc.) growth and space. Furthermore, such “taken for granted” Western notions, such as market and democracy notions, are applied in the Russian context in different and unpredictable ways, producing specific practices (Humphrey, 2002).

Marketing of Babushka Care

The marketing of babushka care can be seen as one such practice. The increased operation of market values and transnational flows seem to have changed the understanding of care, which is now also seen as something that needs to be paid for. A new practice, which I call *babushka for reward*, emerged when adult children started “paying” their mothers and/or mothers-in-law and other female elderly relatives for child care:

My daughter had to return to her work very soon after delivery. I was already officially retired by that time, but I continued to work. My daughter asked me: Mum, how much is your salary? I will pay you as much as you earn now, and you can take care of Igor. I would have been taking care of him anyway, and she would have helped me with money in any case. I was happy to leave my work, and devote myself to my grandson. (Elena, born in 1950, 2006)

Svetlana was contacted by her niece, Elina, to take care of her baby son. Elina’s mother had been for many years divorced from Svetlana’s cousin, and by that time he had already passed away. Elina was a single mother, and she also wanted to work in a company run by her mother. So both Elina and her mother asked Svetlana to take of Elina’s son for a small amount. Svetlana seemed to be very happy with that arrangement, as it was good extra money on top of her pension.

It has also become quite popular among well-to-do families to hire an elderly woman to take care of the children and carry out domestic work. One of my interlocutors told me that her female friend worked as a babushka in the new-middle class families:

My friend used to take care of a boy. His mother was a kind of business woman, and his father also worked. She did everything there. That woman would have left all dirty dishes, laundry. So my friend took care of the boy, did all the dishes, cooked. She was very exhausted. But she told me that she did it for that boy, because she felt pity for him. His mother did not really take care of him; she was busy with dressing, making-up. (Lubov, born in 1954, 2006)

Babushka care is now even marketed in local newspapers, when some women of retired age offer these services alongside short-term child care when, for example, the child is sick and parents prefer not to or cannot afford to take a sick leave. In contrast to the Soviet period when a relativized non-blood grandmother got provided for by the family for child care, relativizing a woman into a grandmother of the family now begins on market terms in the case of marketed grandmothing in post-Soviet Karelia. Babushka for payment has become an important strategy of surviving for many retired women in the conditions of economic vulnerability in post-Soviet Karelia. However, it may mean that women’s input in child care and domestic work might be misused; whether she is “hired” by her family or by an outside family, the babushka may be overloaded, getting a modest reward. It

can be seen as an enactment of everyday economic practices (Humphrey & Mandel, 2002) or even a form of everyday entrepreneurship in postsocialist Russia (on enterprise culture in a particular context of Russia, see Watts, 2002). However, when a babushka in blood or any elderly female relative is involved, this practice can be also seen in the context of three-generation family mutual reciprocity: a grandmother helps with child care and is financially provided for by her children. However, this reciprocity now is also renegotiated in market terms.

The emergence of this phenomenon is remarkable, given that throughout decades of Soviet social realities making profit from selling goods and services privately was illegal, with state ideologies branding these activities as immoral and shameful (Humphrey & Mandel, 2002). Research on the ethnographies of postsocialism has convincingly illustrated that in everyday life economies people often negotiate between shame and pride when doing marketing of different kinds (Heyat, 2002; Kaneff, 2002). With regard to the babushka, I have observed that this kind of negotiation also took place among those grandmothers whom I interviewed. Therefore, they preferred to talk of these arrangements as help and material support from their children or as a necessary means for everyday survival.

The commercialization of care, particularly of child care, has been noted as a specific feature of the changing gender contract in Russia, triggered by various structural transformations, such as the development of the market economy, increased social stratification, and changes in social policy (Zdravomyslova, 2009). Elena Zdravomyslova distinguishes between babysitters and “traditional” nannies (*niania*, in Russian): in the first (western) pattern a professional employee is hired to do her job, which is child care, whereas in the second the old cultural pattern implies closer family relationships with an elderly woman taken into a family to take care of a child and often do domestic work. She is also expected to convey love and warmth, just as babushka. The latter example reminds one of relativizing the babushka into a family; according to Zdravomyslova, however, it also gives more opportunities for the actual misuse of the nannies’ labour. Nonetheless, I would suggest that the scale of commercialization of care varies across social strata, urban and rural spaces, big urban centres and Russian periphery. The commercialization of care is increasingly typical for the new middle class in Russia, which does not represent the bulk of the Russian population, and is concentrated in big urban centres (administratively, commercially, and industrially important). I would suggest that the intensity and the scale of the process of commercialization of care in Russian Karelia are more modest than, for example, in St. Petersburg, where data for Zdravomyslova’s research were collected.

Nevertheless, not only has babushka care become a kind of market commodity in contemporary Russia, but the image of the babushka and its strong symbolic meaning is also

increasingly applied in marketing other products. For instance, there are a lot of dairy products with images of babushka; one company offers dairy products *v derevne u babushki* (in the village at babushka's), appealing to the feelings associated with the common Soviet grandmothing practice discussed above. Baby food is marketed under the name *babushkino lukoshko* (babushka's basket). Even the market of the so-called "new spiritualities" exploits the association of the babushka with traditional healing practices (Chapter VII). Application of a grandmother's image in marketing products is not a new phenomenon. For instance, Sinikka Vakimo argues that grannifying images of a woman are applied in advertisements, school books, and other books for children (Vakimo, 2001, p. 307). However, in contrast to Vakimo's observation based on the Finnish context, representations of babushkas applied in the Russian market often convey a dignified image of the babushka, appealing to her associations with love, family, and care. However, there may be also some grannifying representations of the babushka both in Russian media and anecdotes.

Marketing the babushka in child care service, offering the babushka's healing skills in the market of new spiritualities, and applying the babushka's image in marketing food items are illustrative examples of how market values (or transnational neoliberal trends) are enacted in the Russian context by appealing to something that is culturally cherished. Neoliberalism that draws on assumptions of competitive individualism, rational choice, and the efficiency of free-private market forces (Harrison, 2008, p. 209) has converted babushka care into a commodity of its own kind. In practice, this is an illustrative example of how neoliberal ways of thinking inform both family-making and child care arrangements in general. It also shows that babushkas themselves may now be more aware of the market value of the care they provide.

In this context, the marketing of babushkas can be interpreted as a social change triggered by market reforms in postsocialist Russia (Humphrey & Mandel, 2002), globalization of the culture of neoliberalism (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2000), and political enactment of global trends of neoliberalism into the Russian political sphere. As part of the same process, the domestication of the transnational trend of neoliberalism paradoxically reinforces the so-called "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995) (Alasuutari & Qadir, forthcoming) appealing to and reconstructing the babushka as a symbol of Russian national belonging. From a perspective of "today's cosmopolitanism", the marketing of babushkas appears as a Russian social and cultural phenomenon that has been transformed in a specific marketable commodity in the mills of complex, "transnational cultural flows" (Appadurai, 1996).

Religious/Spiritual Resurgence and Individualization Processes

The postsocialist transformation has been accompanied by religious and spiritual renewal in contemporary Russia, which is particularly manifested in “Russian Orthodoxy resurgence” (Garrard & Garrard, 2009; Roudometof, Agadjanian, & Pankhurst, 2005; Rousselet & Agadjanian, 2010), the revitalization of shamanistic practices (Humphrey, 2002), and the popularization of “alternative” or “New Age” spiritualities (Heelas, 2009; Lindquist, 2006; Feleky, 2010). These new circumstances have created new conditions in which women increasingly apply religion in family-making and grandmothering (Chapter VII). This signifies a remarkable change in the way babushka care could now be expressed. More women started applying religious practices in their grandmothering, such as praying, which became a significant cognitive component of transnational grandmothering (Chapter V). For those grandmothers who were committed to religion during Soviet times, the post-Soviet space enabled them to follow their practices publicly and openly (without fear, as it used to be before) transfer these practices to their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren (Chapter VII). For younger grandmothers it could have meant a return to religion, often inspired by childhood memories of their “religious” babushkas.

In this context, spiritual development could have been taking the form of the individualization tendencies in grandmothering (below). I introduce these two aspects of grandmothering, namely, religious/spiritual resurgence and individualization processes, as new aspects of contemporary grandmothering compared with the Soviet period. However, these two aspects can also be seen as the evolution of some Soviet practices of grandmothering. As I have argued, the religious aspect could have remained significant, particularly in rural grandmothering even during Soviet times, while some working babushkas already tended to prioritize work and public involvement over their grandmothering practices at that time. In the postsocialist context, however, these tendencies have become more clearly articulated and also significantly shaped by postsocialist transformations and transnational cultural flows.

Nadezhda, one of my interlocutors, admits the influence of her babushka, and calls herself Orthodox. However, Nadezhda combines Orthodox practices with other practices, which can also be seen as part of transnational cultural flows that brought “new spiritualities” in the Russian context (Chapter V). Huge amounts and varieties of books, videos, magazines, calendars, and the like, particularly connected with what in the West would be categorized as belonging to the New Age movements, became increasingly available after the Soviet collapse (Lindquist, 2006).

Nadezhda combines various practices for her “spiritual development”. She sees her participation in different cultural associations (*obshestva*), her hosting of foreign guests from Germany and America, and her keeping correspondence with them as part of this spiritual development:

I have started studying Greek this year. On Tuesday, I have Norwegian language classes. On Thursdays I am singing in a choir. I am also signing up for German. From my childhood, I liked hearing when somebody was talking some foreign language. When we were in Germany [Nadezhda’s father was an officer in Soviet army in Eastern Germany], I liked the culture of interaction among people there... During summer I was hosting a German. He had a practice from language courses. So we were talking, and I corrected him. I was also paid for hosting him, which is good... My mother said: You sheltered that German, and did not invite the in-laws of your own son. (Nadezhda, born in 1952, 2008).

Nadezhda was eager to share with me pictures of her foreign visitors, but not pictures of her family. These cultural associations and the organization of Russian language classes for foreign visitors with their hosting by local families also manifest the application of everyday life transnationalism in contemporary Russian Karelia. For Nadezhda, these transnational encounters and free-time activity seem to be more important than family-making or grandmothering. She divorced her husband some years ago, and her daughter lives with her father, Nadezhda’s ex-husband; her son is married and has two children (one from the previous marriage). She only once mentioned, when I asked about her older grandson, that she goes with him to a circus or for a walk. Grandmothering experiences occupy minor spaces in Nadezhda’s narratives, and they are often interwoven with family conflicts, especially the complicated relationship with her mother and ex-husband:

I got sick when my grandchild was born. So I could not go there. But I called her [her daughter-in-law]. Then I got better, and they [her daughter-in-law’s parents] stayed at their place. I called and I and my mother came there, but they left. I don’t know whether they did it on purpose. My mother also played a certain role in this. When we were at their wedding, she was sitting with him [Nadezhda’s former husband]. She supports him, not me (...). I called, and they knew that I would come. They just neglected me. (Nadezhda, born in 1952, 2008)

Nadezhda is a “distant” grandmother, and being *babushka* appears as the minor aspect of the self. Nadezhda’s case represents a new understanding of grandmothering when an individual is more inclined to have her own space. Family narratives appear in her story mostly in a negative connotation: her mother who has been always trying to take “command” over Nadezhda, or her ex-husband who did not suit her “spiritually”.

On closer look, however, one can see that the very fact that family narratives are substantial (although in negative colours) and occupy a lot of space indicates that family still acts as an

important framework and source of Nadezhda's identity. Nadezhda emphasizes her spiritual practices and transnational cultural activity, but the litany over her contradictions and conflicts with her mother and her ex-husband occupy a lot of space. Individualism in Nadezhda's narratives also appears as a strategy to overcome suppressive family space, conveyed primarily by her mother. This case again reveals the micro-powers of some elderly women (in this case, Nadezhda's mother) in the family domain (Chapter VI).

5. Transnational Grandmothering and Recreating Families between Russian Karelia and Finland

The Soviet collapse and the formation of new national states out of former Soviet republics, the subsequent liberation of the cross-border regime, and the unprecedented flows of migration both within the former Soviet space and beyond have all dramatically changed the everyday lives of Russians. People's moves between Russia and Finland, particularly between Russian Karelia and Finland, now constitute one of the most dynamic areas of transnational everyday-life interactions and mobility due to both the geopolitical, historical, and cultural context and the immediate political and social changes. Among the latter, the repatriation programme of Ingrian "returnees", allowing people with Ingrian Finnish roots to move from Russia and other former Soviet republics to Finland, was a key political decision. The programme speeded up migration across the Russian-Finnish border and drastically increased the numbers of Russian migrants in Finland. Russians are now the largest migrant group in Finland, and approximately half of them migrated on the basis of their Ingrian ethnic belonging (Davydova, 2009).

Transnational families have now become pronounced across the Finnish-Russian Karelian space. Grandmothers, often key figures in keeping extended family practices in Russian Karelia (Chapter VI), have had to face the challenges of migration and sustaining familyhood across national borders. Under new circumstances, transnational grandmothering has grown into a new social phenomenon in the transnational space between Finland and Russian Karelia. In this chapter I discuss transnational grandmothering both as concrete childcare practices, and as the important means of babushkas in making their transnational families. The role of a babushka is not confined to emotional and practical grandmothering. The babushka is more than a grandmother: she can be a house manager and family rescuer in times of economic crisis or provide material support to those living on the other side of the border. A babushka can be the one who has actually brought her extended family to Finland. She can be the omnipotent figure making family transnationally, but also the vulnerable aging babushka, taken care of by her adult children and grandchildren. The

chapter discusses various aspects of this transnational phenomenon, which are “re-orientating habitus” and “changing meanings, attitudes, and experiences” both “here” and “there” (Vertovec, 2004).

In the first section of the chapter, I will suggest and discuss the term *transnational babushka*, and propose different categories of transnational babushkas, highlighting differences in their ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic positions, and age differences. In the second section, I will focus on transnational grandmothering practices, underlining their specificities in a particular context between Russian Karelia and Finland. In the last section, I will look at transnational grandmothering and transnational babushkas in the context of transnational families whose members live simultaneously “in and between” different national settings (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). I am interested in how family is lived and imagined by babushkas and in their role in transnational family-making.

5.1 Transnational Babushkas

I suggest the term *transnational babushka* to discuss various aspects of transnational grandmothering and the changing everyday lives and subjectivities of grandmothers. In terms of the Russian-Karelian Finnish context, the term *transnational babushkas* immediately addresses two important features: the transnational experiences of contemporary babushkas on both sides of the Finnish-Russian border, on the one hand, and their anchorages in Russian/Soviet culture that continue to inform their selves and grandmothering practices, on the other.

I apply the term *babushka* to emphasize the continuity in the important role of grandmothers in child care and family-making. Furthermore, being and being called babushka constitutes a significant part of the self for many women: while narrating, some of them refer to themselves in the third person as babushkas. *Transnational* captures the radical changes going on in an increasingly transnational world: even babushka, something “traditional” and solid in Russian imagination, a symbol of “stoic endurance” (Ries, 1997, p. 88), becomes transnational as “the word on the move” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 61). Finally, the term *transnational babushka* enables discussions on the transformation of meanings and practices attached to a broader use of the term *babushka*, particularly its associations with love, care, warmth, and wisdom.

Migrant Grandmothers, Ingrian Babushkas

In discussing differences in the grandmothing practices and subjectivities of transnational babushkas I would roughly differentiate between three categories: *migrant grandmothers*, *transnationally mobile grandmothers*, and *grandmothers staying put (immobile)*. All these types of transnational babushkas are part of a transnational space, and contribute to transnational family-making, although in different ways; these differences will be discussed further. In this section, I intend to introduce migrant grandmothers who are those women who have moved to Finland, staying put within the new country of settlement most of the time.

Again, women as grandmothers are a diverse group in terms of age, social strata, ethnic belonging, grandmothing experiences, and, of course, individual life paths. The youngest migrant grandmother in my study, Anna, was forty-five years old, and had a six-year-old granddaughter at the time I interviewed her. Anna was thirty-six years younger than the oldest migrant grandmother, Inga, who had two adult grandchildren at the time I met and interviewed her. As I mentioned in Chapter II, I interviewed twelve migrant grandmothers in the framework of my fieldwork in Finland, but I also refer to the women whom I talked to and whose permission I asked to draw on their narratives.

Most of the migrant grandmothers whom I interviewed had experienced significant economic problems in Russia before they moved to Finland. Migration itself was often seen as a new hope, a way of escaping the difficulties of social and economic post-Soviet realities, marked by a high degree of uncertainty. Concern about their grandchildren's future appeared as one of the main reasons behind migration in some women's narratives:

We moved to Finland in 1998. We decided to move because of our grandchildren. There was no future there: no work, no wages paid, pensions were very low... (Liliya, born in 1932, 2007)

Transnational grandmothing in the Russian-Finnish context is a particular case in that many migrant grandmothers share an Ingrian Finnish background. The Ingrian Finnish roots enabled them to move to Finland as "returnees" under the repatriation programme initiated by Finnish president Mauno Koivisto in the 1990s. In fact, elderly Ingrian women often brought their extended families to Finland. Inga first came to Finland in 1989 to take care of an old Finnish woman. When the repatriation programme was launched, Inga took care of all required documents and certificates, found a flat, and brought her husband, her daughter, and her other daughter with

her husband and two granddaughters to Finland. Liliya organized both the legal and the practical aspects of the migration of her husband, her daughter and her husband, and two grandchildren. She emotionally exclaimed:

I have been always doing everything by myself, all these moves...Gena [husband] is like a small child... Also with Finland, I did everything by myself... And my daughter, she has got his [husband's] character. (Liliya, born in 1932, 2006)

Liliya's narratives are marked by a self-sacrificing heroic tone, which can be seen as a particular feature of many grandmothers' narratives (Chapter VI). Elderly Ingrian women, who had some knowledge of the Finnish language from their childhood, practically facilitated the migration of their extended families to Finland. They were often agents of these family moves, and through this migration they also hoped to rescue their close family members from the harsh realities of post-Soviet Russia. In some cases daughters with an Ingrian Finnish background (who are often grandmothers themselves in their fifties and sixties) took the initiative to move to Finland, and brought along their aging mothers to take care of them. For instance, Riita explains the history of her arrival by her daughter's insistence:

They just came and told me that I have to go with them. My daughter told me that she would feel easier and calmer to have me near her. (Riita, born in 1932, 2008)

This active role of mid-life and elderly Ingrian grandmothers in the migration of their extended families, which was in many ways enabled by the political decision on Ingrian returnees in Finland, is a specific case when discussing the migration of older people in a postsocialist context. For instance, in the case of postcommunist Albania, old people are often those who are "abandoned" by their adult children migrating mainly to Greece and Italy in search of a better life, and the "denial of the practice of grandparenting" makes this separation even more painful (Vullnetari & King, 2008, p. 139). Likewise, among Bulgarian Muslim migrants in Spain, migrants between twenty-six and thirty-three years of age tend to act as a "pulling" factor, affecting the migration choices of "parents" group aged between forty-five and sixty (Deneva, 2009, p. 6). In both studies, younger people were more active in migration; in contrast, in the Ingrian case, such an observation would be incorrect, as mid-life and elderly women were as active (if not more) as migrants of younger generations.

There are, of course, grandmothers of non-Ingrian backgrounds who have also migrated to Finland, for example as wives of Ingrian Finnish men (as Uljana) or to get married to a Finnish man (for instance, Eleonora). The reason of migration was often articulated merely as family survival;

Uljana told me that they did not think much and decided very quickly to move to Finland when they found out about that possibility:

We decided to move very spontaneously. It was the year 1994. My husband's mother's sister lived here already. My husband and my son wanted to go to Finland to visit her. They came to the consulate and they told them there that now Ingrians could move to Finland, first getting one year visa, and then it would be extended. They came home, and we decided that they [her husband and older son] would move to Finland first. They collected all documents, applied and went to Finland. They were helped to find a flat there. In two weeks, they started writing to us so that we would also come. I also moved, but my youngest son had to stay to finish his studies at the university, only one year was left... It was very difficult for me in the beginning, I did not speak the language. But I was afraid to come back. I had not been getting any salary there for a long time. My mother always helped us. She used to give her pension to us, and we all lived on that. I cooked soup for them [men of the family], and I would be eating just bullion with a bread crust. (Uljana, born in 1947, 2008)

Some women actually moved to Finland for the purpose of providing child care as grandmothers:

I remember when my daughter was young, she used to sit near the window and dream that she would marry somebody abroad. She never wanted to live in Russia. So it happened. She married a Finnish man. Soon after she gave birth to her daughter, she asked me to come and help with the child. So I came and stayed to live in Finland. (Julia, born in 1930, 2008)

Julia and her daughter's family now live in the same house and on the same floor, but in different flats, to see each other as often as they want. As Julia moved to Finland almost twelve years ago, it was procedurally easier to stay in Finland on the basis of family reunification or for the purpose of providing hands-on-care to an elderly parent. Finnish migration policies have now become stricter in following the nuclear family formula, according to which a grandmother or a mother of an adult child is not considered a family member. Legislatively, discursively, and in an everyday life context, the family in Finland tends to be defined as a nuclear family composed of a (heterosexual) couple with their children (Vuori, 2001; Oinonen, 2004, p. 86; Pöllänen, 2008, p. 155).

Randy K. Lippert and Mikka Pyykkönen refer to the so-called “grandma cases” in the Finnish context when the residence applications of two grandmothers of a former asylum seeker from Egypt and of a Russian “marriage migrant”, respectively, were repeatedly denied by Finnish Immigration authorities. They see these cases as a “visible” response of Finnish immigration policy to demands in restrictions of family unifications (Lippert & Pyykkönen, 2012, p. 48). Both cases were intensively discussed in the Finnish media and on-line forums. In the Russian media, the case

was often represented as an “attack” on “the Russian babushka” Irina Antonova, who had been “evicted” or “deported” from Finland (Krakovtsev, 2011; Rytova, 2011); it has resonated nationally, again illustrating the cultural and symbolic importance of the babushka in the Russian imagination.

Uljana told me that it had taken a lot of work for her to arrange her mother’s move to Finland; she had to collect a lot of medical documents to prove that her mother was not able to take care of herself should she remain in Petrozavodsk. During one of my mini-bus trips, I met a young mother with her son travelling to Petrozavodsk to “see babushka”, her mother. The woman told me that she tried to bring her mother to Finland but the Finnish authorities denied the case. After the much-discussed Irina Antonova case, and especially the final decision (eventually Irina Antonova was denied a residence permit in Finland, was transported back to Russia, and soon died in an old people’s home there), it has become even more difficult for Russian elderly women to move to Finland on the basis of being a mother (of an adult) or a grandmother. In these circumstances, the option left for many grandmothers who want to be active in their role as babushkas, and who are retired and still in good health, is to travel back and forth, making the best of the existing visa regime.

Transnationally Mobile Grandmothers

By transnational babushkas who are more or less regularly travelling “in-between” Russian Karelia and Finland, living and staying “here” and “there”, I mean transnationally travelling/mobile grandmothers. Two grandmothers whom I interviewed, Vesta and Elena, can be called transnationally travelling grandmothers. As Vesta is one of my key-interlocutors, with whom I had long-term interaction, this enabled me to observe transnational grandmothers almost on a daily basis during the months I stayed in Petrozavodsk. Furthermore, my cross-border ethnography allowed me to understand that transnational grandmothers has become quite a common practice for some babushkas. Transnational grandmothers and the family lives of these women are to a great extent defined by the Finnish visa regime with the Russian Federation, which allows Russian citizens to apply for a visa maximum for ninety days within half a year:

During this half a year I was in Finland three times, five-six times per year, spending one month every time. At Julia’s [the younger daughter’s] place I am walking with the kids, two times before dinner, 1,5 an hour after dinner. I am also playing with them at home. Julia is now cooking by herself and I am mostly with the children. We have also been to the Entertainment park in Tampere! With Misha [the elder grandson] we are walking long distances. When I am at my older daughter’s

place I am cooking, watching TV, reading, and cleaning the house. They come home, and we eat supper together. We go shopping often, and take a walk before we go to the bed. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

Vesta's daughters moved to Finland with their families and settled in different cities in Finland. When Vesta goes to Finland she stays primarily with her younger daughter, whose two children need more practical care from a babushka than her other two grown-up grandsons, the sons of her other daughter. Earlier, Vesta had moved to Petrozavodsk from somewhere else in Russia (I will call this place city S., as Vesta did not want the name of the city to be revealed), again with the purpose of assisting both her daughters with child care. Now she lives in her younger daughter's flat in Petrozavodsk. The flat was in fact purchased with the money that Vesta received by selling her flat in S. At that time, they did not yet plan to move to Finland, and Vesta wanted to help them with flat arrangements. Because of her relative recent move from S. to Petrozavodsk, Vesta is still trying to make this place her own and devotes a lot of time to the free-time activity, as well as socializing and at times "relativizing" with her new neighbours:

I am not bored in Petrozavodsk. I have found myself here. When I was walking with my grandchildren here, I got to know some neighbours, and I am meeting them now. I am singing now in a choir. I have also started to take classes in dancing, belly dancing, and Spanish dancing. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

In terms of socio-cultural background, transnationally travelling grandmothers are not that different from migrant grandmothers. As I will discuss later, however, their economic status is more vulnerable, and they might be to a certain extent financially dependent upon their adult children living in Finland and/or in Russia.

Most transnationally mobile grandmothers are Russian citizens, and their official "home" is in Russian Karelia (or elsewhere in Russia). My data show that those women who migrate to Finland (migrant grandmothers) do not often become transnationally travelling grandmothers. One possible explanation is the difference between the retirement age in Russian Karelia (50) and in Finland (65-67). Because of the early retirement age, grandmothers in Russian Karelia who are still in relatively good health can travel quite often across borders, meeting the requirements of the visa regime. Migrant babushkas in Finland, even though they may not necessarily work, are obliged to attend language courses and/or participate in so-called "work practices" (*työharjoittelu*), giving them a right for social allowances by the Finnish state. Most migrant grandmothers whom I interviewed can visit Russia only once a year. By the time the women achieve retirement age in Finland, they are either not healthy enough to travel so often or their grandchildren (on the other

side of the border) are grown up and a grandmother's help is no longer needed the way it is when children are small, and often both reasons are important.

However, some migrant babushkas do their best to be active grandmothers towards their grandchildren living on the Russian side of the border. For instance, Anfisa is a very caring and loving grandmother, and is "terribly missing" her grandchildren; she told me that she moved to Finland only because her husband insisted. Two of her children moved with them, while her two older daughters got married and stayed in Russia. Once, when I met her, she told me after a while that she had just returned from Russia where she spent two months dropping and picking up (*vytaskala*) her grandchildren from school, and helping her daughter with cooking and cleaning.

Thus, an important feature of the group of transnationally travelling grandmothers is their health and age. I once observed an elderly woman who was travelling in a micro-bus with me: she was on her way to visit her daughter's family, including her grandchildren. However, she did not feel well throughout the whole trip, and kept repeating, "This is the last time I am coming to Finland; I am getting too old for this!" On the other hand, Liliya, being eighty-four years old, travels four times a year from Finland to Russia. Nevertheless, there are obviously limits to how long a woman can remain a transnationally mobile grandmother. Transnationally travelling grandmothers are, therefore, relatively young babushkas, and often are grandmothers of relatively small kids, when their help is especially needed. Many "old" babushkas cannot travel and, therefore, often belong to the category of grandmothers staying put.

Grandmothers Staying Put

My data show that the group of grandmothers staying put is primarily dominated either by women who are "too old" to travel across distances or "too young" working babushkas who either have not reached retirement age or continue working though retired. It is, of course, a matter of individual choice; some women of a mature age may choose not to travel for the sake of child care, as they may have other than grandmothing priorities in their lives.

Grandmothers staying put visit Finland rarely or maybe never, but they have some family members who have migrated to Finland and with whom they maintain relations. Their grandchildren come to Petrozavodsk to stay for summer holidays at the babushka's place or at the dacha. Galina's grandson, Andrey, whom she "raised by herself" (*vyrastila sama*), moved to Finland with his wife of an Ingrian origin and their son, Sasha. Galina has never been to Finland, but she continues to be involved in her grandson's life mainly through telephone calls and

babysitting her great-grandson when her grandson and his family come to stay in Petrozavodsk. Through telephone calls and Andrey's visits, Galina continues to be connected to her grandson, her great-grandson, and their family, who are now residing "there", in Finland. Although "there", they are also "here" in Galina's narratives, thoughts, and prayers, which have become an important channel of a babushka's care at a distance (Chapter VII).

The division between these three categories of grandmothers is subtle, as the actual practices are more diverse and overlapping. For instance, Elena is both a transnationally mobile grandmother who spends approximately five to six months a year in Finland, but also takes her granddaughter for summer vacation to Petrozavodsk, where they spend most of the time at the dacha.

Elaborating on a broader reading of the term *transnational babushka* and emphasizing the richness of the application of the concept of transnationalism, I would also highlight the transnational experiences of some grandmothers that have significantly affected their lives and subjectivities. Some women carry memories of having met people with different ethnic and national backgrounds, in different places and situations. Their memories sometimes vary greatly. For example, the Finnish occupation of some parts of Russian Karelia during the Continuation War (1941-1944) (Kulomaa, 2006) may have been experienced as something positive by women with a Karelian background, whereas women of Slavonic backgrounds recollect it as a devastating experience. Evdokiya, a babushka of Karelian origins, told me that Finns organized schools and summer camps in their village (though she did not use the word "occupation" but expressed it as *pri Finah*, "during Finns"), and she was taught to read the Bible and pray in Finnish, a practice she has been following to this day. Evdokiya has never moved, but her encounters with Finns during the war have played an important role in constituting her self, her religious practices in particular (Chapter VII). In contrast to Evdokiya's case, Finns for Anna's grandmother (with a Slavonic background) were those who "plundered her house and took everything so that she had nothing to feed her children with":

Babushka took very painfully my migration to Finland. She thought that I would be broken in pieces there. (Anna, born in 1962, 2007)

Varying Grandmothering Messages in the Context of Russian-Finnish Transnationalism

The peculiar history of Finnish-Russian relations and the specific ethnic composition of Russian Karelia also loom large in the contemporary practices of mobility across the border, and have influenced the ways in which babushkas act as grandmothers and see themselves in terms of their

ethnicity or as individual subjects. Depending on the ethnic backgrounds of grandmothers, and the histories of translocal and transnational moves, the grandmothering messages of transnational babushkas may vary. For instance, Ingrian grandmothers are a particular case in that migrating to Finland was sometimes experienced as returning to their Finnish roots; some women spoke of their move as “coming home” (see Chapter VIII). Some women’s narratives are built in somewhat Ingrian terms around the dramatic history of the suffering of Ingrian Finns during Stalinist rule, along with harsh criticism and alienation from everything that can be associated with Soviet.

In her research based on migrants’ written life stories, Laura Huttunen has also demonstrated that in narratives of Ingrian migrants, especially of those who have actually experienced the enforced moves and discrimination because of their Finnish ethnicity during Soviet times, the history of the Ingrian people and criticism of the Soviet system are tightly interwoven (Huttunen, 2002, p. 217). In this context, Ingrian grandmothers are often those who convey the dramatic events of the Ingrian history to their grandchildren; they often also encourage their grandchildren to speak Finnish. However, those Ingrian women, particularly younger ones, who have been more or less successfully “interpellated” into loyal Soviet citizens, are not necessarily interested in transferring Ingrianness across generations (Chapter VIII).

Helena Jerman, in her research on Russian migrants in Finland, suggests the term *hidden minority*: some Russian migrants might have a (deeply unconsciously rooted) fear of revealing their Russian belonging, which they try to “hide”, for example, by not speaking Russian in public places (Jerman, 2003, p. 504). Some migrant grandmothers prevent children from talking in Russian loudly in such public places as buses, living house halls, and children’s playing yards. I also kept observing one Russian migrant grandmother in the Orthodox Church who spoke only Finnish with her grandchildren, at least publicly. Thus, for instance, behind Ingrian grandmothers’ encouragement of their grandchildren to know the Finnish language may lie not only their call for returning to their Finnish roots, but also the fear of being associated with Russians.

However, the fear of revealing one’s Russian belonging should not be overestimated. I also often observed that grandchildren would speak Finnish as a more convenient language for them, and grandmothers would respond in Russian. Some migrant grandmothers make deliberate and serious efforts to teach their grandchildren Russian. For instance, Albina brought up her three grandchildren, one by one, when they were small (their parents lived and studied elsewhere), and the result of her efforts is that all three, although being educated in the Finnish schooling system, including high education, are fluent in their babushka’s mother tongue verbally, in writing, and in reading. Anastasiya also told me that she is teaching her grandson the Russian language. Elena

mentioned that she is always doing the Russian language homework with her granddaughter, as well as reading for her before she goes to sleep.

Transnationally travelling grandmothers and grandmothers staying put speak only Russian with their grandchildren; most of them do not speak Finnish at all. One can assume that for migrant Russian children, babushkas are important mediators of Russian belonging and culture, particularly through the language. If there is any discomfort in speaking Russian in public places, it is obviously compensated by talking Russian at home or within a transnational family space, as I discuss later.

It is possible to note that Ingrian grandmothers seem to find it easier to start feeling at “home” in Finland than do grandmothers with other ethnic backgrounds. It also makes a difference how long a grandmother has actually lived in Russian Karelia. Those grandmothers who happened to come to Russian Karelia in the course of translocal moves have not been profoundly interpellated by the histories of the Russian-Finnish transnationalism. It seems that for them it might be sometimes simpler to overcome the destructive effects of historical and cultural (constructed) distances when just a “smile” is what really matters:

I know some Finnish words, but I forget even those often. Then I smile, and they [Finns] smile back. I feel fine in Finland, and Finns treat [me and my family members] well. I am also communicating through Misha [a grandson]. I ask him to translate: What is the name of this boy? And he asks... Juliya does not talk Finnish yet, so she is talking in English. The older one knows Finnish very well. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

5.2 Transnational Grandmothering Practices

Geographical Proximity and Cross-border Regulations

In the recent literature related to transnational care-giving, particularly in relation to the experiences of old age and transnational mothering, it has been argued that actual physical distances may become an obstacle for maintaining day-to-day family relations and providing “hands-on” care (Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding, 2007; Vullnetari & King, 2008; Erel, 2002; Bernhard, Landolt, & Goldring, 2005; Parrenas R. S., 2010).

Parted family members can often experience this separation as painful and stressful, especially if the sending context is characterized by the prominence of extended family relationships with the pertinent mutual care across generations, for instance, between Italy with the “homeland kin” and Australia as the receiving country (Baldassar, 2007), or between Albania as the

sending site and Greece and Italy as the hosting ones (Vullnetari & King, 2008). Olena Nesteruk and Loren Marks, analysing the transnational family ties of Eastern European migrants (including Russians) in the United States “across ocean”, describe decreased connection and interaction with grandparents as the “biggest immigration-related loss” given “the central role of grandparents in raising grandchildren” (Nesteruk & Marks, 2009, pp. 84-85).

Against the complicated circumstances of maintaining family relations and grandmothering between Eastern Europe and the United States or Italy and Australia, transnational grandmothering between Russian Karelia and Finland appears to be easier to sustain in practical terms. Minna Zechner also emphasizes the short distance between Finland and Estonia as an enabling factor in transnational caregiving (Zechner, 2008, p. 36). To get from Russian Karelia to Finland, or the other way around, one does not need to cross the ocean. Although there is no direct railway connection between Petrozavodsk and Helsinki (or any other Finnish city), and while travelling by air is far too expensive, there are always easily available and affordable mini-buses and private cars that take passengers between these states. In fact, for somebody who lives in Russian Karelia to go to Finland to visit family members, meet friends, or just do shopping may be something more self-evident and “natural” than going to Moscow (not to mention other, remote parts of Russia).

This geographic proximity, along with well-established procedures of getting Finnish visas in Petrozavodsk and the predominantly legal character of migration from Russia to Finland, can be seen as significant factors facilitating transnational grandmothering. This is in contrast, for instance, to the Albanian case, where, although the distances are not huge, neither migrants nor their relatives can visit because of the illegal ways some migrants moved to Greece; moreover, travelling is pricy and not easily affordable for both migrants and their aging parents in Albania (Vullnetari & King, 2008).

More importantly, transnational grandmothering between Finland and Russia may vary a lot. If it is manageable between Russian Karelia and Finland (also between Finland and St. Petersburg, and Moscow as my participant observation has proved) due to the relative geographical proximity and well-developed travelling infrastructure, visiting becomes an obstacle for those who reside or migrate from other parts of Russia. For instance, Eleonora, who migrated to Finland seven years ago by marrying a Finnish man, told me that she only visits her daughter and six-year-old granddaughter in Rostov-na-Donu, located on the Don River, almost one thousand kilometres south of Moscow:

It is easier for me to go there and stay with them. They have to go to Moscow to apply for visa, then to pick it up. It is just too expensive and difficult. (Eleonora, born in 1960, 2010, fieldnote)

The institutional barrier that migrant grandmothers face in their transnational grandmothereing and family practices consists of the travel restrictions that define the eligibility for social security benefits. For instance, women who have not yet reached their retirement age, and attend language courses or work practices, are allowed twenty-one days of travelling abroad in a year. Minna Zechner argues that these restrictions in transnational mobility are among the main obstacles to transnational caregiving provided by migrant women towards their aging parents living in Russia and other former Soviet states (except for the Baltic states, which are part of the EU) (Zechner, 2008, p. 42). For instance, to receive unemployment benefits, travels abroad should not exceed six working days at a time.

As I suggested earlier, this institutional barrier in transnational mobility is one of the explanations why migrant grandmothers do not become transnationally mobile grandmothers. In fact, some of them look forward to retiring in Finland to be able to travel and stay with their relatives in Russia longer.

Maternal Grandmothereing as Prolonged Motherhood in a Transnational Space

As discussed in the previous chapter, postsocialist transformations in Russian Karelia have resulted in increased varieties of grandmothereing practices and identities, although the “traditional” (shaped by pre-revolutionary and Soviet) understanding of the babushka as an important figure in child care and extended family-making continues to be prominent. Transnational grandmothereing can be “formal”, “active”, and “remote” (or distant), just as in a contemporary Russian context (Krasnova, 2000), and grandmothereing practices depend on the age of grandchildren, the age and health conditions of grandmothers, and socio-cultural and individual backgrounds. As I argued in Chapter IV, Krasnova’s classification of babushkas’ behaviour is very useful but also has its limits; therefore I use the terms while explaining their constraints in a situated context.

One of the transnational grandmothereing practices that I observed among transnational babushkas was that some women tend to take entire responsibility for their grandchildren when the children are small. In psychology, this practice is sometimes called “surrogate parenting”; according to Helena Hurme’s research conducted in the late 1980s in Finland, 14% of her informants, maternal grandmothers, could have been placed into this category (Hurme, 1988, p. 82). Hurme points out that most cases consist of grandmothers whose daughters have full employment. This observation is in dialogue with my finding: maternal grandmothers are most active in

transnational grandmothing, and their primary motivation is to provide their daughters with the opportunities to work or study. However, I will disclose some cultural aspects of this phenomenon.

Firstly, I have encountered this practice among migrant grandmothers. For instance, a migrant grandmother, Elina, started taking care of her granddaughter when the latter was three months old. Elina's daughter first had to attend Finnish language courses, and then she started working. The priority for Elina was for her daughter to have time to study and work. When Elina's daughter divorced her Finnish husband, babushka help became even more needed. Elina, her husband, and her daughter and granddaughter live together now in a three-room flat. I met Elina often and she was always with her granddaughter, who is now five years old. Elina was on her bike, and her granddaughter was on hers. In the Russian context, one could hardly imagine a babushka cycling. Thus, being a transnational babushka may include some cultural changes and adopting new ways of acting.

The ultimate example of this grandmothing practice for me was a migrant grandmother, Larissa, whom I happened to meet during one of my micro-bus trips. Larissa was taking care of her granddaughter in Petrozavodsk so that her daughter could continue her university studies. When she and her husband decided to migrate to Finland, she was firm in taking her granddaughter with her:

They [her daughter and husband] did not want to move to Finland. But I could not imagine moving here without her my granddaughter. I brought her up by myself! She is like a daughter to me. (Larissa, 2009, fieldnote)

Although legislatively it was difficult to bring Larissa's granddaughter to Finland on the basis of grandparental ties, she succeeded in doing so. Now Larisa, her husband, and their granddaughter live in Finland, and the twelve-year-old girl visits her parents once or twice a year in Petrozavodsk. There is also a mirror example of Larissa's case found on the Russian side of the border.

Secondly, the maternal grandmothing practice of helping daughters is also present among transnationally travelling grandmothers and grandmothers staying put. Vesta and Elena travel back and forth between Finland and Russian Karelia to help with child care and domestic work. One of the important reasons articulated for this "active" grandmothing is to enable their daughters to study or work:

[In Petrozavodsk] when Julia was studying at the medical institute she got pregnant and I moved to their place [the daughter and her husband] to take care of Ivan [a grandson]. She could not miss one year of her study [in Finland]... Julia goes to courses every day, and I am with the kids. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

I am with Mashen'ka [a granddaughter, a softer version of Maria] all day long. She [Elena's daughter] has to study. (Elena, born in 1950, 2009)

Thirdly, even grandmothers staying put can sometimes practically replace a mother for a child, at least at some stages of their lives. During one of my trips I met a single mother who worked as a cleaner in Helsinki while her five-year-old son was being taken care of by her parents in Petrozavodsk, although it was unclear for how long the woman would be working in Finland and her son would be left with her parents. Children taken care of by their grandmothers in the absence of mothers in Russian Karelia are much fewer than, for instance, transnational mothering in the case of the migration from the Philippines, where 27% of children are growing up without at least one parent due to the parents' migration (more than two thirds of whom are women) (Parrenas R. S., 2010). However, it is not something completely new: there is a history of translocal grandmothering to this, as discussed in the previous chapter. Mothers who had to return to paid work during Soviet times often sent their children to their grandmothers (who could live somewhere else, in a village or another city) to take care of children until they could go to school, for example.

I would call the active grandmothering practice discussed in this section *prolonged motherhood*. Firstly, it connotes being a mother to a child, implying an active caring that includes not only free-time activity with a grandchild, but provision of basic needs: cooking, walking, cleaning, doing laundry, etc. The babushka becomes a substitute for a mother or a second mother, both emotionally and practically. Secondly, some young grandmothers enjoy it when somebody mistakes them as the mother of a child. Stories about this become part of their personal grandmothering histories. Elena became a grandmother when she was 50 years old. I talked to her many times, and the story of her first grandson, whom she took care of, was always linked to a story when people thought that she was actually the mother of her grandson because she looked so young:

I was walking my grandson, and he was playing with a girl, who was with her grandparents. I knew the girl's mother. They live in the same yard. Then we went home, and I met the girl's mother next day. And she told me that we had left a toy there, and her parents took it. The woman gave out toy back and told me that her parents thought that I was my grandson's mother. (Elena, born in 1950, 2009)

Elena also told me that when she was coming back in a mini-bus from Finland, a driver could not believe that she was a grandmother of four children. Vesta, mapping her grandmothering experiences, often mentioned that people could not believe that she was a babushka when her first grandson was born, and many are still surprised that she looks so young. From this point of view,

grandmothering signifies a prolongation of their mothering, and more importantly their youth, being and looking young.

Thirdly, the conscious motivation behind active grandmothering is often a parenting, mothering impulse to allow daughters to be successful in their lives. In this, by being active grandmothers, women continue to act as caring mothers, trying to meet their daughters' interests. Remarkably, all cases above of active transnational grandmothering regard maternal grandmothers for whom one of the important motivations, pronounced verbally, was to enable their daughters to study or work. As I will discuss later (Chapter VIII), work and motherhood, the ultimate values of the Soviet gender contract, often appear as the main criteria of women's success in grandmothering narratives. By being active grandmothers, women provide opportunities for their daughters to be successful "working mothers". Thus, the working mother contract is reproduced in a transnational Russian-Finnish space through transnational grandmothering. Reproduction of this contract comes along with the babushka's both pronounced and subtle self-sacrifice (Chapter VI).

