The role of ethnic community in immigrant's life

The case of Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne

Daiva Silinskaite

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the phenomenon of ethnic immigrant communities as diaspora and related issues like implications to ethnic and host identification, acculturation attitudes and self-esteem. Based on the characteristics of host society, previous experiences, myths and stereotypes, different ethnic groups form various kinds of ethnic communities. In this thesis I analyze small Lithuanian community in Skåne. By using multiculturalism theory I explain the context of the Sweden as a host society and influence on Lithuanian immigrants' choice of acculturation strategies. The research is based on the focus groups interviews with Lithuanians residing in Skåne. The results are analysed by invoking community organizations and acculturation theories. The conceptual framework of these theories helps to situate Lithuanian community in Skåne in a local context, to understand the reasons behind passive or active membership and the impact on maintaining one's ethnic and host identification. The result of this study shows that the purposes of migration, the context of the host society, previous experience of collectivity, willingness to acculturate can be the key factors of ethnic community formation and its role.

Key words: immigrant, community, acculturation, ethnic, host, identification
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1 Introduction

Ethno-cultural diversity – the presence of various ethnic communities and organizations – is the outcome of migration processes around the world. The ongoing political, social and economical transformation in Central and Eastern Europe had a substantial impact on transnational migration processes. It increased migration flows and changed directions of the migration. Different countries have successfully dealt with the reality by making innovative social arrangements and adopting various policies; some still continue being in a conflict phase and struggling with the issues related to diversity. However, probably there is no culturally homogeneous society. People migrate for various reasons, into different directions and for different periods of time. Immigration became "a worldwide phenomenon, both in countries that have been built on the flow of people to develop their societies and in countries that are relatively new to the immigration experience" (Berry et al, 2006: xiii). Immigration is a sensitive issue and a highly complex matter, seen by some people as a threat to national integrity while others welcome it as a source of cultural diversity. Immigrants from different contexts coming to various types of social structures and cultural environments face numerous issues related to identity formation, acculturation and relations between the immigrant and the host society or the immigrant and his/her own ethnic community. Therefore, integration of immigrant communities becomes one of the top priority tasks for European countries for the next decade (Pilipavicius, 2001).

In the 80's transnationalism and various social networks of immigrants became an important aspect of the immigration analysis. The analysis of ethnic communities emphasizes the importance of immigrant communities as specific social networks, as loci of collective consciousness and cultural reproduction (Heisler, 2000: 80-81). Transnationalism describes immigrants' involvement with various communities at the same time. Many researches make it very clear that nation states, immigrant and ethno-cultural groups within them, and their individual members do not all respond to the various complex situations in the same way (Berry et al, 2006: 2). Different positions can be taken by receiving countries (for example, to seek homogenization or multiculturalism), as well as by immigrants' ethnic communities (different acculturation strategies and maintenance of the host and ethnic identity). Therefore, studies and researches about various host countries and the immigrant communities living there are of a great value to the general picture of immigration as a wide-world phenomenon.

1.1   Research question and relevance

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive picture about an ethnic community's insights concerning relations, rules and consequences in various contexts. With the help of solving a theoretical puzzle and invoking a concrete empirical example, this research should answer the question: what is the role of small ethnic communities like that of Lithuanians in Skåne? What are the side-effects for an immigrant's ethnic and host identity formation? How do these side-effects affect acculturation attitudes towards host society? The relevance of this study increases every day because the immigration flows keep on growing and there is an urgent need for systematic research about the various ethnic communities and their organizations in order to develop policy programs and increase cultural sensitivity.

1.2   Outline of the thesis

The first chapter of the thesis will provide relevant background of this research concerning historical and practical issues of Lithuanians immigration to Sweden. The second part will review valid literature and previous research in order to form an appropriate theoretical framework. It will also deal with specific concepts. Further, method and methodology will be discussed, which will be followed by concrete empirical findings and results. At the end, the conclusion will shortly discuss probable answers to the research question.

1.3   Background

The aim of this research is to discuss the importance of ethnic immigrant communities invoking relevant theoretical framework as well as the empirical case of Lithuanians residing in Skåne – a Southern region in Sweden. Lithuania is a post-Soviet country with the relatively short history of open borders and a particular post-colonial way of behavior related to trust, relations and belonging. Shortly after World War II number of Lithuanians immigrated to Sweden, however few years after World War II the borders were closed and people did not have many chances to travel or migrate. It was not until after 1990 that Lithuanians finally got many possibilities to travel across borders and

also became able to communicate and get as much information as possible about various places and potentials for life improvement. The first migration flows were to the countries with strong Lithuanian communities or diasporas and networks which provided people with information, resources or even financial help. With years new directions were found. So quite recently Lithuanians discovered Sweden as a hospitable place for migration and so Lithuanians' community in this country has grown quite dramatically. Also, both Lithuania and Sweden are the members of European Union and belong to Schengen area; therefore Lithuanians can live and work in Sweden legally. Sweden is considered to be a pluralist society with long history of independence and various migration and antidiscrimination policies.

Månsson and Olson (2008) in their analysis about post-war Eastern Europe labor force in Sweden made a general conclusion that "Sweden as a destination did not turn out as popular as expected" (2008: 8). They say that "there are studies with a focus on regions based on micro data, but none that focus on the Baltic Sea Region" (ibid: 9). The situation now is that Sweden attains growing immigrant flows from Baltic Sea Region. In addition, while in North America, the focus has so far been on the comparison of different ethnic groups in the same city, in Europe, scholars are more interested in comparing the integration process of one ethnic group across different countries (Crul, Thomson, 2007: 1027). Therefore this research will be relevant for future studies about Lithuanians and their communities in various countries. Another aspect is that most community research projects tend to focus on strong Islamic communities, having bases of religion, long history of immigration and huge migration flows. I think that even if the sizes of immigrant communities or flows are relatively small, it is still really important to pay equal scientific attention to these processes. In fact, many researchers consider post-Soviet immigrants as a unit. I agree that it was quite true shortly after the collapse of USSR in 1991. However, the time has changed significantly, and separate post-Soviet countries became important actors in the world-wide political and economical arena. To conclude, I find it interesting to take Lithuania as an empirical example in this discussion.

2   Theoretical part

Cross-border flows, movement of finance and trade, media and culture, transnational networks of multinational corporations, development of new means of communication, changes in identity and community formation (Castles, 2002: 1143) are the main outcomes of globalization. In this context migration and diaspora became sweeping issues among social scientists. Theorists usually divide the biggest migration flows into two main phases: the run of the World War II and the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991. In addition, the situation of migration changed quite dramatically after 2004, when a number of Central and Eastern European countries, including Lithuania, became part of the European Union. The attitudes and interpretations about the ongoing processes, reasons and causes of migration have been changing since. Concepts and theories have been developed into different directions, depending on the historical experience with migration, and particular other characteristics of various countries. According to Arango (2000), "migration is too diverse and multifaceted to be explained by a single theory" (2000: 284). Portes (1997) agrees with this statement adding that even at present, there is no widely accepted theoretical approach, although "there are few themes within the broad domain of immigration that may yield theoretical advances" (in Berry et al, 2006: 4). The main focus of this thesis will be on the concept of diaspora and ethnic community and on related contexts like transnationalism, multiculturalism and different forms of acculturation. The last part of the theoretical discussion will consider community organizations, their types and functions.

2.1   The concept of diaspora

An increasing number of studies are focusing on the concept of diaspora, suggesting various theories and interpretations. It is easy to lose the borderline between diaspora as a theoretical concept, diasporic discourses and historical diasporas (Brah, 1996: 194-195). The diaspora concept goes back to ancient times, and was used for people displaced or dispersed by force, as well as for trading groups, and labor migrants (Cohen, 1997). According to Tololian (1991: 4), diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment. Shuval (2000) states that the „diaspora discourse reflects a sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes a homeland and it is characterized by a sense of living in one place while simultaneously remembering and/or desiring and yearning for another place" (2000: 42-43. But according to Brah (1996: 16), 'homing' desire is not the same thing as desire for

a 'homeland'. 'Home' can be called as a "mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" or, on the other hand, "lived experience of locality" (Brah, 1996: 16). Therefore diaspora is directly linked to the subjective feeling of belonging not necessarily to the concrete physical place, but also to some group of people or psychological 'home'. Many scientists relate diaspora only to the inner feeling but not to a strict homeland territory. For example, Shuval (2000) argues that „diaspora is a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity, longings, dreams, allegorical and virtual elements, all of which play a role in establishing a diaspora reality" (2000: 43).

Different scholars perceive the belonging to this term differently: from political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, to all ethnic and racial minorities, overseas communities. According to Shuval (2000), one of the largest recent groups to enter the diaspora's category consists of 25 million Russians living in non-Russian states of the Former Soviet Union (FSU): the collapse of the unitary Soviet state has transformed them into minorities in the states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (2000: 42). Historical experiences and power relations seem to be central issues for some authors. For example, Brah (1996) states that "the concept of diaspora centers on the configurations of power which differentiate diasporas internally as well as situate them in relation to one another" (1996: 183).

The term diaspora has acquired metaphoric implications and is used more and more often by displaced persons, who feel, maintain, invent or revive a connection with a prior home (Safran, 1991: 83). However, while reading diaspora literature, it is possible to notice that there are three sets of actors that are relevant to main theories. These are the diaspora group itself, the host society and the homeland which may be real or virtual (Sheffer, 1986). Also some scholars argue that diaspora, as a phenomenon, is a very diverse and dynamic process, which can appear, be modified, and vanish, reacting to the processes and adapting to new environments. For example, according to Shuval (2000), „a sense of diaspora can occur or re-occur after several generations when the group members are themselves no longer immigrants even though their predecessors were" (Shuval, 2000: 46). Brah (1996) seemed to agree with this statement, arguing that diasporas and diasporic communities are very flexible and far from being pre-given.

The theorists Sheffer and Brubaker are important figures in the discussion about diaspora. Sheffer (2003) uses the term ethno-national diaspora. Here, defining the concept of ethnicity is a must. I have chosen the definition of Yuval-Davis (1997), saying that "ethnicity relates to the politics of collectivity boundaries, and by using identity narratives, dividing the world into 'us' and 'them'" (1997: 44). Sheffer's (2003) choice of the term ethno-national diaspora is based on the willingness to limit the discussion. He agrees that there is a big confusion and latitude related to the use of this term, as a "cognate phenomena" among the science community and common people (Sheffer, 2003). In my opinion, Brubaker agrees with this argument too, however, he says that he is not trying "to deflate diaspora, but rather to de-substantialize it, by treating it as a category of practice, project, claim and stance, rather than as a bounded group" (Brubaker, 2005: 13). Sheffer says that members of the ethno-national diaspora "regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin" and that they came to the host country via voluntary or forced migration (Sheffer, 2003: 9). Also, what distinguishes diaspora people from locals is their ongoing or re-awakened attachment and loyalty to

their earlier culture and specifically to the homeland which they feel they have left (Kearney, 1995: 259). I find it interesting that a person belongs to diaspora if he or she agrees to being of a particular origin, even if the person has been largely assimilated and does not see him- or herself as diasporic (Brubaker, 2005: 3). Brubaker criticized Sheffer's argument that some groups can be constructed as diasporas because of their "continued involvement in homeland politics, sometimes involving the support of terrorist or ultra-nationalist movements" (Sheffer, 2003: 15). Brubaker said that in this way "the reference to the paradigmatic cases has become more attenuated" (Brubaker, 2005: 2).

Diasporas has also been included in the conceptual framework of multiculturalism. According to Sheffer, ethno-national diasporas "in poorer non-democratic host countries can help to pave the way toward legitimized pluralism" (Sheffer, 2003: 94). And on the other hand, if the host society is modern and rich, the existence of ethnic diasporas could easily contribute to the supervention of multiculturalism. One of the examples of multicultural policies is teaching the local language to immigrants. This can lead to better relations between minority and majority. Sheffer (2003) also adds a thought that this policy might also be a sign of an attempt to assimilate and integrate immigrants. In my opinion, in this way some countries deny multiculturalism and pluralism. It is not obligatory; however, it creates a situation when this possibility can easily become a way of discriminating immigrants and putting off the responsibility. Some scientists show that even second or third generation of immigrants (with perfect language skills) still considered being strangers or 'the other'.

To conclude, it is quite complicated to follow one path of diaspora theory, especially when there is no mutual understanding what could be called a definition of diaspora. I have chosen to base my argument on Sheffer's (2003) understanding of diasporas as ethnic communities. This way I intend to avoid misunderstandings which could be caused by existence of various definitions and interpretations of concept diaspora. The following discussion will put ethnic communities in the context of transnationalism which is inevitably a fruitful context for the phenomenon of ethnic communities.

