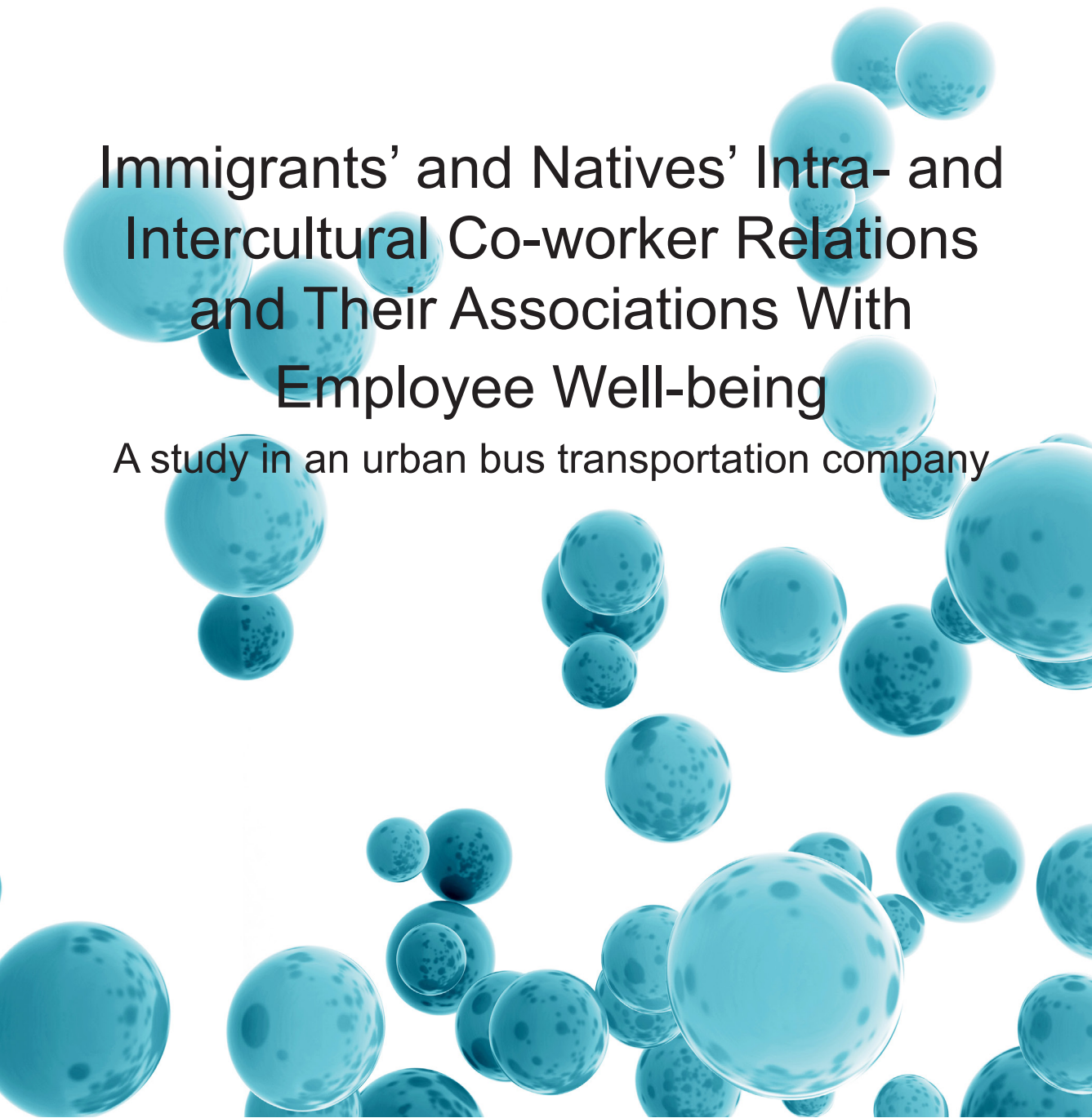


BARBARA BERGBOM

# Immigrants' and Natives' Intra- and Intercultural Co-worker Relations and Their Associations With Employee Well-being

A study in an urban bus transportation company





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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

BARBARA BERGBOM

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Helsinki, May 7, 2017

# ABSTRACT

This dissertation consists of three studies exploring relations among immigrant and native employees, exposure to workplace bullying and the associations of intra- and intercultural co-worker relations with employee well-being. The framework of the research was based on social identity theory, the similarity attraction paradigm, the cultural distance hypothesis, the need to belong theory and models of cultural adjustment emphasizing the role of learning in adjustment. The three studies use a cross-sectional data set gathered by surveys in 2006 as part of a larger study entitled “Multicultural work organizations – immigrant workers’ integration, well-being, safety and equitable personnel selection”, conducted at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The participants were immigrant ( $N = 183$ ) and native ( $N = 186$ ) employees working as bus drivers (93%) and mechanics (7%) in an urban bus transportation company in Finland. The results showed that intra-cultural co-worker relations were in general perceived as more positive than intercultural co-worker relations, among both immigrants and natives. The co-worker perceived to be the closest one also originated most often from the same culture or country. The quality of immigrants’ co-worker relations with natives was associated with cultural distance from the Finnish host culture. The greater the distance, the less positive were the relations perceived. The greater the distance, the greater also the risk of being subjected to bullying. The more positive the co-worker relations were perceived to be, the higher the levels of job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Co-worker relations between immigrants and natives, however, were more strongly associated with job satisfaction than other co-worker relations, among immigrants as well as among natives. Among immigrants co-worker relations with natives were also more strongly associated with psychological well-being than were intra-cultural co-worker relations. The findings of this study suggest that attention should be paid to fostering the development of positive co-worker relations between immigrants and natives, as this may enhance employee well-being, notably job satisfaction. Furthermore, culturally distant immigrants may be at particular risk of social exclusion and subjection to workplace bullying. Hence, it is recommended that culturally diverse

workplaces with immigrant and native employees should focus on social inclusion of all employees regardless of cultural background, and take measures to prevent workplace bullying.

# TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä väitöskirja koostuu kolmesta tutkimuksesta, joissa tarkastellaan maahanmuuttajataustaisten ja suomalaissyntyisten työntekijöiden sosiaalisia suhteita, työpaikkakiusaamisen kohteeksi joutumista sekä sosiaalisten suhteiden yhteyttä työhyvinvointiin. Tutkimuksen teoreettisena viitekehyksenä käytettiin sosiaalista identiteettiteoriaa, samankaltaisuus vetää puoleensa -paradigmaa ja malleja, jotka painottavat tarvetta kuulua ryhmään ja oppimisen merkitystä kulttuuriin sopeutumisessa. Tutkimukset pohjautuvat poikkileikkausaineistoon, joka kerättiin kyselyin vuonna 2006 osana Työterveyslaitoksen toteuttamaa laajempaa tutkimusta ”Monikulttuuriset työyhteisöt – maahanmuuttajien integroituminen työyhteisöön, työhyvinvointi, työturvallisuus ja yhdenvertaisuus työhönottoprosessissa”. Tutkimusjoukko koostui maahanmuuttajataustaisista ( $N = 183$ ) ja kantaväestöön ( $N = 186$ ) kuuluvista linja-autonkuljettajina (93 %) ja mekaanikkoina (7 %) suomalaisessa kaupunkiliikenteen linja-autoyhtiössä työskentelevistä työntekijöistä. Tulokset osoittivat, että työtoverisuhteet omaan kulttuurin kuuluvien työtoverien kanssa koettiin myönteisemmiksi kuin muihin kulttuureihin kuuluvien kanssa niin maahanmuuttajien kuin suomalaissyntyisten keskuudessa. Myös läheisimmäksi koettu työtoveri oli useimmiten samasta kulttuurista tai maasta. Maahanmuuttajien suhteiden laatu suomalaissyntyisiin työtovereihin riippui kulttuurisesta etäisyydestä suomalaiseen kulttuuriin. Mitä suurempi etäisyys, sitä vähemmän myönteisiksi suhteet suomalaisiin työtovereihin koettiin. Mitä suurempi etäisyys, sitä suurempi oli myös riski joutua työpaikkakiusaamisen kohteeksi. Mitä myönteisemmiksi työtoverisuhteet koettiin, sitä paremmaksi työtyytyväisyys ja psykologinen hyvinvointi koettiin. Maahanmuuttajien ja suomalaissyntyisten väliset keskinäiset työtoverisuhteet olivat kuitenkin voimakkaammin yhteydessä työtyytyväisyyteen kuin muut suhteet sekä maahanmuuttajien että suomalaissyntyisten keskuudessa. Maahanmuuttajien keskuudessa suhteet suomalaissyntyisiin työtovereihin olivat myös voimakkaammassa yhteydessä psykologiseen hyvinvointiin kuin suhteet samasta kulttuurista tulleisiin. Tutkimustulokset viittaavat siihen, että kulttuurisesti monimuotoisissa työyhteisöissä huomiota olisi kiinnitettävä maahanmuuttajien ja suomalaissyntyisten välisen myönteisten työtoverisuhteiden edistämiseen, koska tämä voi myös parantaa työhyvinvointia, erityisesti työtyytyväisyyttä. Lisäksi

kulttuurisesti etäisimmillä maahanmuuttajilla voi olla suurin riski joutua kokemaan sosiaalista ulkopuolisuutta ja työpaikkakiusaamista. Näin ollen on suositeltavaa, että kulttuurisesti monimuotoisissa työpaikoissa, joissa on sekä maahanmuuttajataustaisia että suomalaissyntyisiä työntekijöitä, kohdistetaan huomiota sosiaalisen osallisuuden edistämiseen kaikkien työntekijöiden osalta. Lisäksi tarvitaan toimenpiteitä työpaikkakiusaamisen ennaltaehkäisemiseen.

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# LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

- Study I Bergbom, B., Kinnunen, U., & Väänänen, A. (2010). Maahanmuuttajat suomalaisissa työyhteisöissä: työtoverien väliset sosiaaliset suhteet [Immigrants in Finnish workplaces: co-worker relations]. *Työ ja ihminen* [Work and Man], 21 (2007), *Lisännumero* [Supplement Issue] 2, 663–681.
- Study II Bergbom, B., Vartia-Väänänen, M., & Kinnunen, U. (2015). Immigrants and natives at work: Exposure to workplace bullying. *Employee Relations*, 37, 158–175.
- Study III Bergbom, B., & Kinnunen, U. (2014). Immigrants and host nationals at work: Associations of co-worker relations with employee well-being. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 43, 165–176.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Immigrants compared to natives at work

The number of international migrants has increased rapidly during the past fifteen years, reaching 244 million in year 2015 (United Nations, 2016). Europe hosts the largest number of immigrants, and two out of three immigrants reside either in Europe or in Asia. Most immigrants are of working age (United Nations, 2016), and an increasing share of today's workforce in OECD countries consists of both permanent and temporary migrants (OECD, 2016). Even if the employment rate among the foreign-born population is typically somewhat lower than that of native-born, in some countries the employment rate of immigrants is even higher than that of natives (OECD, 2016). Thus more and more people from different cultural backgrounds come in contact and work together – or, at least to work in the same workplaces. Despite this, little is so far known about immigrants' and natives' co-worker relations.

Research on immigrants at work has generally tended to focus on immigrants' employment, working conditions and well-being (e.g. Avery, Tonidandel, Volpone, & Raghuram, 2010; de Castro, Fujishiro, Sweitzer, & Oliva, 2006; Dunlavy, Garcy, & Rostila, 2016; Magee & Umameshwar, 2011; Sundquist, Östergren, Sundquist, & Johansson, 2003). Immigrants have been shown to be often overqualified for their jobs (e.g. Chen, Smith, & Mustard, 2010; Dahle & Seeberg, 2013; Midtbøen, 2016; Salmonson & Mella, 2013) and to be subject to discrimination both in recruitment and at work (e.g. Boréus & Mörkenstam, 2015; Constant & Massey, 2005; Cross & Turner, 2013; Dahle & Seeberg, 2013; Larja, Warius, Sundbäck, Liebkind, & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2012; Marin et al., 2009; Midtbøen, 2016; Potter & Hamilton, 2014; Tomaskovic-Devey, Hällsten, & vent-Holt, 2015). Immigrant employees have moreover been shown to work in poor working conditions that may be detrimental to their well-being (e.g. Cross & Turner, 2013; de Castro et al., 2006). The vast majority of this research has focused on immigrants, that is, natives possibly working at the same workplaces have rarely been included in the studies. A few studies have examined and compared immigrants' and natives' perceptions of psychosocial

working conditions at the same workplaces (e.g. Hoppe, 2011; Hoppe, Heaney, & Fujishiro, 2010; Olesen et al., 2012).

There is, however, a dearth of studies examining co-worker relations among and between immigrants and natives (see Amason, Allen, & Holmes, 1999; Ogbonna & Harris, 2006; Remennick, 2004; Schaafsma, 2008, for some exceptions). Cultural diversity at a workplace is likely to affect particularly its social environment and be reflected in co-worker relations. As co-worker relations are known to be important for employee well-being (De Bacquer et al., 2005; Heaphy & Dutton, 2008; Niedhammer, Goldberg, Leclerc, Bugel, & David, 1998; Stansfeld, Clark, Caldwell, Rodgers, & Power, 2008; Stansfeld, Fuhrer, Shipley, & Marmot, 1999) more research is clearly needed on the co-worker relations of immigrants and natives. This study seeks to contribute to the current knowledge by examining positive co-worker relations, workplace bullying and the associations of intra- and intercultural co-worker relations with employee well-being in a workplace comprised of immigrants and natives.

The introductory section starts by defining the basic concepts and presenting the theoretical framework of the study. Next I review earlier research and articulate the aims of the study on the basis of the gaps in these prior studies.

## 1.2 Definition of basic concepts of the study

### 1.2.1 Immigrants and natives

*Immigrants* in this study refers to people who are foreign born and of foreign descent and who are residing in a host country permanently or for a longer period of time. *Natives* (in Study III referred to as host nationals) in this study refers to native-born nationals of native descent.

These definitions serve the purposes of the present study, and may be considered appropriate for it. The data for this study were collected ten years ago in Finland in a company in which these definitions pose no serious problems as regards categorizing the employees into immigrants and natives, as the immigrants were foreign-born and so called first generation immigrants. However, some of those categorized as immigrants, who had immigrated before the age of 12, could equally well be categorized for example as “1.5 generation” immigrants (see Rumbaut, 2003).

Moreover, it is important to note that the definition of immigrants and natives is by no means clear cut. The definitions used in this study are not inclusive, and do not, for instance, take a stand on how to define so-called second generation immigrants, that is those with at least one foreign-born parent, who in the literature often are referred to as second generation immigrants.

The problems with the definition of both first and second generation immigrants become even more theoretically and methodologically complex in a country, as the history of immigration becomes longer, that is spanning immigration during different time periods and different generational age cohorts (see Rumbaut, 2003, for a detailed discussion of theoretical and methodological problems with the definition of immigrant first and second generations). Moreover, with increasing international migration that takes different forms, such as serial migration and different kinds of international mobility, as different arrangements of international commuting, the definition of immigrants becomes even more complex.

### 1.2.2 Culture and cultural distance

*Culture* has been defined by Triandis “as a set of human-made objective and subjective elements that in the past have increased the probability of survival and resulted in satisfactions for the participants in an ecological niche. Thus culture became shared among those who could communicate with each other because they had a common language and they lived in the same time and place” (Triandis, 1994, p. 22). Objective elements include language, religion, political systems, economic structures and social structures such as family structures. Subjective elements include, for example, unstated assumptions, associations, attitudes, beliefs, norms, roles and values.

Babiker, Cox and Miller (1980), who are frequently considered to have been the first to introduce the concept of *cultural distance* into the literature, defined and measured it as the perceived dissimilarity of sojourners’ own and host countries. Cultural distance has later been defined as the degree of dissimilarity between two cultures (Triandis, 1994, 1995; Triandis, Kurowski, & Gelfand, 1994). Cultural distance defined in this way thus differs from the concept of psychic distance (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977) referring to perceptions of distance. These two concepts are often used interchangeably, particularly in the international marketing literature, even if they address distinct and different phenomena (Sousa & Bradley, 2008). The concept of cultural distance also differs from the concept of social distance

(Bogardus, 1925, 1959, as cited in Himmelfarb, 1993) which is also in the literature sometimes confused with cultural distance.

Cultural distance may, however, play a significant role in creating both psychic and social distance. An increase in cultural distance may often be associated with an increase in social distance, as reflected in the willingness to associate with members of different ethnic groups (see Osbeck, Moghaddam, & Perreault, 1997) and in the formation of ethnic hierarchies within a society, that is the rank order of different ethnic groups vis-à-vis the majority group's preferences (see Hagendoorn, 1995; Hagendoorn & Drogendjik, 1998). In this study cultural distance, however, is understood as an actual difference between any two cultures. Cultural distance is approached vis-à-vis immigrants' cultural distance from Finnish culture.