This grandmothering practice can be also seen in the context of the "strong mother" phenomenon and the life-long dependence of adult daughters and sons upon their mothers. In the context of the Soviet gender contract, the prolonged motherhood grandmothering practice can be also seen as *postponed motherhood*, as discussed in the previous chapter. Many Soviet women were both practically and emotionally deprived of their motherhood because of their "obligatory" paid employment and now try to compensate for that in their role as babushkas. I do not see these practices as alternative or mutually exclusive. Rather I believe they reveal different aspects of contemporary grandmothering, and may or may not be both present in any single case.

Consequently, this devoted babushka practice has been exported through migration to Finland. My observation is also supported by Pirjo Pöllänen's research on inter-cultural marriages of Finnish husbands and Russian wives; she suggests that women's narratives convey an idea that in Russia it is the grandparents' "duty" to take care and be responsible for their grandchildren, whereas in Finland grandparents take care of children only occasionally, when they themselves want to do that (Pöllänen, 2008, p. 160). I would add, however, that both practically and emotionally it is most often grandmothers (less grandfathers, if they are present at all given the high mortality rate among men) who take care of their grandchildren.

The peculiarity of active transnational grandmothering is that it is dominated by maternal grandmothers. Maternal and paternal grandmothers may well be actively involved in grandmothering in local extended families in Russian Karelia. However, maternal grandmothers are overwhelmingly more involved in active grandmothering in a transnational context, as my participant observation suggests. Some migrant paternal grandmothers may well be involved in

child care in Finland when their grandchildren have also migrated or were born in Finland. However, the dynamic of family-making may vary a lot when their children are married to a Finnish spouse or to a person with a different ethnic, cultural, and national background.

The dominant maternal grandmothering is a specific feature of transnational grandmothering across the Russian-Finnish border, in contrast to, for example, Bulgarian Muslim migrants in Spain (Deneva, 2009) and Albanian aging parents with migrant children in Greece and Italy (Vullnetari & King, 2008) where a grandmother's "duty" is to look after her son's children. However, Dwaine Plaza's research emphasizes that maternal grandmothers seem to be more active among transnational grannies with an African Caribbean background in Britain (Plaza, 2000).

The more active role of maternal grandmothers in transnational grandmothering is also encouraged by their daughters, whose opinion (and other subtle means) is often more important in issues related to arrangement of child care. Presumably, some women may use migration as an excuse to avoid undesired intervention in their family lives by their mothers-in-law or other family members. This peculiar grandmother's position as a second mother gives some babushkas a certain subtle authority with which paternal or maternal grandmothers may somewhat "compete". The question with regard to who (maternal or paternal) will become an active transnational babushka may raise tensions in a transnational family space (see below). Nevertheless, maternal grandmothers are more likely to "win" due to their daughters' support.

Weekend, Dacha, and Holiday Babushka Practices in the Transnational Context

Grandmothering practices such as weekend, dacha, and holiday babushka practices discussed in the context of Russian Karelia (Chapter IV) continue to be applied in a transnational context, which is obviously facilitated by short distances between Finland and Russian Karelia. Grandchildren living in Finland come to Petrozavodsk to stay with their babushkas at the dacha, spend their holidays in a Russian summer resort with their grandmothers, or just stay at the babushka's place for a while. Likewise, grandchildren living in Petrozavodsk come to Finland to spend summer holidays with their grandmothers in Finland. When a grandchild comes to visit his/her babushka in a different socio-cultural context and spends even a couple of weeks, it becomes an important experience for both, recollected and talked about long after that. Residing in different socio-cultural contexts but being connected through the transnational family space might become enriching experiences for both grandmothers and their grandchildren. The intensity of communication between a grandchild and his/her babushka during holidays spent together is high, of course, as they practically live

together for one or two months. In this case of transnational grandmothering, paternal grandmothers may be as active as maternal grandmothers.

Just as in Russian Karelia, some migrant grandmothers prefer to spend only weekends with their grandchildren in Finland, particularly due to a late retirement age in Finland, which means that babushkas are either working or attending language or special obligatory courses (as a substitute for employment). In this respect, the Finnish context provides a space for working babushkas: they participate in their grandchildren's life, but at the same time they are active in the public sphere, working or studying. For instance, Ludmila is attending a language course and some special work related practices (*työharjoittelu*, the term in Finnish); she also likes attending concerts and meeting her female friends. She is a paternal grandmother, and one of her sons lives in Finland:

They [her son and his wife] gave birth to their children by themselves. They have to take care of them by themselves...I know that tomorrow they cannot drop him [her grandson] to a kindergarten. I am not going to call. They will call and ask if they want me to do it. (Ludmila, born in 1949, 2009)

On the one hand, Ludmila's approach to grandmothering can be seen as "formal": she can help when she has time, and especially when/if she is asked by her son or daughter-in-law. This approach may connote somewhat looser connections between grandmothers and grandchildren in Finland, where the early independence of children has become a value in itself; in addition, children's independence is enhanced by the mother-infant separation due to encouraged maternal full-time employment (Hautamäki, Hautamäki, Maliniemi-Piispanen, & Neuvonen, 2008).²⁸ On the other hand, on closer consideration, Ludmila's narratives appear to be defensive about her constrained grandmothering by emphasizing that parents should take care of their children by themselves. This defensive argument demonstrates that an image of the babushka taking care of her grandchildren remains strong, and grandmothering practices are understood and evaluated against these expectations. These narratives also show that the position of a babushka might be used as a negotiation of authority in family relations, revealing the grandmother's micro-powers (Chapter VI).

Another grandmother, Anna, who is the youngest grandmother of this study, has a busy professional life, and is a mother of a seven-year-old son and two stepchildren. She admits that she does not have time to spend with her six-year-old granddaughter, again measuring her modest involvement in grandparenting by the "traditional" understanding of the babushka, drawing on her childhood memories. The quotation below also illustrates that there is a difference between the imagination of the babushka and the actual grandmothering practices:

When I moved to Finland, I went to a Finnish language course for Russian immigrants. Once, we were given a task to write a story on our childhood. We left our stories for examination to our teacher, and next morning she started by reading our stories in a class. A first story started in this way: "As a child I spent a lot of time at my grandmother's place". I thought it was mine, but it was not. Next story began with the same sentence. I thought it was mine, but it was not mine again. We gradually approached my story, but many stories we read through during the class started with the same sentence.... We are so lucky that our babushkas took care of us. Our children are not that lucky. (Anna, born in 1962, 2007)

Grown-up Children and Aging Grandmothers

Grandmothering also becomes more "remote" when grandchildren are grown up and/or grandmothers are aging (Krasnova, 2000, p. 110). Although grandmothers do not spend as much time as they probably used to spend with their grandchildren when the latter were small, the history of close relationships between a grandchild and a grandmother may continue to make their interaction intimate and special, even across borders:

My eldest granddaughter is mine. She even called me a mother when she was small. With the younger one it is different. She is different. And she would never work and study at the same time as Masha does. She is only studying. (Marja, born in 1936, 2008)

When Marja visits her granddaughter in St. Petersburg, they have a special ritualized routine together, like going to a theatre or walking in certain places. Her granddaughter has also visited Marja in Finland, and they talk on the phone almost every second week. Marja is making a deliberate effort to save money to enable her granddaughter to combine studies and work. The latter feature is a significant element in transnational grandmothering of migrant grandmothers who tend to financially help their grown-up grandchildren on the other side of the border.

Albina, who "raised three grandchildren by herself", told me that although her grandchildren live somewhere else in Finland they regularly call her. All of them have become artists in different fields, and Albina has become their "expert" in Slavonic culture. They often call her and ask, "Babushka, what does this old word mean? What does it imply for Slavonic culture?" And she is always eager to help. Albina is a regular participant of the Orthodox Church in Tampere. She is always saying special prayers for her grandchildren; she once mentioned that she does a particular ritual, including praying, keeping an icon lamp on at a certain time during a certain number of days, to facilitate her granddaughter in getting pregnant.

Vesta has two small grandsons and two grown-up grandsons. Although she is not involved in the life of her adult grandsons in the way she used to be when they were small, she is always very

well informed on what is going on in their lives. Vesta constantly keeps a photo of her eldest grandson covered with an icon of God's Mother to "keep him from troubles". She was visiting a magus in Petrozavodsk to remove "magical harm" from him. In this context, transnational grandmothering comes about with positive thinking, praying, and good wishing to grandchildren. Likewise, Marina's granddaughter moved to Finland with her family; she receives regular telephone calls from her, which facilitates keeping close emotional connection:

I have lived my life. The most important thing is that they would be happy. (Marina, born in 1927, 2009)

In discussing the grandmothers' experiences of old age and poor health, the question arises: who takes care of frail grandmothers when they themselves, in fact, need love, support, and more importantly "hands-on" care? In the Russian Karelian context of local extended families, it does not appear as a challenge; in most cases, an aging grandmother is taken care of by her family, mostly female relatives, daughters or granddaughters. For instance, Evdokiya lives with her granddaughter in Petrozavodsk, now that she is no longer capable of keeping her household in the rural area. This "hands-on" care, however, is more difficult to maintain in a transnational context, as has been discussed in scholarship on elderly people (Baldassar, 2007; Vullnetari & King, 2008). As this is not the focus of my research (only a few grandmothers in my study are frail elders) I will briefly mention some options of how women face this challenge.

Firstly, as many Ingrian grandmothers brought their extended families with them, they receive this day-to-day care from their daughters, sons, and daughters-in-law residing in Finland. Thus, the logic of three- to four-generation family ties with mutual care arrangements is being maintained in Finland, the receiving context. Secondly, as already mentioned, some women with Russian background have succeeded to arrange for their mothers' move to Finland, again with the purpose of taking care of them. Thirdly, just as Loretta Baldassar discusses in the Italian migrants' case in Australia (Baldassar, 2007), siblings who stay put take care of aging grandmothers, while migrant siblings provide emotional support and arrange long- and short-term visits. Likewise, a migrant grandmother's children may reside on different sides of the border, and, thus, care for the aged grandmother is balanced out by both parts, although in different ways.

Institutional care for elders is not commonly accepted in the Russian context (in addition to there being poor infrastructure); therefore, if a grandmother is left behind, her migrant family may develop a combined solution. Again, a woman of a mature age and good health can be informally hired to provide the necessary "hands-on" care, while telephone calls and regular visits on the family part would be made to channel emotional support. I have not encountered a case of a single

migrant grandmother who resides in Finland and is incapable of taking care of herself. However, one of my interlocutors, Albina, whose son and grandchildren live in Finland, resides in a special home for elderly people. We did not discuss why it happened so, but she seems to enjoy living there. She regularly visits her son and his wife, and interacts with her four grandchildren. However, she seems to appreciate her space and that she does not depend on her son's "hands-on" care.

The Finnish context does make a difference in the sense that institutional care for elders is socially accepted and well developed (Pättiniemi, 1995; Zechner, 2010, p. 645) and family is primarily understood and practiced as a nuclear family (Vuori, 2001; Oinonen, 2004). One of the explanations is that Albina's son is married to a Swedish-speaking Finnish woman, and although Albina brought up three of their four grandchildren, she does not have close relationships with her daughter-in-law. In this context, she does not expect her son's family to provide care for her. This case illustrates that in a transnational context and cross-cultural marriages, mutual care principles of extended family settings may get disrupted. Likewise the case of Irina Antonova, mentioned earlier, illustrates that sometimes transnational families face unavoidable institutional barriers with regard to hands-on care: the Russian babushka had to come back, and she spent the last months of her life in an old people's home, as she was denied a residence permit in Finland.

Thus, transnational grandmothering across the Finnish-Russian border emerges as a complex process in my study, ranging from the immediate practical care of small grandchildren to multi-layered imagined aspects of a babushka's care, for instance, praying and other religious rituals performed on behalf of grandchildren. Irrespective of the actual time spent with grandchildren and various grandmothering patterns, the babushka's role in a transnational context continues to be informed by the romanticized pre-revolutionary image of a loving and caring babushka and Soviet grandmothering practices. It has carried an impact from the Soviet working mother contract and working babushkas of late Soviet modernity. "Modern" western understandings of the role of a grandmother in child care also produce other meanings of the babushka and "hybrid" practices.

Marketing Babushka Care Transnationally

As discussed in Chapter IV, post-Soviet social development has been marked by increased tendencies to market babushka care when either grandmothers in blood were paid by their children or any woman of a mature age was hired informally by a relatively well-to-do family to provide child care and perform domestic work. Some migrant women of a mature age also provide

babushka care for reward in Finland. Before she became a birth grandmother, Elvira used to provide child care for Russian migrants. Now she works as a nurse and visits her grandson once a week, on weekends, or takes him to her place. She also takes care of her aging mother whom she lives with, and her younger adult son. When she came back from Petrozavodsk, she seemed to be disappointed that she spent most time taking care of her grandson:

They [her son and his wife] invited me to travel with them to Petrozavodsk. But they actually wanted me to take care of Nikita [her grandson]. They were spending time in the centre of the city, and I was sitting with Nikita. (Elvira, born in 1950, 2009)

It seems that child care is increasingly seen as work that should be rewarded. It is difficult to define the sources of this neoliberal understanding of care among migrant women. Partly, market reforms and neoliberal transnational flows have influenced the content of care in the Russian context (Chapter IV). Partly, migrant grandmothers (as the cases of Elvira and Ludmila show) also seem to be influenced by the Finnish context, where care has been understood for a longer time as a service provided by the Finnish welfare system. Informal and private arrangements of care also take place, but often in negotiation with the public care services (Zechner, 2010, p. 645).

Some mid-life and elderly women are eager to provide child care for Russian migrants, and these arrangements are most often informal. Russian migrants, when purchasing babushka care, are wittingly and unwittingly willing to make use of the whole package of the babushka phenomenon, including love, warmth, “relativized” relationships, and trust. Babushka care seems to be more appropriate and culturally familiar than “alien” babysitters. The market of babushka care as a social phenomenon and a “hybrid” practice illustrates how traditional (pre-revolutionary/Soviet imagination on babushka) and neoliberal (post-Soviet, Western modernity, including market economy thinking) can merge, producing new meanings and practices both in a postsocialist context and transnational Finnish-Russian context. The babushka as an imagined and lived Russian phenomenon is being turned into a specific marketable commodity in the mills of complex, transnational cultural flows.

During one of my trips from Petrozavodsk to Tampere I discussed with a driver, Alexei, his working routine, routes, and passengers, and he mentioned that when he gets to Helsinki he stays at “one babushka’s place”. It turned out that the mentioned babushka was an elderly migrant woman from Petrozavodsk whom the company, organizing mini-bus trips between Russian Karelia and Finland, pays for hosting drivers. Drivers usually have to spend a night in Helsinki to make a return trip the next day. In this case, again, the whole “babushka package” is expected to be delivered: homemade meals, warmth, and cosy sleeping place, and “it is also cheaper than staying in a hotel”,

according to Alexei. This example again illuminates how the babushka phenomenon has crossed borders of traditional imagination on babushka and actual national borders.

5.3 Transnational Families and Transnational Grandmothering

Deborah Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela point to the relational character of transnational families, which are capable of various mutations, redefining and reshaping themselves in varying contexts (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). Furthermore, family is often a matter of deliberate choice and renegotiation, and not necessarily determined by biological connections (Carsten, 2000). As discussed earlier, family in women's narratives often goes beyond the immediate or nuclear family. The role of the extended family becomes central especially when women are single (widows, divorced, etc.), for instance as narrated by Vesta and Elena:

My motto is my family. First, my elder daughter came here [Petrozavodsk] to study, then the younger one followed her. My husband died. I love my children so much, I moved here because of the children. In my city I lived around 50 years. (...) I understood that a life without my children is not for me. They are the essence of my life. As fate has willed, they have moved to Finland. So I am alone here, but I am visiting them, and they are visiting me. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

I would be happy to move to Finland, if only all my family would be here; my daughters, my grandchildren, my mother, my sister... (Elena, born in 1950, 2009)

The way family is imagined in a transnational context connotes how family is understood and maintained locally, in Russian Karelia, i.e., within the three (four)-generation family frame (Chapter IV). However, the means of sustaining family become more diverse. Firstly, as has been discussed, the relatively short distance, as well as availability and affordability of commuting, between Russian Karelia and Finland enables family members to make quite frequent visits from both sides. Secondly, developments in telecommunication technologies have made it possible for some grandmothers to maintain day-to-day contacts through telephone calls and even the Internet, including e-mail and Skype. It is important to emphasize that I distinguish between “talking family” as 1) discussing concrete daily family routines by babushkas and other family members, and as 2) family tales and histories narrated by babushkas, not necessarily to their family members.

Talking Family as Family Routine

Nancy Ries, who offers a rigorous ethnography of “Russian talk” during perestroika, argues that “the units of discourse and the patterns of behaviour” that are “both products of and the producers of Russian identity and (Soviet) Russian society and have to be examined in both of these valences” (Ries, 1997, p. 23). Focusing on talk as an “agent of cultural reproduction”, Ries points out that “the very acts of talk that naturalize or essentialize cultural reproduction are themselves much more the actual mechanisms of that reproduction than biological factors” (Ries 1997, 25). Discussing family discourses, Jaber Gubrium and James Holstein suggest that “...family is as much a way of thinking and talking about relationships as it is a concrete set of social ties and sentiments” (Gubrium & Holstein, 1990). I would also suggest that “talking family” can become a practical means of sustaining family across national borders.

Talking family is both a product and a producer of transnational families, and examining the practice of talking family is thus important for understanding of how family is lived and imagined by transnational babushkas. My research has shown that the “information highway” technologies that were primarily invented for facilitating political and commercial interactions worldwide are now applied for maintaining conventional extended families and familyhood across borders. Increased opportunities for grandmothers to discuss family routine with those who are living apart are an important way of bonding for a family.

Some grandmothers are using Skype to maintain regular contacts with their grandchildren. One of my interviewees, Ludmila, a migrant grandmother, talks on Skype video with both her sister and her son who reside in Finland and her other son who lives in Russia with his family. Her son helped her set up a computer and taught how to use the Internet and Skype:

I go to sleep very late. I am sitting on mail.ru [a Russian e-mail service provider] and talking with my son, my friends... I am watching Russian TV on Internet now, because having TV is so expensive in Finland. (Ludmila, born in 1949, 2009)

One day, Ludmila called her son in Russia and found out that her grandson was ill. She gave advice and kept track of his recovery. Although she was physically in Finland, by talking and “advising” she participated in the family routine “there” in Russia. In the same way, she could share the excitement of her son and daughter-in-law when her grandson started school in Russia, as the pictures from the event were sent via e-mail and discussed. Elena, whom I refer to as a transnationally mobile grandmother, told me that she recently purchased a computer to be able to

talk on Skype with her daughter and her family, including her granddaughter whom she takes care of when staying with them in Finland (previously she used her other daughter's computer to talk on Skype). Those grandmothers who are not users themselves ask other family members to help and/or encourage them to use e-mail and Skype for regular interactions with those who are abroad; for instance, Marina, whom I refer to as a grandmother staying put, usually asks her granddaughter to help her with Skype and video to talk to her other granddaughter residing in Finland.

However, the use of the Internet and Skype is somewhat limited in the grandmothers' arsenal of maintaining the routine of family interaction, and telephone calls remain the most prominent means in the present situation. My general observation is that telephone calls are primarily made by those who reside in Finland, particularly migrant grandmothers, partly because they might be doing better financially, but also because telephone calls from Finland to Russia are cheaper due to special offers from Finnish telecommunication companies. It is still expensive but generally affordable for migrant grandmothers to call their grandchildren and other relatives residing in Russia:

I call every week. I don't like writing letters. And I am coming to Petrozavodsk often. I was here four times last year. (Liliya, born in 1932, 2007)

Transnationally travelling grandmothers and grandmothers staying put are most often those who receive telephone calls from their relatives abroad. Galina, whom I mentioned as a grandmother staying put, has never been to Finland, but talks regularly on phone with her grandson and great grandson:

When they come here, Babka [a grandmother, roughly, informally, about herself] gets ready to care for (nianchit'sia)! Sashen'ka [soft version of Sasha] goes to a kindergarten there, the last year. Now he will go to school! Andrey likes living there...she [Andrey's wife] has got many relatives there...they were having a phone for free during three months, and he often called... The little one called and asked to send him a magazine "Murzilka" [a popular magazine for children in Russia]... Sashen'ka likes being at my place. (Galina, born in 1936, 2008)

Vesta, whom I earlier introduced as a transnationally mobile grandmother and whose two daughters reside in Finland, told me:

My daughters call me every day. They also take me as a friend. They live there, but they are missing me. They call me and tell me everything ... I can always advise them what to do and support...I don't know even how to use the phone properly. They call me, and I just press the button... (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

When Vesta is in Petrozavodsk, she is always well aware of what is going on in her daughters' families on the other side of the border: how the school day of one grandson was, how

the youngest one in the kindergarten was, how it was between her eldest grandson and his girlfriend:

... They did not want to take him [Ivan, Vesta's grandson] to play, and it was snowy weather. They were throwing balls at him, and he was also throwing balls back. And then he also hit one boy, because he hit him first. We were talking whether he would have to tell that to the school director. He told, and they have changed. It is normal now. You know, they [in Finland] are fighting against racism and nationalism. [At Vesta's older daughter's working place, vocational school]...there was a teacher who started reporting on Russians. She did not like them, and a director saw it and fired her for this. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

They [Vesta's eldest grandson, Boris, and his girlfriend] are constantly fighting. She went to her mum. Then she came back, and found pictures of him with some other girls in his computer. He did not obviously know that she would come back. She came back in one month. And she saw the pictures. He was sleeping and woke up because she hit him with her shoe! So we are thinking, yes maybe this is not a life for them. So she left again. But she is trying to catch him on a computer. He liked her very much. He used to say: she can do everything. Yes, and she does, and we were fine with that he was with her. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

At the moment that was happening in Finland and Vesta was in Petrozavodsk, she was part of family talk through the phone calls by her daughters; the expression “we were fine...” illustrates that Vesta is part of the family space and the discussions going on there. I met Vesta often, and almost every conversation was interrupted by a phone call from one of her daughters. It gave me a sense that this type of family interaction was done on a regular (if not daily) basis:

***Vesta:** She [Vesta's daughter] called yesterday. Yesterday they were first who came to the kindergarten. Sometimes I drop him [the youngest grandson, Misha] at 9 or 9.15. I feel pity about him; that he has to go there. I am still worried about this. And then I pick him up earlier, around 12.00.*

***TT:** So, is he only in the kindergarten until afternoon?*

***Vesta:** It is until 15.00, but we pick him up earlier. They are sleeping there between 12.00 and 15.00. It is good to sleep, but what if they put him near the window, and he would catch cold? So Julija picked him up herself yesterday at 11.10. He was still eating. So she waited until half past eleven. Then they went home. She did not send Ivan to school. She did not like that he was sneezing. And he looked somewhat weak. More tea, Tania? (Vesta, born in 1943, 2009)*

Thus, discussing mundane everyday life events has allowed Vesta to maintain her family transnationally. Vertovec emphasizes that the enhanced ability to make telephone calls and keep real-time communication may serve now as “a kind of social glue connecting families” (Vertovec 2009, p. 56). In her empirical research on Italian migrants in Australia, Baldassar illustrates that those migrants who moved in Australia in the 1990s (as opposed to cohorts of 1950s to the 1960s

and the 1970s to the 1980s) are more likely to hold a greater capacity to engage in transnational relations, particularly due to the development of communication and travel technologies that also increased their obligation to maintain regular contacts with their homeland kin (Baldassar, 2007, p. 293).

Discussing the nature of everyday life, Marina Blagojevic points out that the main obstacle everyday life may encounter is the one of impossibility of routinizing (Blagojevic 1994, p. 470). In transnational grandmothering across the Russian-Finnish border, this routinization of family life has become possible due to relatively short physical distances and the possibility of frequent contacts and, of course, because of family talk, a significant family practice that has been enabled by telecommunication technologies.

In approaching talking family in the context of the routinization of everyday family routine, it can be useful to apply some insights from feminist theorizing, namely, Judith Butler's exploration on how gender is made and reproduced. Talking family (just as gender) can be seen as a "set of repeated acts" that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance" (Butler, 1999, p. 33); the more grandmothers are talking family, both with their transnational/family members and in other contexts, the more substance family gains in the grandmothers' lives and subjectivities.

Seeing routine as a significant element of day-to-day social activity (Giddens, 1984, 60), and given that routines are the "main stronghold of social order" and something that over time become taken for granted, as if "things have 'always' been that way" (Alasuutari P., 2004, p. 15), the day-to-day talking family enabled by telecommunication technologies needs to be seen as a crucial factor in reproducing extended family routines in the context of geographical and cultural proximity between Russian Karelia and Finland. For Russian grandmothers, talking family is both a product of their subjectivities as a babushka, as a mother trying to hold family together, and the very act that reproduces family space across borders. Family talk is what nourishes transnational family space and keeps it alive, especially strengthened by regular visits. This is a striking example of how "modern" things can be easily adopted to reproduce something "traditional" in a transnational world. In these circumstances, discussing family routines can also become a significant channel for some grandmothers to exert their micro-powers in a transnational family space (Chapter VI).

Narrating and Imagining Family

Ulla Vuorela argues that transnational families along with national states need to be seen as “real” and “imagined” communities (Vuorela, 2002). I suggest that transnational grandmothers as one of the significant family practices needs to be situated in a broader context of transnational family fabric, and it is both “real” and “imagined”. The borderline between real and imagined is a subtle one. Feminist theorizing has contributed to our understanding of the illusionary character of social reality, particularly related to gender; imaginary relations of individuals are what actually constitute their “real” living (Lauretis, 1987). By imagining family, grandmothers also actually live in this “imagined” family.

Discussing how family is lived and imagined by grandmothers, as well as seeing family that is not something which *is*, but something one *does*, I suggest an approach of imagining and narrating family, including family histories, as a process of making transnational families. In this section, I approach “talking family” as narrating family histories. Women’s narratives are often built as family narratives in which close and distant relatives, those who are alive and those who passed away, living nearby and far away, invest in varying ways in feelings of familyhood, conveyed by grandmothers. Particular episodes of these family members’ lives are interwoven in the grandmother’s narratives, and become part of family histories.

In this context, by narrating family histories that are pronouncedly presented in the grandmothers’ narratives, babushkas also contribute to transnational family-making. It does not matter if the story is told to a family member or to a friend (or even to a stranger in a bus); the narration is still something “real” and makes the (transnational) family landscape substantial and tangible. Family histories may differ, for example, depending on the ethnic belonging of babushkas; Ingrian women’s narratives are often built as family sufferings and enforced wanderings during Stalinist rule, as some other studies have also demonstrated (Kaivola-Bregenhøj, 1999; Davydova, 2009; Huttunen, 2002).

Almost all women’s narratives convey a feeling of an extended family landscape spread over time and space, encompassing histories of translocal mobility within the Soviet space and transnational moves in a Finnish-Russian space. I focus here on two women’s narratives: of Riita, an Ingrian migrant grandmother (great-grandmother) who moved to Finland eleven years ago, and of Vesta, a transnationally mobile grandmother and a key collocutor of my research. With this choice I wish to highlight also how family is narrated by women of different ethnic backgrounds, of

different ages and contemporary family routines. Riita's narrative allows us to trace how family is being imagined, contracted, and lived through the narration of family histories. I met Riita during one of my mini-bus trips, and our conversation lasted almost ten hours until Riita reached her destination. The depth and frequency of my interaction with Vesta allows me to offer a more detailed analysis of how a transnational family is imagined and narrated in a way that has become daily routine.

While we were talking during our trip, Riita gave me a detailed description of every family member, their appearances, characters, and life situations. In her story she connected all these people into one family space that spanned different national contexts – Russia, Finland, and Estonia. In the beginning of our conversation, Riita told me that her family was deported to Siberia during the war:

We were carried in open trucks (gruzoviki) across the frozen Ladoga lake, and then transported in wagons meant for cattle to Siberia. My youngest brother died before we even got to Siberia, and also my grandmother died, and her body was thrown away from the train as happened to all dead bodies. We still do not know where she is buried. My mother and other twenty-five people missed the train at one of the stations. She went to buy some milk for us, children, but the train left when bombing started. My father, my older sister, and my other brother came to Krasnoyarsk. And my father suddenly died. Next day, a day of funeral of my father, my mother came. She managed to find us. (Riita, born in 1932, 2008)

Then Riita described a complicated history of the moves of her family. At first they had tried to return to Leningrad but were not allowed to stay there. Then they tried to settle in Estonia, but they were forced to leave. Finally, they got to Petrozavodsk, where they were allowed to stay:

When my mother was in Estonia after the war, she got married and gave a birth to a daughter. When we came to Petrozavodsk, my mother died. She accidentally sank down in the Belomoro-Baltiysky Canal [the Belomoro-Baltic Channel]²⁹ when she washed the clothes. Her husband disappeared. I and my elder sister were helped by my aunt. She lived in Petrozavodsk. She also found a childless family for our small sister. They adopted that child, and moved to Narva [Estonia, at that time part of the Soviet Union]. When my sister grew up, she found me in Petrozavodsk, and asked me to provide a space for her to live in. She wanted to study at the university. When she finished her studies, she came back to Narva, got married, and gave birth to a son. Her son visited me in Petrozavodsk, and also here in Finland. Last time he came with his new girlfriend. She is beautiful. I really liked her. The previous one I did not like. (Riita, born in 1932, 2008)

She told me that her husband, who already passed away, had been “excellent”; he “did not smoke, did not drink”, and “when she came home after her work, he met her with a plate of homemade dish”:

*My daughter and her husband live in a three-room flat. They are doing very well. If they lived during Stalinism, they would be dekulakized (raskulacheny).*³⁰

Riita told me that both her grandsons were married and lived in Finland. The younger one, whom she almost “raised by herself” (*vyrostila sama*), has a daughter, Riita’s great-granddaughter, to whom she is planning to leave all her gold belongings collected during Soviet times. Her other, older grandson, has two children and has built a house in Finland. Riita complained that she had asked him to build a kitchen and a room for her with a separate entrance, but he did not do that. She partly justified his decision by the “bad influence” of his wife. She also told me that she visits often her sister in Petrozavodsk, her niece “who is married and has two children”, and nephew “who is still single”. Finally, one more “family member” who was often mentioned during our conversation was a cat, which is part of Riita’s daily routine in Finland. She bought three kilograms of fish in Petrozavodsk for her cat, which now “weighs almost ten kilograms”:

He is the most beloved in my life. I love him so much. (Riita, born in 1932, 2008)

This one trip and conversation with Riita left me with a feeling that the way she was narrating her family history, when the past was part of the present, and the present was linked to the past, was actually the contemporary family space that she lived in. That family landscape, transgressing time and borders, reflected the way family was imagined by Riita. I would suggest that narrating and imagining family histories become especially important means of sustaining family space when grandmothers grow older. There is not as much family activity as imagination of family when grandmothers become “old”. At this stage of family life, babushkas can become those channels through which “family capital” and a sense of “familyhood” are transferred across generations. This role is strengthened in a transnational family space when the family becomes spatially dispersed.

In contrast to Riita, Vesta is a relatively young active grandmother. During one of our meetings I asked Vesta whom she includes in her family:

My daughters with their families. They are my family. I cannot live without my children, and they also love me. I don’t know what will happen in the future. But I don’t think that they would abandon me. And then it is convenient. I am with my grandchildren, I am not whining [complaining]. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008).

Her immediate response to my direct question obviously reflects her contemporary situation; she is a widow, an “active” babushka, moving back and forth, staying with her daughters in Finland and also living in Petrozavodsk. Vesta’s narrative also reveals that one aspect of grandmothering for widowed, divorced, or single women is that it can be triggered by a fear of

being alone, or feelings of being abandoned – a fact that also reveals a grandmother’s vulnerability in family relations. Vesta’s daughters and grandchildren were among the most prominent topics of our discussions throughout our meetings:

First, my elder daughter came here [Petrozavodsk] to study, and then the younger one followed her. My husband died. I love my children so much, I moved here because of children. In my town [S.] I lived around 50 years. I travelled to my daughter endlessly often when she was studying at the pedagogical institute to see her, to rejoice her successes, to give advice, or just to see her. She got married here, and rooted herself here. Some years later, Julia [the younger daughter] graduated from the Medical Academy, and also moved here. I am participating in their lives, and I got tired to travel between S. and Petrozavodsk. Therefore, I decided to move here. I understood that to live without children is not for me. The grain of my life I feel in them. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

When my grandson was born, I left my work, and took care of the child for 1,5 years so that my daughter could continue her studies. Then I started working as an administrator in a hotel. I was working there ten years. With her second child, she was sitting at home by herself; I just helped her. I also spent the vacations at her place [in Petrozavodsk]. When Julija gave birth to Misha, I was taking care of him during four years; one year we were living together in Archangelsk, renting a one-room flat, and then I was living with him alone in [S.] during three years. Altogether, I brought up ten children, with some of them I was sitting until 1,5 years or longer, whereas with others I just helped. Also when my niece started to work, she used to bring her daughter to my home when I was working in the hotel, and had some free days during the week, until the girl was three years old. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

Vesta was proud of mapping her rich childcare experiences, which were narrated as part of a family history. In the course of our meetings I was introduced to nuanced histories of all family members from Vesta’s perspective: tense relationships between her older daughter and her husband, involving a conflict with her mother-in-law, which eventually resulted in divorce; the way her younger daughter negotiates her relationships with her husband, and again with her mother-in-law.

Vesta shared her worries on how her little one would start kindergarten in Finland, and how Misha, the other grandson, would be managing in a Finnish school. She told me a detailed story of how her older grandson was “betrayed” by his fiancée just before they were planning to get married. However, the more I met Vesta, the more I realized that there are actually many more people whom she refers to as her family compared with how she defined her family when answering my direct question. Vesta often mentioned her sisters and the brother who live in S., where Vesta used to live before she moved to Petrozavodsk, how she lived at her sister’s place when she moved from her village to S. The story of how her sister’s child died, a child whom Vesta used to take care of, is a particularly sad one, and one that Vesta kept telling over and over again.

She kept referring to her mother who used to teach her and her siblings to “respect people”, “love working”, and “live with one husband” because when a woman is single she is like a “field without a vegetable garden”. She spoke of her father, whom “the whole village” knew as a good fisherman. Vesta often talked about her husband:

Man is a head, and woman is a neck. I could anticipate his steps, and then I could act accordingly ... When the working week ended, I usually took his hand and told him: Oi, Valentin, we are going to go to bania (sauna) today! Although, we were actually taking bath at home. And his soul melted...We would bathe our children, then they would go to sleep, and we also took a bath. Then we would be sitting together, and he would drink a couple or three glasses. We were working together. So we knew the same people. There was also a common topic for conversation. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

...he was good-looking, well-built, blue eyes, and freckles, but it did not spoil him. He was reasonable, knowledgeable. Women liked him, and he was not noticed to be cheating... beauty comes from his inside. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

Vesta keeps a picture of her husband in the corner under the icon of God’s mother. When she showed me her family photo album I noticed that a photo of her older grandson is also kept under an icon of God’s mother. She told me that among her grandsons, he is the most vulnerable and constantly “gets into trouble”, and, therefore, he needed that extra-protection:

Every day I light a candle. I am praying for my kids [rebiatki, a soft version of children, informally; meaning her daughters and grandsons] every day. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

Vesta also showed me a family collage with pictures of family members of different generations and notes, commemorating their special life experiences: a photo of Vesta, her husband, and their daughters, wedding invitation, a photo of their wedding, Vesta and her husband at work, military laboratory, a picture of a helicopter and military men with Vesta’s husband among them, Vesta’s older daughter as a teacher with her class at school, Vesta’s younger daughter in her medical uniform and dentist equipment, Vesta and her sisters and brother, Vesta with a guitar on hiking, family eating homemade pies, hay mowing in her home village (“helping a mother on vacation”), her family on a cruise, Vesta in a national costume, singing. On the other side of the collage, there were pictures (cut from magazines and newspapers) of a woman milking a cow, a babushka sleeping on a bench, a cat playing with her claw, and a woman with a daughter and a cat, with utensils for baking, and the notes below:

Our mother, Klavdiya Aleksandrovna, was skilful in baking pies and bread. She worked as a dairymaid for ten years. We also had a cow and she-goats. The mother was also good at spinning and weaving. (Vesta’s family collage)

The images describing Vesta's mother are placed together with an image of her father, a picture of two fishermen fishing with a net (also an image that must have been clipped from a magazine or a newspaper):

Our father, Petr Alekseevich, was fishing with a seine net. He was also winter-fishing. He was giving in a lot of fish to sel'mab [the state farm in the village].

The term "our" shows that when the family collage was made, Vesta was thinking and introducing her roots from the perspective of all siblings, her brother and sisters. The form of the family collage, and the way it represents Vesta's mother and father, sisters and brother, husband and daughters, conveys a feeling that it is actually made for somebody; this can be seen as a babushka's message to her grandchildren. When both her daughters moved to Petrozavodsk, and Vesta stayed in S., she made that family collage to keep her family together. Now this family catalogue with pictures of her grandchildren added is applied to keep her family together across national borders. For me the history of the use of this family catalogue illustrates continuities between translocal grandmothering within Soviet/Russian space and transnational grandmothering in a Russian-Finnish context.

Vesta also showed me an article from a local newspaper issued in S., where she used to live. She wrote that small article herself; in it she encourages people to return to family values in the conditions of "poverty, crisis and criminality". She was referring to her family experience, mentioning her daughters and husband, and again admiring her mother's wise sayings, "there can be no two suns" or a single woman is like a "field without a fence" (sometimes she also used the expression "field without a vegetable garden").

Blood relatives were not the only part of Vesta's family narratives. She often referred to her "second husband", the term she preferred to apply to her life partner, whom she met after her husband passed away. She met him in a restaurant, and they "were together" for ten years:

It was a special evening. I felt that I was very beautiful. You know, there are some days in your life when you feel especially attractive. And I felt it, everybody was inviting me. He was also there, he was looking at me, and we were dancing. You know, I am against that women would go to the bed with men immediately. But with Slava it happened that way. He invited me to his home, and I asked him to walk me home. Then he said that it was too hot. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

Slava was living both at Vesta's place and at his place with his mother. His house was nearby, so he was juggling in-between. Vesta's matter of pride was that he was twelve years younger than she, and still one could hardly see that age difference. When she moved to Petrozavodsk, they parted. Thus, it is clear that whom people include in their families or kinship

can be also a subject of change, a process “shaped by ordinary, everyday activities of family life” (Carsten, 2003, p. 6).

Vesta’s narratives and practices are an illuminating example of how “imagining and narrating constructs a sense of community that is both imagined and material through various practices both as a presence and *in absentia*” (Vuorela, 2002, p. 76). The process of making family for Vesta comes about by living “here” and “there”, day-to-day talking to family on the phone, thinking of and praying for her daughters and grandsons. A sense of familyhood is reproduced by narrating family histories and the personal histories of various family members, dead (like Vesta’s mother, father, and husband) and alive, close and distant, translocal and transnational. Their stories and personalities, as narrated and imagined by Vesta, contribute to maintaining a large family landscape, transgressing time and geographical borders. It is a lived family space that is carefully sustained in Vesta’s narrating and imagining, and, at the same time, remains an important source of her identification.

Family is like roots of a tree. A person is solidly standing on the ground, and knows that here his soul will be warmed when he encounters difficulties on his life path (Vesta 2008).

A sense of familyhood is anchored in photographs of her daughters, grandchildren, her husband, the family collage that become manifestations of Vesta’s belonging. In this meaning and weight of family for Vesta, grandmothering becomes an important channel for keeping family together, and also a means to remain an essential part of this family, which, in its turn, provides a sense of security and comfort. Talking family and narrating family histories can be seen as a “set of repeated actions” through which the process of family-making takes place, and family gains its substance. Imagining and praying are emotional aspects of family-making and become indispensable in the expression of babushka care at a distance.

Transnational Babushkas and Family Economy

My data reveal the significant contribution of babushkas in facilitating families in their everyday life economy. First of all, “active” grandmothers provide child care that enables either parents or a single parent, usually a mother, to continue paid work. Secondly, “active” grandmothers are often also prominent in doing domestic work, such as cooking, and doing laundry, which is also an essential part of the reproduction of the family. The babushka’s help in both child care and housekeeping can be seen as factors that provide a higher quality of living, including healthy

homemade food, and the opportunity for working parents to earn higher income. Migrant grandmothers, such as Uljana and Elvira, also often provide care for their elderly mothers. They avoid placing them in public institutions for elderly people in Finland, an act that would be socially unacceptable on the Russian side of the border as among Russian migrants in Finland. Given these different aspects of care, some grandmothers continue to be active care givers who facilitate family economy in a transnational space between Finland and Russian Karelia. On the other hand, as they grow older, they also expect to be taken care of by their grown-up children. This is an example of mutual care across generations in three-generation family ties (Aleksandrov, Vlasova, & Polishuk, 1999, p. 450).

For transnationally travelling grandmothers and grandmothers staying put, working at the dacha (Clarke, 2002) continues to be an important way of providing for their families, especially their grandchildren, with fresh vegetables and berries, and the addition of homemade jams and pickled mushrooms. It is also a relatively cheap way for parents to arrange summer holiday for their children. Apparently, skills in picking up and pickling mushrooms, collecting berries and making jam continue to be applied in Finland by many migrant grandmothers. For them, berry and mushroom picking is also a way of managing their household economy in Finland. Some of them noted that “everything is so expensive” in Finland, and their “pensions are not enough”, so they have to “really save”. For instance, Albina, Marja, Julia, Inga, Ludmila, and Elvira are regular customers of Lidl, a German chain of supermarkets in Finland known for its low prices. However, when it comes to their grandchildren, especially adult ones, they are ready and willing to help financially. In fact, because of a different, more “remote” phase of relationships between grandmothers and grandchildren, assisting financially becomes one of the prominent forms of babushka care towards their adult grandchildren, often with self-sacrifice (as in Chapter VI).

Thus, Marja collects and keeps all the booklets and magazines advertising special offers on discounted products. She goes to supermarkets, selectively buys only discounted food, and puts the money saved into a moneybox. It is a daily routine for Marja, and she uses the money saved either for a trip to St. Petersburg (which became her new home after she moved there from Petrozavodsk) or to help her elder granddaughter, who is combining her studies and work:

Marja: I do not know when I will travel to St. Petersburg this summer. I have just collected all my crumbs (krokhi), and sent to Elena [the granddaughter in St. Petersburg].

TT: Have you sent money?

Marja: Yes, through a man whom I know. He takes 5 euro for that, and I usually add 2 euro, because I know he is an honest man. I have also packed up some other things; I put sausages and chocolate. What else can I send?

TT: And how much did you send, if I may ask?

Marja: Three hundred euro. I collected, going to different shops, saving money, and then I put them in a moneybox. I have already collected some money for now, around 18 euro.

TT: It must be a good help for your granddaughter.