2.2   Ethnic communities in the transnationalism context

Many scholars (Kastoryano, 2000; Castles, 2002) consider globalization as the process generating transnationalism. According to Castles (2002), "increasing mobility, growth of temporary, cyclical and recurring migrations, cheap and easy travel, constant communication through new information technologies question the idea of the person who belongs to just one nation-state or at most migrates from one state to just one other" (2002: 1157). However, I want to shortly mention the argument of Tarrow (2005) who claims that globalization is actually not the source of transnationalism. He thinks that globalization cannot really answer the questions when, why and how people engage in transnational activities, or move across the nation state borders. Tarrow (2005) emphasizes the importance of internationalism, which can explain the origins and mechanism of transnationalism. He claims that internationalization enables relations of

different actors or institutions in local, national and international levels. Then domestic actors can move, encounter others like themselves, and form coalitions that transcend their borders (Tarrow, 2005). In this way they form transnational communities as new modes of migrant belonging. Transnational communities are groups whose identity is not primarily based on attachment to a specific territory (Castles, 2002: 1157). I would argue then that ethnic communities also fall under the pattern of transnational communities. They are formed by transnational actors who seek to maintain the relations with the homeland or specific ethnic group and influence various political aspects related to, for example, financial well-being of citizens.

In the context of globalization, societies and their structures are changing, in spite of nation states' borders. Transnational communities challenge traditional ideas of nation-state belonging (Castles, 2002: 1157). Transnationalism „refers to communities made up of individuals or groups, settled in different national societies, sharing common interests and references - territorial, religious, linguistic - and using transnational networks to consolidate solidarity beyond national boundaries" (Faist, 1998: 216). According to Kastoryano (2000), „transnationalism leads, in any case, to an institutional expression of multiple belonging, where the country of origin becomes a source of identity, the country of residence a source of rights, and the emerging transnational space, a space of political action combining the two or more countries" (2000: 1). Gilmartin, O'Connel and Migge (2009) agree with this statement, adding that transnationalism usually involves much more than connections and contacts with the place of origin, it is more about a sense of belonging in more than one place. And that is the root of diaspora as ethnic community phenomenon.

The emergence of transnational communities can be easily called a global phenomenon. Especially post-colonial immigration flows created numerous communities which still have „historical ties, sometimes going back to a colonial past, affecting the size of the community and the density of relationships with the home country" (Kastoryano, 2000: 3). An example could be the rather big and organized transnational diasporic Lithuanian community in the United States (US) after the World War II fighting for their homeland freedom. However, shortly after Lithuania became independent in 1990, Lithuanians started feeling differently about the current situation and, accordingly, the number of active members of Lithuanians community in the US decreased (Aleksandravicius, 2004: 11). Also, these events influenced Lithuanians' perception and understanding of transnational communities. Therefore, this only proves again that ethnic communities are flexible and they react to the various changes in the historical and political context. Transmigrants sometimes are prefigured as cosmopolitans who are able to cross cultural boundaries and build multiple or even hybrid identities. However, some theorists argue that transnational consciousness is based overwhelmingly on common ethnicity: transmigrants feel solidarity with co-ethnics in their homeland and elsewhere (Castles, 2002: 1158); they feel strong ties with their ethnic diaspora. According to Castles (2002), transnationalism appears as a „revalorization of exclusionary ethnic identity, and transnational communities take on the form of exile diasporas, determined to establish their own nation-states" (ibid: 1158). These are the cases of rather big, historically formed diasporas which usually are not tied to any physical homeland anymore. That way quite a few studies deal mostly with big, formal, organized transnational ethnic communities with clear activities and

consequences, therefore leaving behind smaller, dynamic ethnic communities that lack organization and formality, but that are, nevertheless, significant and important.

But how do these ethnic communities reside in the host societies? What kind of relations do they develop between members of the communities and with locals? Obviously, different countries cultivate different immigrant policies and follow different traditions. Usually countries focus more either on the group rights or on the individual rights. But one can distinguish between two contrasting ideal types of integration strategies. Those are assimilation and separatism. Next, I will discuss different integration strategies starting with multiculturalism, which protects minority rights and encourages cultural variety.

2.3   Ethnic communities and multiculturalism

Multiculturalism refers to attempts to provide various categories of immigrants' groups with minority rights, giving them an opportunity to keep and develop their traditional culture and lifestyle, or at least essential parts of them (Runblom, 1994: 623-624). It is believed that there are two kinds of differences between locals and immigrants: those which threaten and those which don't. According to Yuval-Davis (1997), "multiculturalism is aimed at nourishing and perpetuating the kinds of differences which do not [threaten]" (1997: 56). In a perfect case, multiculturalism grows into a liberal alternative to complete assimilation and sets all possibilities to grow immigrant communities, preserve their languages and culture. This theory denies belief in homogenous and monocultural nation states. It reinforces rights to community formation and cultural development, raising social equality and reducing levels of discrimination. According to Castles (2002), the „term multiculturalism declined in popularity in the 1990s, possibly due to its overtones of state-led social engineering, but the notion of multicultural and multi-racial societies has become firmly entrenched in Western countries" (2002: 1156). Multicultural policies became popular in Western countries. Accepting various cultural and linguistic cultivations stimulates transnational activities and relations. Therefore Castles (2002) points out that „it seems that multiculturalism does not automatically encourage transnationalism, but perhaps gives immigrants more choice on the degree to which they want to carry out cross-border activities" (ibid: 1161).

At this point, it is important to discuss Sweden as an example of multicultural policies. One can argue that Sweden created a mix between antidiscrimination policies and multiculturalism. Antidiscrimination policies claim that one person is equal to the rest. It is a liberal perspective focusing on individual rights. However, antidiscrimination policies do not guarantee or protect minority rights. One should be treated equally to others, which leads more to assimilation, because immigrants in this way have to adopt host countries' culture and learn the language in order to do well in the host society. Sweden officially allows, and even invites and expects, cultural diversity. Runblom (1994) argues that Sweden "more strikingly than most European countries has gone through a transformation from a relatively homogeneous society

to one with a variety of ethnic and language groups" (1994: 623). The most common opinion is that Sweden remains very immigrant tolerant country. Sometimes it turns out to be more a public opinion than the reality. As I mentioned above, Sweden gives all immigrants the opportunity to learn Swedish language which could mean that this second language is important for immigrants to succeed in the country. According to Bron (2003), "freedom of choice meant that the language minorities could have an opportunity to choose how much they wanted to keep and develop their previous identities, and to what extent they wanted to socialize into the Swedish cultural identity" (2003: 611). In her study, she points out that "immigrants take the new language not only as a means of survival, but also as an important step to master their being, to become anew, to reconstruct their identities" (ibid: 606). Therefore, it is interesting to see how learning language changes the behavior of immigrants and host society members, as well as what impact it has on a scale of community relations.

Multiculturalism can be perceived as a middle point between total assimilation and total separatism. The growing trend toward multiculturalism that characterizes most Western societies requires more refined instruments to identify the crucial components of acculturation. In the following section I will discuss these various models or acculturation and behavioral standards.

2.4   Acculturation

Acculturation can be described as the process of change in collective and individual behaviors that allows a minority group to interact with the norms and habits of a dominant social system (Berry, Sam, 1997). Some scholars define it as a cultural change resulting from intercultural contact between two or more cultural groups (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986; Phinney, 1990). Acculturation implies two forms of change: socio-cultural adjustment (Ward, 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1994) and psychological adaptation (Berry, 1997). Those two elements are necessary to explain immigrant behavior in the community and notice various behavioral models. These models were nicely concluded and called behavioral pathways by Berry et al (2006):

> Some do become indistinguishable from the majority in the larger society; some remain culturally vital while achieving full and equitable participation, creating a society made up of many and diverse cultural communities; others also remain culturally vital but stay largely outside the life of the larger society; still others are alienated from their cultures, becoming enmeshed in difficult social situations that are problematic for themselves and the larger society (2006: 4).

Relevant literature supports the importance of considering the role of community context, in particular, its ethnic density, as it affects various dimensions of immigrant and refugee acculturation, including language, identity, and behavior (Birman, Trickett & Buchanan, 2005: 84). It is interesting to refer to Berry's (1992) studies on acculturation. He proposed four acculturation strategies employed by immigrants who want to get an answer to two main questions: is it of any value to maintain cultural

identity and is it of any value to maintain relationships with other groups? These strategies are integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. Berry (1990, 1997) has suggested that central element of a successful adaptation is the manner in which individuals simultaneously deal with two issues:

1. cultural maintenance (dealing with the extent to which cultural characteristics are considered important, and their maintenance striven for);
2. contact-participation (dealing with the extent to which an acculturating individual considers contact with the host society important, and partakes in its ways of life) (in Virta, Sam, Westin, 2004: 16).

According to Ricucci (2010), "this model defines a process that starts from separation (maintenance of one's own ethnic identity) and continues with assimilation (identification with the majority group), thus defining four specific attitudes towards acculturation" (2010: 421). It is expected that the more immigrants become integrated or assimilated into the host society, the more their socioeconomic status improves. This assumption is also based on the classical assimilation theory which contends that the assimilation of immigrants leads to positive outcomes (Virta, Sam, & Westin, 2004). If the immigrant is perceived as 'a stranger', then he is "typically self-effacing and would seek to assimilate in his new environment so as to stop being a stranger" (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 54). However, it is not always the case. Total assimilation leads to rejecting one's culture and language, reconstructing and converting one's identity. It may lead to inner discomfort and confusion at some point. Also, a strong ethnic community can easily create semi-closed social environment for its members.

Next, I intend to maintain the discussion about immigrants' communities and understand what the position and influence of immigrant communities is on the acculturation attitudes of their individual members.

2.5   Community organizations

Many studies are made around ethnic identity and community trying to solve this last issue. Breton (1964) put an emphasis on the economic importance of ethnic communities saying that ethnic communities contain resources that have a significant influence on immigrants' adaptation. Ethnic communities can easily develop a formal structure. After all, they can contain religious, educational, political, recreational, national, professional, welfare, and mutual aid society's organizations (Majka, Mullan, 2002: 71-72). Breton (1964) claims that „the organizations' social, cultural, and economic resources develop forces that have the effect of keeping the social relations of the immigrants within the community's boundaries" (in Majka, Mullan, 2002: 72). An interesting typology of migrant community organizations and their functions was generated by Hack-Polay (2006). See figure 1.

Type of organization	Key function
Social community organization	-welfare solidarity -assistance with employment -education guidance -social events (e.g. weddings, religious, dancing parties)
Cultural survival community organization	-affirm identity -retain connection with roots -preserve heritage, language and religion
Political community organization	-political mobilization -national government in exile -lobbying of foreign powers

Figure 1 A typology of migrant community organizations
Source: Hack-Polay, D. D. (2006: 14)

According to Gold (1992), ethnic communities manipulate collective assets and organizations that help community members deal with and avoid discrimination factors in labor market. However, there are some critics (Desbarats, 1986; Sanders and Nee, 1987) who claim that ethnic communities and enclaves have a negative impact on community members. Sometimes ethnic communities benefit employers and disadvantage workers. Therefore, in the empirical part of the thesis I intend to find out what type of community the Lithuanians' community in Skåne is, and what role and functions it has.

Valuable work about this issue is carried out by Birman, Trickett and Buchanan (2005). They discussed and separated two types of communities - Concentrated and Dispersed communities. Concentrated communities refer to strong and organized closed communities, with community's centers, schools, churches etc. Dispersed communities are ones whose members live in a distance from each other and communicate rather rarely. Birman, Trickett & Buchanan's (2005) research included two different Russian communities living in US. The results were that people living in a Concentrated community maintained a higher Russian identity. An interesting fact is that the greater the number of reported incidents of discrimination, and the more stressful these incidents were, the higher the Russian and the lower the American identity (Birman, Trickett, Buchanan, 2005: 97). Also, the relationship between the length of residence and the level of English language, identity, and behavior was stronger in the Dispersed Community, suggesting a faster process of American acculturation (ibid: 93). In the Concentrated Community, they previously found that acculturation to the American culture was substantially negatively related to Russian acculturation, particularly with respect to identity, suggesting that the pattern for these adolescents was to identify with either one culture or the other (ibid: 89). The issue here is if these results can be generalized and applied to different countries and ethnic groups, and even to a different historical time and situation.

2.6 Theoretical framework and definitions

The theoretical discussion shows that various definitions and perspectives can be applicable for my research. Also, according to Phalet, the "meanings of key concepts such as integration, assimilation, and multiculturalism differ considerably between Canada, Australia [...], the United States, and most European countries" (in Berry et al, 2006: xi). Therefore, it is necessary to resolve the definitional puzzle in order to make this piece of research clear and apprehensible. So I have decided to elaborate the most valuable theoretical framework which could help analyze my empirical findings.

As already mentioned before, there is a wide range of literature and various directions of defining the concept of diaspora. In this research I will mostly appeal to diaspora as an ethnic community. I will base my argument on Sheffers (2003) thoughts about ethno-national diaspora and its members who "regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin" and who came to the host country via voluntary or forced migration (Sheffer, 2003: 9). So I will leave behind the importance of long history and practice and focus on ethnic community as a part of society's social structure.