### 1.2.3 Positive intra- and intercultural co-worker relations

Heaphy and Dutton (2008) make a distinction between connections and relationships at work. A connection implies that there has been some interaction between two people and that both are aware of it. A connection does not, however, imply intimacy nor an expectation that interaction will take place again. Recurrence of interactions develops into a subjective experience of an interpersonal relationship. The perceived quality of relationships varies from negative to positive. In this study positive co-worker relations are operationalized as the perception of the existence of supportive and positively experienced relations as well as the frequency of interactions with co-workers. Positive co-worker relationships are in this study also approached at a dyadic level in terms of the closest or most preferred co-worker. Co-workers refers to employees at the same hierarchical level, thus excluding superiors.

In this study co-worker relations are differentiated from each other as regards the similarity or difference of cultural background into intra- and intercultural co-worker relations. *Intra-cultural co-worker relations* refers to relations to those who are of same cultural origin as oneself, that is, *relations with co-culturals*. *Intercultural co-worker relations* refers *among natives* to *relations with immigrants*. *Among immigrants* intercultural relations are divided into *relations with natives* and *relations with foreign immigrants*, that is, to immigrants originating from another culture than one's own. Even if this kind of differentiation of relationships is not commonplace in the literature, these divisions enable a more detailed picture of the relationships.

## 1.3 Theoretical underpinnings of the study

### 1.3.1 Association of co-worker relations with employee well-being

This study examined two employee well-being outcomes, job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Job satisfaction is a facet of job-related well-being, and as such particularly responsive to conditions and actions in the work-setting (Warr, 2013). Psychological well-being in turn is context-free and influenced not only by job-related factors but also by factors in other domains, such as family and private life (Warr, 2013). *Job satisfaction* is here understood according to the definition proposed by Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller: “*Job satisfaction is an evaluative state that expresses contentment with and positive feelings about one’s job*” (2012, p. 347). That is, job satisfaction includes both cognition and affect (positive feelings). *Psychological well-being* is here understood in terms of Warr’s (1990, 2013) conceptualization of it. That is, psychological well-being is defined as affective well-being consisting of experiences/feelings ranging along two axes: from displeasure-to-pleasure (valence) and from low-to-high mental arousal (activation). Emotional well-being represented by the displeasure-pleasure axis (valence) and energy/fatigue by the activation axis.

Job satisfaction is important as an indicator of employee well-being *per se*. Job satisfaction is also of interest because poor job satisfaction has been shown to be predictive particularly of workplace withdrawal, such as absenteeism, turnover intentions and actual turnover (Fried, Shirom, Gilboa, & Cooper, 2008; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Schleicher, Hansen, & Fox, 2011; Tett & Meyer, 1993). While it is more likely that co-worker relations are more strongly reflected in job-related well-being than context-free well-being, it was considered important to examine whether the work-related factors studied also generalize to well-being outside work and to health in general. Psychological well-being is central to the construct of mental health (Warr, 2013), and as such an important indicator of health. The causal relationship between job satisfaction and psychological well-being is not in the focus of this study. It may, however, be noted here that the evidence to date points to both a reciprocal causal relationship between the two and suggests that the causal relationship from psychological well-being to job satisfaction is stronger than the other way around (see Bowling, Eschleman, & Wang, 2010, for a meta-analysis of longitudinal studies).

The theoretical framework applied to explain the role of positive co-worker relations in employee well-being is the *need-to-belong theory* (Baumeister, 2012;

Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The different role of intra- and intercultural co-worker relations for well-being is theorized according to Ward and associates' *model of psychological and sociocultural adjustment* (Ward et al., 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2001) and *Bochner's functional model of friendship networks of foreign students* (Bochner, McLeod, & Lin, 1977; Ward et al., 2001).

### **Need-to-belong theory**

A sense of being part of a community, that is, social belongingness, is viewed by several scholars as a fundamental and innate psychological need, the fulfilment of which is a requirement for well-being (e.g. Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Smith, Murhphy, & Coats, 1999; Williams, 2007; Williams & Nida, 2011). The need for belongingness is proposed to be so fundamental and crucial to well-being that our brains are prewired to detect signs of social exclusion so that we may react as strongly to social exclusion by out-group members as by in-group members (Eisenberger, 2012, 2015; Williams & Nida, 2011). As a core motive the importance of belonging is a cultural constant even if enacted differently depending on the culture (Fiske & Fiske, 2007).

According to the *need-to-belong theory* (Baumeister, 2012; Baumeister & Leary, 1995), satisfaction of the need to belong involves two criteria; firstly, frequent non-aversive interactions with others, and secondly that these interactions take place in the context of stable and enduring relationships. Employees spend a large part of their time at work, where they regularly meet the same co-workers. Interaction with co-workers in both formal, i.e. work-related and informal contexts may develop into enduring relationships. The workplace thus provides a context in which the need to belong can be satisfied. With regard to satisfaction of the need to belong, it is here proposed that the need can probably be satisfied regardless of the cultural source of the relationship. Those employees who have positive (or at least non-aversive) co-worker relationships and frequently interact with these co-workers are likely to have their need to belong satisfied. Therefore frequent and positive interaction should also be reflected in better psychological well-being and job satisfaction among these employees in comparison to those who lack such co-worker relations.

The aspect of social relations at work that has been most often studied within the realm of occupational health is perceived received or perceived available social support. Lack of social support at work has been shown to be predictive of impairments in well-being and health (De Bacquer et al., 2005; Niedhammer et al., 1998; Stansfeld et al., 2008; Stansfeld et al., 1999). Social support is also one of the central factors in several stress theories (see Kahn & Byosiere, 1992), as for instance



in the job-demand-control-support model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). There has been less systematic research – and consequently less theorizing – on the role of the social environment and social support at work as regards job satisfaction (Judge & Kammeyer-Muller, 2012). Meta-analyses, however, indicate that co-worker relations and social support are also important antecedents of job satisfaction (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Ng & Sorensen, 2008; Schleicher et al., 2011). In fact, social support has even been shown to predict overall job satisfaction above and beyond other work characteristics (Morgeson & Humprey, 2006).

In general different stress models suggest that the beneficial effect of social support on employee well-being can, in addition to having a direct effect on well-being, also be of a moderating nature, for instance by acting as a buffer against strain (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Even if social support may in several different ways enhance well-being, the empirical evidence to date lends more support to a direct or mediating than a moderating relationship between support and well-being (de Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman, & Bongers, 2003; Häusser, Mojzisch, Niesel, & Schulz-Hardt, 2010). Social support and positive social interactions at work seem also to have immediate and direct beneficial effects on cardiovascular, immunological and hormonal activity (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008).

The reason for a mainly direct/mediating, as opposed to a moderating, effect of social support on well-being could be that social support is primarily effective because it fulfils the fundamental psychological need for social inclusion and belonging. It may even be that more important for well-being than support *per se*, is having positive, or at least non-aversive, relationships at work – in which social support is likely to be provided when needed – that, is to be socially included. The fact that co-worker relations in terms of affective climate have in a meta-analytic comparison of antecedents of job satisfaction been shown to be a stronger predictor of job satisfaction than co-worker support (Schleicher et al., 2011) could be interpreted as partial support for this argument.

Moreover, in a recent study including more than 33,000 employees from 34 European countries, it was found that a sense of community (measured as feeling at home in the organization and having good friends at work) was more strongly associated with well-being than social support (Schütte et al., 2014). The association of a sense of community with well-being was particularly strong. Among males it had the strongest association with well-being of all 25 psychosocial factors examined in the study. It was also particularly strongly associated with well-being among females, although the strength of the sense of community–well-being –association

did not differ significantly from the associations with two factors, namely bullying and work-life imbalance.

### **A cultural learning perspective**

Even if co-worker relations, in terms of positive and frequent interaction, were associated with well-being through the satisfaction of the need to belong regardless of the cultural source of the relations, intercultural relations may be especially beneficial through additional mechanisms. Relations with native co-workers have been suggested to be especially helpful in immigrants' adjustment to a host cultural workplace (Amason et al., 1999), albeit the different role of immigrants' intra- and intercultural relations in the work context has not been theorized. There are, however, two theoretical models, one concerning international students and one concerning immigrants' and sojourners' cross-cultural adjustment in general, that may with modifications be applied to the work context.

*Bochner's functional model of friendship networks of foreign students* (Bochner, 1982; Bochner, Hutnik, & Furnham, 1985; Bochner, Lin, & McLeod, 1979; Bochner et al., 1977; Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Furnham & Bochner, 1982; Ward et al., 2001) and *Ward and her associates' model on psychological and sociocultural adjustment* (Ward et al., 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a, 1993b; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2001) emphasize the importance of contacts and interaction with host country nationals for immigrants' and sojourners' cultural learning and thereby to adjustment. Bochner's functional model of foreign students' network asserts that foreign students typically belong to three distinct types of networks – one with co-culturals, one with host nationals, and one with foreign students originating from other cultures – each serving a different psychological function. The model asserts that the function of the co-cultural network is to provide a setting for the rehearsal and expression of cultural values, the network with host nationals in turn instrumentally facilitates the academic and professional aspirations of the sojourner, while the function of the third network is mostly recreational as well as providing mutual support based on a shared foreignness. Ward's and her associates' model (Ward et al., 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a, 1993b) maintains that intercultural adaptation can be divided into two categories: psychological and sociocultural. The model proposes further that sociocultural adjustment is facilitated particularly by contact and positive interaction with host nationals, as interaction with these affords cultural learning opportunities.

In light of these cross-cultural adjustment models emphasizing cultural learning as an important factor of adjustment, it could be expected that immigrants' relations with native co-workers would be particularly important for the acquisition of the

cultural skills that make working in a host cultural workplace less confusing and stressful and more satisfying. While co-culturals and immigrants originating from other cultures may also be helpful from the cultural learning perspective, natives are likely to provide more culturally accurate knowledge as well as feedback that is conducive to the acquisition of cultural skills. Thus it could be expected that positive relations with natives and frequent interaction with them would be more strongly associated with psychological well-being and job satisfaction among immigrants than relations with peer immigrants.

The specific role of intercultural relations in natives' well-being has not been theorized. The proposition here is that cultural diversity at work imposes cultural adjustment requirements to varying extents, i.e. cultural learning, also among native employees. Like immigrants, natives have to encounter cultural and language barriers when interacting with co-workers from different cultures. Difficulties in understanding a non-native accent may hinder successful communication (Trude, Tremblay, & Brown-Schmidt, 2013), not to mention deviant syntax and cultural differences in interaction. Engaging in interaction with immigrants is likely to improve natives' cross-cultural communication skills, at least in positive interactions, where there is a common interest in arriving at an understanding. Positive and supportive relations with immigrants are thus also likely to help natives to operate in a culturally diverse workplace and make the workplace less stressful and more satisfying.

### 1.3.2 Cultural (dis)similarity as a predictor of co-worker relations

The field of interpersonal attraction research has been described by Finkel and Baumeister (2010) as a theoretical morass, with dozens of theories that have guided the research on the development of social relations. The similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971, 1997) from this line of research, and the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) from intergroup relations theories were chosen as the theoretical frame of reference for this study because of their assumed specific relevance for co-worker relations and interaction in a culturally diverse workplace comprised of immigrants and natives. In addition, the concept of cultural distance and the cultural distance hypothesis (Triandis, 1994, 2000) are applied as a theoretical tool. The hypothesis assumes that the more distant two cultures are, the more difficult is adjustment to a new culture, and the more socially difficult interaction between two interactants from different cultural backgrounds become.

According to the *similarity attraction paradigm* (Byrne, 1971, 1997), people tend to seek out others who resemble themselves in salient characteristics and prefer to interact and work with these. Perceptions of similarity function as an attractive force with regard to several characteristics, such as demographic factors, social status, personality and ethnicity, as well as physical characteristics such as wearing glasses (Mackinnon, Jordan, & Wilson, 2011; Morry, 2005, 2007; Osbeck et al., 1997; Ward et al., 2001). Even such a seemingly arbitrary similarity as similar letters in names, has been shown to be predictive of attraction (Jones, Pelham, Carvallo, & Mirenberg, 2004). Perceived similarity has nevertheless been shown to be a much stronger predictor of attraction and satisfaction with a relationship than actual similarity (see Montoya, Horton, & Kirchner, 2008, for a meta-analysis; Selfhout, Denissen, Branje, & Meeus, 2009). In fact, in on-going relationships, satisfaction with the relationship has been shown to increase perceptions of similarity – not the other way around (Morry, 2005, 2007).

A more theoretical basis for exploring interpersonal relations in culturally diverse contexts is provided by the *social identity theory* (SIT) (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The theory makes a distinction between personal and social identity, which is evoked particularly in social situations and is dependent on group membership. According to SIT, people build their social identities by categorizing themselves and others into social categories that are salient or easily concluded in a certain social context, such as gender and ethnicity. The individual perceives the group to which he/she belongs as an in-group, whereas those perceived as dissimilar are categorized as belonging to an out-group. The theory moreover states that individuals show in-group bias, that is, they show a preference for their in-group members and see members of this group in a more positive light, whereas outgroup members are in general seen derogatively and more negatively. The in-group bias results in enhanced self-esteem, as one's own group is perceived to be superior. Billig and Tafjel (1973) found that an explicitly random classification into groups was an even more potent determinant of discrimination than interpersonal similarities and dissimilarities, which were not associated with categorization into groups. The theory has been influential, inspiring extensive research and theory development in intergroup behaviour; albeit some theoretical problems with it remain (Brown, 2000). For instance, even if in-group bias has been irrefutably supported, the question whether positive self-esteem is the cause – i.e. the driving force – of social identity building, or merely a consequence of it, is unanswered (Brown, 2000). To the best of my knowledge, this continues to be the case.

Social behaviour is guided by the objective and subjective elements of culture (Triandis, 1994, 1995, 2000). Cultural similarity/dissimilarity is thus likely, in addition to functioning as a characteristic resulting in perceptions of (dis)similarity and to being used for categorization into in- and out- groups, to affect the ease of interaction and thereby the development of relations. The greater the cultural dissimilarity, that is, *the cultural distance*, between two interacting individuals, the more difficult interaction becomes and the greater the probability of misunderstandings and conflicts (Triandis, 1994, 2000; Triandis et al., 1994). Cultural similarity in turn enables more smoothness and ease in interpersonal interactions. Hence a short cultural distance, or cultural similarity between interactants, increases the likelihood that interaction will result in shared positive and gratifying experiences and that the relationship will develop further, possibly even into friendship. Cultural dissimilarity in turn may increase the likelihood of problems and impede the development of positive relationships, possibly even increasing the likelihood of negative social interaction, such as workplace bullying.

In a culturally diverse workplace consisting of both natives and immigrants, the cognitive, affective and behavioural processes predicted by both the similarity-attraction paradigm and social identity theory may be based on several different factors, such as age, gender, work roles, status and cultural and national background. It could, however, be assumed that cultural or national background may function as a particularly strong and salient category as well as an easily detected characteristic of both actual and perceived similarity/dissimilarity. It is therefore also likely that in a culturally diverse workplace positive co-worker relations will develop mainly between and among those with a common national or cultural background.

## 1.4 Workplace bullying

While positive, or at least non-aversive, relations at work enhance employee well-being (De Bacquer et al., 2005; Heaphy & Dutton, 2008; Schleicher et al., 2011), negative and destructive social interaction is a social stressor at work (Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2010). Workplace bullying is such a severe social stressor that has been shown to have detrimental effects on the targets' health (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Finne, Knardahl, & Lau, 2011; Kivimäki et al., 2003; Lahelma, Lallukka, Laaksonen, Saastamoinen, & Rahkonen, 2012; Rugulies et al., 2012) and

job satisfaction (Rodríguez-Muñoz, Baillien, De Witte, Moreno-Jiménez, & Pastor, 2009). In addition, workplace bullying is predictive of turnover intentions (Berthelsen, Skogstad, Lau, & Einarsen, 2011; Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014) and actual turnover (Berthelsen et al., 2011).

Workplace bullying – sometimes also referred to as harassment at work (particularly by north Americans) and mobbing – may be defined as repeated, regular, aggressive and negative treatment directed at an employee by one or several co-workers and/or superiors in a situation where the target finds it difficult to put up a defence (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011). Bullying is typically an escalating process in which the target ends up in an inferior position and becomes a target of more systematic negative acts. The negative treatment may assume many different forms, such as social exclusion, humiliation, verbal abuse, defamation and rumours – the common denominator being that the treatment is experienced as unpleasant, offensive and humiliating by the target. The definition highlights four core elements of bullying: the target is exposed to negative and unwanted treatment; the treatment is regular; the treatment persists over a prolonged period of time; there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the target, who is therefore in no position to mount a defence against this treatment (Einarsen et al., 2011).