Marja: Yes, I have to help. She is studying, and then she should also pay for an apartment... I also put in a towel my Finnish friend gave me. I also put a bed-sheet. She [the Finnish friend] asked me: do you take it? I took. I came home, washed everything, and ironed. And then I also bought bed-clothes in Hemtex, the price of a complete set was 20,90 euro, and on discount it was 9,90. She has a birthday, and I bought it, also two bed-sheets... Finally, the package was good! ...Everything is expensive there, and the transport is expensive. And sometimes, you know, she wants to go to the theatre and cinema. Theatre tickets are very expensive. We went to the theatre last year. One ticket's price was 700 rubles [around 20 euro at that time]. She bought two tickets. [Elena told her]: Babushka, I know you love theatre. She gave me the tickets as a present for my birthday. I told her it is too expensive. [Elena told her]: Babushka you are making presents for me, and I want to make a present for you. (Marja, born in 1936, 2008)

Financial transfers among my interlocutors are rarely done through the banking system. Because of the geographical closeness and frequency of cross-border interaction, grandmothers either send money through somebody they know or give money during visits. Most of them are also not familiar with the system of international money transfers; they are afraid of using them or feel awkward. It is an obvious continuation from the Soviet everyday life practices when people often preferred keeping their money “in a stocking” (*v chulke*) at home, and money was seldom transferred through the state bank system, especially transnationally.

One can sense self-sacrifice in Marja's practices, as she lives quite modestly herself so as to provide a better life for her granddaughter. By helping her granddaughter, she is also taking her granddaughter's side in a conflict with her mother, Marja's ex-daughter-in-law. Elena (Marja's granddaughter), according to Marja, left her mother's home to live by her own; the transnational babushka is financially supporting her to enable her to rent a flat and buy nice clothes and food. Living in St. Petersburg, famous as a cultural capital of Russia, is identified with wearing fashionable clothes and going to theatre and clubs; these ritualized practices in turn allow a high social status to be maintained among friends, students, and colleagues. Being aware of these practices, Marja is willing to sacrifice her needs to enable her granddaughter to have a good quality of life and social status in St. Petersburg.

During one of my mini-bus trips I met a young woman, Irina, who was visiting her grandmother in Finland. She told me that her babushka got married to a Finnish man five years ago, and moved to Finland. Irina told me that she likes visiting her grandmother in Finland; she goes shopping, chats with her babushka, and, in addition, stays in a nice and big house. The babushka's Finnish husband died two years after they married and she inherited the house from him. His children are now trying to dispute this case in a court. Irina told me that she visits her grandmother in Finland every year, and her babushka comes to visit Irina and her daughter (Irina's mother) in Petrozavodsk. Irina, who works in a low-paying public dental service in Petrozavodsk, is regularly provided by financial support by her babushka.

My data show that migrant grandmothers are more likely to financially help their adult grandchildren and other family members, living both in Finland and on the other side of the border. When migrant babushkas come to visit their relatives in Petrozavodsk, they bring chocolate, coffee, cheese, sausages, and different presents for family members, such as a t-shirt, dresses, and dishes, usually purchased on discount. Elsa told me that her sister Liliya (both are interlocutors of my study, Chapter VIII) "always comes to visit with a lot of gifts and food". When Elvira visits her cousin in Petrozavodsk, she brings a big bag of second-hand clothes for his children. She is also paying back a loan for two cars purchased by her two grown-up sons in Finland. Transnationally travelling grandmothers, Vesta and Elena, also bring some Russian gifts and sweets to those in Finland; at the same time they may "hunt" for cheap (second-hand) clothes and discounted Finnish coffee and chocolate to take back and sometimes impress those family members and friends who stay on the Russian side of the border.

My data also indicate that migrant grandmothers try to combine the advantages of Finnish and Russian systems in their living. When summer comes, Petrozavodsk's public clinics (*poliklinika*) are overloaded with "Finnish babushkas" (as Russian migrant elderly women from Finland are often called in Petrozavodsk), because the medical service is free of charge in Russia and the system is more familiar to them. In Finland, babushkas know where to "get cheap food", "cheap clothes", and even where "you can get food for free". Many times, I have been instructed by my interlocutors, Inga, Marja, Julia, Albina, and Elvira, on these matters.

For instance, Riita rents one room to a young couple in her two-room flat in Petrozavodsk, which helps her to have additional money to live on in Finland. The other room is always available for her to stay in when she comes to Petrozavodsk. She has bequeathed her flat in Petrozavodsk to her "most beloved grandson" who is also residing in Finland. Elvira had more negative experiences of renting a flat in Petrozavodsk; the renters did not pay on time, and the flat was not maintained well. Eventually, she evicted them and renovated the flat (using the money saved in Finland), and

now she and her sons stay in that flat when visiting Petrozavodsk. Elvira is also currently building a wooden house in a countryside area near Petrozavodsk. Her aging mother, who is now retired in Finland and has a right to stay longer abroad (which Russia now officially recognizes for those who migrated), stays in this wooden house during summer; the house is located in the area where she had spent almost her entire adult life.

In contrast to migrant grandmothers, transnationally travelling grandmothers and those grandmothers who stay put tend rather to be recipients of material help, primarily because of their lower incomes in Russian Karelia:

Both my daughters dress me up. They buy clothes for me, and they also give me their old clothes. Juliya is paying for a flat [in Petrozavodsk]. When I am here [in Petrozavodsk], my pension goes only on buying food. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

When Vesta stays with her daughters in Finland, her living is entirely provided by them. Elena, the other transnationally travelling grandmother of my research, is also helped financially by her daughter: when she is in Finland, Elena is provided for by her daughter; when she is in Petrozavodsk, her daughter helps her financially:

My pension is so little. I can only get some basic food, and I spend a lot of money on buying medicine. It is so expensive (...). I am living quite well due to my daughter. She is dressing me, she is feeding me (...). (Elena, born in 1950, 2009)

However, the element of material self-sacrifice for the sake of the grandchildren also marks their grandmothing practices. Vesta's elder grandson talked a lot on the phone with his fiancée in Russia; in the course of these long conversations they stopped being a couple, according to Vesta. When a very high bill arrived, he could not pay, so Vesta paid the bill from the money saved from her pension.

In Soviet times, parents were often expected to support their children financially even in their adult lives, often sacrificing their own needs. Vesta has a rich personal history of helping her adult children financially. This started when her husband was alive. When both their daughters got married, Vesta and her husband provided their young families with an initial family capital, and purchased a tractor for her elder daughter's husband to run a farm; later, when Vesta became a widow, she sold her flat to enable her younger daughter to buy a flat in Petrozavodsk. Given this history, Vesta is still trying to help her grandchildren financially despite the scarcity of her own resources now. This she handles by minimizing her own basic needs.

Family for many grandmothers, as has been discussed, may include their grandchildren and children, and their spouses, their aging mothers and aunts, sisters and brothers, and cousins. In this

broad understanding of the family landscape, helping family members financially does not mean that money and gifts are given away but, on the contrary, the available resources are redistributed within transnational family space. Grandmothers are especially keen on helping their adult grandchildren have a better quality of life by minimizing and sacrificing their own needs. Material (financial) help must also be seen in a larger setting of the whole family “fabric” and mutual care across generations. The babushkas’ active immediate care of children gets rewarded by material provision from their children’s families. A babushka’s financial support for her grandchildren can be interwoven in a broader context of family tensions, for example, the conflict between a mother and a daughter. Paternal grandmothers often tend to express their love towards their sons by buying or repairing their cars (Chapter VI). Finally, working at the dacha, finding and buying cheap food and clothes, cooking, and picking and pickling are significant in contributing to a transnational family economy, particularly in grandmothers’ practices of saving, and not the least offering the babushka’s fresh vegetables or berries, as well as homemade food for transnational family members. The care provided by transnational babushkas calls for reconsideration of the very notion of transnational care in the Finnish context (Jokinen & Jakonen, 2011).

Transnational Babushkas: Commonalities and Differences

I have been trying to show in this chapter that there are many commonalities between the way family is understood, practiced, and imagined by migrant grandmothers, transnationally mobile grandmothers, and grandmothers staying put. This is a major reason why their practices have not been discussed separately. Most grandmothers see and build their lives in a broad setting of family relations; some are extremely devoted babushkas, others are less active in their grandmothering practices. Neoliberal trends are found on both sides of the border, and a new understanding of grandmothering is increasingly operating, especially among “young” transnational babushkas. However, the romanticized image of a caring and loving babushka is prominent in women’s narratives; many of them draw on their childhood memories of their own babushkas. Thus, there is a difference between the imaginations of the babushka and actual babushka practices.

The differences primarily relate to the mechanisms of maintaining grandmothering and family ties, and are in many ways defined by the structural development or macro-factors of Russian Karelia, Finland, and the cross-border regulations. Migrant grandmothers tend to provide material support for their adult children and grandchildren residing on the other side of the border. Telephone calls are mainly done from Finland either by migrant grandmothers or adult migrants

calling their babushkas in Russia. The Internet has become increasingly applied on both sides of the border for reproducing conventional family space with grandmothers as significant agents in this process.

Child care is provided by most transnational babushkas, although in different forms. Migrant grandmothers take care of their grandchildren who also reside in Finland or take their grandchildren from Russia so that the grandchildren can spend their holidays with their grandmothers in Finland. Grandmothers staying put take their grandchildren from Finland to spend their holidays either at some Russian resorts or dacha. Transnationally mobile grandmothers travel and stay in-between two national states to help their adult children, especially daughters, living in Finland with child care and domestic work. The emotional and imaginable aspects of grandmothering become especially important at a distance, and when the grandchildren are grown up and/or the babushkas become very old. Imagining family and narrating family histories are significant channels for recreating familyhood in a transnational space for many babushkas.

In a transnational context, grandmothers are often those who provide social inertia processes by the continued commitment to the grandmothering and family-making practices of the Soviet period. Possible family frictions (Chapter VI) can perhaps be seen as the resistance of younger generations to this aspect of the grandmothers' influence (this is only a hypothetical remark, and further research is needed to answer this question). It is also worth emphasizing that the three-generation family frame allows juggling and making the best (according to individual subjective expectations of what is good for a child, for a working mother, etc.) out of both national systems (Finnish and Russian): for instance, if home care is seen as a better option for a child, the babushka's help allows this option to work with both parents having paid employment, with the addition of social allowances for home child care provided by KELA (Kansaneläkelaitos, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, providing social benefits to citizens).

6. Babushkas' Micro-powers

The purpose of this chapter is to look closely at the position and role of grandmothers in a broader setting of intra-familial relations, as well as some aspects of babushkas' micro-powers in a public setting locally and transnationally. As has been discussed earlier, the increased role of grandmothers in child care and domestic affairs is one of the elements of the three-generation family frame evident both in Russian Karelia and in a transnational family space. In this chapter, I hope to illustrate that grandmothers may also be interested, both wittingly and unwittingly, in maintaining three-generation family ties. Being active in making their extended families is often what gives meaning to their lives, and can be a source of their empowerment.

In the first section, following earlier discussions, I will discuss the term *micro-powers*, focusing on babushkas' micro-powers, loyalties, and vulnerabilities in their interactions with other family members, especially their adult sons and daughters, daughters-in-law and sons-in-law. I will also illustrate how grandmothers can serve as a channel for exerting babushkas' micro-powers over other family members. In the next section, applying the term *babushka* in a broad meaning, I will tentatively discuss the dynamic of babushkas' micro-powers in some public settings, namely, in the Soviet and post-Soviet urban landscapes and in the Russian and Finnish Orthodox Churches.

As the chapter is primarily based on grandmothers' narratives and my participant observation, I would emphasize its tentative character. However, I believe that this chapter is indispensable for a more comprehensive understanding of the babushka phenomenon. Firstly, recognition and even celebration of the babushka's care should not lead to overlooking its more ambiguous aspects when it comes to their interactions with different family members as well as in the whole family fabric. Secondly, when approaching the babushka as a gender subjectivity that may be seen in many ways as culturally and socially imposed on Russian mid-life and elderly women, one should also be aware of the empowering enablement of this position. Thus, I hope to demonstrate that the family position of a grandmother can also be seen as an asset in expanding the presence of babushkas in their extended families and in their continued attempts to influence the lives of their adult children and grandchildren. There is always potential space for the grandmother's micro-powers in a three-generation family setting, given Russian gender cultural specificities. Furthermore, there is a subtle line between women's vulnerabilities and powers.

Sometimes, what appears as vulnerability, for instance in the form of self-sacrifice, may also appear as a subtle mechanism for reproducing the micro-powers of grandmothers.

6.1 Grandmothers and Intra-familial Relations

Micro-powers and Self-sacrifice

In my interpretation of babushka micro-powers I draw substantially on Marina Blagojevic's conceptual framing of gender relationships in post-war Yugoslavia in the Serbian context. She suggests that while one finds patriarchy at the macro level, the micro level is marked by a *sacrificial micro matriarchy*, i.e., a

structure of authority which gives power to women at the level of primary groups, where women achieve domination through self-sacrificing... At that, there are no other privileges for women at the micro level, except for those related to having power over one's nearest, dependence of all from the central figure of a grown, mature woman towards whom different generations and different needs converge. (Blagojevic, 1994, pp. 475-6)

Likewise, Andrei Simic, applying the term "cryptomatriarchy"³¹, points to the important "affectual power" of elderly women as a striking feature of the pre-war Yugoslavian society that appeared "anomalous" in light of a social charter stressing patrilineality, patrilocality, and male dominance (Simic, 1983, pp. 66-67).

Approaching the role of babushkas in Russian Karelia, I would avoid the terms *matriarchy* and *cryptomatriarchy*, as both are too strong and do not fully reflect the diversity of how power relations might be interplayed within family space in this particular context. However, Blagojevic's and Simic's observations on the authority and influential positions of mature women are applicable in my study, and are supported by my data. Thus, I would propose the term *micro-power* to discuss the position of grandmothers within the three-generation family frame. The term *micro-power* is related specifically to this aspect of influence in intra-familial relations that grandmothers might have in the private domain, which is "the key source of power for ordinary people, those outside the circles of political or economic elites" (Blagojevic, 1994, p. 476).

I apply the term *micro-power* in my research somewhat differently from how Michel Foucault approaches the notion of *power*, sometimes also using the term *micro-power* (Foucault, 1995, p. 222). For instance, Foucault discusses it as depersonalized institutional power, refracted in

the “panopticisms of everyday” and inscribed in the very foundations and functioning of modern society. Foucault pointed out the need for research on how intra-familial relations, especially in the parents-children cell, have become “disciplined” by “external schemata” (educational, military, medical, psychiatric, psychological) that have made the family into the “privileged locus” of emergence for the disciplinary question of the normal and the abnormal, or by state apparatuses (Foucault, 1995, p. 216). The Soviet subjectivities and grandmothering practices of grandmothers could have been analysed from this perspective, particularly given the totalitarian characteristics of the Soviet state and the state control over knowledge production process in all spheres. Nevertheless, my research does not explicitly discuss babushka micro-powers in connection with institutional disciplinary power.

However, some Foucauldian characteristics of power are useful for understanding babushka micro-powers in this study. Firstly, Foucault argues that power, operating through “panoptic institutions”, is “not added on from the outside, like a rigid, heavy constraint” but is “so subtly present in them as to increase their efficiency by itself increasing its own points of contact” (Foucault, 1995, p. 206). In the same way, the increased presence of babushkas in their extended families inscribes their micro-powers in the very functioning of the family. The micro-powers of grandmothers may well be very subtle in their character, and may or may not be openly acknowledged by themselves and/or other family members (see next section).

Just as discipline (in the Foucauldian meaning) “must come about without excessive force through careful observation, and moulding the bodies into the correct form through observation” (Foucault, 1995, p. 222), the powers of grandmothers emerge in the very presence of babushkas in extended families and their important role in child care and other home arrangements. Not only do babushkas affect the way extended families are maintained, but the consequences of their micro-powers are also long term and deep when considering that babushkas are important agents in their grandchildren’s upbringing. Although my research does not aim at tracing this type of influence, I would suggest that babushkas in different ways, sometimes directly, sometimes subtly, affect how their grandchildren act within contemporary social realities both in Russian Karelia and in Finland.

What often makes babushkas’ micro-powers subtle is the explicit self-sacrifice of grandmothers. According to Blagojevic, there is a continuity of sacrifice by women in communist and postcommunist regimes, and this self-sacrifice is important for establishing power at the micro-level:

In the name of equality, and in the interest of cheap reproduction of labours through cutting out of extra profits by unpaid household labour, communism has created a

model of an omnipotent woman. Being an omnipotent woman is neither a woman's right nor privilege, but it is her destiny. (Blagojevic, 1994, p. 476)

Blagojevic traces the "tradition of sacrificing" to high war losses in the male population: "there is nothing like the absence of men and concern for one's offsprings that can turn women towards sacrificing so completely" (Blagojevic, 1994, p. 477). This was also the case in the Soviet context after the Great Patriotic War, especially in the rural areas of Soviet Karelia (Chapter IV). The idea of self-sacrificing was an essential part of the early-stage socialist building when Soviet propaganda constructed self-sacrifice as "heroic" and something everybody had to live through for the sake of the "bright future" of next generations. Suffering and sacrificing in the name of victory became the utmost values during the Great Patriotic War (Service, 2007, p. 275).

Nancy Ries points out that "self-sacrificing, long-suffering, all-enduring" became especially glorified during the war years: people who gave up their lives in the fight against the Nazi German were made into "Soviet saints" (Ries, 1997, p. 151). Besides, the tradition of sacrificing is deeply rooted in Orthodox Christianity, although the meanings behind it are different and multi-dimensional. In both Soviet Russian and communist Serbian contexts self-sacrifice became accepted as a value in itself (Blagojevic, 1994, p. 480; Ries, 1997, p. 141). According to Ries, the everyday life tales of Russians convey ideas of "feminine endurance and self-sacrifice" (Ries, 1997, p. 80), and "litanies" are an important form of expression of self-sacrifice (Ries, 1997, p. 84).

However, self-sacrificing also implies rewards. On the one hand, the dependence of men and younger women on (mature) women in their everyday life reproduction/survival enables these mature women to exert micro-powers over men and younger women. On the other hand, as Blagojevic claims, "women self-sacrifice for others, but in that self-sacrificing they are not only passive objects of patriarchal domination, but rather subjects, as they become subjects in the act of self-sacrifice itself, they are accomplished as individuals through self-sacrificing" (Blagojevic, 1994, p. 480). She sees this self-sacrifice and powers on the micro level not only as a form of compensation for marginalization in the public sphere, but also something that "gives their life a purpose". Besides, "the feeling of their power is real to the extent that their power is real and vice-versa" (Blagojevic, 1994, p. 480).

Because my study is primarily based on grandmothers' narratives, it is difficult to say what other family members think of their grandmothers' influence. However, my research reveals intra-familial tensions and shows that grandmothers often interfere in their adult children's lives and try to affect them (next section). Self-sacrificing is often an important component of their lives and narratives. For instance, the transnational grandmother Vesta, who otherwise praised her family,

including her daughters and grandchildren, sometimes also described her active role as babushka in self-sacrificing terms:

When you live with your family in one flat, sometimes you cannot freely breathe or break wind. My children are very good, but they are jealous. They think...well, Olga [the older daughter] told me: mum, you should go out more, you should have a fling! But Julija [the younger daughter], she thinks that at my age it cannot be serious. But I think it might be still serious ... I feel lightness. I would not be any old hag. I felt that with Ilja [Vesta's dating partner after her husband had died]. I can sing and dance. ...she thinks I am a povetrulia (featherbrain), but I am serious. And she thinks that one should age with dignity. I don't know. Perhaps she has only her own interest in mind. She feels easier when I am with her. I give her some strength. I am nourishing her. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

Everything is solved with God's help. My flesh is calm, although it would be good to be with a man. I would fly then. But I can also inspire myself. Perhaps, I am just deceiving myself. But what shall I do? I need to help my children. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2009)

Convincing bodily evidence of the self-sacrificing aspects of grandmothing emerges in the peculiar ways in which many grandmothers (also Vesta) accompany their narration, for instance often taking a deep sigh, saying “such a life”. This bodily/verbal expression is connected to the fatalist aspect of litanies pointed out by Nancy Ries in her research (Ries, 1997, p. 139). In this context, the role of babushka appears as something that women inevitable face to submit in sacrificing for the best for their children.

On the other hand, Vesta seems to carefully guard her position as a transnational babushka, the babushka of the family. She expressed her worries that the other grandmother of the family, her son-in-law's mother, tried to insert herself in her daughter's family by continually calling them and asking to visit them in Finland:

It was quite good the first ten years, but she was getting older and started thinking about how to insert herself in her children's families. She used to live with her older son and his wife, and their daughter grew up. It obviously started becoming not that convenient for them to live with her. And her daughter-in-law's mother got retired. And they obviously started withdrawing from her. And at that moment Julija [Vesta's daughter] gave birth to her son. She might have been thinking to insert in their family, under the guise of a helper. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

Vesta often refers to the negative impact of “that woman” on her daughter, and says that Julija tries to “keep her out of Finland”. However, the very way the problem has been articulated by Vesta shows that the position of a babushka (in this particular case, transnational) is valuable: it is something that may give grandmothers a sense of security and protection, self-fulfilment and self-

realization. In the face of political, social, and economic marginalization in Russian Karelia, and some challenges in cultural and social adjustment in Finland, family may become one of the most important sites, if not the main one, of babushkas' empowerment.

Contemporary Babushkas as Daughters and Mothers

When discussing the micro-powers of babushkas, it is important to bear in mind that every grandmother is a mother, and the way of being a mother defines both their grandmothereing practices and their role in family-making. Rotkirch and Temkina (1996) point out that mothers in Russian culture have a traditionally strong role and a life-long influence over their children, and these aspects are significant when examining transformations of gender identities, both in a social and a psychoanalytical sense. They emphasize “an unusually strong dependence” on their mothers among their female respondents. These specific relationships between a mother and a daughter are also historically and culturally traceable. For instance, folklore studies in both Russian Karelian and Finno-Ugrian contexts emphasize the close relationships between a mother and a daughter that are distinctively expressed in wedding poetry (Kuznetsova & Loginov, 2001; Tiimonen, 1990).

According to a recent psychological research on three generations of Russian women (babushkas, mothers, and daughters), the “mother’s ultra-authority” (*sverhautoritet materi*), “sacrificing”, and “encouragement of a child’s activity” are the most typical characteristics of the maternal behaviour of grandmothers as opposed to mothers who are more inclined to have “verbal communication” and “friendly relationships with a child”, and reveal a tendency of not being able to act independently in their motherhood (*nesamostoitel'nyi*) (Saporovskaya, 2008). Daughters who have not yet become mothers tend to be oriented to “verbal communication”, “mother’s ultra-authority”, and “friendly relationships” (Saporovskaya, 2008), which, in my opinion, appear as a result of the combined influence of mothers and grandmothers.

Michelle Miller-Day, whose research discusses interactions across three generations of women (grandmothers, mothers, and daughters), argues that if in pre-modern society power relations could be more explicitly articulated, in modern society the tools for exerting one’s powers have become more subtle, but arguably still function as effectively as explicit physical and verbal abuse. “Behavioural dominance” can be accomplished through close monitoring of others’ actions and expressing criticism both directly and indirectly through negative verbal comments, negative evaluative feedback, and negative affect. In this subtle exercise of power, comments and remarks

can be very polite but pronounced with sarcasm and implied judgment (Miller-Day, 2004). The below narratives also illustrate this aspect of some grandmothers' micro-powers.

My data are illustrative in that some women's narratives reveal the figure of a strong and powerful mother. The data are interesting and complement each other as grandmothers talk both about their daughters and sons, as well as their own mothers. Some grandmothers talk of their mothers as powerful figures who have been trying to exert control over their lives:

I have never had trusty relations with my mother, though she used to take care of my children. They spent holidays and weekends at her place. When my children were with her she would still phone me to check whether I was at home. If I had been out the previous night, she would call me next morning saying that I have got children and should live for them, having no personal life at all... But once I told her that if she didn't want to take care of my children, then I could easily take them to my mother-in-law [Elena was divorced, but continued to have good relationships with her ex-mother-in-law]. I had the best mother-in-law, which does not happen often. I said to my mother that I want to have my personal life and meet my friends. (Elena, born in 1950, 2006)

My mother never liked my husband. She was somewhat jealous. She wished that I would never get married so that I would always be around her. She wanted me to take care of her. (Elsa, born in 1939, 2006)

My mother is a very good "prosecutor". She likes organizing everything by herself, telling everybody what to do with their lives. This is her thing. She is constantly trying to find somebody to command over. I am already not enough for her, too narrow field for her activity... Until the last breath she will tell me that I am doing everything wrong. I do not wear the right clothes. And I am still doing everything wrong. It is just very difficult to live when somebody is always trying to teach you! (Nadezhda, born in 1952, 2008)

Divorced or single women are often assisted by their mothers in child upbringing, and they live with their mothers. Sharing the same living space with a mother was often experienced as suppressive and constraining:

My mother enjoyed living with me, but sometimes she was harsh towards me, especially when I wanted to go to a cinema with somebody. She was perhaps jealous. She did not want that a man would appear in our home. (Svetlana, born in 1939, 2008)

I live with my mum now [in Finland]. I have always had difficult relationships with her. She is too authoritative (vlastnaia). She has lived through a harsh life. (Elvira, born in 1950, 2007).

I have been always constrained in what I could do because I lived with my mother. I was not allowed to invite my friends. I had no personal life at all. (Olga, born in 1952, 2006)

As has been discussed, in Russian Karelia and especially in a transnational Finnish-Russian context, maternal grandmothers are keen on helping their daughters with child care (Chapters IV, V). Maternal grandmothers do not explicitly talk of themselves as controlling women, but the very way of talking about their daughters' lives, their husbands and in-laws, and their grandchildren reveals that babushkas feel free to discuss extended family problems and express their (sometimes judgmental and critical) opinions about other family members. Some grandmothers narrate how their daughters suffered from the negative actions, both explicit and implicit, of their husbands and mothers-in-law:

Galina: *My daughter got married when she was very young. She was seventeen years old! He was torturing her for fourteen years. She did not live, she suffered. He is an idiot, sadist! He was beating her, poor girl! She was afraid of leaving him, but then she did it finally after she gave birth to Boris [their second child]. But she decided to divorce him. She even once escaped from Petrozavodsk to Archangelsk from him. I did not know where they were. I was trying to find them through militia, and I found them. I brought them back to my place. Slava went to school here, and Boris started kindergarten.*

TT: *So, they have got two children, haven't they?*

Galina: *Yes, and her third child from Victor, her second husband. Now she is married to her third husband. Her second husband did not like children. He just wanted to live by himself: he wanted to go out. He has made children, he got also two children with his first wife, and he does not want to live with them. Lesha [Galina's youngest grandson] was four years old when he told them: Get out from here! So they lived at my place, all my grandchildren and my daughter. (Galina, born in 1936, 2008)*

Vesta: *When Misha [Vesta's grandson] was born I was helping Julija [Vesta's daughter] with him. Then I had to leave for some time. And Dima [Julija's husband] must have told his mother that I had left. And she invited herself as a helper. But it became worse. The only thing she was doing was to walk with a pram outside. And even then she would ask Julija to take the pram outside by the stairs. Julija did everything by herself, and she was just pushing the pram outside. It did not work between them (...). She stayed at their place for two months. And Julija got sick! The child became allergic. They lived in a one room flat. He [Vesta's son-in-law] was sitting with his mother, playing in something, and Julija was with two children by herself. She was also tense because how the child would be sleeping the whole night. But we discussed recently that it was her [mother-in-law's] influence that it was tense, and they got sick. She must have had bad thoughts and wishes. She was angry. She would go to sleep and wished something bad to Julija. We have seen through her, especially me. Now she has started trying to come to them [in Finland] using different excuses... But Julija told her not to come. So she must be feeling angry now there. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)*

Sons-in-law are often liked or at least not openly disliked by their mothers-in-law (for instance, by Aleksandra, Elena, Elina, Elsa, Julia, and Marina), unless they are aggressive and physically abusive towards their wives, the grandmothers' daughters, as in Galina's narratives. Liliya and Julia seem to be critical about their daughters' actions and characters; in both cases a daughter was said to inherit her "bad character" from her father. It is interesting to note that there might be a kind of competition between daughters and mothers as grandmothers and great-grandmothers (if there is one) about who is more liked as babushka by their (great) grandchildren. I encountered one of my interviewees a couple of years after we had last met:

TT: So how is your life? How are your grandchildren and great grandchildren?

Liliya: I visited them last August, in Helsinki [Liliya's granddaughter, Inga, lives in Helsinki]. Inga had to go for a wedding somewhere and I stayed with the kids two days. Ilja [Inga's husband] had to work, so he came home after work, and took care of them. But I was with them otherwise. But I told them that I could be only inside. They are two; it is too difficult outside: What if they would run in different directions? They call me "mummo" [a grandmother, in Finnish]. They ask very interesting and smart questions when we talk on the phone: "Mummo, how do you feel?" They call their grandmother, my daughter, only babushka. They are not as close to her as to me. She is kind of jealous because of that, but she is very dry [unemotional]! They call me both babushka and mummo! (Liliya, born in 1932, 2011 fieldnote)

Generally, the narratives of maternal grandmothers convey a sense that they think of themselves as helpers and supporters of their daughters and often readily sacrifice their social and professional needs to take care of their grandchildren to enable their daughters to be successful in their professional lives (Chapter V). Moreover, women help their nieces to combine motherhood and paid employment (for instance, Olga and Lubov). As "working mothers" in their past they know from their experience how difficult it might be to combine motherhood and paid employment; by assisting in child care they want to make it easier for their own daughters. In that, they continue to be caring mothers towards their adult daughters. This, of course, implies their "extended" role in their adult daughters' lives. How daughters perceive their mothers' attempts to "advise" and influence their individual and family lives is again beyond the scope of this research. However, on the basis of how some "young" grandmothers discuss their mothers' authoritative figures, I would assume that some daughters may feel helped by their mothers but also feel despair because of the "behavioural dominance" of their mothers, for instance, if and when their mothers continue to treat them as immature individuals, incapable of making their own life choices.

I would assume that experiencing one's own mother's "behavioural dominance" does not necessarily prevent a grandmother from being a dominant mother herself. There are obviously limitations in my assumption. There might be differences between different generations of women, and the recent individualization and liberalization trends, as well as the increased multiplicity of gender strategies, may well have led to more independence among younger generations of women (this requires a separate research). It is worth emphasizing, however, that mothers often take their daughters' side in possible conflicts with other family members; on the other hand, it is also possible that they "create" conflicting situations through their micro-powers. For instance, Vesta's narratives above show that she was especially keen on revealing the "destructive" influence of her daughter's mother-in-law, and through that she may have also influenced her daughter's attitude and relations with her mother-in-law. Paternal grandmothers are a particular case in my data, affecting how babushkas participate in family-making. These aspects will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

Russian Masculinities: Grandmothers as Mothers and Mothers-in-law

Questions related to Russians masculinities now and across history have become a prominent subject of recent research (Clements, Friedman, & Healey, 2002; Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 2002; Ushakin, 1999; Kukhterin, 2000). While the topic is complicated and suggests a number of approaches and interpretations, in my research I have been interested in the aspect related to the role of grandmothers or mothers in shaping Russian masculinities, and the way it may inform intra-familial relations. In interpreting my data in this respect, the exploration by Nancy Ries of the interplay of female and male in Russian tales and the studies by Marina Blagojevic and Andrei Simic on the gender aspects of the Serbian/Yugoslavian context have been useful. One may ask how the interpretations of everyday Russian tales can be applied in analysing everyday social reality. Nancy Ries establishes this important connection by saying that even if the tales are exaggerations, which make a narrative into an epic, even a myth, it also means that there was something "culturally cherished in the telling" (Ries, 1997, p. 66).

According to Ries, Russian tales during perestroika "turned patriarchy upside down via mini-exposés of intra-familial relations: in them the patriarch was merely a spoiled little boy (albeit one who could make life miserable) in domestic orbit around the all-controlling, all-managing, all-giving mother" (Ries, 1997, p. 75). She points out that all these stories reflected and reproduced couple relations influenced less by patriarchal principles than by "maternalism" (Ries, 1997, p. 75).

A similar feature has also been emphasized by Blagojevic and Simic in the Serbian/Yugoslavian context. While Blagojevic underlines the dependence of men on women, especially a “grown, mature woman” – first on mothers, then their wives, transferred across generations (Blagojevic, 1994, p. 476), Simic underlines a phenomenon of the “extended childhood”, particularly a strong bond between a mother and an adult son: the “prestigious and authoritative position the society formally bestows on a man, and it is through him that his aging mother can exert influence and power both within the family and in the external world”, and even tremendous social mobility and separate dwelling have not eroded the established pattern (Simic, 1983, p. 77) . Although Simic’s studies dates back to the early 1980s, the pattern has survived into the 1990s as in Blagojevic.

Some contemporary researchers suggest that the crisis of masculinity caused by the deprived position of Soviet men in the family and the domination of women in the private domain is over now, and new masculinities have emerged (Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 2002). New masculinities are characterized by an “attacking character”, especially in sexual life; one of the prominent masculine images discursively constructed by media is a professionally successful, independent, autonomous, good-looking (making special efforts for that), and sexually active man (Ushakin, 1999). According to Elena Zdravomyslova and Anna Temkina, new Russian masculinities are close to the western hegemonic modern masculinity – autonomous, rational, having liberal rights. At the same time, femininity has recently been taking “two traditional Russian variations: housewife plus sexual object, and a business woman” (Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 2002, p.18).

In this new reading of gender relationships in Russia, femininity related to women of a mature age is largely neglected. Moreover, the tendencies of how masculinity and femininity are shaped discursively represent the “new middle class” and do not necessarily reflect dominant everyday life practices in “provincial” Russia, where social inertia has been felt longer. My data show that there is a lot of continuity with the working mother contract, dominant during Soviet times, particularly in the way grandmothers understand their relationships with their adult sons and make their families.

Likewise, instead of celebrating the independent and autonomous character of new Russian masculinities, I would suggest that the situation is much more complex. According to some scholars, Russian men seem not to be ready to take up responsibilities for their families, the niche which used to be largely filled in by the Soviet paternalistic state. Fathers are rather seen as a “luxury” if they are involved in child care, in contrast to mothers (Issoupova, 2000, p. 46; Kiblitckaya, 2000). There are, of course, variations in any cultural tendency, and some men, as Sergei Kukhterin argues, are keen on “living up to their new role”, getting more involved in the

domestic sphere; as the author himself admits, however, it is hard, as “earning money” takes a lot of time and energy, and men are not used to participating in family life (Kukhterin, 2000, p. 88).

Russian masculinities rather connote parodies of Western masculinities. Assuming that gender identity is a form of parody in itself (Butler, 1999, p. 139), and Western masculinities are also imaginary, Russian masculinities are the double parody, or “tangential” Western modern masculinities (adapting the term “tangential” modernity, (Qadir, 2011)³²). As Simic has illustrated in his study, the machoistic role of men prescribed by the culture can coexist and even be reproduced by their dependence on and “subordination” to their mothers (Simic, 1983, p. 88). In other words, all these new Russian masculinities, machoistic in character, do not exclude or in fact may be nourished by their strong connections and emotional dependence upon their mothers. New Russian masculinities again reproduce this “mischief” element of the Russian male identity discussed by Nancy Ries in the context of perestroika (Ries, 1997, p. 65). A professional, independent, autonomous (meaning also no family obligations and responsibilities), new Russian man continues to be a “spoiled little boy” who is allowed to make some “innocent mischief” (drinking, sexual wildness, etc.) and is expected to be mildly scolded but always forgiven and supported by his mother.

Thus, for instance, one of my interlocutors, Galina, is practically and financially supporting her 40-year-old son who lost his job because of drinking. Lubov’s son kept crashing his car, particularly because of drinking; although she was retired she also got a job to be able to pay for the repair of his car. She also gave him and his girlfriend a comfortable apartment in a living house that she inherited from her parents, while she and her husband continue to live in an old wooden house that needs a lot of renovation.

Buying a car for a son is something that many mothers are eager to do, and make special efforts in saving for, particularly by minimizing their own needs. For example, Mari mentioned that she was extremely “happy” when she was able to buy a first car for her son; as she was already a widow by that time, she had to really save to do that by herself. The migrant grandmother Elvira bought cars for her two sons in Finland, and she pays a loan to a bank, again sacrificing her own needs. Mothers repairing or buying cars for their adult sons is an interesting example in that it illustrates how mothers maintain their sons’ machoistic attributes (like having a car) through self-sacrificing.

When discussing Russian masculinities and mothers, it is interesting to note that some grandmothers claim that they have had to command their husbands their entire lives:

Of course, I was the head of our family. We lived almost fifty years together. (Aleksandra, born in 1937, 2008)

When I interviewed Liliya (the second time we met), a phone call interrupted our conversation, and she told me: “My child is calling me”. After she finished talking on the phone it turned out that she had just spoken to her husband, whom she called “my child”:

A brother came to my husband to take some of his money. He keeps his money at my place. I am like a bank for him. He keeps his money with me, because otherwise he would have just wasted it. He sold his flat, half of that money his wife had stolen, and he moved here two years ago. He had some difficulties with his birth certificate. He was born in a train, and his parents did not make a birth certificate for him, although both his parents were Ingrians. I helped him to move here. I gave him advice on the phone. He moved from Estonia. My husband’s parents were trying to make me to take care of him when we were getting married. His brother was fourteen at that time. But I refused. I told them that I want to have only one husband. But now I am taking care of him. I am a mother both to him, and my husband! (Liliya, born in 1932, 2006)

The narratives of grandmothers illustrate that when they talk about their sons and grown-up grandsons they do not necessarily think of them as individuals capable of doing and seeing the right things. To me their sons and grandsons often appear as “boys” who happened to find a wrong wife/girlfriend or were unfairly treated, misguided, and even cheated (see also next section) by the wife/girlfriend:

He did not have many girlfriends. He was a good boy. He was playing in a band. And then he met that girl, from the village. She is a peasant girl. I don’t understand why he has chosen her! She is neither fish nor fowl. She has been always silent. She has never been able to arrange things properly. Although, when I had my jubilee last week, she was able to deliver a toast. (Svetlana, born in 1939, 2008)

When my grandson started building a house of his own [in Finland], I asked him to build a section for me with a kitchen and a room with a separate entrance. But he did not do that. I think because his wife told him something. She influences him in a bad way. (Riita, born in 1932, 2008)

Both sons are married now. My youngest son’s wife is normal. But my oldest one’s wife has got a difficult character. She is too harsh. (Mari, born in 1951, 2008)

Ivan got married, but his wife started cheating on him. She took their daughter, and left for Ukraine with her lover... She was capricious. I saw that she was very young. And I have this kind of character that I was trying to please her. (Aleksandra, born in 1937, 2008)

In the context of the strong bond between mothers and their sons (and even grandsons), their wives or girlfriends often appear in the grandmothers’ narratives as simply not good enough. The

area of contradictory relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law has been researched in both historical studies of Russian peasantry (Farnsworth, 1992; Matossian, 1992) and in folklore studies of Russian Karelian and Finno-Ugrian contexts (Kuznetsova & Loginov, 2001; Stark-Arola, 1998; Ilomäki, 1998). Although the extended peasant household ceased to exist in the way it did in traditional agrarian society, this type of relationship seems to continue as a source of family friction.

Some grandmothers' narratives are illustrative in the sense that women feel free to express their somewhat negative and judging opinion about their sons' wives and girlfriends. My research does not answer the extent to which it affects the whole family fabric; however, it hints at family frictions because of these complex relationships. With regard to child upbringing, grandmothers sometimes criticize their daughters-in-law for not being good mothers: "too soft", "not disciplining enough" (Ludmila, born in 1949, 2009), or "too harsh", not sensitive enough (Mari, born in 1951, 2008):

When they were leaving, he [Mari's grandson] wanted to take Ivan's [Mari's son] former military hat with him, just to play. But she [Mari's daughter-in-law] did not allow him. I don't understand why. And she was so harsh with him [Mari's grandson]. She is always very rude with him, but he still loves her so much. I was trying to tell Ivan that she is so rude, but he told me: Mum, yes, I understand. I work on this. She has already changed a bit. (Mari, born in 1951, 2008)

However, the contradictions between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law should not be exaggerated. It may not be as dramatic as it is, for instance, as expressed in Ingrian wedding poetry: "you exchanged your merciful mother for a mother-in-law severe" (Ilomäki, 1998, p. 166). There is a different logic of hierarchical relations in a modern three- to four-generation family setting and the historically different context of these relationships. Besides, there is obviously another side to the story. Some grandmothers (for instance, Elsa, Evdokiya, Elvira, Nadezhda) speak of their daughters-in-law in more positive terms or at least do not talk negatively about their daughters-in-law:

I have normal relationships with his [Nadezhda's son] first wife. He is now having a new family. She also got married, and gave birth to a second child. She is very calm, and she always let me see my grandson and take him to my place. Tomorrow I am going to pick him up... With the current one, there are some prejudices... I think that her family judged my actions in terms of my husband, whom I divorced. They must be thinking: He is a normal man, what does that baba (a woman, informally) want? ... And my mother played a certain role in this situation. (Nadezhda, born in 1952, 2008)

While Riita expressed somewhat negative opinions about her eldest grandson's wife, she also told me that she really liked her other grandson's wife: "They have the same names, but they are so different!" (Riita, born in 1932, 2008). Although some women (for instance Liliya, Marina, Natalia, and Elvira) told me that they suffered from the somewhat abusive actions of their mothers-in-law when they were young wives, some, like Elena and Vera, were pleased to say that they were "loved" by their mothers-in-law. One of my interlocutors, Marja, who now resides in Finland, told me that she still keeps in touch with her "daughter-in-law" who lives in St. Petersburg, although effectively she stopped being her daughter-in-law as she divorced her son, and he now lives with another woman. Marja partly explains this remaining connection by the fact that her daughter-in-law is grateful towards Marja because she helped her take care of her daughters, Marja's grandchildren:

The girls were always at my place. My daughter-in-law always used to say: my mother-in-law is a person with a big letter [meaning a respected person]. She never shouted at me. I never scolded her in front of my son. I could have scolded my son in front of her, but never her. I would then approach her and tell her in the quiet. Now she always asks me: How do you feel? Would you like me to bring something for you? She called me on the 8th of March to congratulate. She called in the evening and apologized for the late call. First of all, she asked: how do you feel? Every time she calls she always asks first: How do you feel? When I was in St. Petersburg and I had heart problems, she arranged appointments for me, and paid the doctors for the heart check-up. And when my granddaughters call, they always ask: Babushka, how do you feel? So it would be a shame to be offended. Yes, she has got a bad character, my daughter-in-law. And what? Just at that very moment don't pay attention to that, and then you can express yourself, but in the calm manner. My son says: Mum, how can you be so calm? I would not be able... And I say: What would it give to you? If I am "boiling", then you will "boil". Nobody needs it. (Marja, born in 1936, 2008)

The above narratives illustrate that this area of relationships may not necessarily be that tense and full of conflicts, although one can see that these relationships are discussed in the three-generation family frame. For instance, for some women it was important to be "loved" by their mothers-in-law, i.e., to have good relationships with their mothers-in-law. Marja, when speaking of her former daughter-in-law, also emphasized that she had to make efforts to manage these relationships in the right way, to approach her daughter-in-law in the right moment to make her point. However, she also admitted that her daughter-in-law had a "bad" character.

Although Aleksandra seemed to feel angry at her former daughter-in-law (because she left her husband, Aleksandra's son), she still recognizes that her former daughter-in-law tried to please her at the earlier stage of their relationship when she was still married to Aleksandra's son. This illustrates that grandmothers and other family members have to negotiate between different levels

of loyalties (see below) in their interaction in the intra-familial space. In the narratives and lives of grandmothers, this family space may also include ex-family members. In Marja's narratives, her former daughter-in-law appears as part of her transnational family space.