Talking about identities, the definition by Yuval-Davis (1997) reveals crucial aspects and important elements:

> Identities – individual and collective – are specific forms of cultural narratives which constitute commonalities and differences between self and others, interpreting their social positioning in more or less stable ways (1997: 43).

Identity, self-construct or self-awareness has lots of deeply hidden psychological aspects. However, I am not in the position of being able to perfectly reveal these, therefore my focus will be on more or less visible features of identity and subjective perceptions.

Culture, as a social construct, cannot be left outside the dispute about identification and acculturation. I prefer Yuval-Davis' (1997) thought that culture or 'cultural stuff' has to be described as "a rich resource, usually full of internal contradictions, which is used selectively by different social agents in various social projects within specific power relations and political discourse in and outside the collectivity" (ibid: 43).

The term ethno-cultural is common in this research. It refers, as Berry et al (2006: 10) described, to the ethnic and cultural qualities that are characteristic of every group living together in a society (immigrants and natives).

The discussion about 'self' and 'the other' will rise basically from multiculturalism theories. I am not going to focus on a single author but rather try to involve insights of some of the most significant authors in the multiculturalism field (Yuval-Davis, 1997; Rundblom, 1994; Castles, 2002). A great part of the theoretical framework belongs to different acculturation strategies. I frame the term acculturation according to Berry and Sam's (1997) description: that acculturation is a process of cultural change in collective and individual behaviors that allow a minority group to interact with the norms and habits of a dominant social system. The principal position will be given to Berry's (1997) acculturation strategies, which are integration, separation, marginalization and

assimilation. Since the research question is inquiring discussion about community organizations, Hack-Polay's (2006) proposed typologies of community's organization will contribute to this part. The typology consists of three different types of organizations: social community organization, cultural survival community organization, and political community organization. In addition, it will be interesting to see what kind of community – Concentrated or Dispersed (a typology made by Birman, Trickett and Buchanan (2005)) – Skåne's Lithuanian community is.

To conclude, multiculturalism, acculturation strategies and organization typologies will be the central pivot of analysis of empirical findings. The following part of the thesis will broaden the picture of theoretical framework by resolving it into detailed elements and criteria.

2.7 Elements and constructs

In this section my task is to deal with the elements and criteria which will be the axis for the empirical research part. Theories provide a wide framework of the discussion; however, in order to apply them to the empirical research, it is crucial to reveal detailed elements and constructs behind that framework.

The first important block of elements is the matter of identification. There are two main directions: host country (in this case Swedish) identity and ethnic identity (Lithuanian). What kind of identity do the immigrants declare? How do immigrants define themselves? How, in their opinion, are they perceived by 'the other'? The construct of ethnic identity includes statements that encompass liking for ethnic food, ethnic names, and ethnic literature, raising children in traditional ethnic ways, doing business with ethnic group members, and so on (Nesdale, 1999: 1493). Host country identification can be based on daily relations with locals, attending meetings and fests, marrying locals, maintaining business interactions etc. These criteria draw the initial line between different senses of belonging. It will also help to realize the very basic aspects of particular immigrant community. What kind of functions does community have? Why does it have a high or small number of active members?

The second step of analysis is based on cultural differences from the host country. How similar or different is the ethnic background from the foreign one? This also touches on the basic principles of religious belief, power relations, family construct and others. This element is important to interpret the subjective feelings and interpretations of 'self' and 'the other'. It also directly leads to the next criteria of acculturation attitudes which can predict immigrant adaptation. Five domains of life concern acculturation: cultural traditions, language, marriage, social activities, and friends (Berry et al, 2006: 59). According to Berry (1997), there are two main important aspects which conclude this issue: maintaining relationship with other group or maintaining cultural identity. This is the explicit measurement of the extent to which immigrants consider it to be important to maintain or reject their ethnic identity, and to adopt versus reject the host culture (Nesdale, 1999: 1500). These measurements show which

acculturation strategy – integration, assimilation, separation or marginalization – is the most preferred one among the immigrants. See figure 2. This part also contributes to the discussion of the immigrant's community formation. Do immigrants feel a need to join the community? What are the reasons behind cherishing or rejecting community relations?

		Maintain Cultural Identity	
Maintain Relationship With Other Group		+	-
	+	Integration	Assimilation
	-	Separation	Marginalization

Figure 2 Berry's acculturation strategies
Source: Ricucci (2010: 421)

To continue, the significant part of the constructs helps to ascertain what kind of community organization can be found in the empirical case. Since I have chosen to use the typologies of community organizations according to Hack-Polay (2006) and Birman, Trickett and Buchanan (2005), these elements must be taken into account: types of involvement into community's action, the context of the community, activities inside the organization, the direction of political attitudes, and reasons for joining or identifying oneself with the community.

The criterion of self-esteem and satisfaction of life manages the issue about relations between two different identities – ethnic and host societies. What does it say if one's self-esteem is high or low? This reflects immigrant's position in the society, whether he/she feels appreciated and reputable. As Phalet stated, "combining positive attitudes toward ethnic and national cultures, is most often related to psychological well-being and smooth sociocultural adaptation" (in Berry et al, 2006: xii). Obviously, psychological reasons lie behind various acculturation attitudes.

To conclude, host country identification, ethnic identification, cultural differences from the host country, maintaining relationship with other groups, activities in immigrant's community and reasons behind joining it, self-esteem and life satisfaction are the set of main constructs in this research. It is the basic frame which will guide me through empirical findings and interpretations of results. The following part of the thesis will explain and elaborate the way in which the empirical results will be obtained.

3 Methodology

This section of the thesis will be based on the findings from qualitative research. The intention of the thesis is to combine theoretical approaches with my empirical findings which could develop and enrich chosen theories, to reconstruct the contents of the subjective theory. First of all, I will discuss what knowledge this research will produce, what kind of methods has been used for the research, what the reasons behind my methodological choices are, and what kind of implications and difficulties I experienced. Second, I will continue with describing how the chosen elements and criteria for the data analysis will be integrated into an interview guide. Every step of analysis will be based on the theoretical framework described in detail in the previous section of this thesis.

3.1 Design of the study

In general, the goal of the science is to produce new objective knowledge about nature, society, and way of thinking and to reflect changes in different systems. The present issue of immigration and integration is a part of the social science, which, according to definition, analyses structures and functions of social systems and relations between these systems and separate individuals. The development of social science has a goal of making a better society by gaining more objective knowledge of its mechanisms. Since immigration has a great influence on society's structure and various relations, the knowledge about this process contributes to better understanding of social reality and increased public awareness. As Gerard Delanty (1997) stated:

> It is increasingly recognized that our knowledge of social reality is a construction of social science in the sense that social scientific knowledge is a reflexive knowledge that constitutes its object. Clearly, the object, social reality, exists independently of what social scientists do, but there is a sense in which social science itself plays an active role in the shaping of knowledge (1997: 114).

Some scientists believe that even if all possible science questions are answered, daily life problems still remain untouched. However, in my opinion, a deeper understanding and comprehensive interpretations of immigration and integration in specific contexts is a step further to construct a scenery of better society and to help immigrants and locals deal with possible problems like changes in identity constructions, clashes of the cultures etc. Mannheim (1993), who established constructivism, claimed that "knowledge was always produced from a specific social

and historical standpoint, reflecting the interests and culture of the groups in question" (in Delanty, 1997: 113). This proves that there is no end point of constructing and developing theories of immigration, integration and community formation, because the context and social actors are changing all the time, new processes and relations emerge in the scene, and that requires an ongoing process of updating knowledge and understanding.

My research question is based on a *how* and *why* angle which, again, obviously requires understandings and interpretations. Knowledge, according to Delanty (1997: 114), is not neutral or objective; it is a social construction. The goal of this thesis is not really to produce completely new knowledge but rather to develop and supplement already existing ones with new variables and possible situations. The knowledge this research produces should benefit in making a fuller picture about small immigrant communities, in-between relations and consequences to acculturation and identity changes. I am well aware that the results of the empirical research are dependent on participants' personal experiences, their way of life and understanding. So the interpretations of the results build better understanding of this particular issue. To repeat, it is really important to me that my research would have its echoes in social reality in one or another conformation.

Immigration and integration are issues entangled with one's personal feelings, reasons behind one's choices and one's perceptions of belonging. These issues need to be resumed constantly in the field of social science. As I mentioned above, the knowledge produced about immigration and integration is not static or immutable, it is rather dependent on historical context, political and social situation. Immigration flows and consequences for the host (and homeland) societies are in the spotlight of local and regional politicians, economical actors and media for that matter. Immigrant communities are important phenomenon in a social, political, economical and cultural life. I would call them 'pending members' of host societies. I mean that in some cases their role, position and relevance are still quite unclear and contradictory. This matter needs to be further discussed and interpreted to get deeper understanding of what is going on in the small immigrant communities, what kind of relations remain inside it and how this affects the acculturation angle. Therefore, the case study of belonging (broadly defined) seemed to be the most suitable method which helps gain better understanding.

3.2 Case study

I want to start my argument about choices of methods by quoting Gerring (2007):

> Sometimes, in depth knowledge of an individual example is more helpful than fleeting knowledge about large number of examples. We gain better understanding of the whole by focusing on a key part (2007: 1).

This quote reflects the reasons behind the choice of the case study of the social group, in particular Lithuanians living in Southern Sweden. The complexity of social behaviour and the causality between various problems are the key issues in favour of case-based analysis. According to Gerring (2007), the aim is "to preserve the texture and detail of individual single cases features that are often lost in large-N cross-case analyses" (2007: 5). Even if most of the scientists agree on the value of the mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, I will base my research on qualitative methods because of the nature of research question itself. The research question requires understanding of the reasoning, feelings, subjective points of view and causality. Also Lithuanians are wide spread in the whole region, mostly lacking any contacts with each other and there are no formal data bases with the necessary information, so it would be big challenge to reach the sufficient number of respondents for the quantitative research.

Hammersley and Gomm (2007) claimed that if you decide to use a case study as a method then there are basically three options: testing hypothesis or theory, developing a new theory or explaining a particular situation for its own sake. With the help of theoretical approaches and this case study, my purpose is to develop immigration and integration theories, supplement it with new humanistic understandings, and add new experience.

To repeat, the goal of this case study is to contribute to theoretical discussion. According to Berry et al. (2006), most of the migration theories tend to overlook or underestimate the great diversity of acculturation strategies and experiences at the individual level of immigrants (2006: x). In addition, one can argue that studies, that seek to identify the features of the immigrant and receiving people and settings that may support or undermine these processes, are missing (ibid: xiii).

Lithuanians in Sweden as a case study has been chosen purposefully. Obviously, next to the lack of previous research about this case, also my own nationality dictated this particular interest. The particular region Skåne was chosen because of few practical reasons - I am capable of finding and meeting people at their convenient time and place. Also this region has high immigration rate, including immigrants from Lithuania, compared to other Sweden regions. According to Statistics Sweden, Skåne region has the third highest immigration rate in Sweden[1].

According to Berry et al. (2006), "no individual can be understood unless that person's cultural background is first understood" (2006: 14). The context of culture requires not only an understanding of cultural background of immigrant groups, but also the elaboration of some features of the society of settlement. Some authors call Sweden as a *recent receiving society* with intermediate level of their acceptance of pluralism (ibid: 16-19). The level of welfare standards is high. Permanently residing immigrants have access to social, medical and educational provisions. Learning Swedish language is provided by the state free of charge. Berry et al. (2006) stated that "in Sweden there is a distinction made between an immigration policy and a policy for the integration of immigrants" (2006: 35) and that three concepts of integration policy can be distinguished: equality (availability of the social welfare system to all permanent residents of Sweden, irrespective of citizenship), freedom of choice (abandoning

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[1] Information from www.scb.se

assimilation and accepting cultural diversity) and partnership or the need of reciprocity (2006: 36). This is the basic context of Sweden as a receiving country.

I agree with Gerring (2007: 146), who said that to conduct a single case study implies that one should at least think about a broader set of other possible and similar cases. One of the oldest diaspora of Lithuanians lives in the United States. This community has a long history, formal organizational structure and it is well discussed. Therefore, I feel that I wouldn't really benefit the science of expanding the discussion more. I am also aware that rest of the Baltic countries (Latvia and Estonia) have quite similar situation related to the issue of emigration. However, Estonia is the most developed country from the Baltic countries and the immigration flows are mostly directed to Finland[2]. Latvia, on the other hand, could be also the case in this research but due to the language and cultural differences I decided to better take Lithuania as a case study.