Bullying is generally viewed as a multifaceted phenomenon with multiple and often simultaneous causes (Branch, Ramsay, & Barkers, 2013; Salin, 2003; Zapf, 1999). The risk of bullying has been shown to be associated particularly with such characteristics of the psychosocial work environment as poor leadership (Hauge et al., 2011; Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2007; Hoel, Glasø, Hetland, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2010) and heavy workload and low job autonomy (Baillien, DeCuyper, & De Witte, 2011) as well as stress (Hauge et al., 2007; Mathisen, Ogaard, & Einarsen, 2012) (see Van den Brande, Baillien, De Witte, Vander Elst, & Goddiere, 2016, for a recent systematic review). Poor physical work environment (for instance draughts, poor ventilation, cramped spaces) has recently also been shown to be associated with bullying (Salin, 2014). Thus factors in the work environment may generally be the main causes of bullying. However, not all employees are necessarily at equal risk of being bullied. It has been suggested that minority status – that is, being in some respect different from the majority – may render employees particularly socially exposed, and that members of minority groups are thus more likely to be singled out and become targets of bullying (Lindroth & Leyman, 1993; Schuster, 1996).

Differing from the majority may, however, also be associated with a heightened risk of bullying for reasons over and above the fact that minorities stand out as highly visible and are in this way socially exposed. Based on the *similarity-attraction paradigm*

(Byrne, 1971, 1997, see chapter 1.3.2), those perceived as dissimilar are less likely to be liked than are those perceived to be more similar. Secondly, according to the *social identity theory* (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1986, see chapter 1.3.2) minority members – when the characteristics constituting minority membership are easily detected, as in the case of immigrant status and different cultural background – are likely to be categorized as belonging to an outgroup and seen in a more derogative light. Thus, as the natives' attitudes towards immigrant co-workers are likely to be more negative than their attitudes towards other natives, this may lower the threshold for an immigrant to be subjected to bullying, for instance when a scapegoat is sought.

In addition, according to the *social interactionist theory* (Felson, 1992; Felson & Tedeschi, 1993) aggression may be viewed as instrumental behaviour used to socially control and inhibit deviant behaviours. Immigrants are likely, due to their different cultural background, to deviate and break the culturally based rules of natives. Therefore it could be that bullying of immigrants may be instigated by the native majority members as a means to coerce immigrants to conform to the rules of the majority group. The more *culturally distant* an immigrant is from the host culture, the more likely she/he is to deviate from the norms of natives and the more likely she/he could thus be to be the target of aggressive acts, which may develop into full-blown bullying.

Besides increasing the likelihood of deviant behaviour on the part of the majority, *cultural distance* is likely to hamper social interaction (see chapter 1.3.2). Cultural distance between interacting persons increases the probability of misunderstanding and conflicts (Triandis, 1994, 2000; Triandis et al., 1994). Thus conflicts based on misinterpretations and communication problems are more likely to arise between immigrants and natives and between immigrants originating from different cultures – and the more the greater the cultural distance is. If these conflicts are repeated, they may escalate into bullying (see Baillien, Neyens, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2009; Einarsen et al., 2001, on the escalating nature of processes leading to systematic bullying).

## 1.5 Earlier research and gaps in knowledge

Empirical studies on immigrants' and natives' co-worker relations and exposure to workplace bullying are still scarce. Consequently, this is even more the case concerning studies on the association of intra- and intercultural co-worker relations with employee well-being among immigrants and natives. In the following the research relevant to the focus of this study will be reviewed. Also, knowledge gaps will be pointed out, likewise the limitations of earlier studies, which the present study seeks to overcome.

### 1.5.1 Immigrants' and natives' co-worker relations

Despite of an influx of immigrants in the workplaces in developed countries, and the fact that immigrants and natives work increasingly together (see Toivanen & Bergbom, 2013, for the change in Finland), research on immigrants' and natives' co-worker relations is still very limited. The few existing studies have in general investigated co-worker relations as one among several psychosocial factors at work. In addition, they have measured social support either without differentiating whether such perceived/received support is provided by natives or immigrants (e.g. Golding & Baezconde-Garbanati, 1990; Hoppe, 2011; Ko, Frey, Osteen, & Ahn, 2015; Magee & Umamaheswar, 2011; Olesen et al., 2012; Sundquist et al., 2003), or without differentiating between supervisor and co-worker support (Findler, Wind, & Mor Barak, 2007). There are, however, some exceptions (see Amason et al., 1999; Wang & Sangalang, 2005). These studies in general suggest that immigrants' perceptions of support do not differ from natives' perceptions (Hoppe, 2011; Ko et al., 2015; Olesen et al., 2012), or that immigrants perceive less support than their native peers (Aalto et al., 2014; Golding & Baezconde-Garbanati, 1990). The study by Hoppe (2011) found, despite the absence of any difference in the perception of support, that immigrants experienced significantly more stressors in the social environment, such as conflicts and daily "hassles" with co-workers and supervisors. As these studies did not differentiate between intra- and intercultural co-worker relations, conclusions about immigrants' and natives' co-worker relations with each other are difficult to draw.

There are, however, two ethnographic studies (Ogbonna & Harris, 2006; Remennick, 2004) and two quantitative studies (Amason et al., 1999; Wang & Sangalang, 2005) that can shed light on immigrants' and natives' intra- and



intercultural co-worker relations. The two ethnographic studies mentioned above, conducted in the UK and in Israel, both showed relations between immigrants and natives to be problematic. Furthermore, there was little voluntary interaction between natives and immigrants, and virtually no intercultural close relationships at work.

Amason et al. (1999), comparing Hispanic immigrants and native Anglo-Americans, found that there was no difference between immigrants and natives with regard to social support received from natives. Hispanics, however, perceived that they received more support from Hispanic co-workers than did Anglo-Americans. In their study on Filipino immigrant employees in Canada, Wang and Sangalang (2005) found that Filipinos reported greater support from their peer immigrant employees than from their native co-workers. This latter study did not include natives' perceptions of support. Nor did it differentiate between support from co-culturals and other immigrants.

As the study by Amason and associates (1999) examined immigrants' relations vis-à-vis relations with other immigrants, only relations with co-culturals, there are at present no quantitative studies comparing immigrants' co-worker relations with those of co-culturals and immigrants originating from other cultures. The ethnographic study by Ogbonna and Harris (2006), which included immigrants from different cultures, however, indicates that immigrants' relations to peer immigrants originating from other cultures were less positive than relations with co-culturals. One quantitative study by Verkuyten, de Jong and Masson (1993) also suggests that immigrants' relations to co-culturals are more positive than relations with other immigrant co-workers. The study by Verkuyten and associates did not examine the quality of relationships, but those immigrants, as well as those natives, who worked more with co-culturals were more satisfied with their co-worker relations than those who worked less with them.

Even if the empirical research on immigrants' and natives' co-worker relations is so far meagre, the evidence indicates that in line with social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974, Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971, 1997) and the cultural distance hypothesis (Triandis, 1994, 2000), positive co-worker relations develop mainly between co-culturals. None of the studies reviewed, however, examined whether immigrants' cultural distance is associated with their relations with native co-workers. The present study, in addition to examining immigrants' and natives' co-worker relations, seeks to explore whether cultural distance plays a role in the formation of immigrants' relations with native co-workers. Moreover, this study seeks to overcome some of the limitations of earlier

studies, which for the most part have treated a culturally heterogeneous group of immigrants as one group (Findler et al., 2007; Hoppe, 2011; Ko et al., 2015; Olesen et al., 2012) or included only one cultural group of immigrants (Amason et al., 1999; Remennick, 2004; Wang & Sangalang, 2005). This study will examine the research questions separately for culturally different immigrant groups in order to discover potential differences among the immigrant groups. This is important in order to ascertain, firstly, whether the findings can be generalized to culturally different immigrant groups, and secondly, whether and to what extent the social environment at work differs for the different immigrant groups.

The formation and development of co-worker relations is dependent on the extent to which the work requires and allows formal and informal interaction at work. Therefore, in order to make reliable comparisons of immigrants' and natives' co-worker relations, it is important to study immigrants and natives working in similar jobs. At present there are very few studies (see Amason et al., 1999; Hoppe 2011; Ogbonna & Harris, 2006; Olesen et al., 2012, for exceptions) exploring perceptions of social support and co-worker relations among immigrants and natives working in the same workplaces, doing the same jobs. The present study investigates immigrants and natives actually working together in the same workplace with similar jobs.

## 1.5.2 Exposure to workplace bullying

So far there is only a handful of studies comparing immigrants' or ethnic minority members' subjection to workplace bullying with that of natives or ethnic majority members. These studies have in general found that immigrants (Aalto et al., 2013; Høgh, Gomes Carneiro, Giver, & Rugulies, 2011) and ethnic minority members (Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Lewis & Gunn, 2007) are more likely to be exposed to bullying than natives or ethnic majority members, but that there may be group differences as regards occupational status and cultural background. For instance, Aalto et al. (2013) found that among nurses, immigrants were more often bullied than were natives, while no differences as regards exposure to workplace bullying were found among physicians, among whom subjection to bullying also otherwise was less common than among nurses. As an imbalance of power is central in the process of bullying (Einarsen et al., 2011), Aalto and associates' finding may suggest that physicians' high occupational status protected them, including immigrants, against being bullied. Høgh et al. (2011) in turn found in their study on nurses in Denmark that only non-

Western immigrants, but not Western immigrants, were more exposed to bullying at work than were natives.

Fox and Stallworth (2005), comparing three ethnic/racial (Asian, African-American, and Hispanic/Latino) minority groups' exposure to bullying to that of Whites', in the USA found that only Hispanic/Latino minority members were more exposed to general bullying, but that all three minority groups were more exposed to racial/ethnic bullying than Whites. Fox and Stallworth did not report to what extent the respondents of the Asian and Hispanic/Latino minority groups included immigrants. While immigrants and well-established ethnic minorities differ from native majority members as regards cultural heritage, immigrants' situation differs in many ways from that of well-established ethnic minorities. Immigrants are newcomers, and may as such be regarded more as outsiders than native-born minority members. Moreover, well-established minority members may be more or less familiar with the culture and language of native majority members, while immigrants generally face a completely new situation as regards the language and culture of the host culture. Thus, if the Hispanics in the study were mainly immigrants but the Asians were not, this might explain why only Hispanics/Latinos were more exposed to general bullying. In this context it may be noted that a recent meta-analysis reported that ethnicity alone, as a demographic variable, is not particularly strongly associated with peer victimization and bullying among children and adolescents at school (Vitoroulis & Vaillancourt, 2015). Although workplace bullying and bullying among pupils at school cannot be directly equated, it may be that ethnicity alone is not strongly associated either with bullying at work.

However, a more serious challenge in the study by Fox and Stallworth (2005), and also in all the studies mentioned previously (Aalto et al., 2013; Hogg et al., 2011; Lewis & Gunn, 2007), as regards interpretation of the results, is that none of these studies were conducted in an organization-specific manner and thus did not control for psychosocial work factors. Immigrants, as well as underprivileged ethnic minority members, may generally be more likely to be recruited to workplaces with poor working conditions that have problems recruiting natives or ethnic majority members (see Aalto et al., 2014; Constant & Massey, 2005). Therefore the observed higher prevalence of immigrants' and ethnic minority members' exposure to bullying could rather be a reflection of poor working conditions, which have been shown to exacerbate bullying (Baillien et al., 2011; Hauge et al., 2007, 2011; Hoel et al., 2010) than immigrant or minority status *per se*. In order to rule out these alternative explanations it is important to compare the exposure of bullying of immigrants and

natives working in the same jobs in the same workplaces. This was taken into account in the present study.

None of these studies examined whether immigrants' cultural distance from natives was related to their subjection to bullying. The finding by Hogg et al. (2011) – that non-Western immigrants, but not Western immigrants, were at a higher risk of victimization than Danish natives – could, however, be interpreted as suggesting that cultural distance increases the risk of exposure to bullying. The relationship between immigrant status and exposure to bullying has received somewhat more attention in research on bullying among schoolchildren than among adults at work. Some recent studies (Bjereld, Daneback, & Petzold, 2015; Maynard, Vaughn, Salas-Wright, & Vaughn, 2016; Strohmeier, Kärnä, & Salmivalli, 2011) conducted among children and adolescents have shown that immigrants are more likely to face bullying at school than their native peers. However, as with the studies on workplace bullying, neither has any of these studies examined whether cultural distance has an impact on subjection to bullying. Neither do these studies conducted in schools shed light on whether culturally different immigrant groups suffer from bullying to different extents.

Thus not only is there a need for more research on immigrants' exposure to workplace bullying, controlling for work- and organization-related factors, but also for research on whether immigrants' cultural distance from natives is related to such victimization. This is because according to the similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971, 1997), difficulties in social interaction stemming from cultural distance (Triandis, 1994, 2000) and the social interactionist perspective (Felson, 1992; Felson & Tedeschi, 1993), it is highly likely that cultural distance from others increases the risk of being subjected to bullying. This study endeavours also to shed light on this issue.

### **1.5.3 The association of intra- and intercultural co-worker relations with employee well-being**

Cross-national studies conducted in recent years (Chen et al., 2015; Church et al., 2103; Lun & Bond, 2016; Sheldon, Cheng, & Hilpert, 2011), support the notion that satisfaction of the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) – or the need for relatedness as Deci and Ryan (2000) call the construct in their self-determination theory – contributes to well-being cross-culturally. Thus, even if the need to belong were enacted differently in different cultures (Fiske & Fiske, 2007), empirical

research supports the universality of the need to belong. It is therefore reasonable to assume that satisfaction of the need to belong is associated with employee well-being among native Finns as well as among immigrants originating from different cultures. So far research has not paid attention to whether the need to belong can be satisfied equally by intra- and intercultural relationships. There is, however, no reason why this should not be the case.

To the best of my knowledge there are only two studies (Amason et al., 1999; Wang & Sangalang, 2005) examining how co-worker relations with immigrants and with natives are associated with well-being among immigrants, and no studies exploring this among natives. Amason et al. (1999) found that social support provided by native Anglo-American co-workers was negatively associated with acculturative stress among Hispanic immigrants, while support provided by co-culturals was unrelated to the well(ill)-being outcome. Wang and Sangalang (2005) in turn found that perceived social support from native Canadian co-workers was positively – although only modestly ( $r = .18$ ) – associated with job satisfaction among Filipino immigrants, but that perceived support from other immigrants ( $r = .13$ ) was not significantly related to job satisfaction. The strengths of the associations of the two types of social support with job satisfaction did not, however, differ significantly from each other.

Meta-analytic results have shown co-worker support to be one of the more important antecedents of job satisfaction (mean  $r = .27$ ) (Schleicher et al., 2011), hence the associations reported by Wang and Sangalang (2005) was weaker. This may reflect a cultural difference, that is, that co-worker support is not such a strong predictor of employee well-being among Filipinos (see Chen, Kim, Mojaverian, & Morling, 2012; Taylor et al., 2004; Taylor, Welch, Kim, & Sherman, 2007, for cultural differences in the impact of received social support), as among people from Western cultures, where most of the studies on employee well-being have so far been conducted. Another or further reason for the modest association between co-worker support by natives and the non-significant association of support from peer immigrants with job satisfaction may be respondents' line of work. Most respondents in the study by Wang and Sangalang (2005) were blue-collar workers on assembly line jobs. It may be that this kind of work did not allow for much social interaction or exchange of support between employees, which may be reflected in the weak associations between support and job satisfaction.

Thus there is a particular dearth of studies investigating whether intra- and intercultural co-worker relations and co-worker support are equally associated among immigrant employees. Studies on immigrants in general (i.e. not in workplace

context), international students and expatriates, however, suggest that support from and social relations with natives have a greater impact on adjustment and well-being than the equivalent offered by co-culturals (Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola, & Reuter, 2006; Kashima & Loh, 2006; Martínez García, García Ramírez, & Maya Jariego, 2002; Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000; Zhang & Goodson, 2011; see Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2003, for a meta-analysis). However, in this line of studies, too, there has been a tendency to distinguish between co-national (i.e. co-cultural) and host national (i.e. native) sources of support or social relations (see Bierwiazzonek & Waldzus, 2016, for a review), thus omitting relations with other immigrants (students and expatriates) originating from other cultures than one's own (see Hendrickson et al., 2001; Kashima & Loh, 2006, for exceptions).

In an increasingly culturally diverse world and given the cultural diversification of workplaces, it is nevertheless important to ascertain how immigrants' co-worker relations with foreign immigrants (i.e. those not originating from the same cultural background as oneself) relate to employee well-being. This was taken into account in the present study by investigating the direction and strength of immigrants' co-worker relations with job satisfaction and psychological well-being by distinguishing immigrants' relations in addition to native and co-cultural co-workers, also to relations with foreign immigrants. This is also the first study to examine the associations between natives' co-worker relations with co-culturals and immigrants with employee well-being. This is a novel area of exploration as this issue has likewise not been explored in studies unrelated to the work context, that is, among international students' and expatriates' native peers or in society at large.