With regard to the transnational family-making between Finland and Russian Karelia, the micro-powers of babushkas can be channelled both through talking family on phone and Skype supplemented by frequent visits and stays, especially those of transnationally mobile grandmothers:

Boris [Vesta's eldest grandson] had a girlfriend when he was sixteen years old. They were dating. She was a nice-looking girl. But she was that kind of girl, who liked money. So she wanted him to get money in any possible way, even through stealing! She even wanted him to go to Chechnya to bring money. She even pushed him to steal money. They were about to get married; she pushed him into that... Boris found that that she was cheating on him. He got very upset. He came here [to Petrozavodsk], got drunk, and crashed his car in the ditch... and already in two weeks he met Elena, his other girlfriend. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

... My soul has been always in the wrong place because of Boris. His spirit is not strong enough. And I am telling him; don't worry, everything will be fine. And he said to me: something went wrong, we have had done a bad turn to each other. She [Elena] packed her stuff and left... And now this weekend his brother, my other grandson, took some girls to his place, and Boris also came, and he liked one girl there. She is also studying. It seems that it went well for him with that girl. She does not take things in the wrong way [compared with the previous one]. She does not demand too much attention. And he also wants somebody to be with. So now he is with another girl. If he says: I want to have beer, but I don't have money. And she gives him money to buy beer. But he does not drink much. Now he has just had a birthday. And he did not drink, because that girl was at her mother's place in Lahti. So now we are for that girl. Although, we also liked Elena, and we even forced him to be with her. But then we just saw that it did not work. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2009)

The above are some of Vesta's narratives of the history of relationships between her eldest grandson, Boris, and his girlfriends. It certainly conveys a feeling that her 23-year-old grandson's personal life has been a subject of family talk, particularly grandmothers' advice and comments. It appears as if her grandson needs some kind of approval from his family, including his babushka, when building his relationships with his girlfriend.

However, one should be aware of different conditions of channelling micro-powers in a transnational family space between migrant, transnationally mobile, and staying put grandmothers, and further differences within each category. The lack of everyday contacts and actual physical co-being may have reduced opportunities for exerting micro-powers for some migrant grandmothers whose children and/or grandchildren live in Russia, or staying put grandmothers whose children

and/or grandchildren reside in Finland. Although phone and Skype conversations provide these opportunities, there are still limitations in these talking practices to which extent micro-powers can be applied, especially if talking family is not nourished by regular visits.

Importantly in the case of transnationally mobile grandmothers, the space for micro-powers is very enabling. In fact, visiting their children in Finland they have to share the same living space; thus, the intensity of day-to-day interaction may have increased compared with living in separate dwellings in Russian Karelia. With regard to migrant grandmothers whose children and grandchildren also live in Finland, the logic of family relations and micro-powers is often translated from the Russian context, possibly because of the recent character of migration. However, if a son (in Albina's case) or a daughter (in Elina's case) is married to a Finnish spouse, relations seem to be more distant (sometimes explained by the language barrier), and there is less room for evaluative remarks in women's narratives, both positive and negative.

Matriarch of the Family: Antonina's Narratives

Focusing now on the narratives of Antonina, I want to illustrate the differences in one woman's narratives when she talks of her daughter, Anna, and Anna's relationships with *her* husband and in-laws, and her son Denis and *his* relationships with his wife and in-laws. While commonalities in Antonina's family-making with regard to her daughter's and her son's families are evident, I also want to emphasize that the same woman may see family relations and act differently in her shifting positions of maternal and paternal grandmother. I also hope to give a sharp illustration of some of the arguments suggested above, particularly concerning the phenomenon of a strong mother, in this case acting as a mother of the whole extended family, and the peculiarities of mother/daughter, mother/son, mother-in-law/daughter-in-law, and mother-in-law/son-in-law relationships.

Antonina was born and has lived all her life in Petrozavodsk. When I came to Antonina's flat I was very warmly welcomed and offered tea. Her husband also came to greet me. He seemed to be a nice and welcoming man. After that Antonina firmly told him, "Go to your room!" Then she said to me: "You know, he is now in the movement of Anastasiya [a Russian version of New Age movement]. He ordered some booklets, and they arrived, and I broke them into pieces. What is that?" That phrase gave me a sense of who was actually "ruling" the family. Antonina is a wife, a mother of a son and a daughter, a grandmother of three children, and a mother-in-law.

When Antonina speaks of her daughter, she seems to be sympathetic towards her daughter and understands that living with her in-laws, even in the partitioned house, is not easy for her daughter.

My daughter was forty years old last year. They bought one part of a house, and his [Anna's husband] parents live in the same house. The house is partitioned. They live in the other part of the house. It is not very good to live with his parents. But at least they live in separate parts. Before they used to live in the same... We had once this kind of moment. Anna had just given birth to her son, and they lived together at that time. I had returned from my night shift, and Fedor [son-in-law] called me from his work: Mum, come and check Anna. She had a fever in the morning. Check her out!

TT: Does he call you “mum”?

Antonina: *Yes, not always, but when he really needs something. I cannot complain to him. There is nothing to complain about. So I had a nap, and then I went to check Anna. It was already dinner time. I went upstairs, and saw that she was lying there in her bed. She had a fever. And his parents were downstairs, and they did not even go upstairs to check her, although she had not come to them downstairs. So I scolded them properly. Well, it was my daughter, but there was also their grandson! We have not had scandals since that time, but this is their attitude towards Anna...So we had that kind of moment. I was shouting at them, told them many things. I don't remember what exactly, but I gave them a proper scolding! (Antonina, born in 1937, 2008).*

In attempts to protect her daughter from an unfair treatment of her in-laws, Antonina “scolded them properly”. However, Antonina treats her son-in-law almost as her own son, and is proud of the fact that he calls her occasionally a “mum”. Although the good attributes of her son-in-law are also linked to him being “compliant”, and doing whatever he is asked to do:

I have a very good son-in-law. There are almost no such good sons-in-law like him. He is compliant. Whatever I ask him, he always does. If he buys meat, he always brings us a piece. (Antonina, born in 1937, 2008)

However, when it comes to Antonina's son and his wife, she seems to forget that her daughter-in-law has been for many years in the same position as her own daughter, living with her in-laws. She discusses her daughter-in-law in entirely negative and sometimes even humiliating terms:

Antonina: *They [Denis and his wife] lived with us for ten years. They have just recently moved out, before the New Year. They bought a flat of their own.*

TT: How did it go to live together?

Antonina: *In the beginning, when they did not have anything, everything went well. But when they started earning more money, my daughter-in-law started pitching up:*

she did not want to do this, she did not want to do that. Once we had a big scandal. Her sister got pregnant, she had to give birth in June. Yes, she delivered the baby precisely on the city's day.³³

I came home and saw that everything had been turned upside-down. Julija [Antonina's granddaughter, her son's daughter] was not a baby anymore by that time. My daughter-in-law and her sister were looking for nappies for the baby. I also have nephews, and I had already given clothes to my sister by that time. Although, I kept some nice things. They checked all my suitcases, packed up all cotton blankets very nicely. And then you know, at that time ...please, take more tea! ... I started losing my weight. I had been to various doctors, but they told me that everything was fine. It turned out later that I had gall-stones. I had lost fifteen kg at that time! I did not know what would happen to me, and I packed a small parcel.

There was a small pillow in the parcel which I took from a second-hand store (gumanitarka). The pillow was delicate, fringed and trimmed with lace. It was such a nice pillow! I prepared this parcel to my death because I was losing my weight! And they took that parcel and took out the pillow! And all my suitcases! I went mad! ... and I told them: Get out! And my son told me: Mum, we will leave. Of course, they did not leave. Or maybe I am mistaken. I told them "get out" some other time. Once I came home, and my daughter-in-law told me: Why have you messed up my wardrobe? I told her: I did not go to your room... (Antonina, born in 1937, 2008)

Antonina's narratives also illustrate that the position as a grandmother was used to escalate her conflict with her daughter-in-law at Anna's birthday party, when the daughter-in-law was "publicly" scolded for not calling her mother-in-law by name:

Also she never called me by my name. They got married, and she did not call me by my name. I did not pay attention to that. I just wanted that they would live normal. So I did not bother about that much. Once Anna had a birthday party, and we all were there. We started going home. When I go home I always take all my grandchildren with me so that adults can continue to have fun. And she started dressing Julija up. And she did not tell me anything. I asked her: Why are you dressing her up? She had nothing to say. And I told her: You know that I have got a name. My name is Antonina Petrovna. At the same time I told Julija that she would put on her clothes, of course I would not have left her there; she lived with us. My daughter-in-law started crying, of course, and going hysterical. (Antonina, born in 1937, 2008)

For example, when narrating the phone call made by her daughter-in-law, Antonina calls her *chto* ("what"), a question word applied to name a thing, not a person:

Some days later after that she phoned me as she had to ask something about Anna, and she called me by my name, through clenched teeth, and I even did not understand who was there and what was there! (Antonina, born in 1937, 2008)

In Antonina's narratives her daughter-in-law appears as a mother who takes her child to bad company at bad times, such as hiking where they "make a fire and grill meat until midnight". "I

would never go for the night somewhere with my child,” exclaimed Antonina when she told me that story. When Antonina’s son was in Chechnya for six months on work, her daughter-in-law, according to Antonina, did not behave: sometimes she stayed at her female friend’s who also had a daughter and whose husband was also on the same job trip, and brought her daughter with her:

Antonina: They left the kids there during the night and went out.

TT: Did they leave the girls there by themselves?

Antonina: Well, I don’t really know. But I think that when the girls fall asleep, they just go outside. I don’t know. I am not there. I called both to her mother, and her father to tell this. What is that?

TT: Did you also talk about this to your son?

Antonina: No, why should I? He would have killed her! No, no, if they love each other, let them live together. I am not going to divorce them. If he gets to know from somebody else, let him know then. Our city is not that big, everybody knows each other. Her female friend’s husband is different. I heard how he made a scandal when talking on the phone with her. My Denis is different. Well, now he is back, and they are fine... They are going to have a second baby. And they are also adjusting to their new flat. I never thought that eventually we will stay alone in our flat. (Antonina, born in 1937, 2008)

As Antonina is an active grandmother for both her son’s and daughter’s children, the difference in the ways Antonina talks about their respective families is remarkable. Antonina speaks of her son as a naïve young man who was cheated by his wife when he was on his job trip, although the “cheating” is based only on Antonina’s guesses. Antonina’s narratives also demonstrate that the ways of being a mother of a son and a mother of a daughter vary, which in turn affect how she experiences her relationships with her daughter-in-law and son-in-law. Her narratives convey a feeling of the extended family space. Antonina herself is an active agent in making and controlling this family, not least through occasional “scolding” of various family members.

Nevertheless, Antonina’s narratives also convey the feeling of pain for not being treated by her daughter-in-law with respect. It is difficult to say to what extent Antonina’s daughter-in-law was not respectful enough, based only on Antonina’s narratives. However, the feeling of being offended is real for Antonina. This case also demonstrates how hard it is to draw a line between the grandmother’s micro-power and her vulnerabilities; Antonina can be seen as one who is abusive towards her daughter-in-law, exerting her powers of the babushka of the family, but also as one who has been unfairly treated by her daughter-in-law. These substantially presented narratives also help to grasp how Antonina in her narratives is continuously shifting between her various family positions, negotiating between different levels of loyalties towards various family members, for

instance trying to justify and show that she is a good grandmother to her grandchildren, at the same time attempting to restore her authority as a mother-in-law or verbally proving that she is a good mother to her son and does not want to destroy his family life.

My impression after talking to Antonina was that paradoxically she frequently applied the means of scolding family members to actually *make* family. Various family members were at some points scolded by Antonina: her husband whom she “lashed with wet baby nappies when he got home drunk”, her daughters-in-law whom she “scolded” for improper treatment of her daughter, her daughter-in-law whom she several times tried to “get out” of her flat, and her son whom she scolded on the phone because he had not called her for a long time. After my conversation with Antonina in her flat I was left with a feeling that Antonina’s position in her family resembled that of a matriarch. On the one hand, she is emotionally expressive, for instance in making scandals and “scolding”, while on the other hand she also applies more subtle mechanisms when negotiating her daughter-in-law’s “misbehaviour” with her parents without telling anything to her own son. However, I could also experience some positive “warming” effects of feminine micro-powers; Antonina was extremely welcoming towards me, and she was constantly trying to make me feel comfortable at her home; I felt very relaxed and “warmed-up” indeed. Given these feminine aspects of Antonina’s powers, she can be seen as a matriarch of the family, and her husband does not seem to challenge this authority of his wife.

Ambiguities of Micro-powers: Loyalties and Vulnerabilities

Both relationships between grandmothers and their daughters and their sons often reveal the phenomenon of a strong dominating mother, on the one hand, and the “extended childhood” phenomenon on the other. This in turn affects how women act and see themselves as grandmothers. Discussing the role of grandmothers in children’s upbringing, psychologists Anna Varga and Alla Spivakovskaya distinguish between two types of babushkas who have faced difficulties in combining their different family roles: “babushka-victim” and “babushka-rival” (cited in Krasnova, 2000). The babushka-victim sees her grandmother’s role as central and takes all responsibilities in child care, leaving aside her professional career and friendship contacts. Because the only site of her life is her extended family and especially her grandchildren, she often experiences irritation and feels offended for being not appreciated enough by her close relatives, children, and particularly their spouses. The babushka-rival seemingly harmonically combines her social and professional lives, and devotes her vacations and weekends to her grandchildren. However, an “unconscious”

part of her grandmothering is that she is in constant rivalry, either with her daughter or her daughter-in-law; she tries to show that she is a better “mother” for her grandchildren. These grandmothering strategies have different effects on their grandchildren, which have been discussed by Varga and Spivakovskaya. Both types can be seen in the context of postponed and prolonged motherhood, which I discussed earlier.

These two types of grandmothering can overlap, or their elements can be found in women’s narratives on self-sacrificing their personal lives for the sake of grandmothering and help towards their daughters (babushka-victim) or when grandmothers criticize their daughters-in-law for doing something wrong in child upbringing, suggesting what they would do or would not do were they mothers themselves towards their grandchildren (babushka-rival). In terms of grandmothers’ micro-powers, these grandmothering strategies disclose both the micro-powers and the vulnerabilities of grandmothers, and show that a woman’s role as a grandmother is particularly linked to her role as a mother and a mother-in-law. Being part of and making the extended family space, grandmothers often have to negotiate between different levels of loyalties towards various family members. Loyalties, like identities, can also be conceptualized as shifting and situational, but they consist of less play between possibilities, and more commitment. Loyalties are a matter of “conscious negotiation” and choice, and they can be extremely painful (Hirsiaho, 2005, p. 209). When loyalties are broken up either by grandmothers themselves or other family members, it naturally leads to conflicts within the family space.

One can tentatively draw a line between babushkas’ micro-powers and vulnerabilities: on the one hand, the enthusiasm of the babushka-victim in child care and domestic work can be misused by other family members; on the other hand, the position of a victim and self-sacrifice can be used as a channel of micro-power. The vulnerabilities of grandmothers can also be in that grandmothers might be financially dependent on their grown-up grandchildren, especially grandmothers staying put and transnationally mobile grandmothers. Grandmothers can also emotionally suffer from eventual disrespect and rudeness (again, both actual and as perceived by grandmothers) of their children, daughters-(sons)-in-law, and grandchildren.

However, it is necessary to remember that, “when talking of the position of women as mothers [and grandmothers], we need to pay attention to the potentially productive and destructive aspects of power, or else authority that some persons hold over others” (Vuorela, 2002). The ultimate symbolic example of the potential ambiguous or else destructive powers of grandmothers can be possibly found in the image of a legendary figure of the Russian folklore tradition, Baba-Yaga, sometimes called babushka by a hero or a heroine of a fairy tale (whose role can be also comparable with that of Louhi, the queen of Pohjola, a powerful elderly woman in the Finnish-

Karelian mythology (Propp, 1986)). Baba-Yaga is usually pictured as an old, ugly, and wise woman, the fearsome witch, travelling perched in a large mortar, flying through the air with the help of a broom, who lives deep in a hut in the forest that can move about on chicken legs. She is the “guardian” of the world of the dead (*tridesjatoe tsarstvo*), and she is also linked to the world of animals, inhabitants of the forest (Propp, 1986, p. 164). Sometimes she opens to the hero or the heroine a path to another world, the world of the dead, and tests and prepares him/her for this path full of difficulties and dangers by washing him/her in a *bania* (a Russian bath) and feeding him/her properly, as well as giving advice and sometimes magical gifts. For those who dare to ask her, she might appear as all-knowing, all-seeing, and all-revealing. Sometimes she might even want to wash and feed the hero or heroine in order to bake and eat them.

With this brief introduction I want to draw attention to the perceived ambiguities of the figure of the babushka: her constructive and destructive micro-powers in family-making, as well as her powers to heal or harm by way of magic (Chapter VII). My fieldwork research was overwhelmed by the highly positive and unique, often hardly replaceable contributions of grandmothers in child care and other family practices. However, one should be aware of potentially both productive and destructive aspects of the role of grandmothers in family-making, given their particular relationships with their daughters and/or sons, daughters-in-law and/or sons-in-law, and, of course, grandchildren. This area appears as a field of negotiation, manipulation, and manoeuvring between various family members in the family space, both transnationally and in Russian Karelia. Arguably, the separation by national borders can be applied by some family members to weaken loyalties that loom undesired, for instance when Vesta’s daughter did not allow her mother-in-law to come and stay with her family in Finland. Grandmothering and the important role in extended family-making can be experienced by babushkas as both enabling and empowering, but also painful and vulnerable. Family often appears as one of the most important (and sometimes only) site of grandmothers’ lives; while it brings empowerment, it may also imply vulnerabilities and negotiation between different levels of loyalties towards various family members. Babushkas’ micro-powers, vulnerabilities, and loyalties are inscribed in the very function of the extended family space.

6.2 Micro-powers' Reconfigurations in Public Space: Locally and Transnationally

“What would people say?”: Babushkas in the Urban Landscape

When speaking of the babushka as applied to any elderly woman, it is worth noticing that babushkas used to be an important part of the Soviet urban landscape (Novikova, 2005, p. 76). Irina Novikova discusses so-called babushka networks among the Russian-speaking population of Soviet Riga and satellite towns (where the Russian population relocated during the 1940s to the 1960s was concentrated). The help of babushkas was not only essential in keeping the household and taking care of grandchildren; they also played a significant role in monitoring the neighbours, especially younger ones, through babushka networks, in many ways making and organizing the social life of the Soviet urban yard (Novikova, 2005, p. 84).

Most babushkas were actually born in rural areas, and the “village” culture of gatherings was kept alive by babushkas in the Soviet urban landscape as they joined their extended families there. They informed other neighbours of what had been delivered to local stores so that they could rush to take a place in line: this was extremely useful knowledge in the time of “chronic deficit”, a prominent feature of the Soviet planned economy. Babushkas were also aware of what was going on in the yard and in their neighbours’ families, and were especially eager to inform mothers, who had just come back from their work or job trip, when their teenage children came home after dancing the previous night and whom they invited as guests in their flats. Such judging of younger people’s behaviour connotes how young unmarried women were continually under the watchful eye of elderly women in the peasant community; a girl might have remained an old maid due to malicious gossip (Stark L., 2006, p. 426). During Stalinist persecutions some babushkas could have been those who actually reported on their neighbours, which often resulted in arrests and imprisonments.

One of the interlocutors of my research told me that she got married because she was afraid of “what would people say” that she spent a night at her (future) husband’s place. “What would people say?” and “what would people think?” are questions that frame some women’s narratives:

People used to say that our family was good. Some people, which were not that clever, used to say: Ah, these officers! Some people told about my husband: Uchenko

was a real man! Some people told me that others had told them that Uchenko's family was a good family. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

The same expressions would also be applied by some babushkas when educating or scolding their grandchildren. Nancy Ries emphasizes that during perestroika, scolding in public settings (usually provoked by such actions as using obscenities, sitting improperly, or women smoking openly) were almost always “led” by older women. Analysing the characteristics of women’s scolding and complaining (another feature of female narratives), she argues that it was often focused around the “fetishized ideal” of social order in general, as if “women had an eye on society as a whole” (Ries, 1997, p. 72). She points out that women’s discourse was often associated with the values of endurance, self-sacrifice, generosity, heroism, and social order (*poriadok*), ranging from domestic tidiness to an abstract field of “spiritual values” (Ries, 1997, pp. 72, 81).

I would assume that people who formed public opinion in the Soviet urban landscape were often babushkas, and that can also be seen as one of the expressions of their micro-powers. When I recollect my childhood yard, babushkas talking and sitting on the benches are always an integral part of my memories. I was told by my mother that one of them sometimes took care of me when I was a child. However, as a teenager I often tried to avoid talking to these “all-seeing” and “all-knowing” babushkas, and especially to escape their questions. Later, some of them became interlocutors of this research, particularly Galina, who used to keep an eye on me when I was sleeping in a pram:

All my grandchildren have been always at my place. I was also taking care of you! I often used to meet your mother who was desperately shaking a pram with you to make you calm. Then I would come to you and would take you in my hands, and you would fall fast asleep. Then I would put the pram in front of my window outside, and would be doing some other things while you were sleeping. Your mother used to tell me: Aunt Galja (tetja Galja), have you cast a spell over her? With me she is always crying! This is how it was going. I was also taking care of you! (Galina, born in 1936, 2008)

To what extent are “all-seeing” and “all-knowing” babushkas prominent now in monitoring their neighbours’ behaviours and forming public opinion? Do they continue to be an important part of the urban landscape in contemporary Karelia? Have babushka networks been “exported” to Finland through migration from the former Soviet space? My intention is to tentatively and briefly answer these questions by indicating some tendencies I have identified through my participant observation in a multi-sited setting, and by connecting to relevant literature.

During one of my conversations with a Russian migrant woman in Finland, I mentioned my research briefly, and she told me, “What I found to be awkward when I moved to Finland was that there were no babushkas sitting on the benches and talking”. It seems that Russian grandmothers do not apply practices of outside gathering in Finland, possibly because they are often not living in the same yard or even district. However, it is worth mentioning that, according to Anu Hirsiaho, migrant grandmothers have succeeded in establishing support circles of some kind in a so-called “granny club”, meeting on a weekly basis for years in the premises of a suburban NGO in Finland. Most grannies came from the former Soviet Union, and many share an Ingrian background. Anu Hirsiaho uses the terms “babushka power” and “grandmother energy” that, according to her, have been produced by the group weekly through their regular interactions (Hirsiaho, 2008). Possibly the same type of network of women of a mature age is active in the Russian Centre and the Centre of Russian Culture in Tampere; both associations organize Russian cultural events, arrange children’s activities, and provide special trip discounts for their members, the most active of whom are mid-life and elderly women (Chapter VII).

Relying on my participant observation in Russian Karelia, I may conclude that babushka networks are present in the contemporary urban landscape to a much lesser extent compared with Soviet Karelia. There are no benches occupied by babushkas in the premises of fashionable newly built living houses, often surrounded by fences. I could still observe babushkas near market places or stores, selling flowers and knitted socks, berries and mushrooms, pickled cabbage and cucumbers. They would be talking and interacting with each other, forming some kind of babushka networks. I could also observe some babushkas talking and sitting on the benches in Soviet-type urban yards. They may well continue to evaluate and judge younger people’s behaviour, “scolding” them, but there is an obvious change in the effect of such a “scolding”. In this context, it is notable that the “Soviet nostalgia”, characterized in some women’s narratives, is often expressed along with a harsh criticism of younger generations and new habits of life (Chapter VIII). I would suggest that babushka networks have somewhat lost their micro-powers in the social urban life compared with the Soviet period. They can no longer be seen as those who have an eye on society as a whole. This change in the micro-powers of babushkas in the urban space is obviously an outcome of the new liberal discourses and individualization trends, characteristic of contemporary Russian society. However, post-Soviet transformation created another space where some babushkas could regain their micro-powers: the Orthodox Church, which plays a significant role in shaping the new Russianness.

“Church Babushkas”: The Orthodox Church in Tampere

The revival of the Orthodox Church after the Soviet collapse made Orthodox Christianity an important factor of political and social life of contemporary Russia, and it is being increasingly incorporated in the everyday lives of many people (Chapter VII). Elderly women constituted the overwhelming majority of church-goers during the Soviet period when the Orthodox Church was under political ostracism, and “church babushkas” (*tserkovnye babushki*) continue to be active in the Orthodox Church now after its resurgence. Recently, “legends” about church babushkas have become a subject of discussions in the Orthodox Church media. Sometimes, church babushkas are described as “angry crones” who judge the behaviour and outfits of younger people; many young people do not dare enter the church because of these babushkas. One of the regularly asked questions on the church website is: “I want to go to the church, but I am afraid of church babushkas. What should I do?” However, church babushkas are also portrayed as polite, welcoming, sympathetic, wise, humble, and heroic, “a unique phenomenon” of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the ones due to whom Russian Orthodoxy survived during Soviet times (Gorenok, 2008). Some priests warn newcomers “Do not listen to babushkas!” probably because some babushkas are committed to “unofficial” practices of the Orthodox religion, considered as magic. There are obviously contradicting opinions about church babushkas and their role in the Russian Orthodox Church. However, what unites these contradicting opinions is that they admit that church babushkas are a prominent feature of life in Russian Orthodox Church life. I would suggest that the post-Soviet resurgence of the Orthodox Church has opened a channel of empowerment of church babushkas. For strict babushkas (“angry crones”) it gives the possibility of keeping “an eye on society”; it may have become a kind of compensation for the micro-powers lost in the urban space. For more welcoming, devoted, and humble babushkas, the post-Soviet space provided a sort of spiritual empowerment, particularly through guidance and praying for others.

It is important to note that the effect of recent migration from the former Soviet space to Finland on the Finnish Orthodox Church is still an open area for research. My participant observation in the Orthodox Church in Tampere has indicated that Russian babushkas have added to the church service dynamic and social interactions in the Orthodox Church of Tampere. I went to a church in Tampere during my very first visit to the city. I was standing with my young son in front of the church, hesitating whether it was a right time to come in as I did not have a headscarf to cover my head. I was thinking about those “angry” church babushkas that would probably not let

me in and at least would have scolded me in Russia. At that moment, an elderly woman saw me and started talking in Russian with me. She was very welcoming, and told me that we had to hurry up as the Eucharist³⁴ would start soon. Thus, my first encounter with the Finnish Orthodox Church happened through a welcoming church babushka. That babushka later became an interlocutor in my study.

During my participation in the church service I was also often helped by another church babushka, Elena, who moved from Russia to Finland eleven years ago. She often approached newcomers when she saw that they did not participate in receiving the Eucharist. She explained then that in the Finnish Orthodox Church one can receive the Eucharist without a direct confession to a priest, which is different from the Eucharist procedure in the Russian Orthodox Church. She was also very helpful by giving other people special prayers. Participants of the church service of different cultural backgrounds (Finnish, Russian, and Greek) all knew that babushka very well. In this context, she can also be called a *transnational babushka*, as she has been loved and welcomed by most church-goers of various national and cultural backgrounds. After the Eucharist all children come to her because she always treats them with sweets.

Some babushkas regularly bring their grandchildren to receive the Eucharist. One can also see babushka networks of some kind in the church. Russian babushkas usually occupy seats in one particular place; they interact with each other both during the service and especially when having coffee after the church service where everybody is welcome. Some of them wear headscarves, which again distinguish them from other elderly women in the church since this rule is not required in the Finnish Orthodox Church. It is also important to note that the Finnish Orthodox Church has become a significant place for Russian migrants to socialize, which facilitates the process of adjustment to the new social environment in Finland. Thus, the phenomenon of church babushkas has to a certain extent crossed the borders of two national states, and the Finnish Orthodox Church space has provided a space for the empowerment of babushkas under new life circumstances. The Finnish Orthodox Church as a potentially socially empowering space for Russian migrant babushkas can be also viewed in light of the recently increased respect for Orthodoxy in Finland, in contrast, for instance, to the post-war period when those who were Orthodox believers had a position of a “stigmatised minority” (Kupari, 2011, p. 204).

Against the centuries-old transnational histories of Orthodoxy between Finland and Russia, it is intriguing to observe the contemporary evolvement of Orthodoxy in the context of postsocialist and transnational change. In contemporary Russia, Orthodox Christianity has become not only an important political and social force in contrast to secular political developments in Europe, but also an anchor of national and cultural belonging for many individuals and families. At the same time,

the dynamic within the Finnish Orthodox community has dramatically changed after the migration turn in 1990s when it became not only a space for intensive multicultural interactions and transnational family practices, but also a place for socialization and integration of many Russian migrants. In this way, Orthodox belonging emerges as a belonging that both transgresses and strengthens national belongings on individual, family, and political levels in a transnational context of Finland and Russia. In the next chapter I will discuss in detail the ways grandmothering and family-making are expressed through religious practices, particularly in their connections to women's Soviet and post-Soviet subjectivities in postsocialist and transnational contexts.

7. Religion, Magic, and “New Spiritualities” in Babushkas’ Lives and Care

My choice to write an entire chapter devoted to the religious and spiritual experiences of grandmothers in my thesis is an outcome of my fieldwork research as “critical theoretical practice” (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 6). I did not expect to find that for some grandmothers a religious or spiritual dimension constituted the core of their narratives. More than half of the interviewed grandmothers spoke of their religious practices and/or beliefs in the “supernatural”. These practices and beliefs, on the one hand, may well have been informed by traditional magic rooted in a pre-modern peasant society, but, on the other hand, were also influenced by the so-called “new spiritualities” that have become increasingly popular in today’s Russia.

I would emphasize two significant interconnected processes that triggered and came about in the religious and spiritual renewal in contemporary Russia: firstly, the “Russian Orthodoxy resurgence” (Garrard & Garrard, 2009; Roudometof, Agadjanian, & Pankhurst, 2005; Rousselet & Agadjanian, 2010), the revitalization of other traditional religious (for instance, Islam) (Johnson, Stepaniants, & Forest 2005) and shamanistic practices (Humphrey, 2002) that had started during perestroika; secondly, popularization of what is now increasingly studied as “alternative” or “New Age” spiritualities (Heelas, 2009; Feleky, 2010), imported to post-Soviet Russia from western countries, especially through extensive publishing and marketing of popular psychology and self-help and esoteric literature (Lindquist, 2006; Salmenniemi, 2012).

While the first process can be seen as part of neotraditional tendencies, the latter can be interpreted as an outcome of today’s increased cosmopolitanism, and the domestication of global models (in this case, “new spiritualities”) in the Russian context. Both processes stipulated and reflected the processes of rediscovering a religious or spiritual self suppressed during Soviet times. However, it is important to remember that despite the more than seven decades of the Soviet proclaimed atheism, belief in the “supernatural” survived, especially among women. In fact, because religion was banned within the hegemonic Soviet discourse, and many “religious (male) specialists” were either deported or executed, women found an “increasingly important role as ritual leaders both in Soviet Karelia and elsewhere” (Keinänen 2002, p. 94).

Discussing the religious and spiritual practices of the interviewed women will enable one to grasp other subtle aspects of grandmothering and family-making both locally and transnationally, as well as explore suppressed aspects of Soviet female subjectivities recently released under the new circumstances of religious resurgence and the appearance of “new spiritualities”. In the first section I will discuss how grandmothers generally refer to religion and the supernatural as they narrate their life stories, particularly explaining some events of their personal lives by miraculous healing or magical harm. These narratives on the supernatural are often narrated as part of the women’s Soviet experiences; with this I want to illustrate that there was always a place for non-rational, supernatural reality within the Soviet modern (supposedly atheistic) subject. This is one of the possible explanations for the powerful religious and spiritual resurgence after the Soviet collapse. I will also offer a brief analysis of how religiosity has been rediscovered by some women upon their migration to Finland.

In the second section, I will draw on particular empirical cases of how grandmothering and family practices as expressed through Orthodox Christianity, traditional magic, and “new spiritualities”. In analysing these empirical cases I apply the notion of “women’s everyday religion”, which pays attention to how religion is lived (as opposed to the doctrinal theology), discussed by historian of religion Marja-Liisa Keinänen (Keinänen 2010). In the third section, I will focus on one woman’s life narratives, those of Evdokiya, the only grandmother of my study who has lived all her life in a Karelian village. Her narratives are rich and detailed, and in many ways are different from those of the other grandmothers I interviewed. With this I also hope to empirically illustrate the peculiarities of the Karelian rural gender contract discussed in Chapter III, particularly to illustrate how religion might have been an irrevocable part of women’s Soviet subjectivities in rural areas.

7.1 The “Supernatural” and Belief in God

Soviet Female Subjects and the “Supernatural”

In the Finnish Karelian early modern context, Laura Stark applies the term “supernatural” when discussing magic, which she describes as activities that “include various supernatural means of causing harms to others, protecting oneself against supernatural harm, carrying out counter-sorcery and curing illness” (Stark L., 2006, p. 45). Notably, the term “supernatural” is a problematic one in the anthropology of religion and has been criticized for imposing the Western/Christian way of

framing religious experiences where it is not necessarily experienced as something “unnatural” (Eller, 2007, p. 34). However, I have found the term “supernatural” to be useful and quite broad and flexible to analyse grandmothers’ experiences of irrational reality that have been particularly influenced by Christianity and the Russian and Karelian folk religions. As the official discourse constructed religion and magic as something “unnatural”, in many ways grandmothers had to operate with the same understanding, for instance recovering from a disease (which modern medicine was unable to cure) as a miraculous healing.

Elsa told me that when she and her family were in Siberia during the war she suffered from scrofula, so that she could see only with one eye. Because of that disease she could not tolerate the sunshine in summer. Doctors thought it was too late and that Elsa was about to lose her sight:

On our way back from a doctor we met a woman. She asked what was wrong with me, and my mother told her that I had scrofula. She told us that she could heal me. My older sister helped me to get to a village, Salyarka, where that woman lived. I went there several times, and Liliya was with me. We slept at that woman’s place, and she did some incantations at sunset and sunrise. And I recovered. When we came to the doctor next time she was surprised. But we could not tell her what had happened. It was not allowed to tell about these things at that time. (Elsa, born in 1939, 2006)

Another interlocutor of my study, Elena, told me that after pregnancy her face became covered with pigment spots, and the medicine prescribed by a doctor did not help. Later, one woman taught her some incantations which she had to say early morning on the 14th of March, washing her face with snow. When she did that her face became clean, and no pigment spots came up again. She emphasized that that woman was Karelian (Elena, born in 1950, 2006).

However, there are more narratives that reveal a belief in magical harm or “supernatural harm” (Stark L., 2006, p. 45). For instance, one of my interlocutors explained that she did not succeed in getting married because of the magic harm she was subjected to as a girl when she and her family were sent to a remote village in the central part of Russia as war evacuees:

***Zinaida:** We were evacuated when I was thirteen-fourteen years old. There were also girls in the village. They were already going with boys... One boy must have liked me, and some girl must have felt offended because of that. They have done something to me. On our way to a party, 1,5-2 km, in a village “Komary”, they were round dancing, singing... And now I think, or rather I had been thinking already before that they gave me something to eat. So when we came to “Komary”... There was a babushka who rented her izba [a Russian peasant log house] so that young people could have fun there. But young people never had any wine there. Now they drink wine. But at that time they did not drink any alcohol... I came there, and just fell down, and I did not remember anything after that. They have done something to me. And I was just lying there [in the kitchen]. They were*

already done with dancing, and it was time to go home. But I was just off. And I didn't remember how I got home. I didn't say anything to my mum. Next morning I felt better, and then I forgot about this. Then we came home to Svir' [Russian Karelia], I got very sick. I was almost dying. My mum, there was no doctors, went everywhere to ask for help. She went to babkas (healers). Of course, I was also hungry. Therefore, I got sick. And when I got a bit better my mother told me that a Gypsy woman had told her that I would have as many admirers as I wanted, but nobody would marry me... It was done so that I would die.

TT: *What kind people live in that village?*

Zinaida: *There were Russians, but very committed believers. They believed that Leshii³⁵ was walking in their forest. They were using charms. They were very backward people (tëmnye liudi). They had never seen a car!*

... Now they have different advertisements in newspapers that they would remove porcha [magical harm, discussed below]. Once I wrote to one man, Ivanov, in Rostov-na-Danu. I wrote a letter, and described what happened to me, and maybe it had been transferred to my daughter. But he never wrote me back. (Zinaida, born in 1930, 2008)

Zinaida's narratives illustrate the contradictions that I have encountered in other women's narratives, especially of those women who have been deeply affected by the values of Soviet modernity. Zinaida worked as an accountant in the local airlines, an area that was particularly glorified as a sign of the technological progress under socialism. Work narratives constitute the bulk of her narratives; these memories nourish the self and speak of her Soviet female subjectivity. The Soviet person was expected to be modern and enlightened and to believe in reason, progress, and socialism (forthcoming communism) rather than "wander in the darkness" of religion and magic. Zinaida takes a distance from the village people whom she calls "backward"; she applies the expression *tëmnye liudi*, the direct translation of which would be "dark people", people who remained untouched by "progressive" development. With this, Zinaida positions herself as a progressive modern person who cannot believe in *Leshī*, a mythological creature of the Russian folk tradition.

However, she admits that her personal life and even her daughter's life had been negatively affected by the magic harm that had been performed by the village girls. According to Galina Lindquist, this kind of spell is called "the crown of celibacy", and it goes back to Russian folk tradition (Lindquist, 2006, p. 58). The paradox of Zinaida's narratives is that magic practices performed by the village girls whom she despised for being backward have actually appeared as something that doomed the very course of Zinaida's life. This contradiction shows that despite Soviet attempts to erase different forms of religious practices (Orthodoxy, indigenous religions), the belief in the "supernatural" survived even during Soviet times.

When describing what “has been done” by the “village girls” to her, Zinaida applies the term *porcha* (noun from the verb *portit`*, to spoil) which is a well-known term of affliction in Russian folk magic, usually translated as “spoiling”. In the Russian peasant culture, the power of “spoiling” was seen as an impersonal negative force from which the ill-wisher drew her/his power. This destructive force was then focused on a person, a grain field, or some enterprise, and resulted in grave failure, illness, or death. In the contemporary context *porcha* is understood as something that can be inflicted on a person by someone else, a relative, a neighbour, a co-worker (Lindquist, 2006, p. 56). My other data also support this observation: for instance, Vesta went to a local magus in Petrozavodsk to remove *porcha* from her grandson (see next section).

Some interlocutors talked of women of Karelian and Vepsian origins as being known for performing magic harm. Elena partly explained her divorce by magical harm performed by her rival, whose mother was Vepsian, while Elvira thought her mother-in-law’s sister of a Karelian background or maybe even her mother-in-law tried to kill her:

His [husband’s] babushka, she is Karelian. Somebody from their kinship was a fortunate-teller and making porcha in Svyatozero [selo, a rural settlement in Russian Karelia]. So that person told him that we would not stay together long. They all thought that he was very handsome, and they did not like my nose. I think that they must have done something... My mother saw that my mother-in-law’s sister put a sack filled with soil in a box with a doll. My mother-in-law and her sister hated each other. My mother-in-law was not a good-looking woman, while her sister was very beautiful. They were Karelians... Probably, they had agreed to do that. From the very beginning I felt that my mother-in-law was very fake with me... The sack with the soil meant that I had been cursed to death. The doll in the box meant me lying in a coffin... My mother warned me from touching the soil. She gave that doll to somebody and threw the soil away or probably brought it to the church. I think his mother did not like me, I don’t know why. She must have told her sister to do that. (Elvira, born in 1950, 2007)

Elvira’s story, which most probably took place in early 1980s, in some ways connotes practices described by Laura Stark with regard to the Finnish Karelian peasant community when a mother-in-law or other female relatives of the farm household applied harmful magic against a bride deemed undesirable (Stark-Arola, 1998, p. 156). This, of course, in the Soviet Karelian urban context survived as a somewhat hidden and probably not very common practice, performed, as some of my interlocutors claim, by women of Karelian or Vepsian origins. This case also shows how magic could have been used in intra-familial relations, particularly illustrating some grandmothers’ subtle (intentionally harmful) micro-powers (Chapter VI).

One of my interlocutors told me that her mother-in-law, a Karelian woman, was a witch (*koldunîa*) in Valaam. The story told referred to the mid-1980s. When Anna visited her home for the first time people from the village warned her not to eat or drink anything at her place:

Everybody knew that she was a koldunia. People came to her to seek help if they were sick. One woman wrote a letter to her, in which she asked her to heal her legs. She became paralyzed after she gave birth to her child. My mother-in-law picked up some stones on the shore of lake Ladoga and performed a magic incantation over them (zagovorit'). Then she sent the stones to that woman and she recovered... She also healed me when I had health problems after giving birth to my daughter and also when I had a tooth ache... But she did not do only good things, but also evil. People avoided having quarrels with her as they were afraid that she would curse them or perform magical harm. She didn't do evil things to me personally. I knew about her skills to do harm from other people. They said that she could be also dangerous. (Anna, born in 1962, 2007)

The position of Anna's mother-in-law in the village could be compared with the position of a *tietäjä* (healer, a wise woman/man, the one who knows – a translation from Finnish) who was seen as highly skilled in healing and magic (Keinänen, 1999, p. 162; Stark L., 2006, p. 177). According to Laura Stark, *tietäjäs* appeared to hold authority in the Finnish Karelian peasant communities due to their social importance, and the knowledge of magic and sorcery was a valued form of “social capital”. Possessing exclusive knowledge and abilities, they could heal people, perform magic, and perform counter-sorcery to punish the one who caused the magical harm (or “sending back the dog”, as this was called). In the case of Anna's mother-in-law, the elderly woman was also seen as the one who could do magical harm. Again, in Stark's interpretation, people in the peasant community were also scared of those who had a reputation for magical harm who sometimes appeared to be beggars. Therefore, many farmers and farm-mistresses gave alms out of a deeply rooted fear of the supernatural abilities of beggars skilled in sorcery. Thus, some beggars were eager to create such a reputation by telling stories of their own frightening feats of sorcery and carrying with them magic bundles and pouches (Stark L., 2006, p. 172).

From Anna's narratives one may assume that her mother-in-law had a kind of “social capital” in the form of her magic skills, both healing and harming, as people were afraid of her, and also sought her help if they fell sick. However, Anna's Soviet subjectivity discloses itself when she talks of her mother-in-law as an “illiterate woman who could speak only Karelian”. This phrase also illustrates that although belief in the “supernatural” survived through the Soviet times, it was in the margins of the dominant discourse, and often hidden.

However, drawing on my data I want to emphasize that it was belief in the supernatural rather than belief in God that survived in urban areas. Therefore, I would not agree with

observations stating that “religion had remained central in many people’s lives through the Soviet era” (Zigon 2010, p. 10). That would be an exaggeration that underestimates anti-religious Soviet propaganda that had an effect in making a loyal Soviet subject. However, it did not fully reach its goal, as a belief in supernatural was never erased from a Soviet urban mind, especially among women. In fact, this belief in the supernatural has come to constitute this part of identification that got activated during perestroika and after the Soviet collapse, and became one of the sources of the Russian Orthodoxy resurgence and interest in the “new spiritualities” that increasingly shape people’s everyday lives in a post-Soviet space.

Nevertheless, belief in God and continued commitment to religious practices were more likely to survive in rural areas (Keinänen 2002), as I will also illustrate when discussing Evdokiya’s case in the third section of this chapter. At this point it is worth noting that grandmothers hailing from the rural area or raised by grandmothers from the countryside have proved to become believers quite soon when the political and social acceptance of religion allowed this.