Inevitably, there is a downside of the single case study as a method. Gerring (2007: 6) successfully identified the main points of the critic: biased case selection, informal and undisciplined research designs, subjective conclusions, weak empirical leverage, causal determinism and no generalization. However, generalizing is very controversial issue in social science. I do not intend to totally generalize all the results which I will get from this study. The results of the analysis why immigrants cherish or resist community relations, how it affects their acculturation attitudes are "valid independently of and outside specific contexts" (Flick, 1998: 234). In addition, since there is a lack of research about relatively small immigrant communities, the analysis of Lithuanian community relations in Skåne, the implications of ethnic and host identification will provide valuable insights which will highly contribute and be generally relevant to the future studies, comparisons or theoretical developments, or the knowledge could be easily recognized in different contexts (Stake, 2007). According to Stake (2007), the main strength of case study is "that it provides vicarious experience, in the form of full and thorough knowledge of the particular" (2007: 61). Therefore, in-depth interviews add a good value to the case study. My research questions consider personal feelings and experiences which can only be answered by particular in-depth interviews.

3.3   Focus groups

Semi-structured deep interviews in focus groups and one individual interview were used for generation of valuable empirical data. I have chosen this form of the interviews because, according to Flick (1998: 83), by conducting semi-structured interviews the interviewed subject's viewpoints are more likely to be expressed than by using highly-structured interviews or questionnaires. In fact, spontaneity in answering the questions is crucial in this research, because part of the questions and issues deals with the emotional part of the experiences. Therefore, it is most likely to get honest answers

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[2] See http://www.stat.ee/population

while having face-to-face interviews. I interviewed 10 Lithuanians living in Skåne region (South Sweden). This number was a halfway between resources available and quality of the interviews.

The selection of respondents for focus groups plays an important role in this research; it is very important part in the qualitative research (Flick, 1998). According to Flick (1998), depending on how the research question is formulated, one has to adjust the sampling process so that one gets the best data that will answer the questions (1998: 62-63). I have considered several aspects when choosing the respondents for my focus groups. First of all, respondents should be living in Skåne longer than 2 years and intend to stay in Sweden. I excluded exchange, temporal students and seasonal workers from the sample because of a different experience and social status. Second, I have chosen to interview adults and exclude adolescents. So the age of the interviewees varied from 28 to 42 years old. In order to avoid gender bias answers, an equal number of men and women were chosen. Also, the respondents were of a different marital status and education level. This way the answers were not single-minded. Furthermore, they had to have time to participate and had to agree to be the part of the study (Flick, 1998). However, they were informed that the interviews will be anonymous, participation voluntary, and responses will remain confidential. The first contact with the prospective focus group participant was found via personal contact. Successive sampling was based on the snow ball technique. Since I intended to interview Lithuanians who belong to the Lithuanian community in Skåne, and ones who do not belong, the snow ball technique helped to overcome the difficulty of finding contacts of Lithuanians who do not belong to the Lithuanian community in Skåne which is an accessible source of contacts. The description of interviewees (demographic variables) can be found in Appendix 1.

To continue, the respondents were asked to participate in two focus groups. They have chosen the time that was best for them. The first focus group was formed of 3 men and 2 women, the second one – of 2 men and 3 women. This way I tried to overcome the risk that the composition of people affects the discussion. Also, in each of the focus groups there were no married or living together couples. In this way, it was possible to get as many independent views and thoughts as possible. Also, I conducted the focus groups interviews with the help of another student, who took care of all practical issues and also made lots of very useful notes. Since I was conducting the interviews, he stayed more "passive", keeping an ear open for "unsaid things" and being able to follow the reactions of interviewees, how the questions affected them. One can consider the helper role as a possible threat to the focus group validity, but I think that having another person helped respondents to relax and feel more interactive and me as an interviewer focus on the questions and answers.

In addition, I interviewed the chairperson of the Lithuanian community in Skåne. I met her in an informal environment and conducted an in-depth interview face-to-face. Also, I interviewed her after conducting the interviews within the focus groups. My intention was to get a full picture from the ordinary community members first, in order to be able to contrast and compare this information while talking to chairperson. She provided additional historical and statistical information about the community. This interview was crucial in understanding the philosophies behind the formal Lithuanian community's organization and support networks.

3.4 Possible difficulties

I am well aware of the possible problems and cross-purposes of the focus groups interviews which could influence the level of validity and reliability of this study. I, as an interviewer, and interviewees had different life experience such as job situations, social status etc. Therefore we all have different amount and quality of knowledge and perceptions. In order to avoid the situation when generalizations and interpretations make no sense (people considering different things while using the same words), I sorted out the main definitions which were the central key of the interviews. Also, I introduced myself and my fellow student and the purpose of this research. That helped to raise the feeling of trust (Flick, 1998). The researcher's own assumptions regarding the world, life, and people influence interpretations of qualitative findings. So I, as an interviewer, tried to stay out of my own subjective feelings, attitudes and judgments as much as possible. Since we all speak the same language, I haven't considered it as an interference of communication. In addition, some scholars believe that in a focus group there is a risk of "group-think", which is a group dynamic phenomenon meaning that a group of people receive a common set of accepted views. However, I would argue that this would only benefit to my study because it is crucial how Lithuanians reflect together about the issues, how they form opinions and express their beliefs. Also power relations are inevitable and important aspect in focus groups. Some respondents were more active, focusing on their strong opinions. One could feel that they had ruling attitudes and roles in the groups. This kind of situation created the environment of real life relations and possible structure of society.

Another possible difficulty of semi-structured interviews is the problem of "mediating between the input of the interview guide and the aims of the research question on the one hand and the interviewee's style of presentation on the other" (Flick, 1998: 94). Few unexpected directions of discussions that happened during the interviews were not an obstacle but rather valuable contribution to the research itself because they provided ulterior motives and reasons.

The focus group interviews were carried out in Lithuanian language. This language is native for me, as an interviewer, and for all the respondents. This aspect provided the ability to discuss all the issues in a native language and therefore it reduced possible misunderstandings and miscommunication. The respondents could easily express their personal opinions and thoughts. However, while analyzing the results, I had to translate their answers and experiences into English language. It might be suspected that some important aspects or insights might be lost or mistranslated in a process. But I was aware of these circumstances and tried to make sure that all the definitions, questions and expressions are equally understood for the respondents, me as an interviewer and the reader. Therefore, I believe that the validity of this research was not reduced by translating answers from one language to another.

In my opinion, I successfully overcame possible problems related to this qualitative method and the data I got is valid and valuable. Preparing an interview guide contributes to the validity of the research because, according to Flick (1998), asking the wrong questions is a big error which reduces the level of validity (1998: 225). The next

section will present the interview guide – how the questions in the focus groups will help answer the research questions and structure the analysis.

3.5   The interview guide

Creating an interview guide requires operationalizing theories and concepts into "everyday language" (Flick, 1998). The main demographic questions were asked at the beginning while introducing ourselves. The open questions were based on the questions that are raised by the purpose of the thesis. Questions were theory-driven, and oriented to my theoretical presuppositions. Many additional questions were asked spontaneously during the interview. This helped making interviewees' implicit knowledge more explicit (Flick, 1998: 82). The narratives were analyzed and interpreted from a perspective that highlights how Lithuanian immigrants feel in Sweden, what kind of relations they have with the community, etc. The interview guide in English with the main questions can be found in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 presents the questions in Lithuanian language which was originally used during the focus groups interviews. Now, I will shortly discuss the main questions and how they are related to the elements and constructs of this research.

First of all, one of my goals of this research is to understand Lithuanian immigrants' behavior and social situation in Sweden. In order to achieve that, I asked them what the main reasons, for which they came to live in Sweden, were. This question was targeted to get to know focus groups participants, the reasons behind their choice of living in Sweden. This also reflected their feelings towards home country Lithuania and host country Sweden, and by comparing values (*better, safer* etc) respondents revealed their subjective choices of immigration.

The question regarding whether they identified themselves as members of the Lithuanian community in Sweden contributed to sorting out the puzzle of their identities – caught between influences from their ethnicity as well as from their host country. The following question if they belong to any community in Sweden had to reveal not only Lithuanians' personal feelings but also their ‚formal' belonging to ethnic community. In addition, they were also asked if they attended any activities organized by other Lithuanians, celebrated Lithuanian celebrations together with other members, got any help from Lithuanians living in their specific area, and felt in Sweden as at home. Host country identification could be recognized in the answers to questions like: do Lithuanian immigrants belong to any Swedish organization?, are they engaged in Swedish politics?, do they present themselves as non-Lithuanians in some ways?, how many Swedish friends they have?

A block of questions about the Lithuanian community was given to interviewees. To get particular knowledge about community organizations, it was necessary to know if the Lithuanian community has any formal structure. To develop this issue, questions about the community's organization activities and relations with local municipality were asked. It was interesting to know if people were active members of the

community, or rather passive, only identifying themselves with Lithuanians in Sweden in general.

The willing to know more personal feelings and experience about identification was hidden under the question if it was important to Lithuanian immigrants to belong to the Lithuanian community. To establish acculturation attitudes was committed to questions about maintaining their Lithuanian cultural identity or more adopting Swedish culture. Also an important factor was an answer to the question of who they would ask if they needed advice on family matters/help or support/wanted to relax and have fun. The cultural issue was solved by asking focus groups participants how similar Lithuanian and Swedish cultures were to one another. How did they think they were different or similar to Swedes? What about religious beliefs or attitudes towards social structure of life?

The question of how often they felt isolated from others and whether they ever have felt discriminated against or unappreciated helped to reveal self-esteem measurement. The question regarding discrimination was based in two dimensions: formal (job hunting, housing, welfare etc) and more informal (Swedes in daily life situations etc). Focus group participants were asked if they felt that they lived now a more satisfying life than before coming to Sweden.

The questions discussed above are simply the frame of the interview. They helped not to struggle between various issues and focus on the main themes and subjects. The next part of thesis will consist of result and analysis of empirical findings. I will review the answers of the focus groups participants, analyze and interpret them.

4 Empirical analysis

The interviews with Lithuanians living in Sweden revealed significant amount of issues and problems which rise from their situation as immigrants. Some answers were quite predictable while at the same time some thoughts and experiences were surprising and added a great value to this research. I structured the result analysis in a way that each part concerns one block of elements and constructs. First, I will discuss the issue of ethnic and host identification, and reasons for migration based on the findings from the interviews. One of the biggest parts of analysis will cover the issue of the Lithuanian immigrant community, followed by a thorough discussion about acculturation attitudes. Then the analysis will be finished with some insights about Lithuanians self-esteem or life satisfaction.

4.1 Reasons behind migration

Migration is the outcome of ongoing political, economical or social processes in the countries concerned. Lithuania is a fairly young country with unstable political trends and national economy in the making. Therefore, transnational or global processes affect Lithuania deeply. Price fluctuations in global energy markets and dependency on economic situation in neighboring countries are the conditions of weak economical situation in Lithuania. All the respondents named the financial situation of their households as the main reason for leaving Lithuania. A female respondent (R1) said that she and her husband could not manage to fully and properly support their two infant children in Lithuania, although they both are highly educated. In her opinion, Sweden was a country of a migration choice because "it looked like it will not only provide a possibility of fair financial salary but also it will be a place where your education matters" (R1). A male respondent added that also Lithuanian media influenced his decision to migrate to Sweden. He explained:

> (R2): Lithuanian media constantly shapes the positive image of Sweden as a nice country for immigrants. From time to time I was reading articles about immigrant success stories, how great is here, how friendly people are [...], how employers treat you well…

In the Lithuanian mindset Scandinavian countries have always been a role model of nearly perfect welfare, almost impossible to achieve elsewhere. In my opinion, this is one of the reasons why every success story of Lithuanian immigrants in Sweden becomes of such a big importance and gets fully covered in media. It creates the image

of a perfect place to live, or, in male respondent's words, "a country where all your dreams come true" (R2). Another interesting reason for choosing Sweden was mentioned by a male constructor, and totally agreed by others. In his own words:

> (R4): There is always Great Britain! But I was sick and tired of the culture and behavior [...] of Lithuanians there. Way too many of them, seriously! Me and my family, we didn't want to live surrounded by their community, where everybody drinks, fights, steals etc. I already had it in Lithuania, wanted to run away from it. Sweden is different than Ireland [...]

A female respondent (R1) also mentioned that she is ashamed of Lithuanian immigrants in Ireland or Spain. Therefore, Sweden seemed to be a place which is not yet occupied by Lithuanians. These answers gave an interesting tone to the rest of the interviews. At some points, interviewees became a bit ironic while talking about their community relations. While a couple of respondents agreed that they also feel a bit ashamed of Lithuanian immigrants, they still mentioned that one of the reasons of coming to Sweden was that they were invited by their Lithuanian friends who offered them possibility to live together and help find a job. One female respondent said:

> (R3): My friends invited me to come to Sweden. They had everything here: jobs, house and car. I had nothing at that time, just got divorced. I didn't really care about anything else except to get a decent paid job and change the environment [...]