## 1.6 Context of the study

### 1.6.1 Immigrants in Finland and in the bus driving sector

Over the last 25 years, Finland, which forms the context of the present study, has transformed from a country of emigration to a country of immigration. Although the number of immigrants has multiplied during this time period, the proportion of foreign-born people in the population (6.5% in 2016, Statistics Finland, 2017),

remains lower than in the other Nordic countries and is one of the lowest in Europe (see OECD, 2015). The largest immigrant groups in Finland have until recently been Russians, Estonians and Somalis, but today those born in Iraq outnumber those born in Somalia (Statistics Finland, 2017). Immigrants in Finland live predominantly in the Helsinki metropolitan area – where the present study was conducted – and in another two of the country’s largest cities.

The employment rate of foreign born people in 2014 was 14% lower than that of natives (Statistics Finland, 2016). There are, however, large differences between different immigrant groups. The employment rate is higher among those originating from Europe and other Western countries, and lowest among those originating from Africa and the Middle East. When matching educational level, the employment rates of people with immigrant background and natives are nearly the same among men, but not among women. Immigrants, however, work more often in blue-collar jobs than do native Finns, and this includes immigrant men with higher education (Sutela, 2015).

The present study was conducted in one of the largest urban bus companies in Helsinki, in which about 30 per cent of the bus drivers were first generation immigrants (foreign born and of foreign descent). Bus transport is one of the sectors in Finland employing relatively more people of foreign origin. Urban bus companies in the larger cities of Southern Finland have for some years been dependent on immigrants to ensure a sufficient workforce. Bus driving tends to be an occupation for which immigrants and ethnic minority members are recruited also in other European countries and in North America (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2011; Evans & Johansson, 1998).

In Finland there are about 300 bus companies that are members of the Bus and Coach Association (and in addition about 100 companies that are not members) (Bus and Coach Association, 2016). These companies employ more than 12,000 people, of whom about 87% are bus drivers and 6.5% mechanics. These companies accomplish nearly a million bus journeys a day. A well-functioning public transport system is vital for social development and economic growth as well as for the environment (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2011). The importance of public transport is more likely to increase than decrease in the future. The total number of employees working in this sector – as well as the share of immigrant employees – is expected to increase in the coming years in the EU Member States (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2011). From this perspective, a bus company seems particularly suitable for examining immigrants’ and natives’ social relations and their associations with employee well-being.

## 1.6.2 Urban bus driving as a job and bus drivers' co-worker relations

Bus driving is a socially isolating job, with limited opportunities for interaction with co-workers and superiors (Evans & Johansson, 1998; Tse, Flin, & Mearns, 2006). Even if bus drivers serve clients, these contacts tend to be brief and superficial. In fact social isolation is regarded as one of the stress factors of bus drivers' work (Evans, 1994). The main tasks of a bus driver involve transportation of passengers according to timetables and serving the passengers by selling tickets, providing information and observing and helping with loading and unloading (Tse, Flin, & Mearns, 2007). Urban bus driving is considered to be a highly stressful job and has been linked to ill health – particularly with cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders and musculoskeletal problems – as well as to labour turnover and early retirement (Aronson & Rissler, 1998; Emdad et al., 1998; Evans & Johansson, 1998; Morris, Heady, Raffle, Roberts, & Park, 1953a, 1953b; Tse et al., 2007; see, Tse et al., 2006, for a review).

The stressors of the job include, in addition to social isolation, lack of decision-making authority, performance vigilance (in combination with monotony), tight schedules and time pressure, traffic congestion, irregular work hours, night and split shift work, poorly maintained equipment, poor cabin ergonomics, adverse weather conditions, the sedentary nature of the job, demanding interaction with passengers, threats of physical violence from passengers, and work schedule interference with family, and social life (Evans, 1994, 1998; Evans & Carrère, 1991; Tse et al., 2006). The job can thus be characterized as being high in demands and low in control and support (see Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). Moreover, the high demands are often conflictual, particularly as regards adhering to schedules and maintaining good contact with passengers and caring for safety demands (Meijman & Kompier, 1998).

Although bus driving is undeniably a solitary job, the role of co-worker relations in employee well-being among bus drivers may so far have been underestimated. Reviewing the literature on the potential buffering effect of social support among bus drivers, Evans (1994) concluded that the observed null findings are probably due to the solitary nature of the work in that there may be insufficient variance in social support among bus drivers to adequately test its importance as a factor involved in their well-being. However, according to the matching hypothesis, buffering effects are more likely to be found when there is a congruence between a work demand and a resource factor (Van de Ven, de Jonge, & Vlerick, 2014; Van de Ven, Vlerick, & de Jonge, 2008). Among bus drivers social support could thus be



expected to primarily buffer against the social demands of the work, such as demanding encounters with passengers, but not, for instance, demands related to time pressure. Moreover, the evidence to date in general gives more support for a direct than a moderating relationship between social support and employee well-being (de Lange et al., 2003; Häusser et al., 2010). Evans' (1994) conclusion about the insignificant role of social relations in bus drivers' employee well-being may thus be considered premature. The solitary nature of the job could in fact enhance the importance of co-worker relations.

Even if urban bus drivers mainly work alone, they are nevertheless dependent on each other when doing their work, particularly when swapping vehicles (Tse et al., 2006). Although these interactions are brief, they may be rewarding and offer respite from social isolation. Swapping vehicles may also be considered as a critical point in the smoothness of the work. Failure to be on time may result in passenger complaints, foregone rest breaks and penalties from management and give rise to conflicts with co-workers assigned to take over the vehicle (Tse et al., 2006). Depending on how the break areas are planned, bus drivers may also spend time together during breaks at depots and common rest stops, as was the case in the company in which the current study was conducted. Thus, given that there is an opportunity to meet and interact with the same co-workers repeatedly over time, relationships are likely to develop. The proliferation of mobile phone use during the last two decades has also made it possible for people in socially isolated and mobile jobs to be in contact with co-workers during the working day. Thus even employees in solitary jobs may easily interact with each other by phone if the work allows it.

In fact a study on young bus drivers in Finland (Martikainen, 2013) showed that bus drivers themselves considered co-worker support to be one of the primary resource factors at work, and that they called on workmates for peer support particularly after challenging situations with passengers. Another study also contest the notion of the peripheral role of social relations in bus drivers' work environment. A study conducted among bus drivers in a large transport company in Norway found that as many as 11.6 per cent labelled themselves as victims of bullying and that the perpetrators were most frequently reported to be colleagues, that is, other bus drivers (Glasø, Bele, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2011). The prevalence rate found is high in comparison to that of a representative study of the Norwegian workforce, which yielded a prevalence rate of 4.6% using the same measure (Nielsen et al., 2009). Thus, even if urban bus drivers mainly work in isolation from their colleagues they nevertheless interact with each other. Workplace bullying may occur – even at high

rates – that may severely impinge on well-being. Supportive relationships that may enhance well-being are also likely to develop.

## 1.7 Aims and research questions

The aim of this study was to extend our current knowledge of immigrants' and natives' social relations at work, and of how intra- and intercultural co-worker relations are associated with employee well-being among immigrants and natives. Both positive and close co-worker relations as well negative social interaction, in the form of bullying, were examined. The study consists of three sub-studies (Studies I–III) published as original articles. The limitations of earlier knowledge were taken into account in Study I and Study III by examining both intra- and intercultural co-worker relations. Immigrants' co-worker relations were examined by differentiating relations to natives, co-cultural (originating from the same culture as oneself) and other immigrants (foreign immigrants). Natives' co-worker relations were divided into relations to other natives (co-cultural) and to immigrants. Study II expands our current knowledge of immigrants' exposure to workplace bullying, particularly by taking account of immigrants' cultural distance from natives, and by being mindful that the immigrants and natives studied worked in the same workplace. The research questions by sub-studies were as follows:

1. How are co-worker relations to those perceived as belonging to the same cultural group and to other co-workers perceived vis-à-vis positive interaction? What is the cultural background of the co-worker perceived as the closest one? How do different immigrant groups (immigrant groups that are differently culturally distant from natives) perceive their co-worker relations with natives, vis-à-vis positive interaction? (Study I)
2. Are immigrants, when in the minority, more exposed to bullying at work than are natives? Is immigrants' cultural distance from natives related to their exposure to bullying? Through what kind of negative actions are immigrants bullied? By whom – vis-à-vis work role and immigrant status – are immigrants bullied? (Study II)

3. How are intra-cultural and intercultural co-worker relations associated with psychological well-being and job satisfaction among immigrants and natives? (Study III)

The specific hypotheses of the studies are presented in the original publications (as well as in Table 2 on page 50).

## 2 METHODS

### 2.1 Participants and procedure

Studies I, II and III were based on data obtained in a larger study entitled “Multicultural work organizations – immigrant workers’ integration, well-being, safety and equitable personnel selection”, conducted at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH). The research project was approved by the FIOH Ethics Committee. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed in an urban bus company (in Helsinki, Finland) in 2006. The majority (88.5%) of the employees of the company worked as bus drivers, and the rest as mechanics (6.5%) or in administrative (including supervisory) tasks (5%). No immigrants worked in administrative tasks, therefore all those working in these tasks were excluded from Studies I, II and III. The participant group thus consisted mainly of bus-drivers (93%) and a small group of mechanics (7%). Just over 30% of bus drivers and just under 10% of mechanics were first generation immigrants.

In all, 825 questionnaires and pre-paid return envelopes were mailed to the home addresses of all immigrants (i.e. foreign-born and of foreign descent) ( $n = 426$ ) and every second randomly chosen native ( $n = 409$ ) employee working either as a bus-driver or mechanic. A cover letter was enclosed with the relevant background information on the study and the voluntary nature of participation, as well as the procedures for ensuring confidentiality. Two reminders were sent to non-respondents.

According to the employer, all immigrant employees were first generation immigrants. Due to legal restrictions, the employer had no registered information on the national backgrounds of the employees, therefore immigrant background was inferred using personal and family names (see Mateos, 2007, for a review on name-based ethnicity classification methods). This method was deemed appropriate for inferring immigrant status because of the short history of immigration in Finland (in modern times) and the fact that the population of the country has until recently been culturally relatively homogeneous. The constructed list of presumed immigrants and a list of ambiguous native cases were checked with supervisors and secretaries from

the company and necessary corrections were made before the final classification. The procedure for inferring immigrant and native status is described in Appendix 1.

A total of 189 natives and 185 immigrants returned the questionnaire, constituting a response rate of 45% (natives 46%; immigrants 43%). Five of the questionnaires were incomplete and therefore excluded from the analyses. The remaining actual subject group thus consisted of 186 natives and 183 immigrants.

### 2.1.1 Sample characteristics

The majority of the respondents were male (90%), their average age was 45.1 years ( $SD = 9.1$ , range 24–63) and they had worked in the company for an average of 7.7 years ( $SD = 8.0$ , range 0.1–35). Almost all (97%) of the respondents had a permanent employment contract and two out of three (67%) reported that their current work corresponded with their education at least fairly well. The immigrant employees differed from their native colleagues in that they were somewhat younger ( $t(347) = 2.84, p < .01$ ) and had worked in the company for a shorter time ( $t(219,576) = 10.97, p < .001$ ). There were also fewer women among the immigrants than among the native employees (6% vs. 15%,  $\chi^2(1) = 8.38, p < .01$ ).

The immigrants came from 32 different countries and they had lived in Finland for an average of 8.6 years ( $SD = 5.2$ , range 1–24). The most common primary reason for immigration was work (36% of respondents), followed by refugeeism or asylum-seeking (22%), ethnic repatriation (so-called Finnish-Ingrian returnees /remigrants from the former Soviet Union, 17%), and marriage/common law marriage to a Finn (16%).

There were differences between the five immigrant groups (Estonians, Russians and those from the former Soviet Union, Sub-Saharan Africans, those from the former Yugoslavia and the group “others”; see p. 41 for more detail on grouping of immigrants) regarding age ( $F(4,165) = 8.80, p < .001$ ), reason for immigration ( $\chi^2(28) = 249.15, p < .001$ ), duration of residence in Finland ( $F(4,64.1) = 24.67, p < .001$ ), proficiency in spoken Finnish ( $F(4,62.2) = 13.28, p < .001$ ) and correspondence of education and work ( $\chi^2(16) = 54.79, p < .001$ ). Estonians had resided in Finland for the shortest time and were the oldest, whereas Sub-Saharan Africans had resided in the host country longest and were the youngest. Sub-Saharan Africans rated their Finnish proficiency highest and those from Russia and the former Soviet Union poorest. Those belonging to the group “others” reported less often than others that their work corresponded well with their education. Russians and those from the

Soviet Union reported most often that their primary reason for immigration was ethnic repatriation (61%). Estonians in turn reported the reason to be most often work (79%). The most often reported reason for immigration was refugeeism or asylum seeking among those from Sub-Saharan Africa (78%) and those from the former Yugoslavia (88%). Among those belonging to the group “others” 61% reported marriage/common law marriage to a native Finn as the primary reason for being in Finland.

### 2.1.2 Attrition analysis

Attrition analysis showed that the respondents differed from non-respondents in terms of age and sex. The respondents were older (on average 2.6 years,  $p < .001$ ) than the non-respondents, and women responded more often than men (61% vs. 39%,  $p < .01$ ). Respondents and non-respondents did not differ in terms of employment contract (permanent/temporary), length of employment or immigrant status (i.e. native vs. immigrant). Attrition analyses were also performed separately for natives and immigrants. Among natives no differences were found between respondents and non-respondents. Among immigrants respondents differed from non-respondents in that they were older (on average 2.7 years,  $p < .01$ ).

## 2.2 Measures

Two questionnaires, one for natives and one for immigrants, were created in Finnish. They included identical items, but the questionnaire for immigrants also included immigration-specific items. As far as possible, measures were derived either directly or with modifications from established questionnaires with good psychometric qualities. However, new measures were specifically constructed for Studies I–III.

Choosing measures and constructing new ones was partly guided by themes rising to prominence, such as social relations at work, in interviews held at the beginning of the larger study on “Multicultural work organizations”. Altogether 91 employees (56 immigrants and 35 natives), seven supervisors and six HR professionals from altogether 17 different workplaces were individually interviewed before constructing the questionnaires. In addition, seven different occupational health care teams providing services for these workplaces were interviewed in group

interviews (Bergbom & Riala, 2007), as well as eight teams from the workplaces responsible for occupational health and safety at the workplace.

To overcome the language barrier and to ensure the participation of immigrants (see Moradi, Sidorchuk, & Hallqvist, 2010, for immigrants' lower response rates relative to natives'), the Finnish questionnaire was translated by bilingual translators into the three most spoken languages among immigrants to Finland at the time of data collection, namely Russian, Estonian and Somali (Statistics Finland, 2017), and also into English. Back translations were not used, but as an attempt to check and improve the cultural validity and equivalence of the items, the translators were asked to inform the researchers whenever in doubt of the appropriateness of a question, or if they felt that the question was difficult to translate correctly. In these situations, suitable concepts and formulations were sought and found through discussion. To ensure that the questionnaire items were comprehensible for our prospective respondents and that they would make sense to them, the questionnaires were piloted – using a different sample – among both natives ( $n = 10$ ) and immigrants ( $n = 30$ ), during different stages of the questionnaire development. Immigrants received the questionnaire in at least Finnish and English, and, depending on the putative ethnicity, in additional languages.

The original articles provide detailed information on the measures used in Studies I–III. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of the composite scores can be found in Table 1 (see page 47), which summarizes the main variables and analysis methods used in the studies.

## 2.2.1 Cultural distance

Immigrants were asked to report their *country of origin*. The immigrants came from 32 different countries; 71% from Europe and 29% from outside Europe. In Study I and Study II immigrants' *cultural distance* from the host country culture (i.e., Finnish culture) was determined by country of origin and the native language(s) of that country (see Triandis et al., 1994, for measurement of cultural distance and Burton et al., 1996; Jones, 2003, for languages and world cultural areas).

In Study I immigrants were categorized into four groups with regard to cultural distance from natives. Estonian-speaking Estonians ( $N = 68$ ) were considered to be culturally closest to natives, followed by Russians and Russian-speaking Estonians ( $N = 32$ ). Sub-Saharan Africans ( $N = 23$ ) were categorized as the most culturally distant group. Those from the former Yugoslavia ( $N = 19$ ) were considered to be

more culturally distant from natives than Russians but culturally closer than respondents from Sub-Saharan Africa. Those from other areas ( $N = 40$ ) were excluded from the analyses involving cultural distance in Study I.

In Study II immigrants were assigned to three groups according to their cultural distance from Finnish culture and language: *the culturally closest group* ( $N = 69$ ) to Finland, *the intermediate group* ( $N = 60$ ), and *the culturally most distant group* ( $N = 53$ ). The culturally closest group consisted of Estonian-speaking Estonians and one Swede (the only Scandinavian among all immigrants). Other immigrants from Europe, who were mainly from Russia and from the former Yugoslavia, were assigned to the intermediate group. The rest of the immigrants, all of whom came from outside Europe and from non-Western cultures (mainly from Africa and the Middle East) were assigned to the culturally most distant group. The rationale for the categorization of immigrants into different groups vis-à-vis cultural distance from Finland is described in more detail in Study I and Study II.