Babushkas, Religion, and “New Spiritualities” in Post-Soviet Space

Galina, who was raised in a rural area and moved to Petrozavodsk as she got married, told me:

People always believed in God. My mother believed in God. We all were baptized. My grandfather was a very strong believer and my grandmother too. In the villages people revered God...I don’t believe in incantations. I live only what God gives. I pray and go to the church sometimes. God gives us what He gives us. (Galina, born in 1936, 2008)

Of course, the influential position of the Orthodox Church and the revival of Russian Orthodoxy in general (Garrard & Garrard, 2009; Johnson, Stepaniants, & Forest, 2005; Minzarari, 2010) have affected the lives of grandmothers. Those who “used to believe in God”, as Galina, for instance, now could openly go to Church and follow their religious practices. Those grandmothers who “were raised as atheists” could now reconsider their values:

We used to have atheism. I do not know how to pray, and I don’t go to the church, it is too late for me to learn. But I have an icon of Nikolai Ugodnik [Saint Nicolas]. I am talking to this icon and ask that everything would be fine with my children and grandchildren. I don’t know how to pray. (Marina, born in 1927, 2006)

According to Kimmo Kääriäinen’s research on religiosity in “post-atheist” Russia, women constitute the majority of Russian Christian believers, especially elderly (above seventy) and young women (below thirty) (Kääriäinen 2004, p. 122)³⁶. The group of those who believe in “everything”

– Christianity, astrology, supernatural skills, etc. – also consists overwhelmingly of women, although of all ages. An interesting feature is that women who do not believe are in the minority, and most of them are in the age group of forty to fifty-nine years of age (Kääriäinen 2004, 123). These statistical data may provoke the assumption that there is more continuity between generations of grandmothers and granddaughters in their religious subjectivities than between generations of mothers and daughters.

There has been substantial research illustrating that Orthodox belonging has become increasingly linked to constructing a new Russian (post-Soviet) identity (Howard, 2005; Filatov, 2008; Rousselet & Agadjanian, 2010; Minzarari, 2010). For instance, Davis Howard and Sergey Filatov claim that Orthodoxy is not conceived about faith or being an active church-goer and believer, but it is the core and symbol of Russian cultural identity (Howard, 2005, p. 83; Filatov, 2008, p. 188). While this interpretation can partly explain the religious turn in contemporary Russia, it also has its limitations. I would suggest that it is not necessarily either religious belonging or cultural (national) belonging, as the line between them is extremely vague. The way Orthodoxy is actually lived is often experienced as both cultural and religious belonging, being part of the same process, particularly among Russian grandmothers being members of the Finnish Orthodox Church.

Some young grandmothers in their fifties, such as Nadezha, Elena, Olga, and Anna (in her forties) explain their contemporary commitment to Orthodox faith and practices by the influence of their grandmothers who used to be “religious”. Elena told me that her babushka was known as a cattle healer, and she was the one who “baptized all her four grandchildren and brought them to the church to receive the Eucharist”. The religiosity of these women’s babushkas may have affected them in the process of upbringing and sharing daily routine when they were children. Helena Kupari, in her research on the religious habits of Karelian Orthodox female evacuees in Finland (elaborating on Pierre Bourdieu’s theory on habitus), argues that the religious habitus learnt or “internalized” in childhood may well be carried on in women’s adult lives (even when the social surroundings did not support these practices) and get re-activated even more in their old age (Kupari, 2011).

After the Soviet collapse and the Orthodox resurgence, these seeds of their babushkas’ upbringing have “brought forth fruit”. Thus, I agree with Juliet Johnson, who sees the religious resurgence in today’s Russia in light of the activation of a “latent religious affiliation” (referring to James Scott’s explanations on shifts in identification) that may have existed during Soviet times, but became released and activated now, when religion has become socially and politically accepted (Johnson, Stepaniants, & Forest, 2005).

This process of religious resurgence was also accomplished by the continued belief in the “supernatural” or magic, which, under new circumstances, has gained new momentum. When talking about her sickness, Zinaida (in the previous section) also mentioned so-called *babkas* or *babushkas* who, according to Lindquist, never stopped operating in Russian villages, healing humans and cattle and offering magical services to neighbours for a small fee, usually in the form of food or clothes (Lindquist, 2006, p. 28). *Babkas* continued to be known for their healing skills in rural Soviet Karelia, in many ways compensating for the shortage of specialists and/or in cases when official medicine proved to be ineffective (Keinänen 1999).

In discussing today’s Russian Karelia it is worth noticing that some mothers and grandmothers seek the help of *babkas*, particularly when conventional medicine proves to be inefficient or offers some radical interventions that people try to avoid by applying folk magic. One of my interlocutors, Elena, mentioned that her granddaughter was taken to a *babka* to treat *gryzha*, hernia; curing hernia was one of the specializations of *babkas* along with treating rashes and eczemas in rural Soviet Karelia (Keinänen 1999, p. 165).

In contemporary urban Russia, according to Lindquist, alongside “traditional” *babushkas* presenting themselves as wise old women generating village homeness and simple familial charm also emerged “modern” *babki*, young and elegant women offering healing services and calling themselves *babki* (Lindquist, 2006, p. 28). Offering traditional *babkas*’ skills in the emerging market of “new spiritualities” can be seen as an effect of neoliberal trends domesticated in a postsocialist space.

It was mentioned earlier that the postsocialist space has turned out to be extremely absorbing with regard to “alternative” or “New Age” spiritualities (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Feleky, 2010), including yoga, bio-energy healing, meditation, tai chi, and aromatherapy. Galina Lindquist points out that these spiritualities have become a social means that makes uncertainty (penetrating everyday life) in contemporary Russian “bearable” and “hope possible” (Lindquist, 2006, p. 46). Kimmo Kääriäinen also illustrates in his research that a lot of Russian people, especially women, actually believe in “everything”, including Christianity, astrology, and paranormal abilities (Kääriäinen 2004). This tendency is also supported by my data, which I will discuss in detail when drawing on the cases of Vesta, Nadezhda, and Mari.

According to Paul Heelas, New Age spiritualities in the western context might be seen as a reaction to the “iron cages” of capitalism in which the process of instrumentalization blocks interpersonal relationships and suppresses the self (Heelas 2009, pp. 2-3). The “iron cage” in the Soviet case was ideology that erased religion but could not fully compensate for it. The powerful return of

religion and rapidly growing interest towards “new spiritualities” in contemporary Russia emerge as the reaction to the decades of suppression of the religious and spiritual self during Soviet times.

With the increased interest towards supernatural phenomena, indigenous practices have been often re-activated and rediscovered, as Lindquist’s example of *babka* has illustrated. Likewise, modern shamans in Siberia, for instance, combine Christianity and Buddhism, revealing somewhat “little knowledge about earlier indigenous cultures” (Humphrey, 2002, p. 220). In fact, New Age practices are often applied in combination with church symbolism (Lindquist, 2006, p. 74). “Syncretistic religion” has been always the case in popular religions, for example, in the Karelian rural case, implying a synthesis of indigenous practices, Orthodoxy and Old Belief (Keinänen, 2007).

With the engagement in New Age spiritualities, the field of religion and magic has become even more complex, incorporating the effects of domestication of global trends and transnational cultural flows. Even the rich Hindu tradition of yoga has reached people’s everyday lives in the Russian (European) context in its westernized form, as part of New Age western spirituality. Among my interlocutors, Nadezhda, Vesta, and Mari speak of themselves as Orthodox Christians, and, at the same time, their understandings and practices have been in many ways influenced by these “alternative” spiritualities.

Rediscovering Religion through Finland: Orthodoxy and Lutheranism

In my fieldwork research, I observed another important process related to the religious practices of grandmothers. I suggest that migration to Finland has triggered the processes of rediscovering the religious roots of some *babushkas*, which sometimes intertwined with the renegotiation of their ethnic and national belonging. This has been enabled, of course, by the historical presence of both Orthodoxy and Lutheranism in Russia and Finland, as well their transnational histories. My observation, of course, needs further research to evaluate the extent to which these processes take place among Russian migrants, particularly among grandmothers. Nevertheless, some tentative observations can be made here.

For instance, some Ingrian elderly women who used to be Lutheran and were baptized in the Lutheran church in Ingria in the 1930s returned to their religious practices due to their migration to Finland. Marja told me that her grandmother taught her to read the Bible in Finnish and told her to be committed to the Lutheran faith. She could not do it openly during Soviet times, but now upon her “return” to Finland Marja visits the Lutheran church on a regular basis. She also often attends

classical concerts organized by Aleksanterin kirkko (the Church of Alexander) in Tampere. In addition, Marja is keen on rediscovering Russian folk healing practices; she recommended that I read V.M. Travinka, who has extensively published on healing practices. The name of the book she recommended is *Babushka Travinka's Recipes (Retsepty Babushki Travinki)*, purchased in Russia, also illustrating how imagination on the traditional healing skills of babushkas is now applied for marketing a product in the market of self-help and spiritual literature in contemporary Russia.

Another Ingrian woman, Liliya, first came to the Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg, where the Church carried out some humanitarian activities. She joined the church there, and started being active there time. She told me that she started recollecting her Finnish language due to a conversation with a Finnish priest in St. Petersburg. She is now active in the local Lutheran church in a Finnish city she has settled in. According to Liliya, she attends church regularly, and she often bakes pies for the coffee gatherings after service. In the case of Ingrian women, the rediscovering of religious belonging is often linked to the process of recollecting Ingrian identity (see Chapter VIII). Lutheranism as part of Ingrian belonging has also been emphasized by Laura Huttunen when discussing the life stories of some returnees (Huttunen, 2002, p. 221).

For some migrant grandmothers, such as Elvira, Anna, Elina, Albina, and Julia, the Orthodox religion has become an important part of their everyday life upon their migration to Finland. Elina takes her granddaughter to receive the Eucharist almost every Sunday, while Albina goes to church to pray for her grown-up grandchildren, whom she brought up by herself. Albina told me that during Soviet times she could not attend a church because of ideological control, but after the Soviet collapse she started going to church. She is now a prominent participant of the service in the Tampere Orthodox Church. Elvira, describing her childhood in a workers' settlement in Russian Karelia (*rabochiĭ posëlok*) where people of different ethnic backgrounds (particularly Ingrian Finns, American Finns) lived together, mentioned:

Everybody was very friendly towards each other. There were many exiled people there. There were no enemies. Everybody was very helpful, and they still help each other. One Finnish family often hosted a priest. They were a somewhat more well-to-do family. They had a big house. Finnish families went there, and we also went there. I was baptized there. People gather there when there were church celebrations. Many people came there then. (Elvira, born in 1950, 2009)

Elvira likes recollecting this important event in her life, which gained special meaning upon her arrival in Finland where she joined the Finnish Orthodox Church and began to regularly attend church services in Tampere. She told me later that she could not remember whether it was an Orthodox or Lutheran priest who baptized her, and she wondered whether she had to discuss the possibility of rebaptizing in the Finnish Orthodox Church. She often complained to me that her son

and his wife did not go to the church, but she wanted her grandson to be baptized there. She was trying to arrange this, but a priest told her that the parents should do it themselves when they were ready. She seemed very happy to tell me that her grandson was finally baptized, and acknowledged her influence in this decision taken by the child's grandparents.

As I discussed earlier, my participant observation proved that many Russian grandmothers are active in the Orthodox Church in Tampere in the way that they try to get their grandchildren closer to the Church, particularly by attending services. Some of them attend a special Church-based club for children and their parents. Every time I go the church in Tampere I see one particular Russian grandmother who always brings her granddaughter to receive the Eucharist. When the girl gets tired and sits on the floor, her grandmother often makes a cross sign over her head without the girl noticing. I see this as the babushka's attempt to keep the grandchild under God's blessing and protection as a silent and powerful expression of a babushka's care.

Some women have become active participants of a Russian migrants' club (*kerho*, in Finnish), supported and encouraged by the Orthodox Church of Tampere. The youngest grandmother of this study, Anna, is a regular participant of this club. I interviewed Anna before I met her at one of club's meetings, two years later. When I interviewed her, she told me that her grandmother was very religious:

I remember one moment. I asked my babushka: Nobody believes in God. There are no icons in people's homes. People have been in cosmos [space], and they checked: there was no God there. And she told: The one who does not believe in God, does not believe. But do not laugh at those people who believe. That single phrase had a great impact on me, and I never asked and never laughed [at people who believed]. (Anna, born in 1962, 2007)

The fact that Anna has become an active member of the club and sees herself as an Orthodox Christian may also be explained by her grandmother's religiosity, which wittingly and unwittingly influenced Anna as a child. As already mentioned, she spent her childhood at her grandparents' home. Orthodox religious practices became important for Anna only when she migrated to Finland, but memories of her babushka's praying rituals may have played a significant role in her search of God. The interaction of individuals implies both verbal and non-verbal communication, and sharing a certain daily routine affects the people involved in this process, both consciously and unconsciously, which can bring its fruits many years later, as Anna's case demonstrates.

Just as in the case of some Ingrian grandmothers rediscovering Lutheranism in Finland, joining the Finnish Orthodox Church may also be seen as a means of socializing with other Russian migrants, leaning on something Russian in a different cultural and national setting. Obviously, the

motivations behind joining the Church in Finland (either Lutheran or Orthodox) can vary. In some ways, this search for the religious self can be also seen as a way of coping with uncertainty and difficulties in adjustment that any migration implies to a certain degree. It is important to emphasize, however, that both the Lutheran and the Orthodox Churches in Finland seem to have served an enabling and welcoming environment for many Russian migrants of different ethnic backgrounds. Paradoxically, Finland, which is often presented as a country of strong secular traditions alongside other Nordic countries, has turned out to offer the exceptional opportunities for rediscovering one's religious self for some Russian migrant women.

7.2 Babushkas' Everyday Religion

In this section, I will draw on empirical cases of how religion or spirituality is enacted in grandmothering and family-making. I will also illustrate how it appears as a way of developing one's own individual space and, probably, dealing with and even escaping from family tensions. I will analyse the narratives of three women, namely, Vesta, Nadezhda, and Mari, who see themselves as Orthodox Christians, and for whom religion or spirituality has turned out to be especially significant in framing their life narratives and in their actual lives.

Orthodoxy and “New Spiritualities” in Transnational Babushka's Care: Vesta

When I visited Vesta in Petrozavodsk she showed me her home altar (see picture), in front of which she is praying, most often for her two daughters and four grandsons residing permanently in Finland. Looking at the altar I could picture the history of how it has been collected, icon by icon. There are images of God's Mother cut from magazines and newspapers. When it was not possible to get a proper icon of some particular images, especially in the very beginning of the 1990s, Vesta copied a particular image using carbon paper (see the picture below). So the altar consists of purchased icons, sacred images cut from newspapers, and images drawn by Vesta (using carbon paper).



Figure: Vesta's home altar

Vesta kept a photo of her eldest grandson, who “easily gets into trouble”, covered with an icon of God’s Mother.³⁷ Some pictures of other family members were also placed below the icon of God’s Mother. A picture of Vesta’s husband, who had passed away, was also covered with a small icon of God’s Mother. The practice of keeping one’s pictures under, below, or near an icon seems to go beyond what official Orthodoxy prescribes. However, this is Vesta’s way of placing her whole family under the protection of God’s Mother; in this, her home altar appears as a site of family belonging, creating her family. The home altar also tangibly reproduces the sense of togetherness, as the whole family, through their photos, has been placed by Vesta under protection of the Holy Trinity, God’s Mother, St. Panteleimon, *Nikolai Chudotvorets* or *Nikolai Ugodnik* (Nicholas the Wonderworker), and other Saints. The sense of togetherness is also created by Vesta when she prays in the front of the altar for the whole family, especially for her daughters and grandchildren.

Vesta started following Orthodox religious practices after her husband’s death in 1989. She felt “desperate” and did not know “what to do” or “how to live”. She went to a church and talked to a priest. Obviously, the spirit of perestroika and the beginning of Orthodox restoration may have influenced Vesta’s choice on where to go for help. Alongside Orthodox practices, Vesta is also interested in astrology. For instance, she explains a good marriage of her younger daughter by the compatibility of the horoscope signs of both spouses; on the other hand, the failure in her older daughter’s marriage is partly explained by Vesta by the incompatibility of *their* horoscope signs. Vesta follows the moon calendar and advised me on when it is better to cut nails or get a haircut according to this calendar. She is aware that the official Orthodoxy does not encourage these new kinds of spiritualities, but she does not see it as an obstacle in her experience of God:

I talked to a father [batjushka, a priest]. He told me that it is not worth being interested in astrology. But all people have different paths to God. I have recently watched TV, and father Kirill³⁸ said that some part of astrology should be recognized. But he is against when people follow horoscope daily prognosis. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

Furthermore, Vesta's narratives also reveal her belief in supernatural and magical harm. Once, she told me a story of how "one woman" was trying to "cut of all roads" between Vesta and her family:

It happened after my husband died, and I lived already with the second one. Yes, and Ivan [a grandson] was born. And I and Julija lived like a fish on a hot burning frying pan. Everything was going wrong somehow. Ivan was little, and he was always crying. There were some tensions, discomfort. I thought that I had a right approach to life, why something went wrong? And I went to a fortune-teller... When she spread the cards, she told me: Ou..! You love all, and take care of people; but there is nobody to take care of you.... There is a woman who wants to part you from your kin (rodniá), and cut of all your roads.

Vesta told me that she recognized her friend in the woman the fortune-teller described:

That woman told me that her mother was a witch (koldun'ia), and that she had even left her witchcraft notes (tolmut). I asked her once to show it to me, not to use, of course, I just asked. She told me that she had put it somewhere, and could not remember where... Then I told that story to a woman with whom I was walking back home from a church. And she told me to say this: "God, give her wealth and good health, good friends and merriment, but take her away from my side!" And I kept saying this. I told that story to a batjushka (priest). He told me that that yes, witchcraft exists. All these things, he says, have been proved. But you should not be afraid, he says. When you are afraid, and start think of it, it starts sticking to you. You tire yourself out with thoughts. So you should not think of it. I am always having my cross with me, and there is also a prayer "Zhiviy v pomoshi Vishnego"³⁹... I have written it down, and I always wear it in my pocket. I also talked to my children on phone and I told them to do that. I put this prayer in my pocket and I am not afraid of anybody! (Vesta, born in 1943, 2009)

Again, putting a written prayer in a pocket is not something that official Orthodoxy would prescribe. For Vesta, however, it serves as a tangible Orthodoxy way of protection against magical harm. As discussed in the previous chapter, Vesta pointed out the negative influence of her daughter's mother-in-law on her daughter's life. Sometimes she hinted that magical harm may have been applied by that her *svat'ia* (a Russian term for the mother of the son-in-law):

I started noticing when svat'ia left we would always find some pins. She leaves, and there are pins all around. I don't use pins. Julija does not use pins. I don't know. I am now trying not to think of those things. I have come to a conclusion that if you don't think of these things, it is easier to live. And it does not work...according to

astrology...there are also some days when you have to think of good things. If you think or read something bad, it may stay in your head for a long time. So now I am trying to avoid this...Olga [Vesta's older daughter] has now bought a book of incantations. I told her: Why did you buy it! Now they write in all these books and calendars whatever they want to write! Batjushki (priests) say that you should not go to babushkas. I say that I used to go babushkas earlier. And he says: But whom did babushka ask? Maybe the sun? Maybe God? Maybe she did not pray to God, maybe even worse. It is necessary that babushka would be a good one so that she would understand everything in the right way. I have been now watching on TV; they said: Why do you make sorcery (pochemu vy kolduete?)? You'd better turn to God. God has other goals! (Vesta, born in 1943, 2009)

In one meeting with Vesta she told me that she had just been to an astrologist and healer on the matter of her eldest grandson who “easily gets into trouble”. She told her that her grandson had been subjected to *porcha*, and a special session was done to remove that *porcha*. The very day Vesta was at the magus, her daughter Olga was with a Russian-speaking magus who had moved to Finland from Estonia. That magus also revealed *porcha* on Vesta’s eldest grandson and removed it (although the magical act of removing *porcha* in Finland was much more expensive than in Petrozavodsk). Vesta explained that coincidence by “God’s will”, and felt happy that *porcha* had been removed from her grandson.

On the one hand, Vesta’s narratives disclose her belief in magical harm, even something that has badly affected intra-familial relations, particularly those with her daughter. Pins (as Vesta mentioned) or needles have long been known in the Russian folk tradition as items through which magical harm is performed. On the other hand, she takes a critical stand towards her own belief in magical harm. Likewise, if she once saw the published moon calendars and astrological prognosis as a path to God (narratives, 2008), one year later she is more critical of “all these books and calendar” (narratives, 2009). Often she refers to her discussions with a priest, which more or less represent the official position of the Russian Orthodox Church advising people to stay away from magical harm, astrology, or going to babushkas. Thus, Vesta’s spirituality appears as a dynamic field, a site of negotiation and search.

As argued by Kimmo Kääriäinen, this tendency “to believe in everything”, for instance combining Christianity and astrology, is part of post-Soviet religious space (Kääriäinen, 2004). What makes him doubt the power of “religious renaissance” in today’s Russia is that, in addition to the tendency mentioned earlier, people are not keen on following Christian religious practices, particularly attending the service, and their knowledge of Orthodoxy may be extremely feeble. Only every tenth among Russians can be seen as “active” in their religion; they see themselves as Orthodox, pray at least once a week, and believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Kääriäinen 2004, 140). According to other data, 82% of people in Russia consider themselves to be members of the

Orthodox Church, but only 6% to 7% attend services at least once a month (Filatov, 2008, pp. 188-189). It is worth mentioning that recent studies have revealed a substantial gap between people's strongly stated religious beliefs and their own anaemic religious knowledge and practices (Johnson, Stepaniants, & Forest, 2005; Filatov, 2008). However, drawing on my data and applying a flexible and more inclusive anthropological notion of religion, which includes magic and other spiritual practices (Eller, 2007), and looking at how religion is actually lived (Keinänen, 2010), I may emphasize that the "religious renaissance" has proved to take place among women in post-Soviet Russia. Rather than focus on who is more or less Christian in their beliefs and practices, I would pay attention to the process of negotiation of faith, which is quite prominent in some grandmothers' narratives, their everyday religion.

Vesta's narratives are illustrative in the sense that when it comes to her religious (or spiritual) self, she is constantly negotiating between what can be called "traditional" magic and official Orthodoxy, astrology, and other New Age spiritualities. Faith in God appears as a process in which "traditional" and new forms of spirituality are being contested, and religion emerges as a practice, the way it is actually lived by Vesta. Arguably, Vesta's everyday religion is something that is important for understanding and acting in contemporary social realities, particularly in transnational family-making, for instance when she removes *porcha* from her grandson through the healer's intervention, advises her daughters on which prayer to say in a situation of danger, discourages her older daughter from using incantations, and explains her *svat'ia's* negative influence on her daughter by magical harm.

Being physically in Petrozavodsk, she is trying to ensure the well-being and happiness of her daughters and grandsons residing in Finland through religious or magical practices. As a transnational grandmother who often stays at her daughters' places, she seems to be well aware of how her family lives in Finland and where (magical) help is needed. Vesta's everyday religious or spiritual practices can be seen as her negotiating of faith and experiencing God within the self, an expression of babushka care and a means of explaining and acting within the current social realities, particularly in making her transnational family. This form of babushka care and transnational family-making needs to be taken into account when considering grandmothers and the role of grandmothers in sustaining familyhood across Russian-Finnish borders (Chapter V). It also discloses a subtle aspect of micro-powers that some grandmothers may exert in intra-familial relations (Chapter VI).

Nadezhda's Spirituality and Individual Space

Another grandmother in my research, Nadezhda, told me that she was Orthodox, and in her search for spirituality she has been influenced by her very “religious” babushka. Throughout our conversation, Nadezhda occasionally advised me on which herbal medicine to take in which cases. This was also a prominent feature of our talks with some other grandmothers (for instance Albina, Elvira, Julia, Marja, and Vesta). Our conversation took a somewhat spiritual turn from the very beginning:

I live alone now. I am divorced.... The process of divorce stretched too long. I have been long thinking of it. As we married, we immediately started having some tensions. He did not match me spiritually... It was just not interesting. I told him that I was bored with him. He was very disadvantaged. We were sitting, everything was fine, watching TV, and he just started kept changing the channels click, click, click, click... I knew that it was not possible to live like this. Well, our children are grown up, and I brought them up with their father... I tried to divorce him three times, first time when our son was three years old. (Nadezhda, born in 1952, 2008)

Nadezhda started narrating a long and complicated story of her relationship with her husband (at that time). The story is presented in a way that when Nadezhda did not have courage to divorce, she was given “signs” that it was a wrong choice. For instance, the day after she took back her divorce application from a court, she fell down and broke her leg in three places. From my conversation with Nadezhda, I got the impression that she read a lot of literature that can be roughly described as the Russian version of New Age literature:

I read Andrey Levshinov's book. In the early morning you have to set, put a star [a special twelve edged star called Ertsgamma] in front of you, light a candle, and meditate... Once I ordered this star, it was a gold-plated version. I wore it on a golden chain, but it seemed that the lock was broken. So I came home, took off my blouse, and there was no chain, and no star. But it was so expensive! 2000 rubles! I started searching for it, asking people, and then I asked Archangel Michael so that He would help me. And then I came in a room, and there were many different things there, and I was about to lose my focus, but suddenly the star blinked. (Nadezhda, born in 1952, 2008)

According to the official website of Andrey Levshinov (Levshinov, 2007), he is a “Russian Enlightened Master of yoga” with thirty years’ experience. Based in Moscow, Levshinov’s team organizes courses and publishes books that relate to so-called “Yogybo”, a “synthesis of yoga, qigong, Zen, and boxing and flexibility, strength, wisdom and martial arts”, developed by the master himself. Surprisingly, along with marketed products such as t-shirts, cups with yoga symbols

etc., “Karelian-style” clothes and Karelian runic symbolic are also being sold. This gave me an impression that what has been done by Andrey Levshinov (and he is one of many masters, teachers, and healers) can be characterized as a domesticated version of New Age spiritualities. In the end of our conversation, Nadezhda told me that now she discovered a new healing practice, reiki, which she was looking forward to explore.

In my data, as I discussed in Chapter IV, Nadezhda represents individualization trends in grandmothing. Although she meets her grandson regularly and tries to make her contacts with other grandson more frequent, Nadezhda seems to be more interested in meeting her friends, attending different language courses and associations, and, of course, finding her spiritual self (which does not seem to reside in the family for Nadezhda). Family appears in Nadezhda’s narratives as an area of conflict, either with her ex-husband or her dominating mother, as well as in-laws. Nadezhda’s fighting for individual spiritual space and self may be also seen as a way of dealing with or even escaping from these family frictions. Again, Nadezhda’s narratives illustrate that Orthodox belief and New Age spiritualities coexist and interact within the self and in experiencing and acting within the social realities.

Grandmother Healer: Mari

The third woman whose narratives I explore in this section is Mari, who is a grandmother in her late fifties. She lives in Petrozavodsk and shares her three-room flat with her son and his family, a wife and a son. According to Mari, her son had recently converted their dacha into a dwelling space, so they often spend nights there. She has another son who (when I met her last time) was expecting a child with his wife. Mari can be seen as an active grandmother: she used to take care of her grandson when his parents were at work, and now she picks him up from a kindergarten earlier to “feed him” and take care of him. She also cooks for the whole family; when the parents come home, they eat together and then Mari’s son, his wife, and their child leave for their dacha. Mari appears a very loving and sympathetic grandmother who always admires her grandson’s curiosity about the world and his innocence. What makes Mari’s case exceptionally relevant with regard to religion and spirituality is that she is a healer herself (or *tselitel’*, the Russian term, as she calls herself) and earns her income by providing healing. She used to work as an accountant, and discovered her magic skills after her husband’s death:

I was very unhappy with my husband. He was seriously sick, and we lived only on my salary. He was sick for ten years, and I took care of him. But he never treated me well, and he was drinking a lot. When he died, I felt desperate and tired. I was

sitting in my room motionless on my sofa, and suddenly my hand started moving by itself. I got scared, but also curious. So I started practicing. Every time I came from work, I would first go to my room and practice, and then eat. I was very curious. When I started reading some book on that, and realized that some people have this just as I got it. I started practicing more on my children, then on whom I knew. And so it started. (Mari, born in 1951, 2008)

Mari heals people by going into a trance, as she explained to me, a special condition in which she stops being herself and acts as a “channel for God’s forces” to heal a person: “God heals through me”. Mari uses a lot of church symbolism, particularly icons and candles, which is often the case in contemporary “alternative” healing practices in different parts of Russia (Lindquist, 2006, p. 74; Humphrey, 2002, p. 220). She uses prayers that were applied in healing and birth practices among women of pre-Soviet and rural Soviet Karelia (Keinänen, 1999; Keinänen, 2003). Although Mari considers herself Orthodox and goes to the church, she does not participate in confession and, thus, the Eucharist. According to Mari, there are many priests who are not “true believers”, and this is why she avoids talking to priests. One of other reasons could be that the healing practices that Mari applies are not officially recognized by the Russian Orthodox Church.

According to Mari, she often has to remove the effects of magical harm in her healing practices, which roughly connote what healers (*znahar’*, in Russian context; *tietäjä*, in Finnish-Karelian context) were expected to do in the peasant society (Stark L., 2006, p. 177; Keinänen, 1999, p. 164; Dmitrieva S., 1999). Her magic skills might be seen as a valued form of social capital, the term suggested by Laura Stark to underline high authority of *tietäjäs* in the peasant community due to their skills in magic. Marja-Liisa Keinänen, analysing the position of *babkas* who provided healing in rural Soviet Karelia, suggests that “these women have created a mythology of their own which legitimises their practices and demonstrates their superiority over modern medicine within their specialized field” (Keinänen 1999, 165). This is also often the case among urban healers in contemporary Russia (Lindquist, 2006). I could also trace similar attitudes in Mari’s narratives when she advises her clients not to rely on surgery, but to get cured through her sessions.

Mari is respected and even revered among those whom she has healed, as well as in a so-called network of magi, for some of whom she acts as a teacher. She has gained high authority in her translocal extended family; when she goes to visit her brothers in Mordovia, she heals all her kinship there and they always look forward to her visits. Given the popularity of New Age practices and the generally increased interest and belief in “supernatural”, “alternative”, non-rational, and transcendental ways of experiencing the world in contemporary Russia, Mari’s magic skills can be seen as a form of “social capital”, a “medium of spiritual and social empowerment” (Keinänen 1999, 156).

However, being a healer in a post-Soviet urban space is also a challenge. Mari told me that some of her neighbours are suspicious of her practices, and even her sons give her little support in this regard. She told me that when she discovered her gift she felt strength to heal “the whole of Petrozavodsk”, but facing misunderstanding, Mari became more reserved. She invites people to heal only when her son and his family are away in their dacha. In addition, she has conflicting relationships with her daughter-in-law (see Chapter VI), who does not believe in what Mari is doing:

She got sick, and she just could not recover. She was taking different pills, but nothing helped. So I made a session for her, secretly, and she got better. But she thought that some pills helped. She told me: O, this medicine was really good. We have to buy more of that next time. She did not know that I made that session to heal her. (Mari, born in 1951, 2008)

She also told me that when her grandson gets sick, she always makes special healing sessions for him, without saying anything to his parents. I would see this practice in the light of a babushka’s care. She also made sessions for her other daughter-in-law so that her pregnancy went smoothly. Her other son is more sympathetic towards Mari’s healing skills than the older one:

He gets sick sometimes and comes to me, asking: Mum, cure me! (Mari, born in 1951, 2008)

Mari’s case illustrates (along with Vesta’s case) how religion/magic is applied to ensure the well-being and health of all family members, whether they accept these practices or not. Most important is that magic is Mari’s experience of social realities, and thus it is an essential means of living and making her family, as well as of expressing her care as a babushka. Mari’s healing skills provide her with a high authority among her believers and followers, as well as translocal extended family. However, her extended family in Russian Karelia and some of her neighbours have not (fully) accepted her practices, which also shows her vulnerability as a babushka of the family and a magus living in a post-Soviet urban space.

7.3 Karelian Babushka Evdokiya

Marja-Liisa Keinänen, in her research on women’s ritual practices in rural Soviet Karelia, claims that women more often than men continued to be committed to religious practices, and some women’s ritual practices (particularly of indigenous rites of passage such as wedding, birth, death) survived through the Soviet period. She explains this continuation by the fact that these practices

were often an integral part of women's care for the well-being of their family members and friends (Keinänen, 2002, p. 112). The author also points out that one of the popular narrative themes that continuously reappeared in her interviews was a belief that God could punish those (particularly party functionaries and administrators) who participated in the violation of sacred places and objects (Keinänen, 2007, p. 101).

Evdokiya's case is in close dialogue with Keinänen's analysis of women's religious practices in rural Soviet Karelia, and this is a particular case in my data. Evdokiya is the only grandmother amongst those I interviewed who has lived in the Karelian countryside all her life. Therefore, in this section I intend to empirically illustrate the specificities of the rural gender contract discussed in Chapter IV. I conducted interviews with Evdokiya at her daughter's place in Petrozavodsk, where she started staying during winters after her husband passed away. I conducted three recorded interviews with Evdokiya, although we met and talked more often and on different occasions. Evdokiya seemed to be inspired by our communication (just as myself), and she wrote and sent me many letters describing her life after the interviews were over. For the purpose of this study, I have decided to use only our recorded interviews and my fieldnotes; both types of data have turned out to be rich material. I am omitting Evdokiya's letters in this study, as written narratives are a particular source requiring a specific approach, and I hope to use them in my future research.

Transnational Encounters of the Past

Evdokiya was born in a Karelian-speaking village, the thirteenth child in a family; nine of her brothers and sisters died when they were small. What makes Evdokiya's narratives peculiar in comparison with other women's narratives is that the presence of God is persistent, and her life story can be also perceived as the evolving history of her relationships with God. What happened to her and her family members at different moments of life is often explained by "God's help", "God's will", and "God's power". Many events seemed to have a deeper transcendental meaning where the presence of God was experienced by Evdokiya. The first story she told was the miraculous recovery of her brother, who was seriously injured during a war which in historiography is known as the Continuation War (1941-1944) between the Soviet Union and Finland. Evdokiya told me that she was fourteen years old at that time, and she saw that her brother was dying:

I was praying and praying, and then I saw Him, Jesus, all in light. The whole corner was in the light. He was like in this picture [pointing to a picture of Jesus in a book], but His hair was short, and His clothes were glittering. And I started crying, and I

could not stop crying... He helped, and He cured my brother. He recovered, but one of his eyes remained blind for the rest of his life. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2007)

The corner in which Evdokiya saw Jesus was probably the so-called “great corner” of “the corner of God”, which was the most important place in the (Orthodox) Karelian peasant house where holy icons and other sacred items and substances were placed (Keinänen, 2010). Evdokiya told me that the first time she saw a Bible and learnt how to pray was “during the times of Finns”. It is notable that what in official historiography is termed as the “Finnish occupation of Eastern Karelia” is recollected quite positively by Evdokiya; of course, she does not use this official term. She went at that time to school and participated in a summer camp where she took first part in a swimming competition. She told me that she really liked the camp’s director (*leirin johtaja*, the term applied by Evdokiya in Finnish, although we talked in Russian), whose name she remembers to this day. This positive recollection of the Finnish occupation can be partly explained by the differences in the policies of the Finnish military administration towards the “national”, ethnically close to the Finns (Karelians, Vepsians, Ingrian Finns, Finns), and the “non-national”, mostly Russians and Ukrainians. *Heimo* or “kindred peoples” (Evdokiya belonged to that category) were provided and privileged with access to food, medical service, and education, which was in Finnish (Korablev, Makurov, Savvateev, & Shumilov, 2001; Vehviläinen, 2002; Kulomaa, 2006).

The Finnish military administration appealed to the religious feelings of the “national” population to seek their loyalty and sympathy. This gave people what they were deprived of during the Soviet rule: the opportunity to openly follow their religious practices. The transnational encounters of Evdokiya with Finns in the past are felt to this day. When we discussed how it was “during the times of Finns” she started reciting a prayer in Finnish, which she says daily. I suggest that Evdokiya’s case illustrates that the notion of transnational subjectivity can be applied in a broad sense: transnational encounters in one’s personal history may have a profound effect on the self and “habitus”. However, it seems that for Evdokiya it is not that important who had political power; the essential doer behind the deeds remained God:

It was during the Finns, and my mother was very ill. And the doctors told that there was no such a medicine in Finland. She had meningitis. They told that such a medicine was in Sweden, and they ordered it from Sweden. They started curing her. She was out her consciousness during three days. I was nearby. Then I looked at her, and she was smiling on the fourth day. Her face became fresh. And she smiled. Then she opened her eyes, and looked at the floor. I asked her: Mom, why do you look at the floor? She said to me: There were little boys and girls playing. They had beautiful sweet flowers, and they were bringing them to me. I think that those children were my mother’s children, those who died. She saw them; they brought her back to life! I was praying to God, so that my mother would not die, and they brought her back to life. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2007)

This quotation illustrates Evdokiya's peculiar perception of social reality. On the one hand, it shares some characteristics with "the magic self" of the Finnish Karelian peasant context, particularly in the way dead people are seen as communicating with the world of the living (Stark L., 2006); on the other hand, these dead people appear as those through whom God's will is accomplished.

Magical Harm

Evdokiya's narratives also disclose a strong belief in magical harm. According to Evdokiya, a mental disorder her husband suffered for ten years until his death was a result of her father-in-law's brother's wife's "jealousy" and "sorcery" (*koldovstvo*):

Evdokiya: *He was tortured by visions. He was under a spell (okoldovali). It took us only a year to build a big house! And he was so strong and healthy. We built such a house!*

TT: *So he was under a spell.*

Evdokiya: *He was under a spell. Because devil tortured him, devil tortured him.*

TT: *Did you see it somehow?*

Evdokiya: *No, but I understood from what he was saying. I caught him talking to them. He was constantly fighting with them. It is jealousy. My father-in-law told me because he lived with his brother's wife in the same house: Be careful. That woman is nasty. He lived with her all his life. He knew what he was saying. And I also lived and got to know. But her daughter turned out to be twice as nasty. She was doing many bad things. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2007)*

Living with a mentally sick husband was emotionally and physically exhausting and even dangerous for Evdokiya and their five children. She had to do all the work about the house and the plot, took care of the children and work in a kolkhoz. Her husband often threatened to kill either her or their children, or all of them, as the "devil commanded him". In that difficult situation Evdokiya relied on God's help:

Ivan was three months at that time. Kolya [Evdokiya's husband] went to a bania (sauna) with other kids. They started screaming: mama, take away papa, he is throwing hot water on us! We all run away, but Kolya was in the house. He was fighting, and I was praying. God the Strongest heard my prayers! The militia arrived. And I just kept praying and praying so that he would not tear the baby into pieces or cut it with an axe! He locked himself in the house with the baby. The baby

slept calmly all night long. We came there at six in the morning. He was not fighting any more, and the baby slept on a work bench. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2007)

Evdokiya's husband spent some time in a hospital, but the doctors could not cure him. When the medicine turned out to be helpless, Evdokiya turned to a village healer's help:

I had a friend (podruzhka), older than me. We'd been friends for many years. She got married and moved to the southern part of the village, across the river. Her brother-in-law, a husband of her husband's sister knew how to release my husband. And he released him in the end. He was an old man. Though, at that time he was not that old. He was working. He said: I can't do that. It needs a lot of strength and work. But when he found out that it was for his sister-in-law's friend, he said: I will do that. And he sent some water. I had to wash [my husband] with that water at 12 p.m., or at 10 p.m. I don't remember now. And we have an alarm clock in a closet. As I told him [husband] that I will do it he started screaming at me: you want me to die, you want to get married! And he [the man] told me: Be patient. Don't argue. Whatever you say he will blame you in everything. Be patient. Only by patience! It was just impossible to be at home with him at that day. I went to my friend... Then I came back as children had to come home from school. And he [the man] told me that if my power would take over he [husband] would be calm by afternoon. He asked to eat, and I gave him soup. And I looked that he was hardly moving with his spoon. He fell asleep. That man made him to sleep. And I went to sleep. And God showed me a dream. As if my sestrichka (sister)...came to us by bus, and asked to come in. I looked that my sestrichka was coming. Oi. Sestrichka, Kolya [husband] is very sick. Don't go there. Don't go there. But she told me: let me in. While were talking he woke up. And sestrichka said: Hello! Hello! As I got to know that you were sick I came to you straight after the bus. And I am in the kitchen. I thought that maybe I had to make tea. But then I thought: what if I start making tea and he would attack me? No, I have to make tea for my sister. And he saw me and said: Dusya, make tea. We have a guest. And I started making tea, and I woke up. I thought that I had a good dream. Maybe everything will be fine... Then we were sitting in the sofa. Children were already asleep. I looked, and it was ten to ten. And he also looked. That man told me: you put on clean bedclothes, put on clean clothes [on your husband], and tear up the old ones, dig a hole, and bury it in the soil.

TT: *Who was that man? Was he a doctor or a healer (znahar')?*

Evdokiya: *Znahar', znahar'...He told that while washing, tear up the clothes, and then put the clothes in the hole so that everything bad would go there.*

TT: *Did he tell you that a spell was cast upon him [husband]?*

Evdokiya: *If nothing happens, don't get upset, he told me. But if my victory will take over he will be under my power. So it was ten to ten. And he [the husband] told me: Dusya, do what you want to do. I'd better die. I can't stand it anymore. And I said: Ivan, you don't die. So I washed him...He was trembling, almost jumping in the bed. Then he fell asleep. Then he was crying, crying and crying. Then he was laughing, laughing, and laughing. And then he calmed down. I could not sleep. He fell asleep. That man told me: Ask him which dream would he have? I did not have any dreams, because I could not sleep. I saw only my cousin (sestrichka), she was an angel. God*

came to help me. I was already milking the cow, and heating the house. He woke up. I asked him: Ivan, how are you? Did you have any dreams? He said : Yes, I had a dream. As if Pavel Vasiljevich Charkunov came to us. He was a doctor, after the war, and an old man. He went through the rooms. It is too late, he said. It is too late! (Pozdno spohvatilis'). He slammed the door. Yet the door remained open. It meant that he left.

TT: *Who left?*

Evdokiya: *Ivan left. He had been sick for ten years, and took a lot of medicine. But it was too late! (pozdno spohvatilis')... If a door opens in a dream, it means that somebody should leave... he had a serious heart attack. So he was moved to the public hospital [in Petrozavodsk]. He started feeling normal. But he died.*

TT: *It must have been hard.*

Evdokiya: *Yes, it was hard... But He was also protecting me, because I was praying. If I would not pray, my husband could have killed me and the children.*

This quotation shows that both belief in magical harm and counter practices, particularly healing, have survived in rural Soviet Karelia. The man who cured Evdokiya's husband was *znahar'* (a noun from a verb "znat'", Russian for "to know"). *Znahar'* can be seen as a Russian term for *tietäjä*. *Znahar'* would apply Christian symbolism, making a cross and praying to God and saints, in contrast to *koldun* (a male witch), who would aim at harming and denying the Christian God (Dmitrieva S., 1999).

During the last century "tietäjähöod" has undergone the process of feminization in Soviet Karelia (Keinänen 1999), and the well-known practices of *babkas* show that there were probably also some men who continued to be committed to healing practices, although somewhat secretly. As has been extensively discussed in the literature, men were pressured more than women by the Soviet regime⁴⁰; applied to religion, women being religious and committed to ritual practices was seen rather as a sign of "backwardness", while for a man it would imply a "counterrevolutionary" act (Keinänen 1999, p. 155).