Her answer indicated that economical reasons are very crucial aspects which encourage people to migrate. Interviewees with a high education level were especially disappointed about the situation in Lithuania, since they felt they have already contributed to better welfare by getting education and still they were not able to get employed or be respectively appreciated in a job market. According to female respondent (R1), she got tired of "being a well educated and skilled saleswoman in a supermarket for minimum wage". It is obvious that the Lithuanian job market is over-crowded by highly educated workers; there is a bigger supply than demand of those graduates. Uneducated people end up in the same circle of unbalanced job market with relatively smaller possibilities to be employed. A male respondent noticed:

> (R4): I was working as a constructor in Lithuania too, but, come on, for few times smaller salary. Then why not come here (to Sweden) and live a decent life? Lithuania will be my homeland forever; it will not go anywhere [...]. But I want to fight for me and my family, enough fighting for my country [...]

Lithuania became independent in 1991, so respondents were adolescents at that time. For many years they all believed and fought for better future of the country, however, the situation disappointed them. The adverse labor market and national economy stimulated huge waves of emigration from Lithuania. According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, in the last 3 years 121,9 thousand (3,6 %) of Lithuanians emigrated from the country. To conclude, the most common reason for migration is to improve financial well-being.

4.2 Immigrant community

Culturally plural societies are composed not only of the immigrants but also of the numerous ethno-cultural communities that persist for many generations following migration (Berry et al, 2006: 1). Protecting ethnic communities' rights and preserving their culture is the sign of multiculturalism. In many countries, immigrant communities have built their own associations, with a view to provide social support, preserve culture, and protect their rights. (Phalet, 2006: x). Different community organizations can have various functions: social, cultural, economic, religious etc. According to Hack-Polay (2006), "migrant organizations represent a way of establishing or maintaining norms and values within a population of newcomers that share similar characteristics" (2006: 13). One of the goals of this thesis is to see what kind of community organization and inside relations are being fostered by Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne.

In the focus groups, respondents were first asked if they identify themselves as members of Lithuanian community in Sweden. All of the respondents answered positively. The woman said:

> (R6): I really think so… if someone asks where I am from; I say I am from Lithuania. Hm… Automatically I am kind of attached to the rest of Lithuanians here, to the Lithuanian community [...].

There was an obvious borderline between identifying oneself with the community and practically belonging to it. The answers of the respondents gave an idea that identifying oneself with the Lithuanian community is natural and inevitable state of mind. Even according to the formal statutes of the central Lithuanian community in Sweden (see the latter discussion), all Lithuanians living in Sweden are considered to belong to the Lithuanian community. It is like a label which the immigrant gets when crossing the borders of the host society. Also, it is a label which locals acknowledge. Therefore, even if they all identify themselves as members of the Lithuanian community, when asked if they formally belong to the community, answers were different. Only 3 respondents stated that they belong to the Lithuanian community, which means that they attend the meetings, celebrate the most important celebrations, and help organize various activities with the rest of members. An interesting insight was shared by Andrius Užkalnis, a Lithuanian writer and journalist, in his article „Not everybody loses one's heart to communities and collectives". He claimed that Lithuanians had enough of collectivism in the times of Soviet Union when every aspect of social life was based on collective responsibility, various collective ranks (as chairman, secretary etc) and unconditional membership. He said that usually Lithuanian immigrants „are hostile to collectivism and more than anything they appreciate the possibility to be independent and do things in a way they like – it is inconsistent with the love to community"[3].

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[3]Lithuanian newspaper: http://www.tiesa.com/naujienos/3763/bendruomenes-ir-kolektyvai-ne.html

The crucial information and helpful insights about the Lithuanian community in Skåne was given by the chairperson (II) of the community during the individual interview. She explained that the Lithuanian community in Skåne, established in 2008, is a branch of the central Lithuanian community in Sweden. At the moment, there are 300 active members in the central Lithuanian community in Sweden, and approximately 20 in Skånes Lithuanian community. However, according to its statute, community members are considered to be all Lithuanians living in Sweden. According to Statistics Sweden, there were 6644 Lithuanians officially registered in 2010[4]. The highest percentage of Lithuanians lives in Stockholm county and in the Skåne region. The main goal of the Lithuanian community in Sweden is to preserve and cherish Lithuanism and Lithuanian customs, propagate a right and positive image of Lithuania, and to promote better communication between Lithuania and Sweden[5].

Lithuanian community in Skåne is neither functioning according to strict formal management levels nor is highly based on regulations. Instead, there is only a board (consisting of a chairperson, a paymaster and a secretary), which is responsible for keeping contact with the central Lithuanian community in Sweden[6] (based in Stockholm) and with the local municipalities. The board and its meetings are necessary for the Lithuanian community in Skåne to be considered as an official branch of the central Lithuanian community in Sweden. Lithuanian immigrants are on the list of top 10 fastest growing ethnic communities in Sweden. Since 1991, the number of Lithuanians immigrating to Sweden has increased significantly (see Appendix 4)[7]. So, the community has a clear potential of growing and becoming an important agent in the social life of Skåne's Lithuanian immigrants.

The chairperson of the Lithuanian community in Skåne explained why this community still unify quite small amount of members compared with total number of Lithuanian immigrants in the region. The chairperson said:

> (II): It is not easy to motivate Lithuanians to join the community. Or even to find them… Sometimes I feel that they don't trust me or others, I don't know, it just feels like fighting the wind sometimes [...]. Even the members are quite passive… only when they need help or feel lonely…

To continue, it is interesting to understand why the Lithuanian community in Skåne remains relatively small and passive actor. The chairperson brought up some important features of the community which influences the situation at this juncture. First, it is the specific context of community, as physical distances. Lithuanians in Skåne are scattered in all 33 municipalities. As the chairperson explained:

> (II): …obviously we all live quite far from each other [...]. I think you are supposed to have a significant attraction or relation with your community that make you spend your time on traveling to meeting places...

Birman, Trickett and Buchanan (2005) discussed this issue thoroughly and took the example of immigrants from former Soviet Union resettling in two different community

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[4] Information from http://www.scb.se/
[5] See http://www.lietuviai.se/index.php?page=apie-mus
[6] The official website of Lithuanian community in Sweden is www.lietuviai.se
[7] The numbers do not include children born in Sweden for Lithuanian parents.

contexts. They came up with the typology of two types of the communities – Concentrated and Dispersed. Based on this typology, the Lithuanian community in Skåne can be called a Dispersed one, which means that members live in a distance of each other and communicate rarely. Birman, Trickett and Buchanan (2005) concluded that there are a few implications which influence the differences of the level of acculturation, identity changes and language learning[8].

Another important feature of the community is its key functions or reasons for active (or passive) membership. Many social scientists suggest that religion is a powerful source of belonging and attraction; it "promotes social solidarity by dealing with situations of emotional stress" (Hack-Polay, 2006: 23). According to Kinnvall (2004), "the combination of religion and nationalism is a particularly powerful response in times of rapid change and uncertain futures" (2004: 741). Religion is a cause that can provide answers to those in need (Kinnvall, 2004: 742), for example to immigrants who find themselves in a situation of sudden possibility of identity changes. According to a research[9], around 60,2% of Lithuanians are not active Catholics and they attend church only for special occasions or major holidays. All respondents confirmed this point by saying that they only celebrate the most important catholic celebrations (Easter and Christmas) with their family and relatives, otherwise – they do not feel any need to be active church member. A female respondent reflected on this by saying:

> (R8): Christmas and Easter are family celebrations [...]. If we want to go to church, we do that... but I don't feel a need to be surrounded by tens of Lithuanians here... it is only family time.

So it is clear that religion is not an important factor which consolidates Lithuanians and stimulates them to join the community. In contrast, one of the main activities and attraction centers of community in Skåne is the Lithuanian language school for children, were they can learn Lithuanian language. It is based in Helsingborg. The local municipality gave the community the access to premises in the local university two days a month. This shows clear signs of multiculturalism. Multicultural policies provide conditions to cherish and preserve minority rights, such as language, customs or religion.

However, multiculturalism in a host society can be implemented only as long as the minority culture and the local culture do not clash. Human rights and basic values of the host society are always being considered while translating multiculturalism into reality. According to Yuval-Davis (1997), multiculturalism can be considered as a form of the welfare state in which the recognition of cultural differences enriches and strengthens democracy by three basic factors: "that the values of specific cultures might have important values in their own right which might enrich the overall society; that the social organization of the minority communities provides them with emotional support; and that the social organizations also provides more effective means of getting more resources and defending their collective rights" (1997: 56). So, a language school helps

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[8] These implications will be discussed in the following chapters of empirical analysis.
[9] http://www.sprinter.lt/site/lt/vidinis/menutop/9/home/publish/MjYzOzk7OzA=

immigrant children learn their ethnic language and also retain relations to their ethnic roots. The chairperson reflected on this issue by saying that:

> (II): The Swedish local government here is really contributory… I got the impression that they welcome the immigrant community's initiatives for various activities [...]. They willingly supported the idea of our language school for children… Not only by words but also by actions, as a premises and so on… This school still holds our small community together…

Focus groups respondents also mentioned various reasons why they joined the Lithuanian community. In fact, the Lithuanian language school for children appeared to be a significant factor in the choice. One female respondent stated:

> (R1): I go there for my children [...]. I wish that they hear and learn Lithuanian language, learn about customs and traditions, and simply remind them of Lithuanian roots…

According to Hack-Polay's (2006) typology of migrant community organization, the Lithuanian community pursues the functions of cultural survival community organization - to retain connection with the roots and to facilitate language learning. While analyzing the interviews further, it became clear that the Lithuanian community in Skåne has more important functions. Two of the respondent joined the discussion about the community's key functions by saying that when they first came to Sweden, they needed all possible contacts that could help find a job or a place to live. Both focus groups participants put an emphasis on the importance of networking, especially when someone is newly arrived in the foreign country. A male respondent explained:

> (R4): …in spite of the attitude to run from Lithuania and Lithuanians [...] I needed some help, you know, job, place to live, all legal issues etc. So I kind of joined the community after all [...]. But I got settled, learned the language, and made Swedish friends and friends of other nationalities… Just don't feel like putting any effort to the community anymore…

Hack-Polay (2006) distinguished social community organization as one possible type of migrant community organization. To reiterate, social community organization's key functions are welfare solidarity, assistance with employment, education guidance and organizing social events. Therefore, the Lithuanian community organization can be also referred as being this type. The last answer not only explained the reason for joining the community, but also revealed why there is a lack of active participation in the community. Respondents discussed that the more one's life successfully fits into the local social context, the less active one is in his/her ethnic community. As Hack-Polay (2006) stated that: "instead of freeing the individual, the community organization could alienate them, confining them to dealing only with people that look like them, speak their languages and dance their rhythms" (2006: 17). The chairperson shared similar idea in her interview:

> (II): You meet new members of the community quite often in the beginning of their stay here in Sweden… they have many questions, need some assistance… [...] but later they usually just stop being active or even don't show up at all… they feel accepted by local society.

Temporary membership and lack of interest are not able to create a strong community, various traditions and achieve succession. According to Hack-Polay (2006), it can be "established that migrant organizations may have two different aims: either to perpetuate particular norms and values or act as a brokerage for economic and social success and integration of its members who may be or may not be from the same cultural origin" (2006: 14). In addition, as previously discussed I have chosen to consider diaspora as ethno-national phenomenon which usually forms after voluntary or forced migration. So it is important to note that Lithuanians in Sweden can be called diaspora. First of all, all interviewees came to Sweden voluntarily. Second, they still consider themselves as Lithuanians, as being of the same ethno-national origin. Also the respondents feel ties with their homeland and have frequent contacts with their relatives and friends.

To conclude the insights of this part of the analysis, the Lithuanian community organization functions as social and cultural survival community organization. Its key functions are language learning (Lithuanian language school for children), retaining connection with roots and assistance with employment or other social issues.

4.3   Ethnic and host identification

Over time, the sense of self typically evolves (Phinney, 2003 in Berry et al, 2006: 5). People learn the language and customs of the new society; they begin to identify with locals to different degrees. Nesdale (2002) pointed out that the host and ethnic identification can be influenced by years of residence, being able to speak the host country's language, having knowledge of the customs of the host country, and following ethnic traditions and others.