## 2.2.2 Co-worker relations

In Study I and Study III *co-worker relations* were measured with four-item scales aimed to elicit supportive and positively experienced relations as well the frequency of interaction with a defined group of co-workers. The *natives'* (i.e., host nationals') questionnaire included two scales, one measuring co-worker relations with co-nationals and one measuring co-worker relations with immigrants. The *immigrants'* questionnaire in turn included three scales; co-worker relations with co-culturals, co-worker relations with natives (i.e., host nationals), and co-worker relations with immigrants originating from other cultures than one's own (i.e., foreign immigrants).

The four items in each scale pertained to a) social support ("When needed, do you get help and support from [e.g. your Finnish co-workers]?" (1 = *never*, 5 = *very often*), b) the quality of co-worker relations ("How do employees with [e.g. Finnish and immigrant backgrounds] get along at your workplace?" (1 = *very well, no problems*; 5 = *very poorly, a lot of problems*), c) the amount of interaction ("How much do you interact at your workplace with [e.g. Finnish co-workers] (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *very much*), and d) willingness to interact with others ("How much would you like to interact at your workplace with [e.g. Finnish co-workers] (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *very much*). Items c) and d) also included a sixth response option: 0 = *no such co-workers at my workplace*. Items a) and b) in immigrants' questionnaire included an additional response option: 0 = *no others from the same culture at my workplace*. Items a) and b) were taken with



modifications from the Healthy Organization Survey (Lindström, Hottinen, Kivimäki, & Länsisalmi, 1997). Before calculating the sum scales, the coding of item b) was reversed.

The scales were analysed by means of explorative factor analysis (EFA), the results of which are reported in Study III. The EFAs clearly indicated that the scales could be still improved. Nevertheless, as the scales were new and considered to have theoretical merit, their underdeveloped nature may be tolerated (see Little, 2013). Therefore the scales were considered appropriate for the purpose envisaged. The reliabilities of the scales were checked separately for natives and immigrants, and among immigrants separately for cultural groups with sufficiently large sample sizes (i.e. Estonians, Russians, Former Yugoslavians, and Sub-Saharan Africans). The scales included only four items, and they were conceived rather as indices of frequent and positively experienced relations with a certain group of co-workers than as scales of unidimensional constructs (Schmitt, 1996; Streiner, 2003), thus reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) below .70 were also considered acceptable. However, the internal consistencies for two of the scales were extremely low among those from the Former Yugoslavia and thus deemed to be unacceptably unreliable. Therefore, immigrants from the Former Yugoslavia ( $n = 19$ ) were excluded from Study III.

*The cultural background of one's closest co-worker* (Study I) was assessed through a single item. First, a close co-worker was defined as a co-worker with whom one might be happy to work or spend time during breaks or to talk about one's personal life. After this the immigrant respondents had to choose an alternative to complete the statement 'My closest co-worker is' from three response options: 1 = *an immigrant from the same culture as myself*, 2 = *an immigrant from a culture other than my own*, and 3 = *of Finnish origin*. The natives had to respond with the alternatives: 1 = *Finnish-born* and 2 = *of immigrant background*.

### 2.2.3 Workplace bullying

In Study II *exposure to bullying* was measured with a single item, preceded by the following definition of bullying: "Bullying and harassment at the workplace is repeated, persistent and continuous negative behaviour. It may be subjugation or insulting treatment. The bully may be a co-worker, supervisor or subordinate." Following the definition respondents were asked to report whether they felt they were subjected to this kind of treatment at their workplace or not (1 = *no*; 2 = *yes*). This kind of self-labelling method with a single item has been considered to be a

valid measure of bullying, especially when presented with a definition of bullying (Nielsen, Matthiesen, & Einarsen, 2010; Nielsen, Notelaers, & Einarsen, 2011). *The perpetrator's* work role and immigrant vs. native status were elicited by one further question with five different response categories (e.g. one or more Finnish co-workers) that were not mutually exclusive, that is, it was possible to report perpetrators from several categories. To gather descriptive information on what kind of specific bullying behaviours the respondents had been subjected to, *negative acts* were assessed with one question in checklist form: "How often have you experienced the following situations at work?" The question was followed by a list of seven negative acts (e.g. "Rumours and gossip being spread about you"). The response options were 1 = *never*; 2 = *sometimes*; and 3 = *often*).

## 2.2.4 Employee well-being

In Study III employee well-being was measured with both a work-specific and a context-free (i.e. not work-specific) measure: job satisfaction and psychological well-being.

*Job satisfaction*, was assessed with a single item from the Healthy Organization Survey (Lindström et al., 1997) measuring general job satisfaction: "How satisfied are you with your current job?" (1 = *very satisfied*; 5 = *very dissatisfied*). The scale was reversed in the analyses. A meta-analysis by Wanous, Reichers and Hudy (1997) has shown single-items of general job satisfaction to be reliable and valid measures of overall job satisfaction. Single items on job satisfaction have also recently been deemed by Fisher, Matthews and Gibbons (2016) to be acceptable based on empirical evidence on reliability, convergent validity, content validity and test-retest results.

*Psychological well-being* was measured with two scales, emotional well-being and energy/fatigue, from the Finnish version (Aalto, Aro, Aro, & Mähönen, 1995) of the RAND 36-Item Health Survey 1.0 (Hays, Sherbourne, & Mazel, 1993) originating in the USA. The items of the two scales were preceded by a common beginning: "How much of the time during the past four weeks...", after which the items of emotional well-being (e.g. have you been happy?) and energy/fatigue (e.g. have you had a lot of energy?) were rated on scale of 1 (= *never or very seldom*) to 6 (= *very often or continuously*).

The standardization and validation work of RAND-36 in Finland (Aalto, Aro, & Teperi, 1999) indicates that these two scales do not measure as distinct constructs in

Finland as in the USA, but overlap substantially. This finding was replicated among the natives (the Finns) in this sample using EFA. For natives a one-factor solution of the combined scales turned out to be a superior solution to keeping the original two scales separate. A one-factor solution was also deemed to be a better solution for the immigrants in this sample. Keeping the original scales would also have led to the exclusion of one of the immigrant groups (i.e., Sub-Saharan Africans) due to unacceptably low reliabilities. Thus the scales were combined into a composite score and labelled psychological well-being. The analyses of the scales have been described in more detail in the original publication of Study III.

### 2.2.5 Background variables

Background variables were measured for two reasons: firstly, for the purpose of sample description, and secondly, to be able to control, if needed, for those variables that were expected to be confounders. The following background factors were used as controls: *age* (in years) (Study I and Study III), *length of employment* (in years and months) (Study II), *correspondence of work with education* (Study I–III), immigrants' *Finnish proficiency* (Study II), immigrants' *length of residence in Finland* (in years) (Study I), and *primary reason for immigration* (Study I). The reasons for expecting different background variables to have confounding effects is described in the original Studies I–III, likewise detailed information about the measures and response scales.

## 2.3 Measures taken to prevent common method variance

As the use of self-report measures may, through common method variance, be a source of error and particularly lead to inflated (or deflated) associations between predictor and criterion variables, both procedural and measurement remedies were taken in advance to reduce potential common method variance (see Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012, for recommended remedies). Special attention was paid to reducing item ambiguity and item sensitivity in the development of the questionnaire by piloting the questionnaire with both immigrants and natives, and making any necessary adjustments to the items. The major part of the measures were derived from established questionnaires

with good psychometric properties; they had different scale anchors and were located on different pages. Attention was also paid to giving assurances of respondent anonymity: the handling of anonymity issues was clearly explained, and the questionnaires were returned directly to the researchers without any intervention of supervisors or the employer.

## 2.4 Statistical analyses

The main statistical analyses used in Studies I–III are specified study by study in Table 1. Detailed information on the analyses used appears in the original publications, therefore the analyses are only mentioned here. In Study I the main analysis methods were paired t-tests and analysis of variance (ANCOVA), in Study II logistic regression analysis and in Study III hierarchical regression analysis. Because the main analyses used in Study I and Study III are founded on an assumption of a normal distribution, the variables were checked for normality. All variables used in the main analyses were deemed to follow the normal distribution sufficiently in order to allow the use of linear analyses. Potential problems of multicollinearity were also checked for. The condition index in the different regressions was within the limits given and the models were thus not deemed to suffer from severe multicollinearity problems. The significance level for accepting a hypothesis – as well as for concluding a significant association between variables – was set at  $p < .05$ .

**Table 1. Summary of research aims, main variables and main data analyses**

	Research aims	Main variables	Main data analyses
Study I	To examine 1) how co-worker relations with those who are perceived as belonging to the same cultural group (co-culturals) and other co-workers are perceived, 2) the cultural background of the person perceived as one's closest co-worker, and 3) how immigrant groups that are differently culturally distant from natives perceive their relations to native co-workers.	Natives' co-worker relations with co-culturals ( $\alpha = .62$ ) Natives' co-worker relations with immigrants ( $\alpha = .80$ ) Immigrants' co-worker relations with co-culturals ( $\alpha = .60$ ) Immigrants' co-worker relations with natives ( $\alpha = .72$ ) Immigrants' co-worker relations with foreign immigrants ( $\alpha = .69$ )  The cultural background of one's closest co-worker Cultural distance	Paired <i>t</i> -tests. ANOVA (post hoc: Scheffe's test and Tamhane's test). Comparison of the obtained one sample occurrence frequency with the expectation value of the normal distribution. ANCOVA
Study II	To examine 1) whether immigrants, when in the minority, are more exposed to bullying at work than natives, and 2) whether cultural distance from host culture increases immigrants' risk of being bullied.	Exposure to bullying  Immigrant status Immigrants' cultural distance from host culture  The perpetrator's work role Negative acts (specific bullying behaviours)	Logistic (binomial) regression analysis
Study III	To examine how intra- and intercultural co-worker relations are associated with employee well-being.	Natives' co-worker relations with co-culturals ( $\alpha = .62$ ) Natives' co-worker relations with immigrants ( $\alpha = .80$ ) Immigrants' co-worker relations with co-culturals ( $\alpha = .62$ ) <sup>a</sup> Immigrants' co-worker relations with natives ( $\alpha = .74$ ) <sup>a</sup> Immigrants' co-worker relations with foreign immigrants ( $\alpha = .69$ )  Psychological well-being (natives: $\alpha = .93$ ; immigrants: $\alpha = .90$ ) Job satisfaction	Hierarchical regression analysis Comparison of 95% confidence intervals of beta-coefficients

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> These reliability coefficients differ from those in Study I, because in Study III those from the former Yugoslavia were excluded from all analyses on immigrants.

## 3 OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS

### 3.1 Study I

The aim of this study was to analyse the quality of social relations between and among immigrants and natives. As expected, co-worker relations between those from the same cultural group were generally perceived as the most positive. Moreover, the co-worker perceived as the closest originated most often from the same culture or country. Close relationships were also reported, however, between immigrants and natives and between immigrants from different countries and cultures. Every tenth native and every sixth immigrant (who had co-cultural co-workers) reported their closest co-worker relationship to be of an intercultural nature. As expected, the culturally closest immigrants from natives, that is Estonians, perceived relations with natives as more positive than the culturally most distant immigrants, Sub-Saharan Africans.

### 3.2 Study II

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether immigrants constituting a minority in a workplace are at a greater risk of exposure to bullying than natives, and whether immigrants' cultural distance from the host country culture, increases the risk of becoming bullied. As expected, immigrants were on average more likely to label themselves as targets of bullying than natives. The culturally least distant immigrant group did not, however, differ from natives as regards exposure to bullying. As hypothesized, cultural distance from natives increased immigrants' risk of being bullied. The risk of exposure to bullying was nearly three times higher among immigrants in the intermediate group (*vis-à-vis* cultural distance from natives) and nearly eight times higher among immigrants in the most distant group than that of natives. Immigrants were more likely to be bullied by native co-workers,

as well as by both co-workers and the supervisor, than were natives. The primary type of bullying behaviour the immigrants were subjected to was social exclusion.

### 3.3 Study III

The aims of this study were to investigate firstly how co-worker relations with co-cultural and other co-workers are associated with job satisfaction and psychological well-being among immigrants and host nationals (i.e. natives), and secondly, whether the cultural source of co-worker relations was related to the strength of well-being associations. As expected, all kinds of co-worker relations were positively associated with the two well-being outcomes. Also as expected, among immigrants, co-worker relations with host-nationals were more strongly associated with job satisfaction than relations with co-cultural and other immigrants (i.e. foreign immigrants). Among immigrants relations with host nationals were also, as expected, more strongly associated with psychological well-being than relations with co-cultural. However, the associations of relations with host nationals and foreign immigrants did not differ in strength. Among natives, co-worker relations with immigrants were more strongly associated with job satisfaction than relations with co-cultural co-workers.

The hypotheses of Studies I–III and results of testing them are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2. Summary of hypotheses and research questions and corresponding results for Studies I–III**

Study	Hypotheses and research questions	Hypothesis conclusion	Results to research questions	
I	H1	Co-worker relations with co-culturalists or those who are perceived as belonging to the same cultural group as oneself are more positive than relations with other co-workers.	Partially supported	
	H2	The person perceived as one's closest co-worker is most often from the same culture if the workplace has others originating from the same culture.	Supported	
	H3	Immigrants who come from the culturally closest area to Finland (Estonians) perceive their relations with natives as more positive than those coming from the culturally most distant areas (Sub-Saharan Africans). Immigrants who belong to the intermediate groups, with regard to cultural distance to Finland, fall in between the two aforementioned groups.	Supported	
II	H1	Immigrants are more often bullied than natives.	Supported	
	H2	Culturally more distant immigrants are bullied more often than culturally closer immigrants.	Supported	
	RQ1	By whom are immigrants bullied?		Immigrants were more likely to be bullied by native co-workers, and by both co-workers and the supervisor.
	RQ2	Through what kind of negative acts are immigrants bullied.		Immigrants were most often socially excluded (not talked to, not listened to, or ignored).
III	H1	Among host nationals, co-worker relations with co-culturalists (H1a) and immigrants (H1b) are positively related to psychological well-being (H1a1–H1b1) and job satisfaction (H1a2–H1b2).	All sub-hypotheses supported	



H2	Among immigrants, co-worker relations with co-cultural (H2a), host nationals (H2b) and foreign immigrants (H2c) are positively related to psychological well-being (H2a1–H2c1) and job satisfaction (H2a2–H2a2–H2c2).	All sub-hypotheses supported
H3	Among immigrants, co-worker relations with host nationals are more strongly related to psychological well-being (H3a) and job satisfaction (H3b) than relations with co-cultural and foreign immigrants.	H3a partially supported H3b supported
RQ1	Among host nationals: Are co-worker relations with immigrants as strongly related to psychological well-being and job satisfaction (and has the relationship the same direction) as relations with co-cultural?	Co-worker relations with immigrants were (positively and) more strongly associated with job satisfaction than relations with co-cultural co-workers.  The associations of co-worker relations with co-cultural and immigrants were positively and equally strongly associated with psychological well-being.

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## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Overall summary of results

In line with the principles of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971, 1997), and the cultural distance hypothesis (Triandis, 1994, 1995, 2000; Triandis et al., 1994), intra-cultural co-worker relations were perceived as more positive than intercultural co-worker relations both among natives as well as among immigrants on average. This was also the case among four (Estonians, Russians, Sub-Saharan Africans, and “others”) of the five different immigrant groups. The only group for whom intra-cultural co-worker relations were not more positive than relations with natives was the group consisting of those originating from the former Yugoslavia. Intra-cultural co-worker relations were, however, more positive than relations with other immigrants in this group, too. The closest co-worker was most likely to be a co-cultural, among natives as well as among all five immigrant groups. However, among both natives and immigrants there were those who reported their closest co-worker to be somebody from another culture than oneself – that is, even excluding cultural solos. Along with the similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971, 1997) and the cultural distance hypothesis (Triandis, 1994, 1995, 2000; Triandis et al., 1994), immigrants’ cultural distance from Finnish culture was negatively associated with their relations to native co-workers. That is, the more culturally distant, the less positive the relations.

In accordance with the same theoretical underpinnings and social interactionist theory (Felson, 1992; Felson & Tedeschi, 1993) immigrants on average labelled themselves more often as targets of workplace bullying – primarily by native co-workers (or in addition to natives by immigrants and/or supervisors) – than did natives. Immigrants’ cultural distance from natives was positively associated with exposure to bullying. The culturally closest group, however, did not differ from natives as regards exposure to bullying. The primary type of ill-treatment immigrants were subjected to was social exclusion.