These narratives are again illustrative in the sense that for Evdokiya there is no distinction between "official" religion and healing ritual practices. The healer's help is rather narrated in the context of the actualization of God's will; God "showed a dream" to Evdokiya and sent his angel in the form of her "sestrichka" to release her husband from his long-lasting disease, through his death. Dreams for both Evdokiya and her husband seemed to have conveyed a message of what would happen. For Evdokiya it meant the peace she had been longing for since her husband got sick; her husband said "it is too late" and the door, presumably "to the world of the dead", remained opened for him. These "dream" narratives illustrate that dreams continued to be important both as a way of

communicating with the people who had passed away and as a channel of God's Providence. Both used to be the case in the Finnish-Karelian peasant perception of the world and the self. In post-Soviet rural Karelia, dreams became even more important as a means of communication with the deceased alongside the decline in lamentation, which was discouraged by official authorities (Keinänen 2002, 106).

Evdokiya's Soviet Subjectivity

Being a believer, however, does not seem to have prevented Evdokiya from being a Soviet woman. Being successful in her work was very important for her, and a matter of pride:

We had a new chairman of the village soviet, Semen Andreevich. He was a good man. He understood what I was telling him about the work. And he appointed me to be a brigadier [leader of the group of peasant workers]. I said to him: I am illiterate. I can hardly speak Russian! "No, you will work", he told me... Old people, they had to mow hay. And they came to me and asked if I would allow them doing that. I used to tell them: Go to your places, and mow hay. And then you will help me with hay mowing. It was forbidden to mow for yourself until the 18th of August, lespromhoz's [explanation below] hay had to be mowed first, and only then yours. They could give one ton, or one and a half. Just as much they could give. And our brigade [a team of workers] started doing well. We were digging potatoes, rutabaga. And all these babushkas helped me... They come to me. We have to plough, they told me. Plough, I told them. Because I remember how they ploughed on bare feet after the war, for all the people. I became a member of the village soviet. All started liking me because work was done well. I met all the plans, and our lespromhoz [we were seen as its part] three or two year hold the banner in the whole republic in meat, wood, milk, and potatoes production! We had a first place in the republic! (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2007)

During the collectivization drive in the 1930s the state set up *kolkhozes*, formally established as cooperatives. In practice the head of the collective farm was "recommended" by the party. Both male and female peasant workers were obliged to enter *kolkhozes*, selling their produce at low prices, but buying compulsory services of state-own tractors at high retail prices. *Kolkhoz* members had no guaranteed minimum payment, but were assigned work-day units (*trudodni*) in production to the quantity and skill of the work. *Kolkhozes* remained the dominant economic units in agriculture until the 1960s (Nove, 1986, pp. 13, 114). After Stalin, Khrushchev undertook a so-called agriculture experiment aimed expanding the state sector in agriculture at the end of the 1950s. Since that time the *sovkhos* gradually became the dominant economic unit in Soviet agriculture. In contrast to *kolkhozes*, *sovkhos* were large (sometimes organized by merely merging several *kolkhozes*) and seen as state-owned (Soviet industrial) enterprises, and thus

peasant workers had guaranteed wage payments and pensions, while the enterprises regularly got state subsidies (Lane, 1985, p. 11). Evdokiya worked in a *lespromhoz*, which was seen as a state-owned Soviet enterprise in the forest industry that performed forest cutting, pruning, floating, etc. Lespromhozes were also in charge of forest roads, industrial buildings, and attached settlements (workers' settlements, villages), as well as medical and cultural services. Structurally and functionally, they resembled sovkhoses with the difference that lespromhozes were oriented towards forest industry, while sovkhoses concentrated on agriculture and livestock.

Evdokiya's narratives illustrate that being successful at work, leading in the Soviet socialist completion in production, was and continues to be a source of empowerment and joy. She enjoyed being liked and respected by other peasant workers. The important role that work and socialist competition plays in Evdokiya's narratives discloses her Soviet subjectivity. As a "brigadier" (leader of a team of workers), however, Evdokiya took freedom in going against the Soviet regulation in the agriculture production, for instance by allowing local people, particularly babushkas, to mow hay first for their households' needs, and only then for the State farms. Furthermore, Evdokiya's other narratives reveal inequalities in living standards between urban and rural areas, which, as I suggested in Chapter IV, led to differences between urban and rural gender contracts. Living standards were generally much lower in the countryside, and people had harsher lives there:

Once I worked with another person for eight days, and I got only eight rubles! When they gave my pay book, I came home, and started crying. Anna [daughter] hugs me from one side, Elena [other daughter] hugs me from the other side: Don't cry, mum. We will not eat anything, they told me. You will not eat, but I need strength to work! And Stepan Ivanovich Kolesov, the chairman of the village soviet (sel'sovet)⁴¹ came to us, and saw me crying. I have put in so much work. He said to me: I will go now, and look for another work place so that you would have fixed wage. And he found new work for me. I started working in a dairy farm. There I had a fixed wage, 60 rubles. So I had money to live on. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2007)

Evdokiya's narratives describe the system of work-day units that initially started in kolkhozes that remained the dominant economic units in agriculture until the 1960s (Nove, 1986, pp. 13, 114). Kolkhoz members had no guaranteed minimum payment, but were assigned *trudodni* in production to the quantity and skill of the work. The amount of earnings could have been extremely low. As Evdokiya narrates later, she was moved to another unit, the dairy production unit, where the reward system had been changed by that time, and people got fixed wages. It became better since she started working there.

Evdokiya as Babushka

I once met Evdokiya as she was taking care of her great-granddaughter while the child's mother, Evdokiya's granddaughter, was working:

Olushka [great-granddaughter], listen to babushka. Tetja [a woman, informally, also mean an aunt] will ask babushka, and you have to be quiet. Play quietly. Don't disturb us. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2008)

It is difficult to convince a four-year-old child to play quietly and not to disturb you. So I played with Olushka and asked Evdokiya to tell me how she raised her children given that she was so overloaded by the work in the lespromhoz, and became the only breadwinner of the family because of her husband's sickness:

You know, when I had four children, and we lived in an old house. When each of them was one year old, they were taken to the kindergarten. But on weekends they were at home. Once my mother came to me, to our old house. And they are playing, chairs fall down, they are rolling around, shouting. It was very loud. And I don't know how to calm them down. My mother told me then: Dunya, they are trampling you down. Unless you undertake measures it gets worse. And I asked her: which measures? "I will tell you," my mother said. There was a bania at that time, and they were brooms... "Take a thin branch, and when they are shouting, they don't hear your voice. Then you whip with this branch, but don't look whom it touches. Don't look. And do it so that they would feel it. And put it up on a closet, so that they would know that you keep the branch there." And then I started doing this, it became peaceful. I did not really use it anymore. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2008)

Then I asked her how she managed to take care of Olushka now. She told me that it went well, and that they just played a lot, although she could not move so easily because her legs ached. Obviously, Evdokiya did not see her child care involvement as an extra effort or a burden, but rather it appeared as something "natural" and part of her everyday routine. She is a mother of five children, grandmother of nine, and great-grandmother of four. All her children moved to urban areas when they grew up. Three of her children settled in Petrozavodsk, one daughter got married and moved to St. Petersburg, while her elder son became an officer of the Soviet army and was moved to Eastern Germany where he spent some years with his family and after that settled in Ukraine. Thus, she acted as a translocal and, in fact, transnational babushka even during Soviet times, towards all her grandchildren. Most of her grandchildren spent their three-month summer holidays at Evdokiya's place, while her children came to fix something in the house or to store firewood. In this way, Evdokiya's big house, which she and her husband built before he got seriously sick, continued to be a home for the extended family after all family members became dispersed across the huge Soviet space, and even transnationally, in the case of her elder son. She is

also now a transnational grandmother, as one of her granddaughters has recently moved and settled in Helsinki, and in this role praying is what seems to be the most important part of her care as babushka.

Evdokiya's Everyday Religion and Faith in God

Evdokiya remarried after her first husband's death, and again she was very grateful to God that He sent her a man, her second husband, with whom she brought up her children:

God's power was working. I was alone. I was forty years old, living a hard life. My husband died in 1970. And he [the future second husband] divorced in 1971. He was thirty-one years old, younger than me. And he came to Karelia from Belorussia. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2007)

When her second husband passed away Evdokiya started living a more intensive translocal life, staying either at her daughter's place in Petrozavodsk or with her other daughter's family in St. Petersburg. She was particularly helping both her daughters with their grandchildren, Evdokiya's great-grandchildren. When Evdokiya grew older, the daughters took care of their aging mother during winter when it was very difficult for Evdokiya to live in the countryside. Staying at her daughters has further reshaped Evdokiya's religious practices.

Both her daughters became members of Jehovah's Witnesses. Being one of the most rapidly growing contemporary puritanical movements, originating in the student Bible movement of the second half of the nineteenth century in the United States (Stark & Iannaccone, 1997), Jehovah's Witnesses gained many new members in post-Soviet Russia. This movement advocates the return to the early original (in their interpretation) Christianity, rejecting the principle of Trinity, Easter, Christmas, Eucharist, and other sacraments and practices of mainstream Christianity. As this movement claims to "monopolize truth", they refuse all ecumenical relations with other denominations (Holden 2002). Both daughters were previously Orthodox Christians, particularly throughout the Soviet period, but converted to Jehovah's Witnesses. Influenced by her daughters, Evdokiya too formally converted to become a Jehovah's Witness.

From Evdokiya's narratives where God, dreams, and "traditional" magic were often part of the same story line, I could feel that the impact of Jehovah's Witnesses on Evdokiya's self was somewhat constrained. She said that her daughter did not allow her to tell the story of sickness and healing of her father, but "her soul wanted" that. Therefore, she narrated to me the long and dramatic part of her lived experiences described above. There are no icons in her daughter's home, but Evdokiya always keeps pictures of Jesus from the Jehovah's Witnesses' periodic with her.

However, the fact that Evdokiya did not a single time mention, for instance, God's Mother (who is much revered in the Orthodox tradition but whose worship is rejected by this movement) hints at some changes in Evdokiya's self and the way she now experiences her past and present.

In fact, listening to Evdokiya, I got a very clear feeling of how constraining it would be to frame her "everyday religion" referring to one particular tradition. From a researcher's point of view, Evdokiya's self and religious practices would be seen as a manifestation of syncretism of various religious traditions, recent and old, official and informal practices. However, for Evdokiya's self there were no contradictions or even complementarities; on the contrary, it was a holistic experience of God's presence and will. In fact, she never mentioned such terms as Orthodox, Lutheran, magic, or Jehovah's Witnesses. In Evdokiya's case, these terms rather appear as external (outside) tools for framing and even forcing her religious lived experiences and self into the modern world of categorization and classification. Thus, the term "women's everyday religion" or to paraphrase, Evdokiya's "everyday religion" is inclusive enough to take into consideration all these different influences and their syncretism, as well as to depict Evdokiya's religious self or faith. As discussed in Chapter III, according to Wilfred Smith, religious beliefs have differed radically across history, but religious faith would appear to have been certainly not constant, but "more approximative to constancy". Smith sees faith as something that has been expressed through various religious traditions and beliefs (Smith, 1987). This becomes clear when encountering the complexity of Evdokiya's religious beliefs and practices, in which her faith in God emerges as the unifying substance. Of course, given the diversity of non-human spiritual beings and gods across different religious fields and traditions (Eller, 2007, p. 41), it is worth emphasizing that it is the Christian God around whom Evdokiya's life experiences and narratives revolve.

I came to the realization of the strength of Evdokiya's faith in God when I happened to share with her the sorrow and deep sadness of her elder daughter's sudden (unexpected) death. Evdokiya's children and grandchildren were waiting outside deciding who would go to "babushka" to tell her what happened to her daughter. The very day her daughter passed away I went to her after she was told to express my condolences. I hugged her to support her, and she embraced me. When we were left alone, she humbly told me: "It was God's will. If it happened, it must have happened so". Then she told me a story:

Once my sons came to visit me at my place, and they went fishing. Suddenly, I felt unbearable anguish (toska). I felt it in my heart. I felt something heavy on my breast. It was getting dark, and they still did not come back. I understood that something must have happened. I started praying. I just prayed that God would release me and my sons from that feeling of anguish. They also must have felt that there. I was praying: let happen what should happen, but let His will be done. But release me

and my sons from that feeling of anguish. And suddenly it was gone. I started calmly doing things about the house, cooking supper. I went to sleep at 10 p.m. Then somebody knocked on the door. I opened the door, and my sons were there: You must have been praying for us, mama. It turned out that they were fishing on an island, and they got there on a boat. But they could not return back, because the motor broke down. And it was getting very cold, it was winter. They were about to freeze. And one man happened to come to the shore in the evening, and saw them screaming. It was a smooth ice-surface, and the sound was easily heard at long distances. The man helped them to reach the land. They got to know from the man that he came to the shore to pick up some things, although his brother insisted that he would not come, as it was already late evening. But he just felt like going there. God sent that man to save my sons as He heard my prayers. (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2009)

Then she started talking of her daughter and her passing away:

Sometimes God takes the most beloved, but it means that it should be so. And I love God! And God loves me! God wants me to live longer, because not all of my children and grandchildren yet know Him. I still have to help them to come closer to Him! (Evdokiya, born in 1932, 2009)

In my opinion, these words of Evdokiya highlight the way she understands her message as the babushka of the family, and the meaning of her life in general. As illustrated earlier, Evdokiya's narratives very much revolve around faith and God or rather faith in God, and God's will. Transnational encounters and Soviet experiences of the past, which may be discussed in terms of transnational and Soviet subjectivities (Chapter VIII), are also part of Evdokiya's narratives, but rather appear as the changing scenery in which God remains the main actor in Evdokiya's life, especially in helping her to deal with difficult situations whether "under the Finns" or during Soviet times. The Finnish doctors who healed Evdokiya's mother, the Karelian znahar' who "released" her husband from his sickness, or the Soviet chairman of the sel'sovet who helped Evdokiya get a higher fixed wage are more likely to appear as people through whom God helped Evdokiya. I suggest that Evdokiya's case illustrates that women's everyday religion could have been the means of social and spiritual empowerment of many rural (but not only) Soviet women, and became reactivated in contemporary Russia under the new circumstances of the increased interest and application of religion and spirituality. This case convincingly proves what has been substantially considered in the anthropology of religion, that is, while conceiving religion as transcendent and abstract one should be aware that it is also immanent and concrete, thus having power and effectiveness in social relationships (Eller, 2007, p. 81).

8. Babushkas' Soviet and Transnational Subjectivities

I hope to have demonstrated in the preceding chapters that contemporary grandmothing and family practices in Russian Karelia, as well as in a transnational Finnish-Russian space, have been considerably influenced by Soviet family life and gender culture. It is often grandmothers who provide this continuity; many of them are more likely to sustain and strengthen three- to four-generation family ties both within and across the borders. In this chapter I open up this theme to provide some explanations for contemporary grandmothing and family practices in connection to babushkas' identities and subjectivities, especially Soviet subjectivities shared by women irrespective their ethnic, rural, or urban backgrounds. The first section of this chapter is devoted to this analysis.

Secondly, I will continue discussions concerning Ingrian grandmothers, a particular case in my study, including the case of transnational grandmothing. Their Finnish Ingrian belonging, which has been politicized both in Soviet Russia and in contemporary Finland, and the histories of forceful and voluntary moves they experienced made the process of renegotiating their Soviet and transnational subjectivities even more complex. As Ingrian grandmothers constitute the majority of migrant women, I decided to focus on their case separately in the second section of this Chapter.

I discussed in Chapter III how I apply the terms *identity* and *subjectivities* in my study. Here, I only emphasize that I understand identity and subjectivity as different but complementing categories when discussing grandmothers' selves. Subjectivity is the way an individual perceives the world, and it is shaped by the individual's life experiences, her personal histories. It takes into consideration the historical conditions of the constitution of the subject (Foucault 1980, p. 117), and recognizes that some layers of an individual's subjectivity can be deeply unconscious. In other words, subjectivity is a result of the accumulated life experiences of an individual, including her constitution as a gendered subject within a particular context, discourse, or gender matrix (Lauretis, 1987; Butler, 1999).

Recognizing the multi-layered and multi-dimensional character of identity, I apply it as a dynamic category, a subject of change depending, for instance, on political circumstances. Identity can be a matter of deliberate choice, consciously played out. Thus, in this study, subjectivity is

applied to capture the depth of the historical constitution of the subject, while identity is used to illustrate dynamic processes and changes of the self in response to changing historical circumstances.

For instance, as I will discuss later, some Ingrian women started to emphasize and perform their Ingrian identity upon their migration to Finland, at the same time rejecting everything Soviet; this does not mean, however, that Soviet family and gender values have had no effect on their contemporary grandmothing and family practices.

8.1 Soviet Female Subjectivity and Contemporary Grandmothers

I suggest that what provides continuity in contemporary grandmothing practices locally and transnationally is the fact that contemporary babushkas as individuals have been “interpellated” (De Lauretis, 1987, p. 12) by the Soviet gender culture, the context they lived most of their adult lives in. Thus, I will start by establishing connections between Soviet female subjectivity and contemporary grandmothing practices to continue with the various understandings of the babushka in private and public settings. These understandings continue to be shaped by Soviet discourses on the babushka. Furthermore, I will draw on Soviet nostalgia narratives as a manifestation of the Soviet subjectivities of contemporary grandmothers, and their different ways of negotiating in local and transnational context.

Work, Mothering, and Grandmothing

Soviet female subjectivity has been forged in the matrix of the Soviet gender culture assigning women two roles, that of a worker and that of a mother. As has been discussed, the working mother contract was a specific feature of the Soviet gender culture. Generally, work irrespective of gender was seen as one of the social duties of all Soviet people. Glorifying labour and the collective of workers constituted the hallmark of Soviet rituals and was an important part in the process of forming the Soviet person (Lane 1990, p. 269). The project of Soviet modernity aimed at making a loyal Soviet subject, a worker, prescribing a human being the role of a debugged mechanism of the Soviet machine. The lyrics of one of the popular songs of 1920-1940 are illustrating in this respect:

*We were born to make dreams come true,
To overcome space and distances.
Stalin gave us steel hand-wings,
And instead of hearts he gave us a burning motor.*

(“Aviamarsh”, P. German and Y. Hayt, 1920).

It was often the world of paid work through which the grandmothers of this study developed their belonging to the Soviet regime. The Soviet definition of classes comprised manual workers, non-manual workers (the Soviet intelligentsia), and collective farmers. Although egalitarian principles were proclaimed, the reality was marked by distributional inequalities, legitimated on the basis of reward for labour performed: “to the worker according to his or her work”. The system of planning, working out a rational set of wage differentials, gave a political dimension to the distribution of rewards, more or less arbitrary and unjust payment. State planners might have given priority to certain industries they were to promote; for example, heavy industry, such as mining, iron, and steel, was prioritized at the expense of light industry, such as textiles (Lane, 1985). Nevertheless, an ideology of a “classless” society and a system of education and welfare accessible to everybody, free of charge, made the difference in incomes often more subtle than in capitalist countries.

Indeed, the workplace was where women lived most of their adult lives. The Soviet work collective had tremendous social, economic, and political functions, which penetrated almost every aspect of the social existence of workers (Lonkila & Salmi, 2005, p. 681). In addition, such social services and benefits, such as subsidized food, health care, child public care, sporting, housing, and leisure and tourist activities (including those for children), were linked and mediated through the work collective. Not only was it a place through which the party authorities would control the ideological purity of employees, but also work-based committees would exert powers over the morality and appropriate behaviour of employees, including their family lives. For instance, a wife could complain about her husband’s amoral behaviour (drinking or cheating with a female colleague) to a work-related family committee. The workplace was often a locus for establishing and maintaining social ties; in the post-Soviet transition, work-related ties may have been as important in everyday survival as family networks, especially amongst the so-called “Soviet generation” (Piipponen, 2004).

This attitude towards work is what unites the grandmothers of this study, irrespective of their ethnic, rural or urban belonging, or indeed their current location. Karelian babushka Evdokiya,

who lived all her life in the countryside, recalls now with a feeling of pride and satisfaction that when she was a brigadier (workteam leader) their *lespromhoz* was among the first in the social competition among Soviet enterprises in Karelia. Ingrian grandmother Marja still enjoys talking about her work at the factory in St. Petersburg, where she soon became a foreman. She proudly told me that she always earned more than her husband, and that they got a new car through her work. Vesta and I spent a lot of time discussing her work experiences; she told me that she was given a task of special military significance in a military laboratory measuring missile trajectories. All these professional successes continue to nourish the feelings of grandmothers of their own significance and importance, something that is manifest in being a Soviet working woman.

Marina Klibitskaya suggests the term “married to the state” to illustrate the extent to which women of the Stalinist era internalized the state’s ideology of the centrality of work (Klibitskaya 2000, p. 56). Discussing attitudes towards work of the women’s generation of the post-war period, she proposes the term “breadwinners by default,” emphasizing that women had to work because husbands often did not feel responsible to provide for a family. Based on my interlocutors’ narratives, I would suggest that in both women’s generations these two principles were applied. Women of both generations had to work, as a two-breadwinner family was more likely to do well; moreover, many women were single because of the shortage of men due to Stalinist repressions and war losses. Again, many women of both Stalinist and post-war periods actually “loved” work, although self-sacrifice for the sake of work was more characteristic for older women’s generations. Elena, Vesta, Elvira, and other women of the post-war generation often talked of their work as a place where they were important and appreciated (which obviously raised their self-esteem), besides being a place where they could socialize and take a rest from the family routine. They missed these features when they retired. In many cases, I would apply the term “married to work” to characterize the role of work in the lives of Soviet women; by work I mean the whole social world related to a work place, including social networks of colleagues. Vesta told me that she still sometimes longs for her work:

Sometimes I long so much for my work. I still want to be somebody... When I worked, and my husband earned well, I used to change dresses every week. I often went to a hairdresser to make a special hairstyle. Here [showing me a picture] I am wearing a white fur hat. It is a demonstration. We all participated in demonstrations, and I really liked it... I like to show off [swank] (forsit’), wearing tights with lycra. Sometimes I am also wearing a short skirt. When I was working in a hotel in Severodvinsk, people from Leningrad (leningradtsy) came there, and they told us that women in Leningrad wear short skirts. And I came in a short skirt. Now if I am wearing it with black tights with lycra, then it is good, and I feel light in my

soul! Lightness is a very good quality, as if you are a butterfly. (Vesta, born in 1943, 2007)

Vesta talked of places where she used to work – first as a military laboratory assistant, then as a receptionist at a hotel – as spaces where she could “show off” wearing nice dresses and having a special hairstyle. “Showing off” in the past is narrated as part of the current situation when she is still trying to look young and attractive, particularly wearing “tights with lycra” and a “short skirt”. However, taking particular care of her appearance and style does not prevent Vesta from being an extremely devoted grandmother of her four grandsons, as I discussed in the earlier chapters. Importantly, work was often perceived by women as a place where they could express their femininity by demonstrating hairstyles, make-ups, and dresses:

I liked this work. Often I was meeting people who voted for me. Different people would come to me, and I helped them to solve their problems. Once a month, on Saturdays as a deputy I went to the Wedding Palace to congratulate newly married couples. I did not get any wage for doing this public work. But I liked it a lot. Although, I had to make a hair-dress, and I ate in a cafeteria on my own money when we had the Soviet’s sessions. (Elsa, born in 1939, 2006)

Working first as a teacher in a kindergarten, Elsa, a woman with an Ingrian background, soon became a manager of a kindergarten. At the same time, she was working as a deputy in Petrozavodsk’s Municipal Soviet of Workers’ Deputies (*Petrozavodskii gorodskoi sovet deputatov trudiashihisia*), a public duty she was not paid for but that entailed a higher social status and still nourishes Elsa’s sense of identity as a Soviet woman, as the above narratives demonstrate. Moreover, Elsa seemed to be pleased to show me a box where she kept all her Soviet testimonials of being successful in her work and political life.

Thus, in addition to work, political activism was something that loomed large in some women’s narratives. For instance, Riita seemed to be very proud to share with me that she graduated from the Marxism-Leninism institute. Riita still calls herself a “Soviet person”, although she moved to Finland thirteen years ago. The women’s political activism from the Soviet past still nourishes the Soviet subjectivity of these women, which is also an important component of their contemporary transnational subjectivities. For Riita and Elsa, who are grandmothers with an Ingrian background, the experiences of discrimination during Stalinism have not led to rejecting what is related to Soviet (in contrast to some other Ingrian women).

Thus, work was not only a place where women could strive for their professional achievements (which did not necessarily result in increased incomes), but also a space where they could express their femininity and sexuality. Likewise, political activism was not only a way of raising the political/Communist party awareness of women, but was also linked to the ways of

being a female party politician, and the whole fabric of elaborating this representation with corresponding outfit. The life stories of women, and the space and the value the (past) working life has been given in the women's narratives, points to their importance not only "there" in the Soviet past, but also "here" in Russian Karelia and in Finland in the current lives of these women. I would see it as a salient feature of the Soviet subjectivity of contemporary grandmothers.

This attitude towards work and especially the importance of belonging to a work collective have had two significant implications for contemporary grandmothereing practices. Firstly, as I mentioned earlier, because Soviet women encountered difficulties in combining paid work and motherhood duties, many mothers were so overloaded with their work and other obligations that their motherhood was actually "delegated" to the grandmothers of their children. Therefore, often they were deprived of their motherhood to return to the world of paid work. Thus, their own grandmothereing appears as "postponed" motherhood, as they got opportunities to provide active child care once they grew older. This is one of the explanations why grandmothereing narratives and practices appear as more significant for babushkas than being a mother.

Secondly, as I discussed earlier, given the importance of work for contemporary grandmothers and the difficulties in combining motherhood and work (or studies) for today's mothers, babushkas, particularly maternal grandmothers, continue to be caring mothers who enable their daughters to be successful "working (or studying) mothers". Paternal grandmothers (especially in Russian Karelia) often feel obliged to help with child care as they assume that a daughter-in-law should work and bring an income to a family. In both contexts, grandmothereing can be interpreted as "prolonged" motherhood. Paid employment of mothers is encouraged in the Finnish context as well (Vuori, 2001; Lähteenmäki, 1999); this is a significant feature that unites the migrant sending and receiving contexts. Thus, migrant and transnationally mobile grandmothers are keen on helping their daughters to study and work, and integrate into Finnish society in the best possible way.

Grandmothereing as "prolonged" and "postponed" motherhood emerges as one of the manifestations of the Soviet gender contract and as part of Soviet female subjectivity. These analytical explanations of grandmothereing practices need to be seen as intertwining with each other. This feature of Soviet female subjectivity has defined the active role of grandmothers in childcare and family-making in both the Russian Karelian and the transnational Finnish-Russian contexts. However, there is a difference between how women see themselves as babushkas in the family context and in the public space, as I discuss now.

Grandmothers' Perceptions about Babushka

In approaching Soviet female subjectivity as a multi-layered concept, covering the gender subjectivities of women of different ages, the babushka can be also seen as part of Soviet female subjectivity. Whether it is activated in women's actual lives or not (for instance, in case of individualization processes in grandmothers), the babushka as a Soviet gender strategy for women of a mature age continues to remain significant in contemporary grandmothers' perceptions.

For many of my interviewees, becoming a grandmother appeared as an exceptionally emotional experience and a turning point in their lives. Once women become grandmothers they often start talking of themselves as babushkas in the third person. Gradually women become so much involved in this role that other family members start addressing them as babushka. Especially when grandmothers grow old they may become babushka for the whole family, and be called so. For instance, Evdokiya and Marina are addressed as babushka by most their extended family members.

When it comes to the public space, however, being seen as babushka also means looking old. Some women of a mature age may get offended if someone addresses them as babushka in a public space, in a bus or a shop. Although the babushka is associated with love, warmth, and homemade pies, many young grandmothers prefer not to be seen as babushkas in the public space. Only those women who are ready to see themselves as elderly call themselves babushkas, and appreciate being called so not only by their grandchildren. For instance, sometimes I conducted interviews with women as my son was around. It was illuminating to observe how women introduced themselves to him. Vesta, who is a grandmother in her early sixties, positioned herself as his friend, and introduced herself by only her first name, "like people do in Finland" she explained. Vesta's reference to the Finnish context can also be seen in light of the effects of transnational grandmothers on the way she now sees herself. Vesta is a very caring and loving babushka towards her grandchildren and appreciates to be called so by her grandchildren; however, she does not want to be seen as babushka by other people. Sometimes she talked kindly of her female friends, with whom she usually goes berry-picking, as babushkas. However, she deliberately distances herself from being babushka in the general sense. She told me that she does not want to look like babushka, "sitting in the sofa" and doing "old-womanish work (*starushech'ia rabota*), such as darning socks". She often emphasizes how beautiful she was and that she continues to be attractive:

There is a young couple living on the first floor. Both are university teachers. There are more young people living in this house. Many are very surprised when they realize that I am retired. When I travel by train [the ticket is cheaper for those who are retired] people don't believe that I am retired. They are just shocked to hear that! (Vesta, born in 1943, 2008)

In the denial of being recognized as babushka in the public setting also lies a fear of the grannifying representations of grandmothers, which may convey a comic and ridiculous image of old age (Vakimo, 2001, p. 307).

Albina, Liliya, and Marja, who are in their late seventies, introduced themselves as babushka to my son, and asked him to call them as such. Nevertheless, the other great-grandmother of my thesis, Riita, was more likely to emphasize her beauty and attractiveness, as well as that she looked fifty-five years old although she had reached seventy-seven. I would assume that she would not like to be called babushka by somebody outside her family circle.

Approaching grandmothering as prolonged motherhood also means prolonging the babushkas' youth and attractiveness. This may also be interpreted as part of the Soviet/Russian gender culture, characterized by women's desire to look and act feminine and express their femininity and beauty in public spaces. It is often a matter of pride to walk outside with a grandchild; however, some grandmothers like to be mistaken as the mother of a child. Elena told me that she devoted herself entirely to her grandchild and spent all her time with him. People whom she happened to meet as she was walking with a pram often took her for the mother of her grandson. It is enjoyable for some grandmothers when people exclaim with wonder "Are you already babushka?"

Being babushka as a grandmother continues to be important for many women both in Russian Karelia and in a transnational Finnish-Russian context. However, the babushka's identity may also have changed among Ingrian grandmothers upon their migration to Finland. Some of them like to be called "mummo" (in Finnish, a grandmother) by their grandchildren. This can be seen as part of recollecting their Ingrian identity, a process I will discuss more later.

Of course, for women who prioritize their individual lives (very few in my data) being babushka is only part of their subjectivity, and probably quite minor. For instance, Nadezhda focuses more on her spiritual practices and cultural free-time activity in Petrozavodsk; her distant approach to grandmothering represents individualization processes that are going on in Russian Karelia. Likewise, Eleonora, who is an attractive, young-looking woman, has proved to be very successful in her professional life upon migration to Finland. Her Finnish husband helped her to open her hair-dressing salon, and she is now an active businesswoman. She told me that she is more like a mother to her six-year-old granddaughter who lives with her mother, Eleonora's daughter, in

Rostov-na-Donu. By saying this, Eleonora obviously does not want to be seen as a babushka, even as a grandmother of a child. However, she likes spending time with her granddaughter when visiting, and she has helped her daughter and her husband a lot financially, particularly by purchasing a three-room flat for them in Russia. By calling herself mother, she is obviously trying to prolong her youth and to be young. However, her striving to remain a mother speaks of unexpressed motivations behind the “prolonged” grandmothereing as a mother’s care for her child.

Meanwhile, Anna, in Finland, is too busy as a mother of a seven-year-old son to be an active grandmother towards her granddaughter of almost the same age. Her approach to being a babushka reflects probably the Finnish understanding of family as a nuclear family.

However, both women remember their babushkas with warmth and love, and admit the influence of their babushkas on their lives. Migration to Finland for Anna has in fact reactivated childhood memories of her babushka, who raised her. She told me that it was very difficult for her to start feeling at ease in Finland, and she sometimes thought that it would have been better had she stayed in Petrozavodsk. In this mood of longing for home, she started writing short stories about her childhood at her babushka’s and *dedushka*’s (Russian for grandfather) log house. Some stories have been already translated into Finnish and published. Longing for home took a form of recollecting her babushka, who seemed to signify her sense of belonging and home:

Sometimes I regret that I have left Russia. Who knows? Maybe I will save money and buy a small log house in a Karelian village. (Anna, born in 1962, 2007)

Babushkas’ Soviet Nostalgia

Some grandmothers’ narratives reveal a strong feeling of Soviet nostalgia, which can also be seen as one of the expressions of their Soviet subjectivities. There are different ways of expressing this nostalgia. In some women’s narratives it becomes a sharp critique of the new order of things in contemporary Russia. This type of narrative is largely manifest in those grandmothers’ narratives who continue to live in Russian Karelia:

I was very desperate when the USSR collapsed. I was crying. It was very hard. All my life I have lived in the USSR. The life has become much worse, both in moral and material terms. Everything has changed. Nothing is the way it should be. During the Soviet times we had already saved money to buy a car, and after the collapse, all the money was gone. I don’t like everything now. The situation in the city is threatening, too much smoking and drinking. There are so many hooligans. I am afraid of going outside in the evenings. What life is this? Before there were druzhinniki [group of Soviet volunteers watching around] outside between 19.00 and 21.00. I myself was a member of this group. We made children go home after 21.00. We visited socially

unreliable families... and now there is disco, alcohol drinks, wild life. (Marina, born in 1927, 2006)

It was better. An ordinary man could live. At that time one could stay an honest man, but now it is very hard... everybody is stealing. If you don't steal, you are a fool. During Soviet times a working man was respected, at least formally. I don't know what they were actually thinking but they still took workers seriously. Now they look at us as if we are cattle. The most important thing, though, was that there was stability: prices were always the same, one could easily save. Now prices are going up, inflation. We have got freedom, but nobody takes any responsibility, the state has no responsibility. Those who work live much worse than those whom they feed. I am working for them while they are growing fat. (Olga, born in 1952, 2006)

It was better during Soviet times. Before, people got pension 132 rubles, and they could travel for vacations, buy clothes, and now it is enough only for paying communal services. People who have learned to steal money are doing well, but those who have been working all honestly all their lives have got nothing. (Antonina, born in 1937, 2008)

We felt secured in the USSR... I could visit my friend in Ukraine. Now we have no money to buy tickets, and they in Ukraine live poor. In the USSR if one had 100 rubles, they could afford a lot, also travelling. (Irina, born in 1949, 2006)

It was more interesting to live during Soviet times. People had goals to strive for. They were thinking about the bright future. They were looking forward to this future. They had some interest in their lives. There was also stability. There was a lot of patriotism. Today life is empty. Young people are swearing and drinking alcohol. It is muddy everywhere. It is like a pig sty! Before you could get the truth, but now it is not possible. There is malice and boorishness everywhere. (Elena, born in 1950, 2006)

I have never been afraid of new trends. The old system was dying, but the way they started changing everything, it went wrong. It was too sudden. I am not sure what will happen tomorrow. We have already earned our flats, but it is very hard for young people. They cannot earn money to buy a flat. They should have a very high salary to pay interest to a bank if they take a loan. And they can easily lose their job. I am really worried about my daughter and my grandson, and young families in general. The law is not working in private enterprises. They get salaries unofficially. Before if you worked, you would know there would be work tomorrow. Now you have to pay to get education, and if you want to get university education, you will never save money to buy a flat. (Oksana, born in 1951, 2006)

These narratives convey women's longing for safety, social security, and justice – in other words, what they think was more or less the case in Soviet times. They feel there was a higher degree of certainty and predictability, and people could plan how they would arrange their lives in terms of education, employment, and dwelling; even the scarcity of resources would be part of this planning. The narratives also reveal an appealing concern for grandmothers' children and grandchildren: How would they make their living in conditions of uncertainty and emergence of

such “bad” habits as drinking, smoking, and a nightclub life? Katherine Verdery argues that the new postsocialist context does not give only rights, for instance, rights to own a property, but it requires more responsibilities from an individual, “the obligation of ownership” (Verdery & Humphrey, 2004, p. 16). The degrees of responsibilities have dramatically changed in postsocialist Russia compared with the Soviet period; now almost all responsibilities are laid upon an individual.

These narratives also remind us of what Nancy Ries calls “anti-Soviet litanies” during perestroika, often performed by elderly women. Ries (1997, p. 84) defines litanies as “passages in conversation in which a speaker would enunciate a series of complaint, grievance, or worries about problems, troubles, afflictions, tribulations, or losses, and then comment on these enunciations with a pregnant rhetorical question: ‘Why is everything so bad with us?’” By constantly affirming the profound powerlessness of the self and of the associated collectivity, litanies reinforce a sense of hopelessness and futility and undermine attempts to imagine or invent even small-scale solutions of local problems (Ries, 1997, p. 115). It is difficult to disagree with Ries’ observation; indeed, when talking with some grandmothers I got a feeling that the litanies were performed for the sake of litanies, uncompromised criticism of the existing order of things but also expressing self-sacrifice. However, behind this self-sacrifice, as I argued in Chapter VI, micro-powers may well be operated. Soviet nostalgia among migrant and transnationally travelling grandmothers often takes other forms. For instance, Ingrian grandmothers, who constitute majority of migrant babushkas, are more critical of the Soviet regime in general. Among migrant and transnationally travelling grandmothers, the nostalgia is more about their youth and (possibly) happy family life during the Soviet period (next section), but there is less concern about their children’s and grandchildren’s future, especially if they have also moved to Finland. One of the surprising and unexpected results of migration was that many grandmothers have found in Finland what they feel they lost in post-Soviet Russia: safety, social security, the secured (although in their imaginations) future of their children and grandchildren. Although there is a discussion on the “precarization” of migrants’ lives in Finland (Jokinen, Könönen, Venäläinen, & Vähämäki, 2011), the Finnish welfare state still provides considerable security, especially during old age. If the children and grandchildren of migrant grandmothers continue to live in Russia, grandmothers try to balance this uncertainty by supporting them both practically and emotionally, as I discussed in Chapter V. Thus, this unexpected effect of migration also illustrates that Soviet female subjectivity and the Soviet lived experiences have in fact become part of and enabling for the transnational subjectivities of migrant grandmothers.

Grandmothers' Transnational and Translocal Subjectivities

The notion of transnational subjectivity (Vuorela, 2009) is an important tool for examining the processes of contestation and renegotiating of women's belonging, relationship to place and space. The concept of transnational subjectivity pays attention to the effects of transnationalism from below, from the perspective of individuals' selves and family lives. The notion of transnational subjectivity helps to understand that the personal stories of the women are not so much stories of all the places they lived in, but of the ways they have settled in new places (Vuorela, 2009, p. 170). For instance, Liliya recalls an enforced move to Siberia and experiences Krasnoyarsk Krai where they lived during deportation as a negative place, against which a move to Finland looked great.

The women's personal histories and lived experiences of moves are imprinted in their *transnational* and *translocal* subjectivities, a term I apply to conceptualize women's moves within borders (Introduction). For grandmothers who have experienced the harshness of war times and often evacuation to some remote places, these translocal moves can be extremely important but also painful. For instance, for Zinaida the remote "backward" village in the middle of nowhere is experienced as the place where she was subjected to magical harm, which turned the whole course of her life up-side down (Chapter VII). For Marina, the village in the Arkangelskaya oblast is recollected as a place where she met her true love, an experience against which her marriage to another man upon her return to Petrozavodsk, with whom she had four children, is narrated as an accident and a wrong choice. Evdokiya told me that throughout her entire life she felt connected to a man whom she loved but could not marry (her father would not accept her choice because of his Ingrian belonging, according to Evdokiya); being connected translocally wherever that man happened to live, she also felt the day he passed away. For Anna, Valaam is narrated as a life-turning place in her life, where she was assigned to come to work and met her future husband and gave birth to her daughter. It also appears as a place of loss; she had to divorce her husband because of his drinking problems and returned to Petrozavodsk where her mother hosted her and her daughter for some time. The longing for "strong shoulders" on which to lean, expressed in many grandmothers' narratives in the form of lost love, is also a particular feature of Soviet female subjectivity, which is the other (vulnerable) side of the "Soviet superwoman who works, runs a household and takes pride in her ability to do so" (Ashwin, 2000, p. 20).

The past lived experiences of the women in various places, their personal histories of mobility, which are clearly "rethought and reinterpreted in the intersection of individual experiences with wider frames and socio-political realities, nourish individual projects in the present" (Roberman, 2008, p. 101). For the women I interviewed, these histories also inform processes of

“rewriting” (Feierstein & Furman, 2008, p. 105) and renegotiating identities, Soviet and ethnic. For many Ingrian women their Ingrian Finnish identity has been anchored in Finland. Upon their arrival they started gradually recollecting their Ingrian past and belonging, suppressed during the Soviet times. This past is activated to bridge the ethnic “we” (Armstrong, 2004, p. 136), to develop their relationship to the Finnish national context in which they now reside, to construct their Finnish belonging.

In the course of my fieldwork in Tampere I visited two elderly female friends. Marja migrated as an Ingrian returnee, while Julia moved to Finland as a babushka to help her daughter, married to a Finnish man, with child care. Both women had portraits of Tarja Halonen in their homes. In Marja’s flat the portrait of the Finnish president (2000-2012) was placed on a wall in the living room, surrounded by angels. In Julia’s flat it was located in a bedroom, above her bed. The women told me that they admired the Finnish president, both as a politician and as a woman. I suggest that this practice (which would probably look strange for Finns born and raised in Finland) is one of the manifestations of transnational subjectivities, informed by the women’s Soviet experiences. Both women came from the Soviet regime, a political culture where everybody was expected to express public loyalty to the political leader of the country especially during Stalinist rule. It may partly explain why the Finnish president is so admired, with her portrait occupying an important place in their flats. The past indeed informs the present in a myriad of ways, as it “lingers in surprising ways and coexists obstinately with things modern” (Vuorela, 2009b, p. 264).

In the Soviet context, however, there was always a *male* leader whose portrait would be usually displayed publicly. A portrait of the female Finnish president surrounded by angels certainly carries deeper symbolic meanings for these women, perhaps linked to their religiosity. Marja is an active member of the Lutheran Church, while Julia belongs to the Orthodox community in Tampere. Possibly, Tarja Halonen is a symbol of freedom for them, although with different meanings: for Marja she might signify a liberation of her Ingrian identity suppressed during Soviet times, while for Julia (whose family members lived in constant fear of being taken by NKVD in Leningrad during the night in the 1930s and 1940s) it might imply liberation from unconscious fears and a regained trust in the state and in political leaders. Or, it could be an unconscious tribute to the Soviet working woman; finally, a woman politician who had been working hard for her country has been publicly recognized and acknowledged. Of course, for both women it is an expression of their gratitude to the Finnish state for providing them social security – an essential element of the Soviet system lost after the collapse, but gradually regained upon their migration.

Given the shared experiences of paid employment and often active political and social activism, it was difficult for some migrant grandmothers to live active social lives upon their arrival

in Finland. However, this was mostly the case only in the initial stage of migration. The social network among Russian migrants in Finland has become quite developed, and my participant observation has proved that agency in these networks often belongs to grandmothers. Often, the effects of migration were that many women have packed up their social lives quite tightly, just as it used to be in their Soviet and post-Soviet lives in Russia. Some grandmothers, such as Anna and Larissa, became active members of the Russian Centre and the Centre of Russian Culture in Tampere. Albina, Julija, Elina, and Elvira are active members of the Orthodox Church, and Marja and Liliya of the Lutheran church. Uljana is one of the most energetic activists of the Association of Ingrian Finns, although she is ethnically Russian and her husband is an Ingrian Finn. Migrant grandmothers attend different courses and clubs (*kerhot*). Thus, reproducing belonging to a collective, which was once crucial in Soviet Russia, remains significant for many grandmothers in their current lives in Finland.