Thus many different factors influence the degree to which immigrants identify themselves with the host society or maintain their ethnic identity. To start, one of the important factors is that of cultural differences. According to Nesdale (2002), when cultural dissimilarity increases, it might be expected that "immigrants would find themselves less able to simultaneously adopt a new and possibly discrepant set of cultural values and practices or to discard their own cultural identity in favor of the new cultural identity" (2002: 1492). To see whether this assumption is valid, the focus groups participants were asked to indicate how different or similar their culture and ethnic backgrounds are from Swedish culture. The first reaction was that Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne are "invisible" because of their similar physical appearance. One female respondent noticed:

> (R3): Nobody can notice that I am immigrant in the street or shop [...]. Until someone asks something assuming that I am Swedish… or I need some help or assistance. However, I always know that I am an immigrant…

The issue of 'visibility' was broadly discussed by Garbi Schmidt (2004), who talked about Islamic identity formation among young Muslims. Her idea was that "we all are visible by our very existence", however, she was questioning "what transforms us into something public, what places us in the center of public debate" (Schmidt, 2004: 33). She pointed out that "Muslims in the West are undoubtedly visible due to aspects of aesthetics and body politics, for example when practicing Muslim women dress differently than the majority, and when Muslim communities establish houses of prayers with an 'authentic' Islamic architecture" (Schmidt, 2004: 33). In spite of that, an immigrant's social status, the myths and stereotypes about a particular nationality or ethnicity create 'visibility' and challenge the host societies. In this case, physical 'visibility' is not really an issue, but in spite of that, Swedish people still have their own perception or experience about Lithuanians. According to a female respondent:

> (R6): I always think that Swedes have their own opinion about Lithuanians…It is a close country, and we have many immigrants in Norway and Denmark, so all Scandinavians are familiar with our nation at some level. Media has a lot to do with that… oh, we have a bad reputation in the world…

The majority of respondents agreed that any person comes to the country with the baggage of myths and stereotypes from the perspective of locals. Yuval-Davis (1997) also maintained that identities "often relate to myths of common origin and common destiny" (1997: 43). When asked if they ever practically experienced Swedes expressing their opinion about Lithuanians in different forms of action, only one of them answered positively. This male respondent said:

> (R9): I met some Swedish people [...] when I told them that I am from Lithuania, their reaction was already influenced by news about Lithuanians robbing houses in Scandinavian countries and eating swans in the parks of Dublin…

This can help make an assumption that perhaps the myths and stereotypes of their own Lithuanian identity create a tension between "us" and how "us" is perceived by "the other". I got the impression that nearly all Lithuanian immigrants have already been affected by numerous negative stories and stereotypes about natives all around the world, so it is difficult for them to realize that someone could have a different opinion or have no opinion at all. That is the reason why only one respondent experienced it in reality, but all of them are convinced that Swedish people have negative stereotypes about Lithuanian immigrants. This creates a tension between host and ethnic identification. One the one hand, 'non-visibility' should help to assimilate, but on the other, a few of the respondents added that even if their differences are "non-visible", they never forget their own ethnic identification. As Yuval-Davis (1997) said, "the non-visibility of the difference is of no help ultimately because of the fear that, hiding his essential difference, he can take over what is not rightfully his: he is, and for ever will remain so, a stranger" (1997: 48). As one male respondent said:

> (R10): I am not pretending to be Swedish even if they cannot tell it… It is how it is, I am an immigrant. Even if I learn their language, I am still foreigner here [...]. I was born in Lithuania, my roots are there…

Neither religious beliefs, nor significant differences in customs and traditions, have a big influence on host and ethnic identification. But it was interesting to notice that nearly all respondents perceive the Swedish standard of culture as being higher than Lithuanian standard. At this point of the discussion, the respondents referred to the term 'culture' as a set of behavioral standards, people's relations with the environment and the way of treating others around them. Therefore this aspect affects the level of willingness to assimilate with the host society. One male respondent explained that he feels a bit liable for keeping up with Swedish culture in general. All respondents agreed that the behavior of Swedish people in public spaces, the respect for nature and people and other features of high culture are the model of friendly and wish-to-be society. As Nesdale (2002) suggested, "when the host country is positively disposed toward immigrants, identification with both the host country and the immigrants' ethnic group is likely to be facilitated" (2002: 1492). One male respondent noticed:

> (R2): I wish that all Lithuanians were as Swedes…for sure… I am Lithuanian myself… but not proud of the way it is at home (in Lithuania), or how other Lithuanian immigrants act… I try to behave according to their standards because I really respect them. I wish my future children were Lithuanians with the indoctrinated parts of Swedish culture [...].

Some of the participants said that they think about themselves as part of two cultures or two different contexts – Swedish and Lithuanian. At the same time, they all still identify themselves as Lithuanians. One female respondent expressed her thought that since Lithuanian and Swedish cultures are not that different (while considering customs, traditions, religious gospel etc), she does not feel a pressure of making up her mind which identity to advocate more – Swedish or Lithuanian. All respondents shared similar opinions, by adding that they will always remain Lithuanians, respect the traditional culture and values, however, they also adopt some parts of the Swedish cultural identity. One female respondent explained:

> (R6): …some aspects of the Swedish culture are rather attractive to me, like the responsibility for public places, courtesy and others [...] I prefer those more than my own Lithuanian ones… but it is not such a big deal in general, we all are similar, except for our nationality… our cultures or customs don't contradict, I think… so I am fine with being of Lithuanian identity [...].
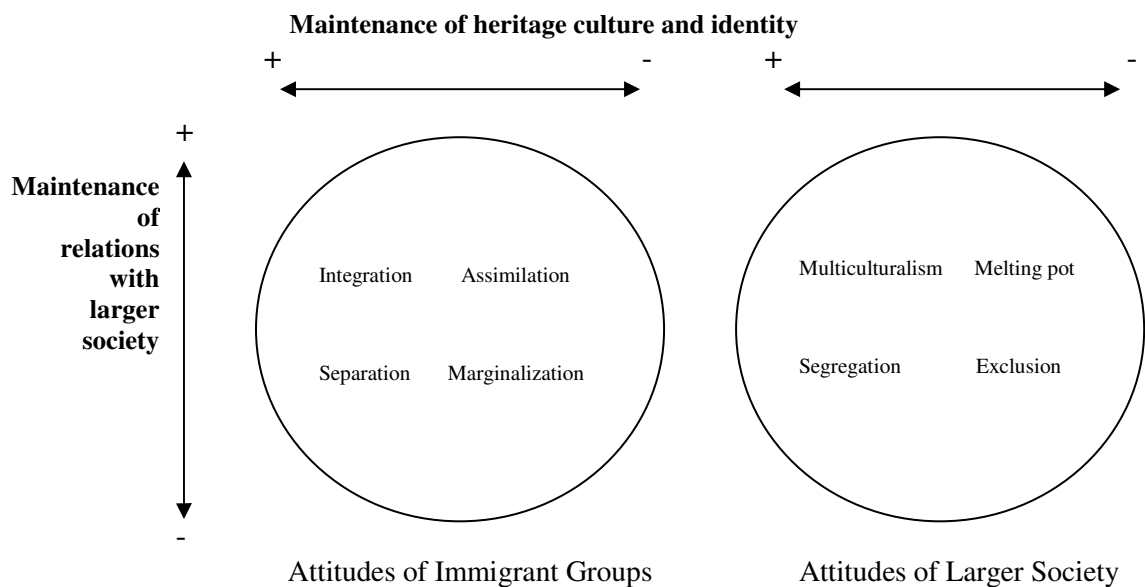
According to Nesdale (2002), "as cultural or physical differences increase, hence dominant-group rejection increases, it might be expected that immigrants would be less likely to identify with the host country, they would turn increasingly toward their own ethnic group, and their identification with it would increase" (2002: 1492). This implies that when differences decrease, immigrants would be more likely to identify with the host country. In this case, the cultural and physical differences between two countries are quite trivial, therefore immigrants do not feel a need to identify with the host country and lessen their ethnic identification. In my opinion, the more similar cultures are the easier to find a balance between ethnic and host identification.

According to Berry et al (2006: 5), "the ways in which immigrants' cultural identities change over time in a society of settlement is influenced both by their ethnic

community and by the larger society and the character of the relationships between them". Therefore, the next part of the analysis will discuss the issue of acculturation attitudes.

4.4 Acculturation attitudes

According to Yuval-Davis (1997), "all societies have a pool of cultural traditions, collective memories and 'common sense' in which the image of the 'others' and the 'rules' about how they should be handled are to be found"(1997: 47). Acculturation attitudes, as the major challenge confronting immigrants (Berry, 1988, 1990), can be analyzed from two different perspectives: those of particular immigrant groups and larger society (see Figure 4).

Maintenance of heritage culture and identity

	+		-		+		-

Maintenance of relations with larger society +

Integration	Assimilation		Multiculturalism	Melting pot
Separation	Marginalization		Segregation	Exclusion

-

Attitudes of Immigrant Groups   Attitudes of Larger Society

Figure 4 Acculturation attitudes of immigrant groups and of the larger society
Source: Phinney et al. (2006: 74)

In this case, the main focus will be given to analyze the acculturation attitudes of Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne. Phinney et al (2006) summed up the issues related to acculturation attitudes: "to what extent do immigrants or other non-dominant groups wish to have contact with (or avoid) people outside their group and to what extent do they wish to maintain (or give up) their cultural attributes?" (2006: 73). So according to Nesdale (2002), "while some immigrants might endorse an acculturation attitude of

identification with both their ethnic group and the host culture, others might choose to become assimilated (i.e., adopt the host-culture identity) or to live within their ethnic community and culture (i.e., maintain their ethnic identify and reject the host culture identity)" (2002: 1492).

The acculturation "experience depends to a larger degree on the conditions in the larger society" (Phinney et al. 2006: 74). As already mentioned before, multiculturalism and antidiscrimination policies are being successfully mixed in Sweden. Sweden is considered to be one of the most immigrant-friendly countries in Europe. This country has a number of distinguishable ethnic groups, all cooperating within a larger social system, which is a sign that multiculturalism has been translated into reality.

Focus group participants were asked if they tried more to maintain their Lithuanian cultural identity, or tried to adopt the Swedish culture totally. The majority of the respondents said that they definitely maintain Lithuanian cultural or ethnic identity by celebrating traditional holidays, preparing Lithuanian food, supporting various kinds of Lithuanian sports teams or being aware of the political situation in Lithuania. This means that they decided to maintain and develop their ethnic distinctiveness in society and that their own cultural identity and customs are of value and should be retained (Berry, 2006). One male respondent noticed:

> (R9): I read Lithuanian news daily; always see what is going on there…The internet helps to stay always connected to my country [...] also I am especially interested in Lithuanian basketball [...].

Another male respondent added:

> (R10): Sport is really unifying us [...]. It is a special feeling to meet with your Lithuanian friends and watch some game when Lithuanian national teams are playing… In those moments I feel the biggest pride of being Lithuanian [...] you cannot really fight your own nature.

It was interesting to notice that national sport was one of the key issues which unify Lithuanian immigrants and stimulate the feeling of ethnic belonging. Also political awareness was an important issue among the respondents. They all agreed that they are interested in the political situation in their homeland to some degree. However, none of the respondents have voted in the last municipal elections in the beginning of 2011, mainly because of practical issues[10]. A female respondent explained:

> (R8): It is interesting for me to follow the political debate in Lithuania, particularly before the elections… For me it is complicated to use the right to vote because of all the difficulties like going to embassy etc, but still I always know who is running for the offices, who are winning and so on…

When asked if the respondents are engaged in Swedish politics, the principal and the most common opinion was that they are aware about Swedish politics but mostly as long as it concerns immigrants' rights and related issues. So in spite of the fact that all respondents claimed maintaining their own ethnic identity, they also added that Swedish culture has a big influence to their consciousness. As discussed earlier, all the

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[10] Electronic voting is still not available in Lithuania.

respondents agreed that Swedish culture is a role model of the better society. Therefore, they respect it and are willing to adopt some aspects of Swedish cultural identity. A female respondent noticed:

> (R7): I am surrounded by Swedes everywhere, how can I ignore it? [...] I have chosen this country as my future place of residence, I must respect their ways of acting or doing things… I also think it contributes to the improvement of me as a person.

The focus groups participants were asked about the percentage of their Swedish friends. The answers varied from 40 to 60 % of all friends. The relatively high number of Swedish friends can be considered as the outcome of being passive members of their own ethnic community. The focus group participants claimed that they participate in various Swedish gatherings, celebrations or festivals, organize dinners or trips for their close Lithuanian, Swedish or other nationalities friends. The respondents also added that it was important for them to have Swedish friends, to be accepted because usually it is believed that "a cultural 'other', the immigrant or the member of other communities who do not share the same myth of common origin, is constructed as an alien and as such as potential 'enemy' who threatens the national cultural integrity and uniqueness (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 64). For the majority of the respondents having Swedish friends was the way to become one of 'them' and move from being 'the other' or stranger. As female respondent said:

> (R1): For me it[11] is a sign of being accepted to society [...]. We all have something to share together: our life experiences, perceptions and feelings… I feel like we can always learn from each other…

This answer refers to one of the central arguments of multiculturalism, which raises the idea of society as a 'mixed salad' rather than as a 'melting pot' (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 59). According to Yuval-Davis (1997), "although he/she does not share the myth of common origin with the group, he can bring new qualities into it which might entitle him to group solidarity" (ibid: 48).

To sum it up, the findings from the focus groups interviews revealed that the majority of Lithuanian immigrants favor identifying with both their ethnic group and the with host culture. So according to Berry's (2006) acculturation strategies, Lithuanian immigrants prefer integration over assimilation, separation or marginalization. Integration as an acculturation strategy can be explained by affirming that immigrants relatively equally maintain their own cultural identity and the relationships with the host society. As Berry (1992) explained that "the integration option implies some maintenance of the cultural integrity of the group (that is, some reaction or resistance to change) as well as the movement to become an integral part of a larger societal framework (that is, some adjustment)" (1992: 72).