Consistent with the need-to-belong theory (Baumeister, 2012; Baumeister & Leary, 1995) intra- as well as intercultural co-worker relations were positively associated with job satisfaction and psychological well-being, among immigrants and

natives alike. According to the model of Ward and associates of psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Ward et al., 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a, 1993b; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2001) and Bochner's functional model of friendship networks of foreign students (Bochner, 1982, 1985; Bochner et al., 1977), co-worker relations with natives were more strongly associated with job satisfaction among immigrants than relations with co-cultural or other immigrant co-workers. Immigrants' co-worker relations with natives were likewise more strongly associated with psychological well-being than relations with co-culturals. The associations of co-worker relations with natives and with other immigrants did not, however, differ in strength as regards psychological well-being. Among natives co-worker relations with immigrants were more strongly associated with job satisfaction than relations with native co-workers.

## 4.2 Comparison of the findings with those of earlier studies

### 4.2.1 Positive and close intra- and intercultural co-worker relations

The finding that immigrants and natives had more positive and close intra-cultural co-worker relations than relations with each other is in line with the findings of ethnographical studies (Ogbonna & Harris, 2006; Remennick, 2004). The finding also concurs with the finding by Amason et al. (1999), that is, natives reported more perceived support from other natives than from immigrants, although the immigrants (Hispanics) in their study did not differ in this regard. The finding that immigrants had more positive and closer co-worker relations with co-culturals than other immigrants is also in line with the findings by Ogbonna and Harris (2006), while the two other studies mentioned above did not include more than one cultural group of immigrants.

However, contrary to the findings of Remennick (2004) and Ogbonna and Harris (2006), in the present study close positive co-worker relations of an intercultural nature were found both between natives and immigrants, as well as between immigrants from different cultures. There are several possible reasons for this divergent finding. First, it could be that these relationships went unnoticed because of the qualitative nature of these two earlier studies and the smallish number of

interviewees. However, intercultural close co-worker relations were not particularly rare in the present study, as every sixth immigrant – who had co-culturalists as co-workers – and every tenth native reported this kind of close relation. Moreover, it was the closest perceived co-worker relation of all co-worker relations. A proportion of this size of close intercultural co-worker relations should presumably also have been noticed in interviews and emerged from observations.

Second, the present study differs from the study by Remennick (2004) on two significant aspects related to the composition of the personnel and the organization of work, which may also explain this different finding. In the present study only about 30% of employees were immigrants, originating from many nations and cultural areas, while in the Israeli organization studied by Remennick more than half of the employees were immigrants, and they were all from one country (Russia or the former Soviet Union) and all spoke Russian. It may be that a more culturally diverse workplace fosters more positive intercultural relations than a bi-cultural workplace, which may lead to a stronger us vs. them categorization (see Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1986, for SIT), and thus to a more marked polarization between the two groups. When the number of a minority (or immigrants) increases, this may have a negative impact on the relations between the majority (or native) members and immigrants in an organization (see Quillian, 1995, for perceived group threat; and Schaafsma, 2008, for more problematic relations in work units with a higher percentage of immigrants). In this study, the majority of immigrants and natives worked as bus drivers. Immigrants and natives swapped vehicles with each other, and used the same common spaces for breaks – thus, there were naturally occurring contacts. This was also the case between bus drivers and mechanics. In the study by Remennick (2004) there appear to have been fewer naturally occurring encounters between immigrants and natives. Immigrants worked more than natives in lower-status positions, and most immigrants worked on the less popular evening/night shift.

In the study by Ogbonna and Harris (2006) the immigrants represented a wide range of nationalities, as in this study. The proportion of immigrants, however, was somewhat higher than in this study, as well as the proportion of established ethnic minorities. Maybe even more importantly, the turnover rate was extremely high (70% during a six-month period the year before the study was conducted) which was not the case in the organization in which the present study was conducted. This may be a third reason explaining why close intercultural co-worker relations did not develop in the organization Ogbonna and Harris studied as co-workers changed frequently.

Even if according to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971, 1997) and the cultural distance hypothesis (Triandis, 1994, 1995, 2000; Triandis et al., 1994), it is more likely that more positive relations will develop between those originating from the same culture than between those originating from different cultures, positive relations also develop between people from different cultural backgrounds. According to contact theory (Allport, 1954; Hewstone & Swart, 2011; see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, for a meta-analysis), contact between members of different groups reduces prejudices and leads to more positive relations – as also demonstrated in this study in terms of the existence of close intercultural co-worker relations. It may also be that exposure to intercultural contact makes it possible to form perceptions of interpersonal similarities between another person and oneself that exist despite differences in cultural origin. These contacts are then likely to increase interpersonal attraction and thus positive relation development.

Comparison of the findings on cultural distance and immigrants' perceptions of their relations with native co-workers would suggest that these findings corroborate those of earlier studies conducted in Finland. Studies on natives' attitudes towards different immigrant groups (Jaakkola, 2005; 2009) show that natives are generally more positively disposed toward immigrants originating from countries less culturally distant and enjoying a high standard of living. Thus, immigrants' perceptions of their actual co-worker relations with natives mirror natives' attitudes toward immigrants in general. The findings are also consistent with those of a study on perceived discrimination in Finland, in that culturally more distant and visually different immigrants were found to perceive less discrimination than culturally closer and less visibly different immigrants (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Perhoniemi, 2006).

#### 4.2.2 Exposure to workplace bullying

The finding of immigrants' higher risk of exposure to workplace bullying is in line with the two studies published so far on the subject, both conducted on nurses (Aalto et al., 2013; Hogg et al., 2011), even if in the study by Aalto and associates (2013) no difference was found in this regard among the high-status employees, that is, doctors. However, contrary to these studies, in the present study immigrants and natives worked in the same workplace, and this rules out some of the confounding effects. This adds credence to the finding. Moreover, the findings of this study shed

more light on the phenomenon, as cultural distance was measured, and it turned out to markedly increase immigrants' risk of exposure to bullying: The culturally most distant immigrants were at a 800% greater risk than natives, while the culturally closest immigrants were not more exposed to bullying than were natives. In addition, the findings of this study served to reveal by whom culturally more distant immigrants were bullied, as well as by what primary tactic.

This to the best of my knowledge is the first study to investigate the immigrant/native status of the perpetrator(s) of bullying. The previously mentioned study by Fox and Stallworth (2005) reports that ethnic and racial minorities are more exposed to ethnic/racial bullying than (white) majority members, while the same does not necessarily hold for exposure to general bullying. Lewis and Gunn (2007) for their part found that in addition to that ethnic minority members were more subjected to bullying at work by both supervisors and co-workers, the bullying tactics of supervisors in particular differed depending on whether the target belonged to the majority or minority group. Even if ethnic/racial minority status cannot be equated with immigrant status, the findings of these earlier studies and the present study taken together suggest that there may be particular tactics by which immigrants (and minority members) are bullied. In order to recognize and to be able to prevent bullying in workplaces consisting of immigrants and natives (or ethnic/racial minority and majority members) more research is needed on why immigrants seem to be at greater risk of being bullied and about how bullying is enacted by colleagues as well as supervisors.

#### **4.2.3 Associations of intra- and intercultural co-worker relations with employee well-being**

The finding that co-worker relations were positively associated with job satisfaction and psychological well-being among immigrants originating from different cultures and among Finnish natives is in line with cross-cultural studies reporting that satisfaction of the need to belong is positively associated with well-being in different cultures (Chen et al., 2015; Church et al., 2013; Lun & Bond, 2016; Sheldon et al., 2011). Moreover, this study showed that both intra- and intercultural relations were positively associated with well-being outcomes – thus, the finding suggests that the need to belong can be satisfied regardless of the cultural source of a relation. However, it should be noted that satisfaction of the need was not measured in this study. Its role between co-worker relations and well-being is thus purely theoretical.

Nevertheless, frequent and positive interaction with co-workers – as the co-worker relations were measured – fulfils the conditions set for satisfying the need to belong.

The finding that among immigrants positive co-worker relations with natives were positively related to well-being can be interpreted as being in agreement with the findings of Amason et al. (1999) and Wang and Sangalang (2005), albeit different measures were used. However, in contrast to the present study, these earlier studies found no positive association between support provided by co-cultural co-workers (Amason et al., 1999) or by peer immigrants (Wang & Sangalang, 2005) and well-being among immigrants. The discrepancy in the results may stem from the different measures of co-worker relations used in the studies. Moreover, Amason and colleagues measured well/ill-being via acculturative stress, which is supposedly more closely related to relations with natives than with co-culturals. Neither of these studies investigated how co-worker relations with immigrants and natives were associated with well-being among natives.

To the best of my knowledge no studies have so far examined how intra- vs. intercultural co-worker relations are associated with well-being among natives. Studies on the impact of intra- vs. intercultural relations on natives' well-being are also lacking in society at large, as well as concerning international students' native peers. It has, however, been suggested on the basis of status construction theory (Ridgeway, 1991; Ridgeway, Boyle, Kuipers, & Robinson, 1998) and the notion that immigrants in general have a lower status than natives, that natives' co-worker relations with immigrants may have a negative impact on natives' well-being, even if immigrants' co-worker relations with natives have a positive impact on their well-being (see Hoppe, Fujishiro, & Heany, 2014). The reasoning is that frequent interaction and supportive relations with those who have a lower status at work, i.e. immigrants, could be predicted to “contaminate”, that is lower one's own status, and thus be detrimental to well-being.

Hoppe et al. (2014) found partial support for this notion in their study conducted in nine workplaces. The degree of racial/ethnic similarity at work was positively associated with job satisfaction among natives (white Americans in the USA) and negatively among Latinos (mainly recent immigrants), while for the native racial/ethnic minority, African Americans, the association was insignificant. The study by Hoppe and associates did not, however, examine whether natives' close and positive relations with immigrants were actually associated with lower job satisfaction. The finding of the present study – that those natives who interacted and had positive co-worker relations with immigrants enjoyed better psychological well-being and were more satisfied with their jobs than those lacking such relations

– could be interpreted to contradict status construction theory (Ridgeway, 1991; Ridgeway et al., 1998).

### 4.3 Methodological evaluation: limitations and strengths

The study has several limitations as well as strengths that should be taken into account when considering the findings. The three most serious limitations pertain firstly to the validity and reliability of the measures used, secondly to the generalizability of the results and thirdly to the study design. A fourth limitation, albeit not as serious as the aforementioned limitations, is the smallish number of participants and its consequences for statistical power.

#### 4.3.1 Measurement validity and reliability

The findings concerning co-worker relations with the new scales should be interpreted with a certain caution. Neither were the two scales taken from the RAND 36-Item Health Survey 1.0 (Hays et al., 1993), emotional well-being and energy/fatigue, without problems. The EFAs performed on the *co-worker relations scales* showed clearly that the measures could be improved. Moreover, the reliabilities of three of the five measures were suboptimal. However, the reliability of those scales were close to the level (.70) generally considered adequate. As the scales were intended to capture different aspects of co-worker relations rather than measuring a unidimensional construct – both qualitatively and quantitatively – and the number of items on each scale was only four, the construct validity and the internal consistencies may be considered satisfactory (see Little, 2013; Schmitt, 1996; Streiner, 2003). Two of the scales were, however, deemed non-satisfactory for one group, those originating from the former Yugoslavia, which why this group was excluded from Study III. This was also the only group for which one of the three hypotheses concerning co-worker relations did not gain full support in Study I. Even if the co-worker scales may for the other groups be considered reliable enough, more reliable measures could presumably have captured more of the desired construct, and thus explained more of the well-being measures. It may, however, be noted that the co-worker scales even in their present form explained a substantial amount of



the variance of well-being (among immigrants 21% and among natives 12% of job satisfaction; among immigrants 12% and among natives 8% of psychological well-being).

Future studies on co-workers relations should be conducted with more valid and reliable measures on co-worker relations. It is, however, important to note that when studying social relations among a culturally heterogeneous group, the measures most commonly used in Western cultures, such as measures of perceived/received social support, may not be appropriate for the purpose. For instance, while there is an impressive number of studies showing social support to be positively associated with well-being and also to causally predict well-being (e.g. De Baquer et al., 2005; Stansfeld et al., 2008), perceived/received social support is not in all cultures positively associated with well-being, and may even be negatively associated with it (Chen et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2007; Taylor et al., 2004).

Thus, even if the need to belong is considered to be a cultural universal (Baumeister, 2012; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fiske & Fiske, 2007) it depends on the cultural construal of relationships whether or not perceived/received social support is positively associated with well-being. Therefore, at least social support provided to others should also be measured if social support and its association with well-being is under scrutiny. As regards social support from others, it is also of importance to distinguish between available and activated support (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola et al., 2006). Moreover, with regard to intercultural relations, even if quality of social interaction has been shown to be more important for well-being than quantity of interaction (Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000), in order for the need to belong to be satisfied, quantity of interaction is also important (Baumeister, 2012; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). From these aforementioned perspectives the co-worker relations scales used in this study are not entirely devoid of merit – even if they were sub-optimal and require further development.

The analyses conducted on the two scales of *psychological well-being*, emotional well-being and energy/fatigue originating from the RAND 36-Item Health Survey 1.0, showed that the two scales did not measure different constructs either among natives or among immigrants, but rather one construct. The scales had therefore to be condensed into one scale and called psychological well-being. This one-factor solution was deemed satisfactory – and a better solution than keeping the scales separate – and the reliabilities were good among both natives and immigrants ( $\alpha \geq .90$ ), as well as good or satisfactory among Russians, Estonians, those from the former Yugoslavia, Sub Saharan Africans and the group “others” ( $\alpha = .72-.92$ ).

Thus, combining the original two scales into one may rather be considered a strength of the study than a limitation, as keeping them separate would have been a poorer solution.

*Immigrants' cultural distance from Finland* was inferred from country of origin and the language group of that country, and was thus only a proxy of cultural distance. The measurement of cultural distance may, however, be considered appropriate (see Triandis et al., 1994) – particularly as distance from Finland was measured on an ordinal scale with three points with no attempt at more exact measurement. The same approach has also been used by several eminent scholars as for instance Furnham and Bochner (1985). Yet there are several other ways of inferring or measuring cultural distance. One of these would have been to measure cultural distance by plotting distance points taking into account an immigrant's country of origin and scores for that country, using scores collected in different studies on Hofstede's cultural dimensions (see Hofstede, 1980, for the classic study; see <https://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>, for the database on country scores). That is, constructing distance points by relating scores for a given nation with the scores for Finland. However, scores were not available for all the 32 nations from which the immigrants in this study originated. Moreover, even if previously collected scores on Hofstede's cultural dimensions are very widely used in research on cultural differences and the impact of culture on work-related outcomes, I consider the use of these scores problematic for several reasons. Firstly, the available scores date from very different time periods for different nations, and cultures do change, albeit generally slowly (Triandis, 1994). Secondly, the available database on scores for Hofstede's cultural dimensions in different nations does not include information on the representativeness of the samples from which the scores were compiled. In addition, Hofstede's cultural dimensions have been criticized, in particular, for unacceptably low internal consistencies and lack of construct validity (Blodgett, Bakir, & Rose, 2008; Spector, Cooper, & Sparks, 2001) and for excessive reliance on values in studies aiming to understand cultural variation (Gelfand, Nishi, & Raver, 2006).

Therefore a more appropriate way would have been to construct distance scores, for example, from studies collected on cultural syndromes such as individualism-collectivism (Triandis, 1995) and tightness-looseness (Chan, Gelfand, Triandis, & Tzeng, 1996; Gelfand et al., 2006; Gelfand et al., 2011) that cover better cultural variation than values. However, there were no scores available for some participants in this study, either for cultural syndromes, or other options such as the scores of the GLOBE Study of 62 societies (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta,

2004). A third way to measure cultural distance would have been to ask immigrants about their opinions or perceptions of the magnitude of cultural differences between their cultures of origin and Finnish culture. However, neither would this approach have been unproblematic in the present study for several reasons. For example, an individual's perception of large cultural differences could actually be more a consequence of difficulties in adjusting to a new culture than an estimate of actual cultural differences. Thus a more objective measurement of distance, as used in the present study, is preferable in order to be able to draw more causal conclusions about cultural distance and the quality of social relations between people originating from different cultures.

All in all, the way cultural distance was measured in this study may be considered appropriate (see Triandis et al., 1994). Nevertheless, an advisable way in future studies on cultural distance could be, in addition to inferring cultural distance from country of origin, to measure cultural distance by choosing relevant cultural values or syndromes for the study and administering tests on these as a part of a survey. Moreover, inferring cultural distance by administering tests to study participants on relevant cultural values, attitudes and other relevant elements of culture would also cater somewhat better for the dynamic nature of culture. Immigrants acculturate to varying degrees to their host country. For instance, regarding change of norms and roles, a recent study examining foreign-born individuals in 30 European countries found that gender roles, which have traditionally been considered deep-rooted and stable over time, are actually among immigrants more prone to change toward the gender roles prevailing in their host country (Breidahl & Larsen, 2016). This also seems to happen at a much faster pace than previously thought. Moreover, immigrants may have had also extensive contact with other cultures than their culture of origin and the host culture. And again, even if cultures have traditionally been considered to generally be slow to change (see, Triandis, 1994), it is debatable whether this holds true in today's world, characterized as it is by increasing internalization and people's exposure to different cultures.