Finnish migration policies apply the term *kotouttaminen*, which is often translated as integration. In fact, the Finnish verb *kotouttaa* derives from the word *home* (*koti*) or the expression *at home* (*kotona*). Thus, the Finnish term *kotouttaminen* does not objectify migrants as the term *integration* does: it is not only about migrants being integrated into the Finnish context, but also about migrants starting to feeling comfortable, “at home”, in Finland. The law on migrants’ integration was approved in 1999 and renewed in 2011. *Kotouttaminen* is a complex process that builds on migrants’ experiences of interactions with Finnish institutions, communities, and people, including those who moved to Finland from other countries, i.e., other migrants (Vuori, 2012, p. 235). Language courses and work practices are part of the policies aimed at the integration of migrants into Finnish society. Drawing on my research, I suggest that Russian migrant women of a mature age actively apply and appreciate these opportunities provided by these policies. For them, not only is it a way of integration into the new context but also a way of fulfilling their need (as I said, in many ways shaped by their Soviet experiences) to be socially active.

In fact, in the current Finnish space with Finnish policies encouraging ethno-cultural activities and financially supporting various associations, contemporary migrant grandmothers have more opportunities than their counterparts in Russian Karelia or elsewhere in Russia, where post-Soviet developments have blocked these channels, to lead an active public life. Interestingly, transnationally mobile grandmothers who stay regularly for some months in Finland may also be linked to the networks of Russian grandmothers. For example, when visiting her daughter Elena often meets other Russian women who have migrated to Finland, and she attends cultural events, such as concerts, meetings with Russian artists, etc. She also mentioned that there were some Russian grandmothers like herself who travel between two states and attend Finnish language

courses when staying in Finland. Thus, the Soviet subjectivity of contemporary Russian grandmothers can be seen both as part of and enabling their transnational subjectivities.

8.2 Ingrian Grandmothers Renegotiating Their Transnational Subjectivities

We are aliens here and there... In Finland we are Russians (ryssä), in Russia we are Finns. (Marja, born in 1936, 2008)

It was wonderful [upon arrival in Finland]! We have arrived back home. It was the 2nd of September of 1998. There were flowers all around... and it was very clean. People smiled... I felt I have left a burden away. I started breathing fully. (Liliya, born in 1932, 2006)

In this section I examine the processes of contestation and renegotiation of the transnational subjectivities of grandmothers with a Finnish Ingrian background in a multi-sited Finnish-Russian context, particularly discussing the differences among (return) migrants in Finland and those who stayed in Russia. The continuous processes of juggling, balancing, and negotiating between Soviet, post-Soviet, Russian, Ingrian, Finnish, Finnish Ingrian, and Russian Finnish senses of belonging and identity, informed by the interplay of the past (as recollected by the women) and the present, are pivotal aspects of the constitution and renegotiation of transnational subjectivities.

In the Soviet context, ethnic belonging was intertwined with nationality (*natsional'nost*); nation always had an ethnic component (Verdery, 1998). Ethnic groups were in many ways constructed and actually “made” by Soviet authorities on the basis of ethnographic knowledge to create the “Soviet friendship of nationalities” (Hirsch, 2005). For geopolitical reasons, Ingrian Finns were made into an “enemy nationality” during Stalinist rule, and this affected their life trajectories and subjectivities for the rest of their lives. After the Soviet collapse ethnic belonging was again re-enforced and politicized, particularly in the process of forming new national states out of former Soviet republics (Assmuth, 2004). In the Ingrian case, the major impulse behind renegotiating their ethnic belonging as part of their transnational subjectivities was linked to their migration to Finland.

How does the current location of the women affect the way they renegotiate their ethnic and national senses of belonging and identity, their relationship to place, space, and home? What is the role of the past, memories, personal histories of mobility (transnational and translocal, enforced and voluntary moves), and Soviet experiences in the process of constitution of transnational subjectivities? How does the involvement of the women in transnational family space influence the

processes of contestation of multi-local identities and senses of belonging? These are the questions I aim to discuss in this section.

Focusing on the women's lived experiences I will try to illustrate not only the complexity and ambiguity, but also the coherency and interconnectedness of the processes of making transnational subjectivities. I will emphasize the enabling and empowering aspects of these processes, as well as the suppressing and disempowering aspects. I also want to underline the specificity and in many ways the uniqueness of the Ingrian case in the Finnish contemporary context. In contrast to migrants of other national and ethnic backgrounds, Ingrian Finns of older generations (who were actually born and lived part of their lives in a linguistically and culturally Finnish environment on the Russian side of the border in the 1920s and 1930s) might have had experiences of strong Finnish belonging in their childhood and adolescent years. Their Finnishness now is among other factors informed by those lived experiences in the past and is particularly refracted in the Finnish language they speak, often seen as "old-fashioned" by local Finns. In this context of their personal histories of Finnish belonging, their Finnishness might appear as challenging to "modern" Finnishness (*suomalaisuus*).

Recollecting Ingrian Identity in Finland

What became quite clear for me when I was meeting women with an Ingrian background who migrated to Finland (not only those whom I interviewed, but also others in different public places, travelling by micro-buses between Finland and Russia, as well as in my own transnational family) was that many of them were eager to underline their Finnish Ingrian origins, their belonging to Finland. The context and audience obviously did matter (Jerman, 2006, p. 135). I once observed some elderly Ingrian women socializing with local Finns. One of the Finnish ladies called them "Russians" to which one of the women immediately reacted by saying: We are not Russians, we are Ingrians. Other women expressed their approval.

This tendency of *recollecting Ingrian identity* in a new context, in Finland, becomes even more striking when one looks at the same situation from the other side of the border. When I was doing my fieldwork in Petrozavodsk, some Ingrian women refused to talk to me at all. I believe this was partly because of an unconsciously rooted fear. This fear has been anchored in their past, especially the enforced moves and discriminative policy during Stalinist rule. It made me feel that sometimes silence might appear as more revealing than talking when exploring the individuals' selves.

The difference in the ways Ingrian ethnic belonging is experienced by women residing on different sides of the Finnish-Russian border appears in the life stories told by two elderly sisters. An older sister, Liliya, moved to Finland in the 1990s, whereas Elsa, a younger sister, stayed in Petrozavodsk in Russian Karelia. Here they talk about their move to Siberia during the war:

They came in the evening. They were six. Two soldiers were armed. Even children were accompanied by them to go to the toilet. My mother was sick. She thought that she would not even survive until the first station. Elsa [sister] had scrofula. We were transported in the back of the lorry to Ladoga, and across Ladoga. We were placed in a carriage meant for cattle. The carriages were closed, and there were bars in the windows. It took the whole month! Half-starved! When we crossed Ladoga we had to wait in a church. There were dead people lying around, and we just stepped over them. We were given a piece of dried bread each. Well, the train stopped at times, and my father came to a village to exchange something, to get food. We were allowed to take with us only 30 kg. The children picked up the things, as the mother was sick. What could the children take? ...We were taken off in the place six meters before the station. It was at night, the end of April. There was nothing! We were just left in the open air, and the train went further.

My father went to look for something. There was the city of Achinsk nearby, 180 km from Krasnoyarsk. God exists! And we were lucky to meet good people. They needed workers, and they took us and another family. The rest of the people were taken far away to glukhoman' [a remote place, in the middle of nowhere]. I, at least, was able to go to school...When father was taken as a worker, we were given a pig-pen to live in. It smelled bad. And we were eight families living in the pig-pen. We lived so during three months. And then father was taken again...It was at night. There was a sort of store place with a big yard. We were placed there behind the fence. We were not allowed to leave that place. And people came there to look at us as if we were a menagerie. Some good people took three of us (my mother with two daughters) secretly through a crevice to their place. They fed us, and we got to the bed. We were the "enemies of the people"! We were there until the daybreak. It was pouring the whole night. Our people, who were in Finland, under Germans; Germans gave them food, at least! (Liliya, born in 1932, 2006)

We were in Siberia during the war, Krasnoyarsk kray, the city of Achinsk. I remember that I always wanted to eat. We were happy eating any little piece of bread. I tell to Nastya [granddaughter] that we were glad to have any little piece of bread. After the war, the bread became "commercial". We stayed in a queue...the queues used to be very long. A number of your turn in a queue was written on your hand. We were small, and sometimes we were just pushed out of the queue. I remember a New Year's celebration. We had no New Year's tree, and we decorated a broom with paper beads. It was our New Year's tree...

When I was nine years old I was baptized in the Orthodox Church. I was even dipped into a barrel with water. My godmother gave me a doll as a present. But this doll was sold so that we had something to eat... (Elsa, born in 1939, 2006)

The sisters' memories bring us to Krasnoyarsk Krai in Siberia, where their family was deported in 1942 during the Great Patriotic War (*Velikaia Otechestvennaia Voïna*). The deportation of Ingrian Finns was called an "obligatory evacuation" (*obiazatel'naia evakuatsiia*) in official documents (Suni, 1998a, p. 22), whereas in the documents stamped "top secret" that were handed over to Stalin the term "eviction" was applied instead (*vyselenie*) (Gil'di, 2006, p. 161). The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (*Narodnyĭ Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del, NKVD*), the leading secret police organization of the Soviet Union responsible for political repression during the Stalinist era, was assigned to organize that "eviction". I would argue that the move had rather an enforced character. This is obvious by the term "eviction", but is also clear in the disastrous conditions under which they were deported and left in Siberia, as well as the official national Soviet policy labelling Ingrian Finns as "anti-soviet elements".

Nevertheless, the same event is narrated in different ways by these sisters. Liliya talks about her Siberian experiences in Ingrian terms. Her story is smoothly built into the dramatic history of Ingrian Finns under Stalinist rule, and the way the story is told reveals Liliya's attempts to restore her Ingrian past and recollect her Ingrian ethnic belonging. This tendency of recollecting her Ingrian identity, I believe, has been in many ways inspired by her arrival in Finland, the place where she now resides.

The dramatic Ingrian history of suffering is supported by the criticism of the Soviet system, a feature that has also been noted by Laura Huttunen when examining the life stories of some elderly Ingrian returnees (Huttunen, 2002, p. 217). Liliya often mentioned that she never lived well during Soviet times, particularly because of her Finnish belonging. She once shared the successes of her grandson with me, and I told her: "He is very smart," to which she responded:

He got it from me. They did not allow me to go far. Once I took an exam and got one of the highest marks in the Russian language. Even a teacher told everybody: Look! She is Finnish but knows Russian better than you! But they did not admit me to a college. I got a letter that they ran out of available places. But of course, they did not take me because I was Finnish. (Liliya, born in 1932, 2011 fieldnote)

Many women have had to look through archives for authentic birth certificates of their parents and other relatives to prove their ethnic Finnishness, and attend a Finnish language course prior and subsequent to their migration to Finland. Discussing the "materialisation" of an ethnic belonging through similar procedures among Russian Greeks in post-Soviet Russia, Anton Popov speaks of ethnicity as "partly constructed as a bureaucratic concept during the process of obtaining Greek visas and citizenship" (Popov, 2007, p. 31). Upon their arrival some grandmothers joined Ingrian associations and started participating in Ingrian celebrations (*Inkeri-juhla*)⁴² and studying

Ingrian history. All these have become signifying practices of their Ingrian identity, “a set of repeated acts” “performed” (in Butler’s sense (1999, p. 25)) on a regular basis. In this context, ethnic identity also appears as a “matter of choice” and of “political and cultural configurations” (Alasuutari & Alasuutari, 2009, pp. 323, 329).

For Liliya this process started perhaps in St. Petersburg where her family moved from Petrozavodsk in the 1970s. After the collapse of the Soviet system she started attending the Lutheran church. She also became engaged in church activity, by baking pies and preparing tea to offer people after the service. She started recalling the Finnish language at that time by speaking with a priest in Finnish. In the church, Liliya was also given second-hand clothes (*gumanitarka*) sent from Finland in huge quantities at that time, the period of deficit and social breakdown. Many people in Russia at that time encountered social and economic vulnerability as a result of a “shock-therapy” policy that increased social stratification and poverty, particularly among elderly people (Zaslavskaya, 2003, p. 464). Liliya told me that she came to Finland in the first place to improve her financial situation and to provide a better future for her grandchildren (Liliya’s daughter’s family also moved to Finland).

Elsa is more reserved than Liliya in her narrations on Siberia. She applies a neutral term: *evacuation*. Her memories are rather the memories of a girl of wartime who decorated a broom with paper beads to make a New Year’s tree, and cried when her doll was sold to buy food for the family. Elsa’s memories on Siberia, in contrast to those of Liliya, are incorporated into the history of the war, the national history. The Great Patriotic War had grown into the central symbol of the power of the Soviet history, and gained a new value in Putin’s Russia, playing a tremendous role in constructing the new Russianness. Elsa’s story is built into the Soviet/Russian national history; when narrating she tends to relate to the Russian national “we”.

Stamped as “anti-Soviet elements”, some people with an Ingrian Finnish belonging tried to conceal their ethnic roots by changing their patronymic name (indicating the father) from Finnish to Russian. As a child I myself always knew my grandfather as Sasha (a Russian short name of Aleksandr), and it was only many years later that I got to know that his real name was a Finnish one, Sulo. Not that it was officially prohibited to speak Finnish, but it was socially unacceptable. In the post-war period, anti-Finnish attitudes flourished on the Russian side of the border. In Russian Karelia, Ingrian Finns were often confused with Finns from Finland. Officially, Ingrian Finns stopped existing as an ethnic group, and children of Ingrian Finnish background were registered as Finns in birth certificates. In the public consciousness, Ingrian Finns were often perceived as the Finns whom the Soviet people fought during the war, and who “collaborated” with the fascists. When Marja started to work at a factory she felt despair when a brigadier called her a “fascist”, a

term employed by her mother-in-law. Marja's mother-in-law used to constantly ask her son: "Couldn't you find better girls in Piter/St. Petersburg? But you have married this girl of a fascist nationality!" According to Marja, her mother-in-law's husband was killed during the Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland, and, therefore, she was so harsh with Marja.

The post-war social space, inspired by the cult of the Great Patriotic War that was created and nourished after the Great Victory, allowed the emergence of the negative attitudes and feelings towards Ingrian Finns associated with the enemies of the Soviet people. The negative label of Ingrian Finns became even more prominent. People avoided speaking Finnish in public places, and the parents did not dare to speak Finnish with their children. At Marja's factory her name was soon transformed into Marina (the Russian name), and her middle (father's) name was also converted into the Russian version. Her Finnish name sounded too strange, according to others. Consequently, the Ingrian ethnic belonging was to be suppressed in order to become a "true" Soviet citizen.

Perhaps those who succeeded in returning to Ingria after the chain of moves were more prone to sustain their ethnic belonging even during Soviet times. Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhoj has undertaken a study of identities of Ingrian Finns resident now in Ingria, on the Russian side of the border. Her research is based on life stories told by thirty-four Ingrian Finns, of whom majority (twenty-six) were elderly women nearly seventy years of age (Kaivola-Bregenhoj, 1999, p. 49). She maintains that at the centre of the life stories is not the individual life but a whole group of people. The *we-narration*, according to Kaivola-Bregenhoj, speaks of a strong group (ethnic) identity and of the fact that experiences were shared by many (Kaivola-Bregenhoj, 1999, p. 59).

Some may argue that Elsa was younger than Liliya when their family was deported to Siberia and, therefore, her memories differ from those of Liliya. Nevertheless, I would suggest that it was the move to Finland that launched the processes of rethinking and renegotiating Liliya's personal history to meet the needs of her present life. Remarkably, the tendency of recollecting Ingrian identity also marks the ways some mid-life migrant women talk about the deportation of their parents, although these events lay behind their personal experiences.

The sufferings of their parents gradually became a part of their personal histories, a part of their family histories transferred across generations. When Elvira was talking about her mother who was deported to Siberia during the war, as well as her father who was imprisoned as he was returned from Finland, I got a feeling that Elvira herself had gone through these experiences. The imprisonment of her father was kept secret in her family. She discovered the relevant documents by accident in the 1960s, but the entire story was told to her only during perestroika when her father received a document proving his rehabilitation. Elvira was trying to find out what had happened to her grandmother and grandfather in Siberia. The family ties were lost due to the deportation, and

her grandparents never got to know that Elvira had been born. She received a paper from Siberia that they had died there. Currently, Elvira is busy finding legal ways to get back a wooden house in Ingria where her mother was born. The house was allocated to other people during the war when the family was deported to Siberia. For me, Elvira's engagement in restoring the Ingrian past of her parents and regaining ownership rights to the house in Ingria appears as a manifestation of the process of recollecting her Ingrian ethnic identity that in many ways was inspired by her migration to Finland. Elvira's narratives in this sense obviously vary from the narratives of a woman of the same age, Lubov, living in Petrozavodsk, who only briefly mentioned that her parents lived in Siberia during the war.

Similarly, during the war Inga and her family were evacuated to Finland, and upon their return to the Soviet Union they were sent to a village in Yaroslavl oblast (located in the central region of the European part of Russia), from where she and her sister escaped to Estonia. As they came to Estonia they met other Ingrian Finns, whom they recognized by the language they spoke, at a railway station. These people helped Inga and her sister to find work in Estonia. Later, however, Inga and her sister were enforcedly moved from Estonia: like many other Ingrians, they were allowed to settle in Russian Karelia. Ingrian Finns appear in Inga's story as "our people" (*nashi liudi*), both in a context of her personal life and in a broader contemporary Finnish context: "there are many 'our people' here in Finland", as she told me. Her story indeed sounded as the story of a "returnee". As an evacuee in Finland she worked at a textile factory in Tampere. Inga told me that she did not want to return to the Soviet Union, and since her return she had been longing to go back to Tampere. She succeeded in moving to Finland even before the collapse of the Soviet system in 1989: Inga was allowed to settle in Tampere in order to provide care for an old Finnish woman. Her husband and her adult daughters with their families also migrated to Finland, though later. The process of recollecting Ingrian identity is particularly refracted in the way Inga talks about Ingrian Finns, "our people", relating to the ethnic "we" and Finnish national "we".

Contesting Ingrian Identity in Transnational Family Space

However, the transnational family space in which Ingrian women on both sides of the border might be involved provides even more opportunities for renegotiating one's belonging. What struck me when I next met Elsa, one year later, was an obvious change in the way she talked about the deportation of her family to Siberia. She continued to apply the term *evacuation*, but now she emphasized that they were sent there due to their Ingrian ethnic belonging. These were no longer

only memories of the girl of wartime, who suffered from hunger as all Soviet people did. I soon realized that this change in the way Elsa talked about her past was an outcome of discussions that took place between her husband and her sister Liliya when she came to visit them:

She [Liliya] has got a complex of Finland. This happens sometimes. She is more a Finn than those Finns who were actually born in Finland... it was right that civil population was evacuated from the places of fighting. All were evacuated, both Russians and non-Russians. But she says that they were deported to be destroyed. If there was a purpose of destroying them, they would not be evacuated at all.... mmmm but that's right, they were suffering in Siberia. (Elsa_Victor, 2008)

There is “Liliya’s room” (as Elsa put it) in the three-room apartment of Elsa and her husband. The room is decorated with the pictures embroidered by Liliya, a hobby she has been pursuing since she moved to Finland. There is a picture of a wooden house, among others. “This is our house in Ingria, as I remember it,” Liliya told me later. Whenever Liliya comes to Petrozavodsk, the room is always available. A sense of togetherness in this transnational family is reproduced not only through correspondence, greetings, telephone calls, and gifts and presents carried by Liliya, and cognitive crossing the borders, but it is also anchored in the presents, pictures, and photos that become “talismans of home and belonging” (Vuorela, 2002, p. 76).

When I visited, her husband Victor was about to write his memories of the war as well as Liliya’s war narratives. He was eager to show me a family catalogue he had recently made. There were pictures of relatives, close and distant, those who live in Petrozavodsk and far away, those who are alive, and those who are dead: Elsa’s grandmothers and grandfathers, a mother and a father in an Ingrian village, Victor’s grandfather in a Belarusian village located on the Soviet-Polish border that shifted during the Second World War, Elsa with her family in Siberia, Elsa and her relatives in Karelia, Victor in Ural working as an engineer, Elsa and her husband in Petrozavodsk, Liliya in Finland, Liliya’s granddaughter’s wedding in Finland, Elsa and her husband’s adult children travelling in the United States, Elsa’s granddaughter travelling in Barcelona, and others. The family appeared to me as something that was imagined across time and space, going beyond the actual composition of a given household. Elsa’s and Liliya’s transnational family emerged as a relational unit, reshaped and renegotiated in varying contexts. It certainly provided a diverse space for renegotiating their Soviet, Russian, Ingrian, and Finnish belonging, constituting their transnational subjectivities.

A similar process seems to take place in Lubov’s transnational family. Previously, she did not seem to be very interested in the Ingrian part of her family history. She now regularly visits her aunt who moved to Finland; Lubov has only to pay for her tickets. Her aunt hosts and provides both for Lubov and her cousin, who also comes from Petrozavodsk to visit. She seems to have a tight

schedule when she visits. She travels around Finland, visiting her nieces and her relatives from her father's and mother's sides, many of whom migrated to Finland. It seems that during these visits she becomes more aware of her Ingrian belonging and related histories, possibly due to discussions that went on when she visits her Ingrian kin in Finland. She also told me that she visited the place where her father lived during his evacuation to Finland during the war.

“Soviet person”: Riita

In contrast to other Ingrian migrant women in Finland, Riita openly declared her Soviet belonging and called herself a “Soviet person”. It was her conscious choice not to apply for Finnish citizenship. The Soviet belonging did not contradict her ethnic one. She spoke of herself as a “Russian Finn” (*obrusevshie finny*), and blamed primarily Stalin for the deportation of Ingrian Finns, as he “hated Finns” for some reasons, possibly “thinking of them as if they were the Finns living in Finland”, who were certainly “different from Russian Finns”. Thus, Riita was more likely to negotiate her ethnic belonging in connection to Russia and her personal Soviet experiences. The personal histories of enforced mobility and sufferings in Siberia have been overshadowed by her warm and positive experiences of successful work and a happy family life, especially her caring and loving husband. These warm memories of her husband (who had passed away by the time we met) did not prevent Riita from asserting that she was more advanced and successful in her work and political career as opposed to her husband who “had only seven classes of school education”. This competitiveness with a husband in a professional sphere, which also marks other women's narratives (for instance Marja), is also a vestige of the ways Soviet female subjectivities have been constructed, particularly incorporating an iconic figure of a working woman.

Riita seemed to be a woman who has made efforts to look attractive and beautiful. When I met her she had bright make-up on and wore gold rings on her fingers and a gold chain around her neck. Riita told me that she used to have 15 gold teeth, which she had since replaced with others, and wanted to make a chain of these removed gold teeth. Her daughter asked her to give her gold belongings, but Riita refused:

I will only give it all to my granddaughter, Sophia [a great-granddaughter]. (Riita, born in 1932, 2008)

Channelling Soviet nostalgia, Riita was rather longing about her youth and beauty, working and family life, love and her husband. What women mean by “Soviet” might be very much defined by their individual life trajectories and lived experiences during Soviet times. It is what constitutes

their Soviet subjectivities; either they explicitly maintain their Soviet identity or reject their Soviet belonging. As an outcome of the enforced moves Riita happened to come to Petrozavodsk, where she met her husband, established her family, and made a good carrier of a Soviet woman. That place became especially precious to her, and there she wants to be buried when she dies, as Riita told me. Thus, in Riita's case, the Ingrian identity is played out in a different way compared with other Ingrian migrant women; it is built as part of Soviet/Russian national belonging. However, it is also part of her transnational subjectivity.

Multi-local Presence: Having Various Homes or Feeling Homeless

My grandmother told me a lot about Finland. She was a servant there, before the revolution. It was free at that time [the border was open, because Finland as a Grand Duchy of Finland was a part of the Russian Empire between 1809 and 1917]. She told me something already after the war [The Great Patriotic War]. I started to understand something at that time. I was working at a bread-making factory in Petrozavodsk. Our conversation started to have a spiritual character...she gave me the Bible. She taught me to read in Finnish, by reading the Bible. She taught me both to read and write. (...). She told me once: My age comes to the end, and you are growing up. But remember, that you are a Finn, never change you nationality (natsiiu). You are baptized as a Lutheran. Never change your faith. You were born in Russia. And although you are a Finn, never betray your Motherland. Because then you will understand... A bird is nesting where it was born. A fish is spawning where it was born. They overcome a lot of difficulties, when lohi (salmon) are coming... many of them die during their travel. The same happens with people when they are becoming old. They are longing for the place where they were born. But how can I go to that place? It does not exist anymore. (Marja, born in 1936, 2008)

Marja was born in an Ingrian village in the borderland between the Soviet Union and Finland. As a child she went through a German concentration camp where her mother died. Marja, her father, and her brother were miraculously rescued and then evacuated to Finland. Soon they were returned to the Soviet Union to settle down in a village in the middle of nowhere in the central part of Russia. From there Marja escaped from the "tyranny" of her stepmother and arrived in Petrozavodsk to her babushka. Later Marja moved to St. Petersburg to work at a factory. She got married and gave birth to a son. Marja divorced her first husband when she was 40, and after retirement married another man with whom she was lived in Ukraine until his death. Finally, from Ukraine, Marja moved to Finland as an "Ingrian return migrant".

The transnational and translocal moves, both enforced and voluntary, have produced a mosaic of Marja's senses of belonging (Soviet, Russian, Finnish, Ingrian, Ukrainian) and various relationships to these places. All these processes of negotiation and contestation between various

senses of belonging and places, the feeling of multi-locality, having various homes or the feeling of being homeless in varying contexts, reveals the transnational/translocal subjectivity of Marja. Marja is also a transnational babushka who intensively interacts with and helps her granddaughter, who lives and studies in St. Petersburg. She used to have such a close relationship with her granddaughter that as a child the girl often called Marja “mother”.

Marja enjoyed talking about her work at the factory in St. Petersburg, where she soon became a foreperson. Marja’s Soviet subjectivity is to a great extent nourished by her work experiences at the factory, through which she regained her social status after a chain of moves and suppressive experiences due to her Ingrian ethnic belonging. “Soviet” in a positive sense is attached in Marja’s narratives to that location, St. Petersburg, which became her new home, and in many ways to her work experiences at the factory.

I met Marja on various occasions, and I believe it enabled me to observe the situatedness of national and ethnic belonging. In company with Finnish people, Marja mastered her Finnish, and explicitly underpinned her Ingrian Finnish belonging. In company with Russians, an island of Russian nostalgia was easily created, and Marja felt sorry that Russians were unfairly treated in Finnish society. This unpleasant feeling, however, did not stop her from admiring the Finnish president and from expressing gratitude to the Finnish authorities for providing her with material well-being. For many Ingrian/Russian elderly migrants, migration to Finland came about with a returning of the feeling of social security they used to associate with the Soviet periods of their lives. For most elderly people in current Russia, the longing for Soviet times is in the first place a longing for social welfare and security. Migration to Finland gave Ingrian female migrants of a mature age what once was linked to their Soviet lives.

Women often applied the term *home* in varying contexts, for instance when remembering the home of their childhood in Ingria or when expressing feelings of (dis)comfort with regard to either Russia or Finland. There are multiple understandings and experiences of home: home is not necessarily a physically bounded space, but can also mean a longing for the past. In the postsocialist context, “return home” may also imply a longing for a “normal life”, for the safety and social security associated with everyday life during socialism, and connected to a desire to overcome the current precariousness (Jansen, 2007). In this context, the migration can be interpreted as an individual’s desire to rebuild a “normal life” or find a new home where precariousness seems to be less dramatic (Jansen, 2007, p. 194).

All these multiple senses of belonging (across time and space) are being reproduced and maintained daily, and enrich Marja’s sense of belonging. Transnational subjectivity is produced and expressed by her in daily interactions with various people, Finns, Ingrian/Russian migrants, and her

relatives and friends living in St. Petersburg, and through a continuous process of renegotiation between the past and the present both at a level of everyday life and within the self. Nevertheless, one should be aware of two sides of the coin, i.e., the positive and the destructive aspects of the same phenomenon. An individual, instead of having various homes on different sides of the border, both imagined and actual, might also have a feeling of being homeless, belonging nowhere:

We are aliens here and there... In Finland we are Russians (ryssä), in Russia we are Finns. (Marja, born in 1936, 2008)

Marja kept telling me that Russian migrants were not that well treated in Finnish society, impulsively exclaiming: “They look at us as if we were insects!” Other women also told me that encounters with the Finns might sometimes turn out to be awkward. For instance, Ludmila mentioned that she was once followed by a Finnish woman who publicly insulted her because of her Russian belonging. Helena Jerman, in her research on Russian migrants in Finland, suggests the term “hidden minority”: some Russian migrants might have a (deeply rooted) fear of revealing their Russian belonging, which they try to “hide”/conceal by not speaking Russian in public places (Jerman, 2003, p. 504). A history of Finland (*Velikoe Knjazhestvo Finljandskoe, A Grand Duchy of Finland*) within the Russian Empire, with the peculiar relationships between Finland and the Soviet Union, and the ways these issues have been playing around in a political sphere and media have made anti-Russian attitudes quite prominent at the level of everyday life discourses in contemporary Finland. Ingrian Finns are primarily seen as Russians, not as Ingrian Finns. Moreover, some women recall that as evacuees during the war in Finland they were often called “ryssä” by the local population, a degrading term for Russians in the Finnish language. This fear of being associated with Russians was also traceable among Karelian evacuees during the war who wanted to be disassociated with Russians (Alasuutari & Alasuutari, 2009, p. 335), and changed their Russian surnames to Finnish, or even converted to Lutheranism from Orthodox Christianity.

For some migrant women the deeply rooted fear they experienced during Stalinist rule still marks their lives in Finland, and in a context of anti-Russian attitudes this has been converted into a fear of being sent back to Russia, or not passing through a language test to be eligible to apply for Finnish citizenship. When I came to visit my relatives, a sister of my grandmother and her daughter (they moved to Finland a decade ago), they were very anxious about my son speaking in Russian too loudly because the neighbours would not like that. In this way, whereas the Finnish Ingrian identity was suppressed in Soviet times, the Russian belonging might be nowadays “hidden” in Finland. It means that transnational subjectivity might be not only enabling, enriching, and empowering, but also challenging and troubled. However, the origins of this fear of revealing their

Russian belonging now in Finland might be somehow rooted in their Soviet past, particularly Stalinism.

The transnational subjectivities of the Ingrian women have been renegotiated in a continuous process of contestation and balancing between national (Soviet, post-Soviet, Russian, Finnish) and ethnic (Ingrian, Finnish Ingrian, Russian Ingrian) senses of belonging. In this process, personal histories (as remembered and narrated) are often defined by the present, and play an important role in making sense of women's current lives and their relationship to place, space, and home.

The past is being rethought to meet the individual projects of the present lives of women, particularly defined by their current location: migrant Ingrian women are more likely to activate their memories on deportation to Siberia to emphasize their Ingrian Finnish belonging, whereas those who stayed on the Russian side of the border tend to apply seemingly the same experiences of the past to relate to the Russia/Soviet national space. Transnational subjectivity might be explicitly manifested when some women openly maintain multiple senses of belonging, relating to various national states, but at the same time maintaining their ethnic peculiarity. However, it might also be troubled and "hidden", suppressed when some women tend to picture their Soviet past entirely in gloomy colours, in the same depressing way things look at what is going on in contemporary Russia, or else hide their Soviet past and Russian belonging in contemporary Finland.

Furthermore, Soviet subjectivity unites all these women, regardless of their current location. Soviet subjectivity is in many ways informed by an identity of a "working woman" and an identity of babushka. Soviet nostalgia (especially related to Soviet work experiences) marks almost all women's narratives, whereas functioning as a babushka, particularly across the borders, became an important component of the women's everyday lives and selves. What "Soviet" means for the women might vary considerably, depending on individual and family experiences. However, consciously and unconsciously, the Soviet lived experiences continue to inform their everyday life practices and to shape the transnational subjectivities of the Ingrian women of a mature age.

Finally, the transnational family space provides even more opportunities for renegotiating multiple senses belonging, producing a feeling of being at home at various places, having various homes, both actual and imagined. In some contexts, however, the feeling of multi-local presence might be experienced as disorientating, feeling lost and homeless, belonging nowhere, which is partly a result of the complicated position of Ingrian Finns both in the Soviet Union, especially during Stalinist rule, and in their exclusive association with Russians in the contemporary Finnish society.

9. Conclusions: Babushka in the Midst of Social Change, Locally and Transnationally

I set out in this study to offer a historically sensitive ethnography of the babushka and family-making in the midst of postsocialist and transnational changes in the particular context of Russian Karelia and Russian-Finnish transnationalism with its specific ethno-cultural historical trajectories and histories of mobility. I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the continuities and changes in grandmothering practices across time, from Soviet to contemporary Russian Karelia, and space, in a Finnish-Russian cross-border context?
2. What is the role of grandmothers in family-making in Russian Karelia and transnational families across the Finnish-Russian border?
3. How have subjective and cultural meanings and understandings of the babushka changed in the context of postsocialist transformation in Russian Karelia, and transnational Finnish-Russian mobility?
4. How is the religious or spiritual dimension manifested in grandmothers' selves and their grandmothering and family practices?
5. How have the ethno-cultural (Ingrian Finnish, Karelian, Slavic) and spatial (rural and urban) backgrounds of grandmothers, their lived Soviet experiences, and the personal histories of moves affected their subjectivities, as well as grandmothering and family practices?

Each of the empirical chapters has addressed these research questions in detail. The purpose of this chapter is to conclude my historical, anthropological, and transnational journey into the babushka phenomenon by offering what can be seen as a higher-level of abstraction of the thesis. In approaching the babushka as a gender strategy that mid-life and elderly women renegotiate in their lives, two major tendencies in the ways women see themselves and act as babushkas can be distinguished. The first, dominant tendency is (neo)traditional or active grandmothering, strongly

informed by Soviet family culture and today's Russian neofamilialism. In this context, the babushka appears not only as a caring and devotional grandmother but also the one who holds agency in maintaining three- to four-generation family ties or familyhood, particularly across national borders. The second tendency is the individualization process in grandmothing, which is also influenced by Soviet female values of women's public involvement, especially work. For a less involved babushka, grandmothing is only one part, perhaps not the most important, of her subjectivity and everyday life. Instead, she is more prone to focus on nourishing her individual space and/or nuclear family. These tendencies are not mutually exclusive; they may be intertwined in one babushka's practices, and change across her life span. Both tendencies are also interconnected with neoliberal understandings of the babushka.

In the first section here, I focus on grandmothing and family-making as a process. I will discuss Soviet legacies, individualization, and neoliberal and neotraditional trends in contemporary grandmothing and family-making both locally in Russian Karelia and in transnational families between Finland and Russia. The second section focuses on grandmothers, the actors in these processes. I will discuss the subjectivities (Soviet, translocal, transnational) of babushkas and the related urban, rural, and ethnic differences. I will also establish a connection between these varying subjectivities and grandmothing practices and messages.

9.1 Changes and Continuities in Grandmothing and Family-making

Soviet Legacies in Contemporary Grandmothing and Family-making

The first immediate finding of my ethnographic research on babushka practices is that contemporary grandmothing practices both in Russian Karelia and in a transnational Finnish-Russian space continue to be strongly informed by Soviet family routines and gender culture. I argue that the practices of babushkas in providing child care and helping in domestic work were significant features of the Soviet working mother contract.

I suggest that babushkas, both wittingly and unwittingly, were made by Soviet power into omnipotent figures of Soviet families in the period between 1917 and 1970, which was marked by the continued lack of available places in public child care institutions, highly restrictive legislation for mothers, and significant shortages in the pension system. In view of Soviet representations and

practices depriving men of fatherhood and the family sphere, coupled with the actual shortage of men in the post-war period, women were expected to be the primary care givers of children. Babushkas, both grandmothers in blood and other mid-life female family members, or even neighbouring or relativized babushkas, were those who often eased the “double burden” of Soviet women who combined obligatory paid work with motherhood. In fact, only a two-breadwinner family was able to survive, which made paid employment even of women with infants unavoidable. At the same time, the shortage of accommodation made the three- to four-generation family residing together quite common.

This continued scarcity of resources at different levels was one of the elements through which the importance of belonging to a family was reproduced. In the family, there was often a woman of a mature age, a babushka in her fifties to her sixties, who was at the core of the organization and reproduction of everyday life routine – taking care of children, cooking, doing laundry, pickling, cleaning. This significant role in everyday life can be interpreted both as indicating a self-sacrifice, particularly through exhaustion, and as a space in which the micro-powers of babushkas over junior family members could have been exerted.

In the rural area of Russian Karelia, where the Finno-Ugric population was concentrated, there was a greater scarcity of public child care and medical services, as well as generally lower living standards, compared with urban areas throughout the Soviet period. This marginalization of the countryside had three significant implications on grandmothering and family-making. Firstly, extended family support was needed even more for survival in rural areas, which stipulated the significance of three- to four-generation family ties. Secondly, because of the shortage of men (particularly due to war losses) and the crisis of masculinity embedded in such self-destructive practices as alcoholism, the dominating female figure compensated for this gender imbalance created by urban-rural disparities. In the face of extensive migration from rural to urban areas in 1970s and the 1980s and the aging of the rural population, this gender disparity was balanced by the babushka, vulnerable and strong at the same time. Thirdly, the marginalization allowed the survival of religious practices and traditional magic, often residing in the hands of babushkas, and their application appears significant in grandmothering and family-making. These practices were enhanced after the religious resurgence started during perestroika, continuing to the present.

The translocal mobility within the Soviet space created a need for maintaining families across distances; almost all my interlocutors have had experiences of living in translocal families. Notably, many children used to spend their summer holidays at babushka’s village (*v derevne u babushki*), while some were raised by their babushkas in the countryside until school age. I refer to these practices as translocal grandmothering. These experiences of translocal grandmothering and

translocal families are a significant Soviet legacy that facilitated transnational grandmothering and family-making following the dissolution of the USSR.

In the late Soviet period, with considerable improvements in legislation for mothers and better child care arrangements and living standards in general, the involvement of grandmothers in child care and domestic work became practically less needed. However, the babushka as a gendered practice commonly shared by mid-life and elderly women remained prominent. In fact, working babushkas could now retire at a relatively early age, fifty years for women in Russian Karelia, which encouraged many of them to seek more flexible work solutions or stay retired to actively focus on grandmothering and their families. In this period, the dacha became one of the most popular destinations for grandchildren to spend their summer holidays with their babushkas, while working at the dacha soon grew into a significant tool for grandmothers to provide their adult children's families with fresh vegetables, berries, pickled cucumbers, homemade jam, etc.

The understanding of a grandmother as child care giver and helper in domestic affairs in a three- to four-generation family setting was thus forged during Soviet times, which included relying on pre-revolutionary imaginations and practices of the babushka. However, it continues to be dominant even in contemporary grandmothering and family-making in Russian Karelia and in a transnational space between Finland and Russia. In fact, the help of grandmothers in child care and the skills of babushkas in hunting for food, cooking, and working at the dacha became activated for the survival of their extended families in the time of economic crisis in the 1990s following the Soviet collapse. Likewise, Ingrian grandmothers were often active agents initiating and arranging migration to Finland in order to provide a better life for their children and grandchildren or they soon became those who offered considerable material support to those staying behind in Russia. Thus, one aspect of the migration was often a survival strategy applied by grandmothers to rescue their extended families from uncertainty and the harsh economic realities that most people faced in Russian Karelia and elsewhere in the former Soviet space after the dissolution of the USSR.

The significant contribution of babushkas in child care and arranging family affairs as part of three-to four-generation family ties was thus prominent not only during Soviet times. It also got reactivated in times of crisis, and continues to constitute the core logic of the everyday family lives of many people in contemporary Russian Karelia and in a transnational Finnish-Russian space. This also implies mutual care across generations, which practically means that when babushkas become incapable of taking care of themselves due to aging and health problems, their grown-up children and grandchildren are expected to provide emotional support and arrange hands-on care if necessary.

However, as long as women stay in good health, becoming a grandmother appears a turning point in most women's lives when they are keen on being caring babushkas towards their grandchildren, and through grandmothing get more involved in the extended family fabric. When families are seen in the way grandmothers tend to imagine and practice them, it seems irrefutable that women extend their families as they grow older and become grandmothers, most likely starting to include both their adult children and their respective nuclear families into their own family space. However, this does not necessarily mean that other younger family members would do so.

Most grandmothing practices that were shaped during Soviet times are also applied in contemporary Russian Karelia: some grandmothers, especially of small grandchildren, choose to entirely devote themselves to child care in many ways, practically and emotionally substituting for an actual mother of a child, while many working babushkas have set up regular routines of spending weekends and summer holidays with their grandchildren, in which the dacha is significant. There are, of course, different stages of grandmothing across one woman's life. As grandchildren grow up and grandmothers grow old, grandmothing patterns change and revolve around discussing grandchildren's adult lives and narrating family histories. In this, the relationships might be deeply intimate and warm, particularly informed by the early history of interactions between a grandmother and a grandchild; some aging grandmothers like recollecting how they "raised" their grandchildren or how a grandchild took the babushka for her mother. In a transnational family context, the mechanisms may have been different, but the logic of maintaining grandmothing and family ties carries the same Soviet legacy as in Russian Karelia.

I particularly trace this evolving importance of the babushka as a family position and as a child care giver to the specificities of the Soviet gender culture. The babushka's subjectivity is also defined by the grandmother's identity as a mother. On the one hand, grandmothing can be seen as postponed motherhood: Soviet women who were deprived from engaged mothering by the state and who "delegated" this role to their mothers and mothers-in-law are now active babushkas to compensate for these losses in mothering. In this context, their mothering seems to have been postponed until they become grandmothers. On the other hand, grandmothing can be also interpreted as prolonged motherhood, as it connotes being a mother to a child but also prolonging youth: some babushkas enjoy it when people take them for a mother of a child. Grandmothing can also appear as a need to continue the care as mother of her adult child through involvement with grandchildren.

However, some differences need to be highlighted when discussing paternal and maternal grandmothers. Maternal grandmothers often appear as caring mothers to their daughters, and by being active babushkas they try to help their daughters combine motherhood and work or education.

It becomes quite obvious that the criteria of success in the narratives of grandmothers are the two ultimate features of the Soviet working mother contract, namely, work and motherhood. This continuity is especially explicit among transnationally mobile and migrant grandmothers, for whom grandmothering turns into prolonged mothering to help their daughters be successful in Finland.

The differences between paternal and maternal grandmothers also reveal themselves in intra-familial relations in a three- to four-generation family setting, which can be also explained by the peculiarities of Soviet and post-Soviet gender culture. The other side of the new, autonomous Russian masculine image may well be a “spoiled little boy” who is emotionally strongly dependent on his “all-controlling, all-managing, all-giving” (and all-forgiving) mother. This strong life-long connection between mothers and their sons may result in tensions between babushkas as mothers-in-law and their daughters-in-law, in which a grandmother’s position can serve as a channel for exerting the micro-powers of babushkas. Furthermore, some grandmothers try to affect their grandsons’ choice and relationships with their girlfriends and wives.

The life-long dependence may also mark relationships between daughters and mothers, but it has somewhat other implications on grandmothering and a grandmother’s role in family-making. The primary concern of grandmothers seems to be to assist their daughters in combining motherhood and work or education. This does not mean, however, that they may not appear as controlling mothers towards their daughters, as some younger grandmothers of this research have characterized their own mothers. Both paternal and maternal grandmothers share access to a very subtle and hardly distinguishable aspect of micro-power, for instance, through monitoring of other family members’ actions, expressing criticism both directly and indirectly, and making verbal comments or giving evaluative feedbacks.