The ways immigrants feel towards different acculturation strategies can be affected not only by the context of host country but also by the background or experience of immigrants themselves. In this case, how Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne perceive acculturation atmosphere in Sweden is also influenced by their behavioral history in

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[11] Note: 'It' refers to 'having Swedish friends'

Lithuania. As mentioned before, Lithuania is considered to be a highly xenophobic country, so Lithuanian immigrants have significantly low standards of evaluating Swedes' behavior related to immigrants. As a male respondent noticed:

> (R9): It is heaven for immigrants!.. It makes me laugh when I hear the discussion that Swedes are intolerant for foreigners, or discriminate them… when someone doesn't have anything else to complain about or to compare with [...]

It was obvious that even the most natural behavior or circumstances for Swedes, sometimes is perceived as a sign of respect and high culture by Lithuanian immigrants. Focus groups participants recited some features which, in their opinion, make Sweden to be immigrant friendly country. The most important are:

- Free possibility to learn the Swedish language (SFI – Swedish For Immigrants);
- Various classes or trainings that assist them with employment, housing etc are provided to immigrants;
- High quality of service in the public sector;
- Possibility to communicate and be assisted by public servants in English.

After all, the respondents argued that the Swedish government and society have successfully created an environment which helps deal with the problems or difficulties immigrants can confront. As Berry (1992) stated, "problems often do arise during acculturation; however, these are not inevitable and seem to depend on a variety of group and individual characteristics which enter into the acculturation process" (1992: 75). In the context of the host society and ethnic background, acculturation attitudes determine the level of general life satisfaction and self-esteem of immigrants. According to Berry (1992), "acculturation sometimes enhances one's life chances, and sometimes virtually destroys one's ability to carry on" (ibid: 75).

4.5 Self-esteem and life satisfaction

Ethnic and host identification changes, acculturation attitudes and many other psychological and social issues related to migration generate the level of the migrant's self-esteem and life satisfaction. The outcomes of migration can range from very positive adaptations through to very negative ones (Berry, 1992; Berry and Kim, 1998). This part of the analysis will try to reveal the most significant factors which enhance or diminish self-esteem and life satisfaction of Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne. Previous parts of the analysis have already provided some valuable insights about this issue, since self-esteem and life satisfaction is considered to be the outcome which sums up various aspects of the migrant's life.

According to Nesdale (2002), "it might be anticipated that the positivity of immigrants' attitudes toward their host country, and hence their likelihood of host-country identification would increase to the extent that they experience success in their

daily lives" (2002: 1491). One of the life satisfaction factors is successfully achieved goals. As already discussed, the main reason why Lithuanians migrated to Sweden was the possibility of solving their financial shortcomings. All of the respondents claimed that overall their financial well-being increased significantly. A female respondent said:

> (R3): I can afford now many things which were impossible in Lithuania [...]. Like to travel on holidays, to have dinner in the restaurant… I am able to save some money now, not like in Lithuanian – I was living from salary to salary…

A couple of respondents shared the interesting insight that, in the short run, a good salary upstages the importance of one's education. A male respondent of a high education explained it by saying that having well-paid unqualified job at the beginning of his residence in Skåne still made him feel appreciated and satisfied. However, he added that:

> (R10): In the short run I felt good, because I was really well-paid compared to my income in Lithuania. But after a while, I learned the language, settled down and started feeling a need to realize my potential [...]. After all, I am highly educated…

The respondents discussed this issue and came up with the conclusion that to find a job according to one's education is quite difficult, although not impossible. They stressed the importance of networking and Swedish language. Networking is directly related to being a member of the various communities or organizations. As already discussed, this is one the most important factors which stimulate Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne to join Lithuanian community even for a short period of time. It is also noteworthy that the inability to communicate using the language of the host society leads immigrants to socialize with people from their ethnic origins and social conditions, and this way to avoid the lack of their self-esteem in the host society (Hack-Polay, 2006). So, the language barrier is a crucial factor related to self-esteem and life satisfaction. All respondents agreed that being able to speak a local language is a great deal from the perspective of belonging to society. 2 of 10 respondents were still not able to communicate the Swedish language perfectly and therefore they stated it as one of the biggest and most important challenges they are facing at the moment. A female respondent told me:

> (R3): …it is difficult; I feel shame that I can't speak the language. It seems that everything else is fine [...], but I still can't express myself here or be completely confident living in this society…

Another female respondent commented on her opinion by saying that:

> (R6): I don't feel shame, no… But I can't make my own terms in this country… You know what I mean… I believe that a language is a must if you want to feel good here and require locals to take you seriously [...].

According to Hack-Polay (2006), the "failure to master the language - or to put it metaphorically - refusal to be linguistically colonized, leads to diminished chances of survival in the unknown social and cultural jungle" (2006: 7). The capability to master the language and this way to raise the immigrant's self-esteem depends on various

aspects like type of the community or acculturation strategy. As already discussed earlier, the Lithuanian community in Skåne fulfills the conditions of Dispersed community according to Birman, Trickett and Buchanan's (2005) typology. In their research, Birman, Trickett and Buchanan (2005) have concluded that "in Dispersed communities' immigrants tend to learn the local language much quicker and integrate to the host society more easily" (2005: 96). A female respondent reflected on this issue:

> (R7): You hear Swedish language every day and everywhere [...], it was not really difficult to learn it since I attended SFI, got really good basics… Then I started communicating in Swedish by saying simple sentences in the shops or cafes... [...] I came to Sweden to live here, so I am not going to spend all my time with Lithuanians, no, at the beginning it was a bit different, so I found the Lithuanian community in Skåne… But now, I don't even know them around in my neighborhoods and I feel perfectly fine about it [...]. Whenever I miss Lithuanians, I can always go back to Lithuania and meet my friends, or talk with them via internet, it is not a problem.

So even if the respondents claimed that they do not formally belong to the Lithuanian community in Skåne, to the question if they ever feel isolated from others, the common answer was 'no'. New means of communication and abilities to overcome the physical distances create multiple connections with people across the borders. As Yuval-Davis (1997) said, "given the new communication technologies, it is easier than ever for immigrant communities to keep in touch with the country of origin, as well as with other immigrant communities from the same country in other places" (1997: 65). Vertovec (2009) also argued that many migrants develop various modes of community cohesion, however, not necessary with others in their own locality (Vertovec, 2009: 78). These processes can be attributed to transnationalism which creates ways to abolish the sense of isolation in a host society and to raise life satisfaction.

The same conclusion was made by Nesdale (2002) who argued that "the more the immigrants wished to live according to the standards of their ethnic group, the more they socialized with ethnic group members and identified with their ethnic group, and the lower was their job status and self-esteem" (2002: 1501). My focus groups interviews showed that Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne prefer to maintain their ethnic identity as well as to adjust to Swedish society to some degree. In other words, they prefer an integration strategy. According to Van-Selm et al (1997), integration is related to feelings of competence and self-esteem (in Nesdale, 2002: 1489). In addition, the respondents claimed that Swedish society provides nearly all conditions to implement this strategy. According to Berry et al (2006), some surveys show that in Sweden public opinion does not support xenophobic offenses and felonies. However, people started feeling dissatisfied with various immigration policies and public debate slightly moved toward exclusion and intolerance. Therefore, "most of the traditional democratic parties in the center of the political field are revising their views on immigration policy and adopting elements of restriction and restraint" (Berry et al, 2006: 36).

The majority of the respondents mentioned that the latest elections at the end of 2010 were an important sign of Swedish society's attitudes. A female respondent said:

> (R8): At that point I felt a sudden need to hide my nationality or status in the Swedish society… I got this feeling like I was doing something wrong in this society, simply being an immigrant [...]. But nothing really has changed; I haven't

felt any different attitudes towards me or some direct action… Just some thoughts crossed my mind.

This illustrates that public opinions or particular policy actions or directions affect the immigrant's well-being and the level of confidence. It might be even expected that in the long run public opinion can change immigrants' acculturation attitudes in two directions: either moving it toward total assimilation (relinquishing one's cultural identity and moving into the larger society) or toward total separatism (when there are no substantial relations with the larger society, accompanied by a maintenance of ethnic identity) (Berry, 1992: 72).

To conclude, success in achieving one's goals, being able to communicate in a local language, acculturation attitudes and social conditions were directly related to the level of self-esteem and life satisfaction of Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne.

5   Conclusions

Immigration and its outcomes are rather complex phenomena discussed from different perspectives. With the help of proper theoretical framework and method, this case analysis offers number of valuable results. The role of group and country in acculturation and adaptation is a critical issue to pursue in acculturation research (Vedder et al., 2006: 209). Therefore, some findings are general to all human beings and some are specific to a particular cultural group (Berry et al., 2002 in Vedder et al., 2006: 209). I believe that there are two major contributions from my analysis. First, it provides the unique discussion and understanding of Lithuanian immigrants who are residing in Skåne (Sweden) and their community relations. Second, the analysis of the reasons behind their choices to immigrate to Sweden, their willingness to join or ignore the Lithuanian community and the implications of ethnic and host identification provides valuable insights for general immigration theories.

The results from the focus groups interviews show that economical factors are the most important ones. People were willing to improve their financial well-being and have chosen to migrate to Sweden. Sweden has the most positive image created in Lithuanian media. It is considered to be a role model of the perfect welfare state where one's education matter and where all the workers are fairly paid. Also, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the Lithuanian immigrant communities in Great Britain, Ireland or Spain have a negative image and that influence people's attitudes about belonging to community and being an active member there.

Lithuanians in Sweden constitute a fast growing ethnic community. The Lithuanian community in Skåne, which is part of the central Lithuanian community in Sweden, is still in a process of creating and establishing community relations, various customs and experiences. All the respondents identify themselves with the Lithuanian community in Sweden, although only small number of them formally belongs to Lithuanian community in Skåne. This proves their willingness to maintain their ethnic and cultural identification. Also, the interviews revealed that Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne prefer maintaining their ethnic identification at the family level, not at the level of the Lithuanian community. Previous experience of forced collectivism in Soviet Union reduced the attractiveness of formal power relations and constant belonging to various collectives and communities. In spite of the fact that the Lithuanian community in Skåne still remains a very small and quite passive actor, it already operates as a cultural survival and social community organization. Its main functions are:

- To retain connection with roots (celebrating the most important celebrations together, retaining customs and traditions);
- Language learning (Lithuanian language school for children);
- To assist with housing, education and employment.

This relatively small immigrant community functions as an initial pivot for immigrants to enter new cultural and social contexts. However, it is noteworthy that this immigrant community is based on temporal memberships. Apparently after successfully entering local contexts, immigrants tend to reduce or even refuse active membership in the community. This can be explained by the results of empirical analysis which showed that Lithuanian immigrants in Skane prefer integration over other possible acculturation attitudes. That means that they have chosen to maintain their ethnic identity as well as to maintain relationship with Swedes. In order to maintain local or Swedish identity for immigrants, it is necessary to focus not only on ethnic community but also try to adopt various aspects of local culture and be aware of the local context. According to Phinney et al. (2006), "the view that individuals are not simply pawns or victims of their circumstances but rather actively seek out and create their own ways of living lends support to the use of the term strategies to refer to differing ways of handling the complexity of living in two different cultural contexts" (2006: 214).

The 'visibility' appeared to be an important issue while discussing ethnic and host identification. Since Lithuanians consider themselves as 'invisible' (physical appearance, similar cultures and traditions, similar religious believes etc) in the local context, this aspect helps them to reach a balance between ethnic and host identification, the pressure between two cultural contexts becomes lower. Also, Lithuanian immigrants in Skåne perceive the Swedish cultural (as a context of public behavior, the respect for nature and people) as being of much higher standards than Lithuanian culture. This approach stimulates an integration attitude. So on the one hand, Lithuanian immigrants can maintain their ethnic identity (usually at family level) without contradicting it with local context, and on the other hand, they eagerly adopt some features of the Swedish culture.

New means of communication and many possibilities to overcome the physical distances are the most important features of the globalization which help the immigrants to keep constant relations with their families, relatives and friends back in their home country. This helps to reduce the feeling of isolation and raise the level of self-esteem and life satisfaction. However, language barrier appeared to be the biggest challenge that immigrants have to overcome. It directly affects the process of host identity formation. For all of respondents, being able to communicate local language was the biggest step to feeling integrated into host society and becoming a valuable member of it.