Using actual individual measures of cultural distance instead of inferred measures, could also shed light on whether immigrants' and natives' co-worker relations are more contingent upon cultural differences or whether the potent forces are more grounded in ethnic hierarchies. Even if perceived cultural similarities/dissimilarities from natives are used in the formation of ethnic hierarchies, other factors also affect the rank order of ethnic groups within a given society (Hagendoorn, 1995; Hagendoorn & Drogendijk, 1998), as can be seen in the ethnic hierarchy in Finland. In studies of opinions about immigrants among Finns

(Jaakkola, 2005, 2009) this is reflected, for instance, in the finding that Russians are ranked lower (more negatively) and Vietnamese and Chinese higher (more positively) in the hierarchy, than cultural distance (referred from country of origin) from Finland might suggest. The present study does not reveal to what extent the differences found among immigrants belonging to different cultural distance groups are caused by cultural similarities/dissimilarities from natives, and to what degree by other factors determining the formation of ethnic hierarchies.

In addition, concerning validity and reliability of measures used in this study, three of the focal variables, namely, closest co-worker, exposure to workplace bullying and job satisfaction were measured with single items. As these variables were single items, indicators of their validity or reliability could not be obtained. However, a recent study by Fisher et al. (2016) showed that single-item measures of job satisfaction are reliable and valid measures of overall *job satisfaction* as also previously concluded (Wanous et al., 1997; Wanous & Hudy, 2001). When piloting the questionnaire these one-item questions appeared unproblematic in that the respondents indicated that they had indeed understood these questions. Nonetheless, single-item questions – albeit economic in terms of questionnaire length – cause limitations.

As regards the *closest co-worker*, a close co-worker was defined in such a way – a collaboration relationship, a more informal, or an intimate relationship – that the respondent could choose what kind of relationship felt closest. Thus the findings only concern the cultural background of this relationship. For the purposes of the study, this poses no problems, as the research question only concerned the cultural background of the closest co-worker, not the nature of the relationship. However, as a research question for future studies it would be worthwhile to explore whether close intercultural relationships are formed mainly between those who work more closely with each other, or whether these relationships evolve further or primarily during informal interaction.

As already described in chapter 2.2.3 a one-item question on *exposure to workplace bullying*, particularly when workplace bullying is defined as it was in this study has been shown to be a valid way to measure bullying (see Nielsen et al., 2010; Nielsen et al., 2011). However, even when bullying is defined, there can be cultural differences as regards labelling oneself as a victim of bullying. This has been shown to be the case when studying ethnic differences among children using a definition-based single item measure of bullying compared to a behaviour-based measure (see Sawyer, Bradshaw, & O’Brennan, 2008). Future studies could benefit from using quasi-objective measures, such as the “behavioural experience method” (a

questionnaire with a list of bullying behaviours), along with a self-labelling measure. The combined use of these two types of measures has also been recommended as a best practice approach by Nielsen and associates (2010). This would also give more precise information about workplace bullying and would also reveal cultural differences or non-differences.

As the primary type of bullying behaviour the immigrants in this study were exposed to was social exclusion, it would be important to learn more about how this manifests in order to be more able to prevent bullying in culturally diverse workplaces. It would be important to learn more about what kind of workplace bullying immigrants, and particularly the more cultural distant immigrants, are subjected to. Conducting qualitative interviews on the subject would afford more insight on this, and should be used as a method in future studies.

### 4.3.2 Generalizability

The response rate of the study was relatively low (45%). If the modest response rate is associated with systematic selection of respondents in ways that affect the representativeness of the sample, this impairs the generalizability of the results. Yet it may be noted that the response rate is within the average range of (published) voluntary studies (i.e. with no pressure to participate) conducted in organizations (Baruch & Holtom, 2008) – and as such by no means exceptionally low. Immigrants' and natives' response rates did not differ from each other. However, the attrition analyses showed that among immigrants respondents were older than non-respondents.

In the study sample those from Estonia and Russia were on average older than those from outside Europe. Immigrants from Estonia and Russia received the questionnaire in their own languages, while those originating from outside Europe – with the exception of Somalis – did not. This may indicate that immigrant respondents were selected based on whether they received the questionnaire in their own languages as well as on their proficiency in Finnish or English. Particularly cultural solos (who did not receive the questionnaire in their mother tongue), whose Finnish and English proficiency were poorer, may be underrepresented in the study sample. As culturally more distant immigrants – who were on average younger than culturally closer immigrants – were more likely to have less positive co-worker relations with natives, and were also more likely to be exposed to workplace bullying, it may be that their response rate was lower and related to their experiences at work.

That is, those who perceived the social environment at work more negatively may have been less inclined to participate in the study.

There are possible reasons for the relatively low response rate. The low response rate may be a reflection of fairly low job satisfaction among the employees, as aggregate job satisfaction has been found to be associated with response rate: the lower the satisfaction the lower the response rate (Fauth, Hattrup, Mueller, & Roberts, 2013). The respondents of the present study had a lower level of job satisfaction (60.5% rather or very satisfied) than average Finnish employees (80%) and Finnish process and transportation workers (74%) according to the Work and Health Interview Study conducted by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health in 2006 (Perkiö-Mäkelä et al., 2006) and the data for this study were collected during the same time period. Moreover, the employees of the organization were mainly men, and homogeneity in gender composition has been shown to have a negative effect on survey participation (Fauth et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, systematic selection and its consequences for generalizability cannot be excluded. It is possible, for example, that those whose attitudes toward cultural diversity were more positive, were more inclined to respond. This kind of systematic selection could, for instance, be reflected in more positive intercultural co-worker relations than would have been the case for the whole targeted sample. It is also possible that there were differences between immigrants' and natives' response behaviour. Familiarity with questionnaires may have affected immigrants' and natives' response behaviour differently, as native Finns are in general used to receiving questionnaires from an early age. Literacy – Finland is ranked as the most literate nation in the world (Miller & McKenna, 2016) – may also be a reason for different responding behaviour among immigrants and natives. It may, however, be noted that eligibility for work as an urban bus driver in Finland entails passing exams requiring reading and writing skills. It is thus highly unlikely that there were illiterates among the targeted sample.

The study was conducted in one single organization. The employees, as well as respondents, were mainly men. The vast majority of respondents (and employees) worked as urban bus drivers. The ratio of immigrants to natives was about 1:2. These factors may also affect the generalizability of the findings. The findings may in some way be dependent on organization-specific factors or idiosyncratic features of the particular organization in which the study was conducted. It could, for example, be that the close intercultural relationships that were found to exist – contrary to previous findings by Ogbonna and Harris (2006) and Remennick (2004) – are due to a particular atmosphere fostering intercultural co-worker relations. This kind of

atmosphere could also to some extent explain why intercultural co-worker relations were more strongly associated with job satisfaction than intra-cultural co-worker relations. That is, if employees engaging in such relations were in some ways recognized and rewarded, this could lead to higher job satisfaction. However, neither my observations of the organization, nor the interviews conducted in the organization support such a conclusion. That is, there were no signs of particular diversity management actions or support for intercultural relations.

A more likely feature associated with the organization that may have had an impact on the findings, particularly as relates to bullying, is that the company had undergone major organizational changes a few years before the study. Organizational changes have been shown to be associated with an increase in bullying and other types of ill-treatment (Fevre, Lewis, Robinson, & Jones, 2012). Despite being a public transport company, it had to compete with private bus companies in a fiercely competitive market situation. This may have been reflected in a deterioration of working conditions. Poor working conditions have been shown to be associated with increased bullying (Hauge et al., 2007, 2011; Hoel et al., 2010; Baillien et al., 2011). Thus, these factors may be reflected in the quite high incidence of bullying found. However, this does not undermine the finding that when bullying occurred, immigrants, and particularly culturally more distant immigrants, were more likely to be targeted than natives.

As the majority of respondents were men, it is not known to what extent the findings can be generalized to women. When gender differences between natives' attitudes toward immigrants have been explored, women have in general been shown to have more negative attitudes and to be more intolerant of immigrants than men (François & Magni-Berton, 2013; Mayda, 2006). Attitudes predict contact and intergroup relations, even if the link from contact to attitudes is typically stronger (Binder et al., 2009; Brown, Eller, Leeds, & Stace, 2007; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). It is therefore conceivable that less positive and less close co-worker relations between natives and immigrants, as well as more bullying of immigrants, would have been found in a workplace employing more women. However, this most likely does not pertain to Finland, where the study was conducted. In Finland, women, and particularly young women, have traditionally had more positive attitudes towards immigrants than men, even if the gender gap has diminished during the first decade of the 2000s (Jaakkola, 2005, 2008, 2009). Less is known about gender differences as regards immigrants' attitudes, as there is less research on immigrants' attitudes toward natives, and the few existing studies have generally treated sex as a control variable (e.g. ten Teije, Coenders, & Verkuyten, 2013). However, the findings

concerning cultural distance and its association with co-worker relations between natives and immigrants and immigrants' risk of being bullied is unlikely to be affected by the proportion of men and women at the workplace.

There are inconsistent findings as to whether social relations are more strongly associated with well-being outcomes among women or men. Some studies have found that intimate social relations are more strongly associated with well-being among women than men (e.g. Goodman, 1999; Leavy, 1983). As regards co-worker relations, some studies have, however, shown that the health and well-being of men are more affected than women (Niedhammer et al., 1998), while other studies have found no gender differences (van Daalen, Sanders, & Willemsen, 2005). Thus, it is unclear whether the associations between co-worker relations and psychological well-being and job satisfaction would have been of different strength among women. However, it may be noted that in the previously mentioned large scale study by Schütte and associates (2014), a sense of community at work had the strongest association with psychological well-being among men, and was also one of the three strongest (and equally strong) predictors of well-being among women. As regards the findings concerning the different strength of associations between different types of intra- and intercultural relations among immigrants and natives, it is unlikely that this finding would have differed in a workplace with more women as employees.

The majority of respondents worked as bus drivers, as 93% of the potential respondents were bus drivers and the rest worked as mechanics. Unfortunately we had no information on whether specific respondents worked as bus drivers or mechanics. Thus we could not exclude mechanics or analyse possible differences between bus drivers and mechanics. However, even if all mechanics responded, the vast majority (84%) of respondents would still have been bus drivers. Bus drivers' work is solitary, with only fleeting opportunities for interaction with co-workers (Evans, 1994; Evans & Johansson, 1998; Tse et al., 2006). Thus it is not known to what extent the results can be generalized to other occupational groups, and particularly to groups whose work involves more interaction with co-workers.

As contact in general reduces prejudices and fosters positive intercultural relations (Binder et al., 2009; Brown et al., 2007; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), intercultural relations might be more positive and close, with less bullying, in occupations involving more intense social interaction. More contact and interpersonal interaction between co-workers could also attenuate the effect of cultural distance on relations. It could, however, also be that more intense interaction would result in more conflicts between culturally distant co-workers, and thus accentuate the effects of cultural distance. It remains unknown to what extent the



associations between co-worker relations and employee well-being outcomes would be stronger or weaker in jobs in which collaboration and informal interaction are more prominent. As the work of urban bus drivers is solitary, they may be in particular need of positive interaction with co-workers, and this may have amplified the associations between co-worker relations and employee well-being (see Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

As the ratio of immigrants to natives at work is likely to have an effect on relations between immigrants and natives (see Quillian, 1995; Schaafsma, 2008), the fact that about a third of the employees in the present study were immigrants affects the generalizability of the findings. However, that the proportion of immigrants of all employees was known is also a strength of the study as regards interpretation and comparison of the findings with those of other studies reporting the ratio of immigrants to natives at work, which unfortunately is not common.

### 4.3.3 Design of the study

The cross-sectional design of the study is a major limitation, as it precludes causal inferences on the associations found. The associations found could also have been due to reversed causality. As regards the associations between intra- and intercultural co-worker relations and employee well-being (Study III) it could as well be that those who enjoyed higher levels of psychological well-being, and particularly those who were more satisfied with their work, tended to evaluate their co-worker relations, and in particular intercultural relations, more positively than other respondents. However, as longitudinal studies (e.g. De Bacquer et al., 2005; Niedhammer et al., 1998; Stansfeld et al., 2008) suggest that social relations at work are predictive of well-being, it is unlikely that the associations found could be attributed in their entirety to reversed causation. Nevertheless, to confirm the nature of the relationships longitudinal studies are needed, especially on the relationships between intra- and intercultural co-worker relations and employee well-being.

Secondly, the use of self-reported measures may have led to inflated relations due to common method variance. However, it has been argued that the criticism of self-report measures is exaggerated, and that common method variance does not automatically lead to inflated relations (Spector, 2006). Moreover, several measures, both procedural and measurement remedies (see Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012), were taken in advance to reduce potential common method variance (described in Chapter 2.3). Furthermore, as regards Study III and well-being, it has been argued that

individuals themselves are best equipped to evaluate their own well-being (e.g. Gana, Broc, Saada, Amieva, & Quintard, 2016; Jylhä, 2009; Murdock, Fagundes, Peek, Vohra, & Stove, 2016). Nevertheless, future research could benefit from including more “objectively” measured well-being and health indicators such as register based absenteeism rates and physiological health markers. Concerning Study I and Study II, the cross-sectional design is not an equally serious limitation as in Study III, as cultural distance was inferred from country of origin, which cannot be caused by co-worker relations or exposure to bullying. Nor do the problems of possible common method variance pertain to Study I and Study II.

Thirdly, as the number of participants was quite small, this may have led to type II errors. Yet the associations found can nevertheless be considered robust, as the statistical power was limited because of the smallish sample size. This is particularly the case in Study III, where the difference in strengths of associations was tested by comparing 95% Confidence Intervals, which is a rigorous test and sensitive to statistical power.

#### 4.3.4 Particular strengths of this study

The major strength of this study is that the respondents worked in the same workplace, most of them in the same jobs. Thus the study was able to overcome some of the major methodological shortcomings of many earlier studies (e.g. Aalto et al., 2013; Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Hogh et al., 2011; Lewis & Gunn, 2007; Sundquist et al., 2003), that is, the problems of confounding effects of different workplaces and different jobs. This may be considered important in all three sub-studies, and strengthens the credibility of the findings and conclusions drawn from them.

For instance, in Study II, concerning workplace bullying, this was important as workplace bullying is considered to be a multifaceted phenomenon, frequently with multiple and simultaneous causes (Branch et al., 2013; Salin, 2003; Zapf, 1999). Several factors, either poor or problematic psychosocial as well as poor physical work environment have been shown to be associated with bullying (Baillien et al., 2009, 2011; Hauge et al., 2007, 2011; Hoel et al., 2010; Salin, 2014). Taken together with the fact that immigrants tend to be recruited to workplaces with problems in obtaining native employees (Aalto et al., 2014; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2011) – presumably because of less attractive working conditions – a comparison of immigrants’ and natives’ experiences is problematic in terms of the

conclusions that can be drawn. There are so far very few studies on immigrants, and a particular dearth of studies on immigrants and natives working in the same workplaces in the same jobs (some exceptions being Amason et al., 1999; Hoppe, 2011; Hoppe et al., 2014; Ogbonna & Harris, 2006). More studies are needed in which working conditions are controlled for. The fact that the study was conducted at a real workplace with employees actually working together adds to its ecological validity.

Another methodological strength of the study is that several relevant background factors – both general as well as immigration related – were taken into account, which is not commonplace in the literature on immigrants nor in the literature on immigrants and natives. Thus in this study the confounding effects of some potentially salient background factors could be controlled for, if necessary. This was particularly the case regarding the correspondence of work with workers' education, which turned out to be associated with most of the focal study variables, particularly among immigrants. As over-qualification is common among immigrants (Chen et al., 2010; Dahle & Seeberg, 2013; Dunlavy et al., 2016; Midtbøen, 2016; Salmonson & Mella, 2013) it is to be recommended that future studies on immigrants' (immigrants' and natives') psychosocial work factors should also measure and control for the correspondence of work with workers' education, when it is considered to be a potential confounder. Although several background variables were indeed measured, it has to be noted that neither personality traits nor attitudes were measured in this study, and could thus not be controlled for. Personality traits and attitudes, like attitudes towards multiculturalism, for instance, could in several ways act as confounders in this study. That is, be responsible to a lesser or greater extent for the associations found between co-worker relations and employee well-being.

An additional strength of study was that it differentiated between different subgroups of immigrants instead of treating immigrants as a homogeneous group. This was done in Study I and Study II when testing the main hypotheses. Unfortunately this was not possible in Study III as it would have led to too much loss of statistical power. The studies reviewed have tended to either treat a heterogeneous immigrant group as one group (Hoppe, 2011; Olesen et al., 2011) or only included one group of immigrants (Amason et al., 1999; Golding & Baezconde-Garbanati, 1990; Hoppe et al., 2010; Hoppe et al., 2014; Wang & Sangalang, 2005) (see Hogh et al., 2011; Verkuyten et al., 1993, for exceptions). Differentiating immigrants into subgroups may reveal important differences between groups, and also suggest whether the findings can be generalized to different immigrant groups.