Given these evolving emotional and practical connections that often take place between grandmothers and their adult children (both daughters and sons), this subtle aspect of micro-power can be very important for the whole dynamic of intra-familial relations. Importantly, access to influence the whole family fabric is opened when women become grandmothers, and through grandmothering women get more involved in everyday interactions with their children’s families. Thus, the micro-powers of babushkas are potentially inscribed in the very functioning of three- to four-generation family ties through the babushkas’ assistance in child care and other practical issues. However, emphasizing the micro-powers of babushkas in intra-familial space should not lead to overlooking women’s self-sacrifice in their roles as babushkas; again the idea of female self-sacrifice can be seen as part of the socialist or Soviet legacy. This aspect of babushkas’ involvement is also important in transnational family-making, but the mechanism of maintaining babushkas’ micro-powers differ from the local context.

Neoliberal, Individualization, and Neotraditional Trends in Grandmothering

Alongside the significant Soviet legacies evident in contemporary grandmothering practices, there have been important changes. I suggest that these changes have been largely triggered by two somewhat contradictory trends, namely, neoliberalism, accomplished by an increased individualization process, and neotraditionalism, which marked postsocialist transformations in Russian Karelia and elsewhere in Russia. In the babushka phenomenon, these trends may appear as both competing with and complementing each other, reproducing different hybrid practices and meanings.

Neoliberal tendencies came about as the effects of importing such Western values as market, democracy, and privatization into Russia, and dramatically increased cosmopolitanism in people's everyday lives through media, movies, and travel encounters. Given that the Soviet space was all but closed to outside influence, these changes had outstanding implications. Applied to the babushka phenomenon, these tendencies manifested in the marketing of babushka care both by birth-grandmothers as well as by mid-life and elderly women in general, providing child care and domestic work for reward.

Purchasing and selling the whole babushka package, including the practical and emotional aspects of child care, and the warmth and love associated with the babushka, Russian national sentiment is also increasingly applied among migrants of the former Soviet space to Finland. I observed a case when the babushka "package" was purchased by a travel company in Russian Karelia that paid an elderly Russian migrant woman in Finland to host drivers who take passengers across the borders.

In both Russian Karelia and Finland, neoliberal trends have reinforced individualization in grandmothering and family-making. Some, like a few younger grandmothers among my interlocutors, choose to nourish their individual space, focusing for instance on professional career, public activism, or spirituality. However, the traditional image of the babushka remains strong even in the narratives of these neoliberal grandmothers both through recollections of their childhood experiences of their own babushkas and the way they themselves critically evaluate their constrained involvement as babushkas. This reflects the process of enhancement and romanticization of the traditional babushka with the elimination of actual grandmothering experiences.

This enhancement of traditional imaginations of the babushka can also be interpreted as part of neotraditional trends largely aimed at revitalizing pre-revolutionary Russian traditions. This emerged partly as a reaction to the marginalization and critique of Soviet values, and as a

conservative response to the domestication of neoliberal trends in the Russian context. In fact, it sometimes led to the development of hybrid practices, such as the marketing of babushka care, mentioned above, and generally an increase in the application of the traditional babushka image in the marketing of dairy products, baby food, folk medicine practice, and “new spiritualities”.

Neotraditional trends have explicitly manifested in Russian Orthodox resurgence, as well as in the revitalization of Lutheranism, Islam, and traditional magic and shamanism. Applied to grandmothers and family-making between Russian Karelia and Finland, this resulted in an open commitment of many grandmothers to religious or magic practices looming largely in their babushka care both locally and transnationally. Partly, this contemporary religious resurgence relied upon belief in the supernatural, which remained a hidden part of Soviet female subjectivity. Partly, it reactivated women’s commitment to religious and magic practices that had never been fully erased from the rural areas. Finally, intensified transnational flows made “new spiritualities” part of the Russian contemporary spiritual awakening.

Orthodoxy, Lutheranism (mostly in the case of women with an Ingrian Finnish background), traditional magic, and “new spiritualities” are applied by babushkas in various combinations in their everyday religion. Praying, keeping pictures of family members under icons, traditional magic healing, and magus sessions to remove *porcha* are some of these syncretic practices used by grandmothers to protect primarily their children and grandchildren both in Russian Karelia and in a transnational Finnish-Russian space. However, religion and “new spiritualities” can also be applied by some grandmothers to nourish an individual space, a neoliberal approach to being an active babushka or for choosing not to be such.

Transnational Babushkas Making Their Families

Soviet legacies, as well as neoliberal and neotraditional trends, are also evident in transnational grandmothers and transnational family-making. However, there are significant peculiarities in how these trends manifested in the specific context of Finnish-Russian transnationalism. First, I distinguish between three categories of transnational babushkas: migrant grandmothers, transnationally mobile grandmothers, and grandmothers staying put, all of whom may be very much involved in grandmothers and family-making transnationally, although the forms of this involvement may vary depending on the age and health of the grandmothers, their location, available resources, and the conditions and intensity of mobility.

Notably, in contrast to contemporary dominant patterns of migration when the labour population moves in search of better life opportunities (often both here and there, given transnational family ties), the agency in the move from Russian Karelia or other parts of the former Soviet space to Finland often belonged to mid-life and elderly women with an Ingrian Finnish background. Not only had this ethnic background enabled them to move as “returnees” to Finland, but also their knowledge of the Finnish language and ways of life, especially among elderly women, had been applied by many grandmothers to bring their extended families to Finland. In this case, the cross-generational mutual reciprocity of women was of a great importance. Some grandmothers stood for the migration of their grandchildren and adult children with their families, some grandmothers arranged the move of their aging mothers who needed and were expected to need hands-on care. Women of other backgrounds moved to Finland as wives of men with an Ingrian Finnish background or after marrying a Finnish man, or their move had been arranged by their daughters, particularly with the purpose of providing child care.

Thus, migrant grandmothers were often those who brought their families with them, and if this did not happen because of institutional barriers or other family members’ individual choices not to move, migrant babushkas continue to materially help their grandchildren (both young and adult), their adult children’s families, their own siblings, and often their nephews and nieces. Material assistance takes various forms, from money transfers (almost never done through banks but rather informally) to sending and bringing (when visiting) second-hand or discount clothes, chocolate, cheese, and coffee. Some of them arrange visits of other family members, particularly their grandchildren, children, nieces, and nephews, to Finland or host them entirely. Migrant grandmothers often tend to combine the advantages of the Finnish and the Russian national systems in making their own living and their families. Thus, “Finnish babushkas” often utilize free-of-charge medical service (a remnant from Soviet times) when they visit Russia in the summer, while cheap clothes and food are purchased on discount in Finland by carefully keeping advertising booklets with special offers. All these help generate savings and provide other family members with both cash and commodities. These skills to manage living in the conditions of limited resources were certainly accumulated by contemporary babushkas during the Soviet years of dealing with scarcity.

If grandchildren also moved to Finland, grandmothers often tended to be the same caring babushkas as in the local Russian Karelian context, sometimes taking entire responsibilities for their grandchildren to enable their parents, especially daughters, to work or study, sometimes dropping and picking children from school or spending weekends attending cultural events. In principle, all the forms of babushka care that were applied in Soviet and then contemporary Karelia continue to

be applied in Finland. If grandchildren stay on the other side of the border, migrant grandmothers often make phone calls, while some of them use the Internet for e-mailing and talking on Skype. The same is applied in interacting with other family members staying put: due to special offers by Finnish telecommunication companies and somewhat better living standards, migrant grandmothers make phone calls more frequently than those staying put. Migrant grandmothers do not travel to Russia as frequently as they would possibly wish. When they reach retirement age in Finland (from sixty-five to sixty-seven years of age) they are either too old to travel frequently and/or their grandchildren are grown up and do not need the hands-on care of babushkas as much as small children do. When in good health, however, elderly women travel quite often to visit and stay with other family members in Russian Karelia.

The most intensive mobile lifestyle certainly marks the lives of those grandmothers who frequently travel between two national states, Russia and Finland. The visa regulations are pertinent to how frequently grandmothers, citizens of the Russian Federation, can travel and how long they may stay. Women are allowed to stay in Finland usually six months a year or three months every half a year. Most often, they stay for one or two months and then return to Russian Karelia, coming again to Finland in a month or so. Therefore, transnationally mobile grandmothers are continuously commuting across the border primarily to assist in child care and domestic work, again to enable their adult children (generally daughters) to combine motherhood and work or education in Finland. In this context, the age and health of grandmothers is a significant enabling and disabling factor: only women in relatively good health can travel twelve to fourteen hours in a mini-bus or private car every second or third month. The active role of maternal babushkas among migrant and transnationally travelling grandmothers, a practice that turns grandmothering into prolonged mothering, is one of the empirical findings of my study.

Materially, travelling grandmothers are the more vulnerable members of transnational families and are often supported by those who have moved to Finland, mostly their adult children. It is often daughters whom grandmothers help with child care. Daughters, in turn, provide their mothers with some money, pay communal services in Russia, or provide other help. Because transnationally mobile grandmothers stay with their children when visiting Finland, the intensity of everyday interactions may be very high, in fact even higher than if they would have stayed in Russia but in separate dwellings. This intensity of everyday contact nourishes transnational family space, but also gives greater opportunities for babushkas' micro-powers in intra-familial relations, often leading to intensified family frictions.

The third type of transnational babushkas I have examined are grandmothers who stay put in Russian Karelia but with some family members, particularly grandchildren, who migrated to

Finland. These women do not travel frequently for various reasons: some are not in good health or are too old and, therefore, incapable of making long-distance trips, while others are still working babushkas. There are also some grandmothers whose stay may not be welcomed by other family members, for instance, paternal grandmothers if they have tensions with their daughters-in-law in Finland. In many cases, grandmothers staying put are also economically vulnerable and thus supported by those living abroad. They are also often those who receive telephones calls from Finland, although the use of Skype is now making the agency more balanced in terms of who is maintaining connections through telecommunication technologies. Sometimes grandmothers are helped by more advanced users, such as other younger family members, living in Russian Karelia. There are also grandmothers who save money to buy a computer of their own and attend special computer courses to be able to talk whenever they want. The dominant practice of hands-on grandmothering among babushkas staying put is when grandchildren from Finland come and stay with them at dacha or spend holidays elsewhere in Russia. Arguably, this practice may significantly facilitate child care arrangements for parents' residing in Finland during summer holidays; it can be also viewed in light of transnational family economy.

I argue that the geographical proximity between Russian Karelia and Finland, the affordability and availability of transportation that enables visa regulations, and historical and cultural inter-connectedness have indeed facilitated people's transnational lives in this specific transnational context. My cross-border ethnography in mini-buses illustrated very well that the space between Russian Karelia and Finland has grown into a lively transnational phenomenon with people commuting regularly across the borders. Babushkas of various ages are important agents in making their transnational families in this space, particularly through transnational grandmothering.

There are also other essential mechanisms of how transnational babushkas make their families transnationally, mechanisms that do not necessarily require physical proximity (including hands-on babushkas' help) and material mutual support. First of all, I suggest that telecommunication technologies are now increasingly applied by grandmothers for discussing everyday family routines; it may range from sharing worries and detailed conversation on how a grandchild went to a Finnish kindergarten or school, or what the quarrel was between a grown-up son and his girlfriend, to gossiping about in-laws. Thus, I argue that "talking family" enabled by telecommunication technologies is an important practice applied by grandmothers and other family members that serves for family routinization that nourishes transnational family space. The Finnish context may be seen as enabling in this respect, given the highly developed market of telecommunication products and services. The significance of this practice increases when it is

stimulated and strengthened by regular visits; as discussed, this holds true in a specific transnational context between Russian Karelia and Finland.

Secondly, I suggest that narrating family histories, not necessarily to other family members, is another important mechanism in the way family is imagined and actually made by grandmothers. The importance of this practice increases in the lives of babushkas as grandmothers grow old and their grandchildren grow up, and at a distance. Through narrating women indeed make and extend their families, transgressing time and borders, interweaving other family members' stories – those of their mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, siblings, aunts, children and grandchildren, close and distant relatives, those who are alive and those who passed away – into one family landscape.

There are certainly differences in the way family is understood, imagined, and made through “talking family” and by narrating family histories. In the first case, it is an immediate family space within which grandmothers operate in their everyday lives that gets nourished and maintained. In the case of narration of family histories, it has more to do with imagination of family as kinship across time and space. This way of making family appears especially important for grandmothers themselves, their feeling of belonging and anchorage; it also gives a sense of what family stories they convey across generations, particularly through their children and grandchildren.

The third significant way of transnational family-making by babushkas is the tangible recreation of familyhood by keeping a room for those who reside abroad but come regularly to visit, placing pictures and photos, carefully keeping family catalogues and newspapers with family members' pictures or with columns written by or about them, as well as other objects that become talismans of family belonging. In this context, a home altar with icons and family photos may play a significant role in the tangible recreation of transnational familyhood. Thus, praying and other religious and magical practices (for instance, going to a magus) may be seen as the fourth important mechanism for expressing babushka care at a distance that does not necessarily require the physical proximity of grandmothers and their children and grandchildren.

9.2 Babushkas' Subjectivities

Babushka: Imagined and Real

Although the line between what is real and what is imagined is extremely subtle, as imagination takes part in the constitution of the actual, I would still maintain this division. It underlines that the

romanticized imagination of the babushka, re-emphasised in the mills of neotraditionalism and neofamilialism and often nourished by the childhood memories of grandmothers of their own babushkas, does not necessarily lead to enactment of this imagination in the actual experiences of grandmothers.

Some (younger) grandmothers who still work, or are in other ways involved in public activity or have their own nuclear families to focus on, tend to praise the babushka's involvement in child care but are not active grandmothers. This may reflect a neoliberal change in attitudes towards grandmothering among younger generations of women. However, it may also mean that they have not yet reached a phase in their lives when grandmothering becomes a crucial source of identification. In this context, the point of reference remains the traditional babushka, but actual practices differ from that imagination.

It is also important to emphasize that while grandmothering and family-making may constitute an essential part of contemporary babushkas' lives, few of them are ready for complete self-sacrifice for the sake of grandmothering. There are also other types of activity, such as work or other forms of public involvement, that continue to be a significant part of grandmothers' lives and a source of their identifications.

In addition, there are also differences between the imagination of the babushka in the public space and in the family circle. In the public space, the association of the babushka as an elderly woman generating love, warmth, and kindness is also linked to old age, a representation that many grandmothers who want to look young would not welcome. In fact, they could get offended if somebody addresses them as babushka in a public setting. Not all of them would be willing to be associated with "all-seeing" and "all-knowing" babushkas occupying benches in the urban yard and gossiping, or babushkas scolding youngsters for improper manners and words in a public setting.

However, being called babushka by their grandchildren carries an emotional reward for most grandmothers. They are encouraged if their grandchildren think of them as babushka who loves, bakes homemade pies, and cooks *borscht*. Generally, the strong subjectivity of babushkas as grandmothers among my interlocutors speaks to the fact that many of them refer to themselves as babushkas in the third person when narrating. Becoming the babushka of a family when many other family members would call a grandmother "babushka" is a practice that evolves as women age, and they are ready to accept their old age.

Soviet Subjectivities of Contemporary Babushkas

An important finding of my research is that irrespective of the grandmother's age, or ethnic and geographical belonging, contemporary babushkas in remarkable ways remain Soviet women in the way they perceive themselves, build their lives, and act as grandmothers. What unites these women is their attitude towards work and its importance in their past and present lives. By work, I refer to the Soviet work culture, including but not limited to the work itself and the collective of co-workers and other groups. For women it meant both work and attractiveness as a woman in a working environment. For some women, public activity in political or work-related organizations added even more significance to their Soviet lives, as well as influencing how they see themselves as individuals now. For most women, being publicly involved was and continues to be a crucial source of their identification, a matter of pride. The other significant feature is that most grandmothers share an idea of motherhood as a natural destiny and something every woman has to experience. It does not necessarily mean that women were active in their mothering. On the contrary, many Soviet women had to delegate the practicalities of child care to babushkas. However, the very act of giving birth to a child and becoming a mother was talked of by most women as an essential experience by a woman and even a duty. Thus, in their life values, most grandmothers reveal two basic features of the Soviet working mother contract, cherished by Soviet ideology: work and motherhood.

The Soviet female subjectivities of transnational grandmothers can be traced in the way maternal grandmothers try to act in their daughters' interests where the success of their own daughters is measured against the values of the Soviet working mother contract. In this context, babushkas continue to be caring mothers and/or compensate for the losses in their own mothering during Soviet times. Thus, grandmothering can be seen both as prolonged and as postponed motherhood.

Arguably, the gender role of the babushka as a grandmother who is expected to take care of her grandchildren and is actively involved in a three- to four-generation family setting is embodied in Soviet female subjectivities. In this context, the Soviet female subjectivities of contemporary babushkas are the very mechanisms through which the cultural practices of the babushka get reproduced both in Russian Karelia and in a transnational Finnish-Russian context. Therefore, the questions are whether the generations of women who are brought up in today's Russian Karelia would follow the values and practices of their grandmothers and if women who are raised in Finland would take up their transnational babushkas' attitudes to grandmothering and family-

making. This research, of course, cannot give even tentative answers to these questions. However, it is important to emphasize that the agency of contemporary babushkas in grandmothering and family-making can be explained by their Soviet subjectivities. In addition, rooted in the Soviet ideological culture, grandmothers as Soviet women in their past often try to convey such values of Soviet modernity as culturedness (*kul'turnost'*) and (self)discipline to their grandchildren.

Babushka Networks

The importance of being involved in the public space through work and other public activity (although within the rigid frameworks of Soviet ideology) had somewhat different implications in women's lives in local and transnational contexts. In Russian Karelia and elsewhere in the post-Soviet space, the sphere for women's public activism shrank considerably. Mid-life grandmothers who would possibly be interested in being publicly involved were marginalized from the public sphere. This social marginalization stimulated some grandmothers to focus on their grandchildren and their extended families to compensate for the powers lost in the public area.

In addition, during Soviet times, mid-life and elderly women “had an eye on society”, often standing for social order and morality. Micro-powers resided in “all-seeing” and “all-knowing” babushka networks occupying benches in the Soviet urban yards, monitoring and evaluating the behaviour of their neighbours. Women of a mature age were often those who kept an eye on the moral behaviour of their co-workers, particularly through special party work-based committees. The opportunities for these micro-powers that mid-life and elderly women (as babushkas in the general sense) had in the Soviet public space have dramatically diminished in a post-Soviet context as a result of both political and social marginalization of women. Soviet nostalgia, so pertinent in the narratives of those grandmothers who live in Russian Karelia, is longing not only for the social security associated with the Soviet order but also for the micro-powers women of a mature age used to exert in the Soviet public space formally and informally. This marginalization was one of the factors that increased the importance of their families as the main site of their empowerment. Importantly, the focus on families also grew among mid-life and elderly women, because they were often those who had to struggle for the everyday survival of their families in the 1990s.

In the Finnish context, with its culture of associations, encouragement of free-time activity, and special programs for the integration of migrants, grandmothers who migrated from Russia, in fact, found the opportunities for public activism that they lost in the post-Soviet space. Networks of women of a mature age are arranged around language courses or work practices. Mid-life and

elderly women are the most active members of the Russian Centre, the Centre of Russian Culture, and Ingrian associations, and constitute support circles that can be seen in the context of women's individual and collective empowerment under new circumstances. Transnationally mobile grandmothers who stay in Finland for a certain period of time may also be active in these babushka networks, both contributing to and benefiting from them.

Surprisingly, the Finnish context, which is traditionally seen as secular alongside other Nordic countries, also turned out to be extremely enabling for migrant grandmothers in terms of their empowerment through religion (Lutheran and Orthodox), both individually and through babushka networks. The Lutheran or Orthodox Church is often a place where women meet other migrants from the former Soviet space and make new acquaintances, particularly with Finns. For some grandmothers with an Ingrian background, the Lutheran tradition and church are channels of recollecting their Finnish Ingrian identity, often suppressed in their Soviet lives, and elaborating closer connection to the Finnish context. A phenomenon of “church babushkas” as an integral part of Russian Orthodox Churches has also crossed national borders, when a Russian babushka may become a welcoming and caring old woman who is known and loved by various members of a Finnish Orthodox Church with different ethno-cultural backgrounds, and especially children whom she treats with sweets after the Eucharist. In fact, church babushkas, both in the positive (as loving and helping) and the negative (as “angry crones”) sense, are gaining more space for their micro-powers with the Russian Orthodox resurgence in the Russian context. Likewise, the Finnish Orthodox Church has become a significant place for socializing with other Russian migrants, and facilitation in the process of adjustment in the receiving context of Finland.

Babushkas’ Ethno-cultural Backgrounds and Varying Grandmothering Messages

When discussing how the ethno-cultural backgrounds of contemporary babushkas have affected their lives and subjectivities and how these backgrounds inform the values they transfer as grandmothers, I consider ethnic belonging as a social and cultural construct that is subject to change in response to evolving circumstances, particularly as the effects of the institutional power. The Soviet power adopted policies that treated people with various ethnic backgrounds in different ways; for various reasons whole ethnic groups could have been easily made into the “enemies of the people”. The various experiences of grandmothers as a result of their ethnic backgrounds and related Soviet policies have added to the complexities of their Soviet subjectivities.

In my study, the Karelian and Ingrian Finnish backgrounds of grandmothers have distinctively defined important peculiarities in their subjectivities and grandmothering messages, although all of them share quite the same values about work and motherhood. In this, they may be strongly anchored in Soviet gender and family culture. However, their specific Soviet life trajectories have resulted in some significant specificities.

For instance, Karelian babushka Evdokiya lived all her life in the rural area, which was the case with many other people with Karelian and Vepsian backgrounds in Soviet Karelia whom the Soviet authorities were more likely to keep in the agricultural border areas where no industry was developed. Because of looser ideological control and an even greater lack of resources (as opposed to the urban space), religious and magic practices have been never erased from the people's everyday lives, especially those of women. In contrast to grandmothers who were raised in urban areas and became modern Soviet subjects, belief in God, magical harm and healing, and angels delivering messages from God through dreams emerges as the major framework of Evdokiya's life and narratives. Her identities as a daughter and a mother, a babushka of her grandchildren and the whole family, or of a Soviet working woman appear as secondary and defined by this larger framework, in which faith in God is both the purpose and the explanation of the social realities, and what grounds Evdokiya's everyday religion. Not only have religion and magic been applied for solving concrete family problems and removing magical harm, but also her message as a grandmother is defined by Evdokiya in religious terms, which is to "help them [children and grandchildren] to come closer to God". As discussed above, some grandmothers from rural areas or those raised by religious babushkas now also employ religion, traditional magic, and "new spiritualities" in grandmothering and family-making. However, only in Evdokiya's narratives does faith in God appear as the organizing principle of the narratives, as well as in her life in general.

Another particular case in my study is grandmothers with Finnish Ingrian background. On the one hand, they were made into Soviet loyal subjects, and the values of work, motherhood, and *kul'turnost'* shape their lives and grandmothering practices, just as of those women with other ethnic backgrounds. On the other hand, their Soviet discriminative experiences and histories of moves, translocal and transnational, enforced and voluntary, as well as recent migration to Finland, have shaped the peculiar ways in which Ingrian grandmothers may define and negotiate between their ethnic (Ingrian Finnish, Finnish, Russian Finnish) and national (Soviet, Russian, Finnish) senses of belonging, various homes (lost, left behind, re-found, imagined and real), and what values they may convey to their grandchildren.

First of all, it is the current location that defines how strongly Ingrian grandmothers would invoke their Ingrian belonging. Both my participant observation in Finland and in mini-buses, as

well as my interviews, have been illuminating in revealing the obvious tendency of recollection of Ingrian identity among migrant grandmothers who have moved to Finland as Ingrian returnees. Being now physically located in Finland is crucial in activating their dramatic history of Ingrians as an ethnic group close to the Finns that suffered because of their ethnic belonging during Soviet times. This also develops a comforting sense of being at home in Finland. The history of deportation, enforced during Soviet times, is pictured in bitter and horrifying detail, and the Soviet state is mostly blamed for these sufferings. In contrast, those Ingrian grandmothers who stay in Russian Karelia are more likely to remain Soviet and Russian in expressing their sense of belonging. For instance, recollections of their experiences of moves during Soviet times take a neutral narrative form, or may be integrated into a history of all Soviet people, a national history. These differences in negotiating between ethnic and national belonging have various implications on grandmothering.

Some Ingrian migrant babushkas are called by their grandchildren *mummo*, a Finnish term for a grandmother, or both Russian and Finnish terms are applied. Applying *mummo* speaks for the conscious and unconscious wish among grandmothers to be seen as Finnish or Ingrian Finnish grandmothers, which can be interpreted as part of recollecting their Ingrian identity and developing their Finnish national belonging. Some Ingrian grandmothers are keen on narrating the dramatic histories of their deportation and evictions to their grandchildren, and encourage them to speak Finnish. Importantly, some younger grandmothers who did not experience these moves by themselves draw on their parents' memories of these dramatic events to recollect their Ingrian belonging.

Secondly, there are differences among migrant grandmothers on how they see themselves as individuals in terms of national and ethnic belonging. The major difference is in their attitudes towards the Soviet regime, and their Soviet past. Most elderly Ingrian women, who actually experienced the enforced moves, reject their Soviet identity, and describe everything Soviet in gloomy and grey colours, against which their arrival in Finland appears as a return to their homes. Some women lived in Finland during the evacuation during World War II, and they re-activate these memories for constructing Finland as their home, and their move as return. However, even those women who had never been to Finland before their migration may still call their arrival as a return, appealing to the Finnish ethnic roots.

Younger women are more likely to maintain their Soviet and Russian belonging, providing more positive accounts of their Soviet lives and the Soviet regime in general. As grandmothers they often try to convey values of Soviet modernity to their grandchildren, encouraging them to be educated, civilized, and cultured (*kul'turnyi*). However, this does not prevent them from developing

a strong Finnish Ingrian identity, which gives them a feeling of comfort in being in Finland. Some Ingrian grandmothers feel offended if they are called Russians, not Ingrians; this resistance to being associated with Russians may well be also viewed in light of somewhat ambiguous and at times negative attitudes towards Russian migrants in Finland. There was only one Ingrian grandmother among my interlocutors who wanted to be a “Soviet person”, and called herself so. In developing her Ingrianness she, in contrast to other women, was drawing on the Russian national context, relating herself to a group of Russian Finns.

Thirdly, the relationships of grandmothers to the Soviet past are often defined by their individual life trajectories, especially whether or not they were happy in their family lives, becoming a mother, happily married, being successful at work (particularly within the Communist party), etc. In their attitudes towards work, motherhood, and grandmothereing, they share the same values and concerns as babushkas of other ethnic backgrounds. Thus, whether they want or do not want to be seen as Soviet women, Soviet subjectivities are pertinent for all of them, and continue to influence their transnational subjectivities.

Babushkas’ Translocal and Transnational Subjectivities

When I provided in the Introduction the histories of translocal and transnational moves in the Soviet context, and in a transnational Finnish-Russian Karelian space, I was curious to know how these complex moves, of enforced and voluntary characters, have affected my interlocutors’ relationship to place, space, and home, as well as family and grandmothereing practices. I saw translocal/transnational subjectivities as a result of “a trajectory that combines living in different places, and makes mobility a historical trajectory of one’s own, always connecting to where one is located but simultaneously keeping oneself solidly anchored in one’s own story and oneself” (Vuorela, 2009, p. 170). I looked at the ways various places were and are experienced by women, often producing a feeling of multi-local (translocal/transnational) presence, and how this living in different places has influenced their contemporary lives, their grandmothereing and family practices. It is important to note that in the Soviet and post-Soviet contexts the notions of *national* and *nationality* are linked to one’s ethnic belonging.

Being aware of the translocal subjectivities of contemporary babushkas whose memories of living in various places during evacuation in the course of the Great Patriotic War or when they were sent somewhere or when they accompanied their husbands as a result of labour migration is important from three perspectives. Firstly, translocal living, particularly in translocal families, is

something that women had experienced in their lives. Being part of a spatially extended familyscape is not something grandmothers first encountered in their transnational grandmothering. Secondly, the multi-local presence, which includes both negative and positive recollections of certain places women settled and lived in over their lives, is another significant aspect of contemporary grandmothers' lives and selves. In this, there is obviously a connection between translocal living/subjectivity and transnational living/subjectivity. Thirdly, because of Soviet translocal moves, many contemporary grandmothers in Russian Karelia and in a transnational Finnish-Russian space are, in fact, anchored somewhere other than in this particular geopolitical context. This can be also seen as an assertion in transnational grandmothering when the negative aspects of the Finnish-Russian Karelian interactions of the past (for instance, wars, occupation of territories) do not seem to have destructive implications on the contemporary transnational experiences of grandmothers.

However, the ethnic difference may also challenge what appears as negative and positive transnational encounters of the past. For instance, the Finnish occupation of Soviet Karelia may be recollected positively by grandmothers with Finno-Ugric backgrounds, and negatively by grandmothers with Slavic background. These transnational encounters of the past may have had a deep impact on grandmothers as individuals, and inform their contemporary grandmothering practices in different ways.

Again, the case of Ingrian Finns is a particular example, as elderly women with this background may have experienced a chain of enforced moves to places far from the sites of their abode during Stalinist rule, in the evacuation to Finland during World War II to save their lives during the German occupation of Leningradskaya oblast, in the move to Russian Karelia and later somewhere else in the course of labour recruitments. These translocal and transnational moves are activated in different ways by Ingrian grandmothers, particularly depending on their current location (Russian Karelia or Finland) and individual experiences connected to a certain place.

On the one hand, the transnational subjectivities of Ingrian women may appeal to troubled and painful aspects when an individual feels homeless, belonging nowhere. In this context, the discriminative attitudes towards Ingrian Finns in Soviet Russia, and ambiguous feelings linked to being a Russian migrant in Finland may result in the so-called troubled transnational subjectivity evident in Marja's narration: "We are aliens here and there... in Finland we are Russians, in Russia we are Finns".

On the other hand, transnational subjectivity may come to manifest in babushkas' multi-local presence, their multiple national, ethnic, and spatial senses of belonging, and the feeling of having homes here and there, both real and imagined. These different, troubled, and enabling

aspects of transnational subjectivities may variably shape the grandmothering messages of contemporary babushkas, subtly informing the ways their grandchildren come to see themselves as individuals in terms of their ethnic, national, family, and home belonging.

9.3 Afterword

My ethnographic journey into grandmothers' lives in a multi-sited context of Russian Karelia and Finland by analyzing the histories and puzzles of the babushkas has in fact raised new questions and opened further avenues for continued research. One of the questions partly addressed in my study but needing further research is the role of national and transnational policy-making, media and social media in constitution of the contemporary transnational subject. How do the transnational Russian-Finnish context and its re-activated histories affect transnational subjectivities of those living in this area? How do national policy-making in Russia and Finland inform transnational lives in receiving and sending contexts? Various aspects of transnational subjectivities and the modern self with regard to gender, age, religion and ethnicity in the context of Finland and Russia (in conjunction with globalizing processes) comprise a vast and rich avenue for further research which I hope to address in future work.

Another promising avenue which has revealed itself in my research is the increased importance of spiritual and religious practices for individuals, as well as in grandmothering and family-making. The centuries-old transnational histories of Orthodox Christianity between Finland and Russia, its contemporary revival in today's Russia, and an increasingly positive image of the Orthodox Church in contemporary Finland, all make the anthropological, sociological and historical inquiries in the field of Orthodoxy Christianity in this particular context especially intriguing. My research has tentatively illustrated that the Finnish Orthodox Community is nowadays an area of intensive multicultural interaction. In fact, this space offering other than national belonging seems to have been more successful in incorporating migrants, particularly Russian migrants, into the Finnish context, than many programs specifically launched for these purposes do. Given that anthropology of Eastern Orthodoxy is an "emerging" area of research which has hardly been given an in-depth research analysis with its own elaborated methodological and epistemological tools, this area also represents an immensely rich avenue for future research which I also hope to incorporate in my coming research.

Endnotes

¹ In Russian Karelian historiography, the Civil War in Soviet Karelia is usually considered to have lasted between 1918 and 1920, as opposed to the Russian Civil War, commonly referred to have taken place between 1917 and 1922.

² The term *Great Patriotic War* (Russian: Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voina) is used in Russia and some other states of the former Soviet Union both officially and in everyday life, as well as applied in the Russian historiography, to describe the Soviet Union's struggle against Nazi Germany and its allies during the Second World War from June 22, 1941 to May 9, 1945.

³ During Stalinist rule the use of the prisoners' labour force was an important part of the Soviet economy. The classical totalitarian model was particularly based on regularly implemented large-scale repression that provided the economy with cheap prisoners' labour force.

⁴ Republic of Mordovia located in the eastern part of the East European Plain of the Russian Federation. The ethnic composition of the republic is quite diverse, including Mordovins (a Finnish ethnic group), Russians, Tatars, and Ukrainians at 31,9%, 60,8%, 5,2%, and 0,5% respectively, according to the 2002 Census.

⁵ Arkhangelskaya Oblast is located in the northwestern part of the Russian Federation, and includes Nenets Autonomous Okrug. It borders Kirov Oblast, Vologodskaya Oblast, the Republic of Karelia, the Komi Republic, and the White Sea. Severodvinsk is a primary shipyard for the Russian Navy.

⁶ Valaam (Valamo, in Finnish), the largest island situated in lake Ladoga, has a complex history, linked to the power struggle and border shifting between the Russian and Swedish empires in the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, between the Soviet Union and Finland in the twentieth century. When Valaam became part of the Soviet Union after World War II, the Valaam monastery (a western outpost of Eastern Orthodoxy since the medieval age) was abandoned and the island was converted into a Soviet military base. It was also a place where handicapped people were sent to go for recreation and healing programs. Most of them settled down in the island. Production of food on household plots remained essential for people's every day provision.

⁷ Although this statistic provides some information on the ethnic composition of the population, it gives only a partial picture. For instance, it does not reflect that parents of different ethnic backgrounds had a right to choose the ethnic belonging (the mother's or the father's) in their newborn child's birth certificate. Often, the ethnicity which at that particular historical moment was considered to be more "unreliable" (for instance Karelian) was likely to be excluded by the parents in attempts to provide a more secure future for their children.

⁸ The Continuation War (1941-1944) followed the Winter War (1939-1940); these wars were fought between Finland and the Soviet Union during World War II.

⁹ This was related to me by one of my interlocutors for this study, who was narrating her personal experience.

¹⁰ From July 2011, people with an Ingrian background are no longer eligible to move to Finland on the basis of their ethnicity, as it is believed that those who wanted to apply to migrate to Finland had already done so.

¹¹ “Socialist building” (*sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo*) was a term frequently applied in the political rhetoric of the USSR with regard to plans (*plany*) in the societal, economic, and political spheres, aimed at the actualization of socialism.

¹² “Language question” was one of the most polemic ones during socialist building in Karelia; in Russian Karelian historiography, the term “finnization” (*finnizatsiia*) is often used to depict the enforced character of encouraging the Finnish language as a language of education for Karelian and Vepsian population of Karelia.

¹³ This doctrine emphasized rapid privatization, release of prices and currency control, withdrawal of subsidies, and free trade, as distinct from state-supported and more regulated varieties of capitalism (Humphrey & Mandel, 2002, p. 2).

¹⁴ *Dacha* comes from the verb *dat'* (to give). It was first used in the seventeenth century to name bestowals from the tsar. This practice was continued during Stalinist rule when comfortable wooden houses would be allotted to officials and intellectuals. Another type of *dacha* emerged in 1950s, when land for the cultivation of vegetables was given out to institutions, which land was then divided among workers to build tiny houses with a plot. By the late 1970s, plots would be given by district city administration. It was only in the 1990s that *dachas* began to be bought and sold, not given. Since that time *dacha* would also mean a private purchase (Humphrey, 2002, p. 186).

¹⁵ It is my deliberate choice not to apply the term “key-informant” as it tends to objectify those people who are researched (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 56).

¹⁶ Following the contemporary ethnographic style of writing in anthropological research and relying on women’s narratives, I did not make specific references to my field diaries throughout the text. However, the description of grandmothing and family practices substantially draw on these fieldnotes of my participant and non-participant observation, as well as the whole embodied experience of being in the field.

¹⁷ Being aware of the mushrooming literature in border studies with its own elaborated epistemological, methodological, and theoretical tools, as well as different modalities and dimensions of the term “border” (Paasi, 2005), I did not find it possible to include a detailed analysis of grandmothers’ cross-border experiences in my thesis due to the chosen empirical and theoretical focus of my research.

¹⁸ The expression “this actually existing socialism” was applied by the East German political activist, writer, and dissident Rudolf Bahro in his book *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, where he provided his critical analysis of the development of socialism.

¹⁹ The term “deterritorialization” is applied by Arjun Appadurai broadly, ranging from such examples as transnational corporations and money markets across national borders to ethnic groups, sectarian movements, and political formations that increasingly operate in ways that transgress specific territorial boundaries and identities (Appadurai 1996, p. 49)

²⁰ David Harvey in his research on the “political-economic story of where neoliberalism came from” defines it as a “theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade”. Yet, he recognizes that the effects of neoliberalism have been far-reaching, particularly refracted in the ways of life and thought (Harvey, 2005, pp. 2-3).

²¹ The book won the 1997 Heldt prize for best book by a woman in Slavic studies given by the Association for Women in Slavic Studies.

²² In his theory of structuration Anthony Giddens claims that the various forms of social constraint can be also seen as a form of enablement as they “serve to open up certain possibilities of action at the same time as they restrict or deny others” (Giddens, 1984, pp. 173-174). Not to overdetermine the enablement, the Soviet social order was also a social constraint as it tended to impose on women of a mature age the importance of a grandmother’s role.

²³ These statistics are not precise comparisons, as exact age category statistics are not available. This was a common feature in Soviet data presentation, possibly to obscure such analyses. However, the scale of numbers (only 6% of approximate age cohort in preschool) would not change much with more precise data.

²⁴ When I quote a woman’s narratives I refer to her name, the year she was born, and the year the interview was conducted. In the description of data in the end, other details are also provided. Pseudonyms are applied instead of real names, for ethical reasons.

²⁵ The deficit of goods was a prominent feature of the Soviet planned economy characterized by an oversupply of some goods and a scarcity of others, especially those that could be seen as markers of the high living standards (cars, accommodations, carpets, dishes, etc.). The term *deficit* became commonly applied on the everyday life level to depict the chronic shortage of these goods, culminating in the severe lack of basic food items at the end of the perestroika period, resulting in the dissolution of the USSR. The grandmothers in my study often refer to this period as “the time of deficit”. I would see “deficit” as an ethnographic term highlighting everyday life economy in the late Soviet period.

²⁶ This is a city in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug of the Russian Federation. It is the centre of the West Siberian oil-producing region.

²⁷ There are also difference across Russian Karelia, for example, between Perozavodsk and other cities, and between rural and urban areas (see also Chapter VI).

²⁸ This psychological research explored transmission of attachment across three generations, based on a low-risk Finnish sample of parents expecting their first child and maternal grandmothers. The research followed informants from pregnancy until the child was three years old.

²⁹ The Belomoro-Baltiysky Canal, built in 1931-1933 mostly by prisoners of the Stalin repression, connects the basins of Baltic and White seas.

³⁰ Dekulakization (*raskulachivanie*) was the Soviet campaign of political repression, including arrests, deportations, and executions of better-off peasants and their families in 1929-1932; rich peasants called *kulaks* were considered to be a class enemy.

³¹ Cryptomatriarchy defines a situation in which men retain socio-political prominence and dominate the public sphere, while women dominate the domestic sphere and exert fundamental socio-psychological influence through the mechanism of kinship.

³² Metaphorically, “tangentiality” refers to a line touching but deviating from another line or curve, typically indicating the gradient of the latter. In the case of modernity in Pakistan, it has been significantly affected by colonial influence, being dependent on “the long march of modernity” in Europe. Especially in Britain, this march in British India, contemporary India, and what is now Pakistan was fundamentally tangent to a similar development in Europe (Qadir, 2011). Applied to Russian masculinities, I want to emphasize that there is an obvious tendency among Russian men to appear as Western modern men, triggered by post-Soviet transformations and everyday transnationalism. However, at a closer look one can see that Russian masculinities seem to be tangential in the context of Western masculinities.

³³ City’s day or *den’ goroda*, commemorating the foundation of Petrozavodsk is usually celebrated every year with a lot of entertainment arranged downtown.

³⁴ The Eucharist, also called Holy Communion or the Lord’s Supper, is a Christian sacrament commemorating, by consecrating bread and wine, the Last Supper, the final meal that Jesus Christ shared with his disciples before his arrest, and crucifixion, when he gave them bread saying, “This is my body”, and wine saying, “This is my blood”.

³⁵ *Leshii* is a male woodland spirit in Slavic mythology that often appears as a tall man with long hair and a beard made from living grass and vines. He is a guardian of the forest and all living creatures there.

³⁶ According to Kimmo Kääriäinen, there are four types that can be identified among Russians with regard to their beliefs: those who believe in “everything”, particularly Christianity, astrology, “supernatural” skills, etc. (27%); those who are more likely to be committed to Christian religion (26%); those who are “in search” (27%); and those who do not believe (20%) (Kääriäinen 2004, pp. 120-122).

³⁷ According to Eliade, reverence for God’s Mother has been vital in the Orthodox tradition. Worship of the Virgin Mother can be traced back to archaic levels of unconsciousness in the immemorial Asiatic and Mediterranean conceptions of parthenogenesis claimed by the Great Goddesses. The importance of Mary derives from her motherhood: she is Deipara, “she who gives birth to the God”. Later the term was replaced by Theotokos, “Mother of God”. Marian theology represents the transfiguration of the earliest and most significant homage

paid, from the time of pre-history, to the religious mystery of womanhood. In Western Christianity the Virgin Mary is identified with the figure of divine Wisdom. The Eastern Church, on the contrary, developed side by side with the theology of Theotokos, the doctrine of celestial Wisdom, Sophia, into which the feminine figure of the Holy Spirit flowers (Eliade, 1982, p. 410).

³⁸ Since February 1, 2009, Kirill (Gundiaev) has been Patriarch of Moscow and Russia.

³⁹ Psalm 90 (91), "He that dwelled in the help of the Most High shall abide in the shelter of the God of heaven..." is read, according to some Orthodox prayer books, in the moment of danger.

⁴⁰ In particular, the number of men persecuted and executed in the 1930s far exceeds the number of women.

⁴¹ The Soviet village community was controlled by an economic institution, kolkoz or sovkhoz, (collective or state farms), and an administrative one, the village soviet (*sel'sovet*).

⁴² Inkeri-juhlas have been celebrated in Finland since the 1950s and were initiated by Ingrian migrants who were moved to Finland during the war and stayed there afterwards (Nevalainen, 1998, p. 41).

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Uljana. (born in 1947, 2008, 05 12). (T. Tiaynen, Interviewer) Tampere.

Vera. (born in 1937, 2008, 01 15). (T. Tiaynen, Interviewer) Petrozavodsk.

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Data Description

20 women were interviewed in Petrozavodsk. 12 women were interviewed in Tampere (incl. Riita, who was interviewed while we were travelling in a micro-bus across borders). Liliya was interviewed both in Petrozavodsk and Tampere when visiting her relatives.

Thus, 31 women altogether were interviewed. In addition, I refer to four other women with their permission to quote (reference marked as fieldnotes). So, 35 women are mentioned by their names in the research. Out of them: nine women have an Ingrian background, two live in Russian Karelia, and seven have moved to Finland. I had particularly intensive interaction with three interlocutors:

- Vesta (Transnationally mobile grandmother) – 12 interviews
- Evdokiya (Karelian grandmother from the rural area in Russian Karelia) – three interviews
- Marja (Migrant grandmother in Finland) – two interviews

In addition, of course, informal meetings and conversations (for instance with Marja, a lot of communication went beyond recorded form of interaction). This comes to a total of 58 interviews (including four references marked to fieldnote and 54 face-to-face interviews). I made substantive diaries with fieldnotes between 2006 and 2010, which have been used throughout the work.