This study shows that issues of immigration, acculturation and community relations can be understood in broadly applicable regularities and characteristics irrespective of ethnic groups and countries (Vedder et al: 2006: 209). However, it also shows that deeper understanding of different contexts and different immigrant groups can offer very specific and unique results which contribute to the main theories. The future studies could focus on other small immigrant communities, to explore the specific local and ethnic background. What kind of community relations they maintain? How it affect their acculturation attitudes? As Phinney et al. (2006) concluded that the patterns of preferred ways of acculturating cannot be considered universal; therefore the specific situation must be taken into account (2006: 215). Another direction could be to research various aspects of multiculturalism and how different national or regional policies

create specific environments for immigrants. An interesting angle could be to research the acculturation attitudes of the host society. What features of immigrants' behavior are the most significant in a process of choosing acculturation attitude? So the process of developing immigration theories is continual and it requires additional studies by researches with a range of backgrounds and perspectives.

6 Executive summary

The ongoing political, social and economic processes in Central and Eastern Europe had a significant impact on transnational migration. Various new migration directions were found and migration flows increased substantially. Immigration is a highly complex phenomenon seen by some people as a threat to national integrity, while others perceive it as a source of cultural diversity. When entering the borders of the host society, immigrants experience various problems and challenges related to ethnic and host identification, community formation, acculturation attitudes, etc. The main interest field of this thesis is the importance of small ethnic communities like that of Lithuanians in Skåne (the region of South Sweden), the side-effects for immigrant's ethnic and host identity formation and the relations between these side-effects and acculturation attitudes towards host society.

The background of the research reveals that there is a lack of the studies which examine small immigrant communities. Most of the studies focus on strong religious communities or the communities with long history in the host societies. Sweden is newly discovered immigration country for Lithuanians. After the collapse of Soviet Union, Lithuanians got many possibilities to travel and get information about various places and potentials for life improvement. After Lithuania joined European Union, migration flows to Sweden has grown dramatically. This situation makes it interesting to discuss considerable small but with the potential to grow Lithuanian community in Skåne.

The aim of the theoretical part of the thesis is to form a proper theoretical framework, to see which theories and concepts will be helpful while analyzing the results of empirical research. The theoretical part of the thesis starts off by introducing the concept of diaspora. It appears that the concept of diaspora has many different definitions and interpretations. I have chosen to use the understanding of diasporas as ethnic communities. In this way, I intend to avoid misunderstandings which could be caused by the variety of the definitions of diaspora. The thesis uses transnationalism as a context of the appearance of immigrant communities. In a way, transnationalism explains the importance of the community relations, the role of immigrants and their relations with homelands or ethnic groups. The following part of the theoretical discussion offers a few insights about the relations between ethnic communities and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism protects minority rights and gives the immigrants opportunities to maintain their ethnic identity. In this thesis, Sweden is considered to be the example of the mix between multiculturalism and antidiscrimination policies.

Acculturation attitudes are important aspects of this thesis. Acculturation, as a process of change in collective and individual behaviors in the intercultural contact between two or more cultural groups, is a crucial in the process of immigration. I focus on Berry's (2006) acculturation attitudes: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. These strategies are able to describe immigrant's attitudes towards

maintaining one's cultural identity and maintaining the relationship with majority groups. Further, the research questions are based on the community organizations, its functions and influence to acculturation. Community organizations accomplish various functions depending on the size and structure of the community. According to Hack-Polay (2006), three main types of community organizations can be distinguished: social, cultural survival and political community organization. In addition, Concentrated and Dispersed communities, based on Birman, Trickett and Buchanan (2005), offers a great insights about community's influence on ethnic and host identification. These two typologies will help to analyze the Lithuanian community in Skåne.

Empirical part of the thesis is based on the case study. The research questions requires understanding of the reasoning, feelings and subjective points of view, therefore qualitative method are the most valid for this study. In designing this study, I have chosen to interview 10 Lithuanians residing in Skane longer than 2 years. Semi-structured deep interviews in focus groups and one individual interview generated valuable empirical data. In empirical part of the thesis, I have thoroughly discussed all the possible difficulties which may arise from this particular method. Therefore, I claim that the results from the research are valuable and offer a few general insights which contribute to the theories of migration.

In this thesis, the result analysis starts with the discussion of the main reasons behind the migration. This part answers the question why Lithuanians immigrated to Sweden. The interviews showed that the main reason to migrate was to improve their financial well-being. Also, they have chosen Sweden because the respondents had an image of Sweden as a country where one's education matters, where even unqualified jobs are well paid. A few respondents also mentioned that Sweden was attractive because there are not that many Lithuanians living already. This showed respondents' dissatisfaction with the way Lithuanian immigrants form and run the community.

Next part of the analysis was dedicated to Skåne' Lithuanian immigrants community. The respondents revealed that they all identify themselves with Lithuanian community in Sweden, but only few of them formally belong to it. The reason is that they all are willing to maintain their ethnic identity; but on the other hand, they are tired of collectivism after the times of Soviet Union. The chairperson of the Lithuanian community in Skåne shared the most important facts and history about the community. She explained that specific context and features of the community makes it quite unattractive for Lithuanian immigrants. These are physical distances, the lack of motivation, key functions, etc. The biggest attraction is the Lithuanian language school for children. According to Birman, Trickett and Buchanan's typology, Lithuanian community in Skåne can be called a Dispersed community where all the members live in a distance from each other and communicate rarely. Lithuanian community in Skåne functions as cultural survival and social community organization.

The following part of the analysis covers the issue of ethnic and host identification. Many different factors influence the degree to which immigrants identify themselves with host society or maintain their ethnic identity. First important factor discussed by respondents was 'visibility', or in other words various cultural and physical differences. All the respondents agreed that they are quite 'invisible' in the local context, because Lithuanian and Swedish cultures are similar; there are no significant physical differences or differences in religious beliefs. However, myths and stereotypes or the

perception of 'us' and 'the other' create a tension between ethnic and host identification. In addition, the majority of the respondents shared the same opinion that Swedish cultural standards (behavior in public spaces, the respect for nature and people around them, etc) are higher than Lithuanian. That means that the respondents are willing to adopt various parts of the Swedish culture and this way to improve and develop their personal status. Therefore, the respondents claimed to be of the two cultures: Swedish and Lithuanian. They can easily maintain their ethnic identity, because it does not clash with the local context and culture (it is important feature of the multiculturalism), and at the same time, they perceive Swedish culture as worth and valuable to adopt at some level.

The previous discussion showed that Lithuanians in Skåne prefer integration attitude over other acculturation attitudes. The respondents mentioned the most important features of their ethnic identity which they maintain and develop. These are: ethnic food, traditional holidays, national sport, and awareness of the political and social situation in their home country. At the same time, the respondents claimed having a high percentage of Swedish friends, being active in local events, learning language, etc. The respondents mentioned that they prefer integration attitude also because Sweden is very immigrant friendly country and offer a great deal of multicultural and anti-discrimination policies, and friendly and helpful environment. In a way, acculturation attitudes determine the level of general life satisfaction and self-esteem.

The outcomes of migration range from very negative adaptations to very positive ones. All the respondents shared the opinion that, in a short run, they successfully achieved their goal to improve their well-being. Networking, partly provided by Lithuanian community in Skåne, helped to achieve their goals. In general, the biggest challenge mentioned by the respondents was language barrier. However, only two of the respondents were still not able to perfectly communicate in local language. Since the respondents are trying to be active members of the local society and not only focus on their ethnic community activities, the process of language learning becomes easier. So, success in achieving goals, acculturation attitudes, social context and a good knowledge of local language directly influence the level of immigrant's self-esteem and life satisfaction.

So this thesis offers number of valuable general insights and understandings about small immigrant community as that of Skåne's Lithuanian community. This study can be a motive for future studies and research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Focus groups respondents:

| Respondents	Gender	Age	Marital status	Children	Education	Length of residence in Sweden
R1	female	37	married	yes	University	7 years
R2	male	30	single	no	University	6 years
R3	female	35	divorced	no	Higher College	6 years
R4	male	40	married	yes	School	8 years
R5	male	35	married	yes	University	4 years
R6	female	28	single	no	Higher College	5 years
R7	female	34	married	yes	University	5 years
R8	female	29	single	no	School	4 years
R9	male	42	divorced	yes	Higher College	9 years
R10	male	29	single	no	University	4 years

Appendix 2

- What are the main reasons why you came to live in Sweden?

- Do you identify yourself as a member of the Lithuanian community in Sweden?

- Do you belong to any Lithuanian community in Sweden?

- If yes, is there any formal structure of the Lithuanian community?

- Is it important for you to belong to any Lithuanian community?

- Does the Lithuanian community have any relations with local municipalities?

- Do you identify yourself as a member of any other community than Lithuanians in Sweden?

- Do you celebrate Lithuanian celebrations with other Lithuanians?

- Do you attend activities organized by other Lithuanians?

- Do you feel in Sweden as at home?

- What is the percentage of your Swedish friends?

- Are you engaged in Lithuanian politics? Maybe you are engaged in Swedish politics?

- How often do you feel isolated from others?

- Do you maintain your Lithuanian cultural identity or try to adopt Swedish culture?

- How similar do you think the Lithuanian and Swedish cultures are?

- When you need advice on family matters/help or support/want to relax and have fun, who do you ask?

- Do you present yourself as 'non-Lithuanian' in some ways? When?

- Did you ever feel being discriminated and unappreciated?

Appendix 3

Interview guide in Lithuanian:

- Kokios pagrindinės priežastys paskatino Jus atvykti gyventi į Švediją?

- Ar Jūs laikote save lietuvių bendruomenės Švedijoje nariu?

- Ar Jūs priklausote Lietuvių bendruomenei?

- Ar jūs dalyvaujate lietuvių organizuojamuose renginiuose?

- Ar švenčiate lietuviškas šventes su kitais tautiečiais?

- Ar Švedijoje jaučiatės kaip namuose?

- Ar Jūs priklausote kokiai nors švedų organizacijai?

- Ar dalyvaujate Švedijos politikoje?

- Ar kada slepiate savo tautybę?

- Koks procentas iš jūsų draugų yra švedai?

- Ar bendruomenė yra formaliai struktūrizuota?

- Ar lietuvių bendruomenė palaiko ryšius su vietine savivalda?

- Ar Jums svarbu priklausyti Lietuvių bendruomenei?

- Ar puoselėjate lietuvišką kultūrą, ar stengiatęs įsisavinti Švedišką?

- Į ką kreipiatės, kai reikia patarimo šeimos klausimais, pagalbos, paramos ar tiesiog norite pasilinksminti?

- Ar lietuviška kultūra panaši į Švedišką?

- Kaip dažnai jaučiatės izoliuotas nuo kitų?

- Ar kada jautetės diskriminuojamas ir nevertinamas?

Appendix 4

Lithuanians in Sweden
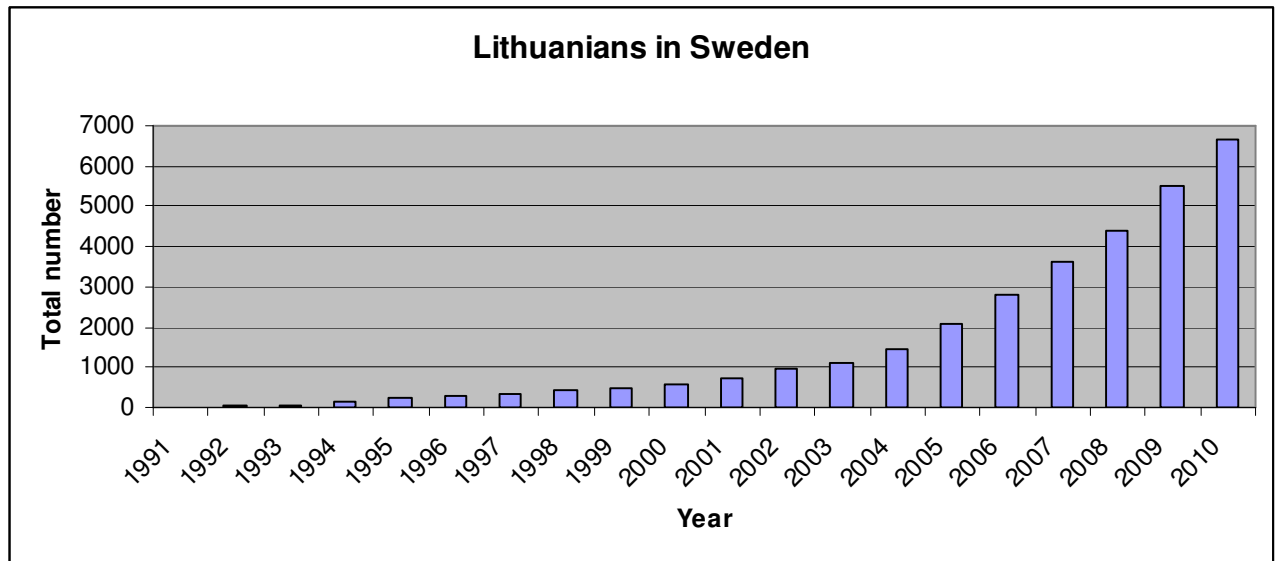
Source: Statistics Sweden (www.scb.se)