The use of a questionnaire translated into four languages is also a strength. Even if the back translation method was not feasible because of costs and time constraints, an attempt was made to achieve cultural validity by active communication among the translators and researchers, and by piloting the questionnaire. As back translation often is not sufficiently cost effective, particularly with a culturally highly heterogeneous study sample, investing in the cultural validity and comprehensibility of a questionnaire in other ways is to be recommended. Presumably the efforts contributed to a response rate among immigrants which was no lower than that among natives, which is more an exception than a rule (see Moradi et. al, 2010, for differences in immigrants' and natives' response rates).

## 4.4 Practical implications and additional avenues for future research

### 4.4.1 Positive intercultural co-worker relations

The same predictions – that were supported – concerning positive co-worker relations could be made on the basis of social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971, 1997), and the cultural distance hypothesis (Triandis, 1994, 1995, 2000). It is nevertheless worth noting that it would be important for practical – as well as for theory developmental – reasons to ascertain whether the forces influencing interpersonal relations lie more in the processes of similarity attraction or social identity building. A study by Billig and Tajfel (1979) showed that the effects of manipulated social categorization into in- and out-groups overrode the effects of interpersonal similarity. More studies on this issue would be valuable.

A practical implication of similarity attraction is that in order to improve intercultural relations, interventions aimed at increasing perceptions of similarity between individuals originating from different cultures are desirable. According to SIT, interpersonal similarity is not, however, a prerequisite for social categorization to occur, even if interpersonal similarity in salient characteristics, such as cultural or national background, often in natural settings is used as a basis for social categorization. If the enhancement or maintenance of positive self-esteem is the

driving force of social categorization, and not merely a consequence of it, which is not known (see Brown, 2000), an intervention aimed at enhancing perceptions of interpersonal similarity across culturally dissimilar co-workers could in fact be counterproductive. According to SIT and social categorization theory (Haslam, Power, & Turner, 2000; Oakes & Turner, 1980), an increase in perceptions of similarity between an in- and out-group, may actually impair the quality of intercultural relations if the initial categorization is based on nationality or cultural background. That is, an increase in perceptions of similarity between the in- and out-group does not necessarily undermine an existing categorization, but may result in new bases for the categorization being used in a way that in-group membership still supports positive self-esteem, which may actually result in impaired inter-group relations. Thus future research to elucidate this issue would be valuable. However, at present advisable interventions are those which succeed in de-emphasizing social categorization on cultural and national grounds, for example by fostering a sense of common goals within the work group.

Even if intra-cultural co-worker relations in this study were more positive than intercultural co-worker relations, close and positive intercultural dyadic relations were indeed found. In fact, a workplace provides a context with at least three of the four optimal conditions assumed in Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, namely face-to-face encounters, common goals and institutional support, the fourth being equality in status, for prejudice-reducing effects and positive intergroup relations to develop. While typical workplaces are hierarchical, employees working with the same jobs may presumably also have equality of status, even if native vs. immigrant status may be associated with different social status. Thus even all four optimal conditions for positive intergroup relations may be fulfilled in a culturally diverse workplace. The support for the hypothesis is well-established, and the prejudice-reducing effect has been found to be strongest when contact meets the four optimal conditions originally assumed by Allport (see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006 for a meta-analysis). In order to foster positive intercultural co-worker relations it is thus important to organize work in such a way that employees from different cultural backgrounds work together rather than in more or less separate culturally homogenous groups or surroundings. An interesting question for future research concerns the circumstances in which particularly close and positive intercultural co-worker relations develop.

#### 4.4.2 Workplace bullying

More studies are needed on immigrants' elevated risk of being subjected to workplace bullying and particularly on immigrants' cultural distance from natives and its association with the risk. The findings of this study clearly show that the risk increased as cultural distance from natives increased, that is, from the majority group. The culturally closest immigrants, who were mainly Estonians, were not at a higher risk than natives. As they were also the largest immigrant group, it may be that the higher risk among more culturally distant immigrants had also or more to do with the small size of this group. Studies are therefore needed to ascertain the extent to which a possibly higher risk is associated more with cultural dissimilarity from others or with the size of a minority group. The large size of a minority group may serve as a protective factor against bullying.

Moreover, immigrants are not necessarily in the minority in all workplaces; natives may be in the minority. Are natives in these situations at elevated risk of exposure to bullying – or, are they protected by their native status? Or is the possibly elevated risk among immigrants, some immigrant groups, or natives related to the proportion of natives and immigrants in managerial positions? At present there are no answers to these questions, thus more research on the issue is warranted, particularly as exposure to workplace bullying may be decidedly detrimental to health and well-being. Immigrants' exposure to workplace bullying primarily took the form of social exclusion – albeit only seven different types of ill-treatment were investigated. More research on manifestations of social exclusion and its prevention is needed, likewise on types of ill-treatment not explored in this study (e.g. racial/ethnic bullying).

The fact that the findings obtained by the self-labelling method and exposure to ill-treatment did not overlap, except for social exclusion, is intriguing. One possibility is that culturally more distant immigrants, in addition to being exposed to social exclusion, were also particularly exposed to racial/ethnic bullying, not examined in this study. The seven types of negative acts examined in this study were chosen for descriptive purposes, and do not constitute a validated measure of bullying in general. A greater overlap between the two different types of measures could, however, have been expected. Taken together with relevant items not included, this discrepancy could be a reflection of other causes, such as a different threshold for labelling negative acts as bullying. For instance, previous experiences of discrimination and exposure to injustice could sensitize an individual to ill-treatment and thus alter the threshold for labelling negative acts as bullying (see Crosby, 1976,

1984, for relative deprivation theory and changes in sensitivity). As immigrants in general encounter more discrimination and less justice than natives (e.g. Chen et al., 2010; Midtbøen, 2016; Potter & Hamilton, 2014; Salmonsson & Mella, 2013), this could have led the immigrants in this study to consider exposure to ill-treatment as bullying more often than natives. A further possible reason for the discrepancy found is that immigrants are bullied specifically by means of social exclusion. Social exclusion, as opposed to other forms of ill-treatment is arguably less easily detected by others than by the target, thereby reducing the risk of perpetrators being identified by others than the target. It could thus be a “safer” way to bully for the perpetrator/s, than other forms of ill-treatment, that is, it could lessen the likelihood of negative reprisals for the ill-treatment. In any case, the discrepant finding between the self-labelling method and exposure to ill-treatment calls for further research.

As regards the prevention of bullying in culturally diverse workplaces it is important for organizations to clearly articulate a zero-tolerance of bullying, taking steps to identify occurrences of bullying, and making use of appropriate interventions in cases of bullying. This is also the case with monocultural workplaces. However, if cultural diversity is associated with an increased risk of employees being exposed to bullying, such interventions are even more warranted in culturally diverse workplaces. At present it is not known whether the prevalence of bullying is higher in culturally diverse than in monocultural workplaces. It may, however, be noted that 14.5% of the respondents in the present study reported that they had been subjected to bullying, which is relatively high if compared to the 5% of average Finnish employees and the 5% of Finnish workers in the process and transport sector regarding themselves as victims of bullying during the same time period as that in which this study was conducted (Perkiö-Mäkelä et al., 2006).

As workplace bullying is a multifaceted phenomenon, often with different simultaneous causes associated with poor working conditions, promoting decent working conditions and constructive leadership is also essential to prevent bullying (Baillien et al., 2011; Branch et al., 2013; Hauge et al., 2011; Salin, 2003; Zapf, 1999). Interventions intended to promote positive intercultural relations, such as improving supervisors’ and employees’ cross-cultural communication and conflict negotiation skills as well promoting an atmosphere on inclusiveness and acceptance of cultural diversity might be valuable in preventing bullying.

Related to both positive co-worker relations and exposure to workplace bullying in culturally diverse organizations a note has to be made on cultural solos (i.e., being the only person from a culture). This is a more or less invisible and forgotten group in the literature. If intra-cultural co-worker relations tend to be more positive than

intercultural co-worker relations and cultural distance increases the risk of being bullied, in particular in the form of social exclusion, where do we find cultural solos (and culturally most distant solos) in the social fabric of a workplace? Do they tend to become socially isolated and are they at a particular risk for exposure to workplace bullying, and particularly if they also are culturally more distant than others? This may be a risk group as regards social relations at work, and research on cultural solos is much needed.

#### 4.4.3 Associations of intra- and intercultural co-worker relations with employee well-being

The findings of this study suggest that both intra- and intercultural co-worker relations are important for employee well-being in workplaces comprised of immigrants and natives. That positive co-worker relations between immigrants and natives were more strongly associated with job satisfaction than intra-cultural co-worker relations, however, suggests that these relations should be intentionally fostered in the workplace in order to strengthen job satisfaction, the more so as the findings showed that the respondents mainly tended to develop positive co-worker relations with co-culturals. Moreover, among immigrants positive co-worker relations with natives were also more strongly associated with psychological well-being than relations with co-culturals.

Replications of the findings are needed in order to enhance their credibility. Research to determine the possible reasons why relations between natives and immigrants were more strongly associated with job satisfaction than relations with other co-workers would also be valuable. The findings could also be explained by a third variable that is actually responsible for the association. Such a variable might be one or more personality traits, such as emotional stability (vs. neuroticism), which has been shown to be a correlator of both subjective well-being (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Steel, Schmidt, & Schulz, 2008) and of job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002) as well as of cultural competence (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000; Wilson, Ward, & Fischer, 2013) and cultural adjustment (Yakunina, Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovac, & Elsayed, 2012). That is, the same personality trait/s could be associated with both higher job satisfaction and the likelihood of an individual developing positive intercultural co-worker relations. However, as among immigrants co-worker relations with natives were more strongly related to job satisfaction than relations with immigrants originating from other cultures, i.e. both



co-worker relation types being of intercultural nature, it is unlikely that personality traits alone would explain the finding. Nevertheless, research is needed in order to ascertain to what extent personality explains the association between intercultural relations and well-being. Besides emotional stability there are several other personality variables, such as open mindedness, flexibility and negative affectivity – negative affect being closely related to neuroticism (Judge et al., 2002) – that could in different ways confound the associations found in this study.

It would be important to learn more about this issue also from the perspective of individual differences, in future studies in this area of research. The use of personality variables with culturally heterogeneous samples, however, is not unproblematic. The problematic issues concern particularly universality vs. cultural uniqueness of trait structures, cultural differences in trait levels, and consistency and validity of traits and their measures (Church, 2016). Nonetheless, personality traits deserve more attention in research on cultural adjustment and intercultural relations in the future than has hitherto been the case, as stated by Wilson et al. (2013).

There is a particular need for longitudinal studies to shed light on causal relationships, as well as on how co-worker relations and well-being develop over time in culturally diverse workplaces. In addition, more research is needed on those circumstances and interventions which are conducive to the development of positive intercultural co-worker relations.

## 4.5 Bus drivers' co-worker relations and employee well-being

This study suggests that social relations at work are more important factors of employee well-being among urban bus drivers than previously assumed. Positive co-worker relations, intra-cultural as well as intercultural, were positively associated with employee well-being. The solitary nature of the work may in fact increase the significance of co-worker relations. Moreover, given the solitary nature of the work, the high incidence of workplace bullying – 14.5% of all respondents reported being subjected to bullying, primarily by co-workers but also by superiors – may be considered surprisingly high. The study by Glasø and associates (2009) also suggest that urban bus driving may be a high-risk occupation as regards workplace bullying. As Glasø et al. did not report whether the bus drivers were immigrants and natives,

it cannot be determined whether the high incidence of bullying in these two studies is associated with cultural diversity or with the work in itself.

Subjection to bullying can have extremely detrimental effects on well-being (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Finne et al., 2011; Rugulies et al., 2012) and also affect drivers' performance vigilance, thereby constituting a safety risk, conceivably an increase in the risk of fatal traffic accidents for drivers as well as passengers. More research on workplace bullying among urban bus drivers is thus much needed. Moreover, as urban bus driving is a customer service occupation, future research should also pay attention to drivers' exposure to ill-treatment by passengers. Culturally more distant immigrants were at high risk of workplace bullying in this study. Are culturally distant immigrant urban bus drivers also particularly susceptible to ill-treatment by their customers?

During August 2016 a trial with two self-driving buses began in Helsinki (Gibbs, 2016). At present there are only a handful of projects of this kind taking place in the world. It is impossible to foresee whether and to what extent urban bus driving will be automated, and if so, how fast. It has, however, been estimated that increasing urbanization will increase the need for urban bus transportation and the number of bus drivers in Europe in the years to come (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2011). The increasing number of migrants (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2011) may be considered as an important feature of this sector. The workforce in the transport sector is ageing at a higher rate than the general working population in Europe (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2011) a shortage of labour may hence become a problem in the next few years. In order to ensure a sufficient workforce in the future it thus important to make urban bus driving attractive enough by managing the increasing diversity of the personnel effectively. This is also important in order to enhance employee well-being, for its own sake, as well as for reasons of traffic safety. Attention should be paid to cultural diversity as well as age diversity.

## 4.6 Final propositions

It is here proposed, that among immigrants as well as among natives, positive relations between them, in addition to satisfying the need to belong, serve different kinds of psychosocial functions in a culturally diverse workplace from relations with

co-cultural. These relations may offer both parties the opportunity to acquire cross-cultural skills that help in navigating and operating in a culturally diverse workplace, reflected in better employee well-being, job satisfaction in particular. Intercultural interaction of a positive nature may also be rewarding for other reasons, such as enjoyment associated with being exposed to culturally different views and values, and gaining a wider understanding of issues. Among immigrants positive co-worker relations with natives may also be particularly beneficial because these relations may help integration into and adjustment to the host culture as a whole. It has recently been shown that natives who have immigrants as co-workers have more intercultural friendships outside the workplace than those who have not (Kokkonen, Esaisson, & Gilljam, 2015). Hence, the development of positive co-worker relations between immigrants and natives at work may also have positive consequences at the societal level, that is, it may relieve negative tensions between natives and immigrants – which may be considered crucial in today's world.

It is here also proposed that immigrants' co-worker relations with immigrants originating from other cultures than themselves – i.e. foreign immigrants – may serve psychosocial functions other than relations with other co-workers. Bochner (Bochner, 1982, 1985; Ward et al., 2001) proposed in his functional model of international students' networks that the psychological function of the network with other international students originating in cultures other than one's own was mainly recreational in addition to providing a shared experience of being a foreigner. Immigrants' intercultural relations with other immigrants have so far attracted only little attention in the literature. As regards expatriates, it has often been considered that their relations with other expatriates originating from other cultures than their own are more of a hindrance than an asset in adjustment to the host culture (see Triandis, 1994).

It is here, however, proposed – albeit very speculatively – that relations with co-immigrants originating from other cultures than oneself may in addition to provide a shared experience of being a foreigner, which may be empowering, also enhance the acquisition of cross-cultural skills and cultural adjustment. The reasoning behind this argument is as follows: Interpretations of a foreign culture through the lenses of one's own culture, and with co-cultural, are likely to be myopic and somewhat flawed (see Triandis, 1994). People originating from different cultures are likely to interpret the same phenomena in a culture differently. Hence, interaction with those from another culture and sharing different interpretations of the same phenomena with them may result in an understanding that one's own (cultural) interpretations of the host culture are not necessarily the only ones that can be made, and that these

may be erroneous and hasty. This may result in increased cognitive flexibility, open mindedness and cross-cultural competence.

Immigrants' co-worker relations with co-cultural are proposed, in a similar vein as in Bochner's (1982, 1985) functional model of friendship networks of foreign students, to provide a setting for the rehearsal and expression of cultural values. In addition, it is proposed here that those co-cultural co-workers who have acquired good cultural skills and are knowledgeable about the host culture may act as bridges between the two cultures. Relations to these co-cultural individuals may be particularly helpful and valuable in acquiring the needed cultural skills as these individuals may serve as cultural interpreters.

The impact of the rehearsal of the values of the culture of origin on well-being should, however, not be underestimated. Even if in the present study relations with native co-workers were more strongly associated with well-being outcomes among immigrants than relations with co-cultural, it may be that acquiring co-cultural co-workers would enhance equally or even more the well-being of cultural solos' than positive relations with natives. As regards natives, they are probably not in such great need of cultural rehearsal as immigrants, as they live in their culture of origin. Nevertheless, sharing views with co-cultural on how the workplace functions may be identity strengthening also among natives. Natives' relations to co-cultural may be particularly important in workplaces where they are in the minority. Moreover, as with immigrants, natives' relations with those co-cultural who have good cross-cultural skills and positive contacts to immigrant co-workers may help them to thrive in a culturally diverse workplace.

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# APPENDIX 1

**Table 3. Examples of inferring immigrant and native status from personal and family names of fictive individuals**

Family name	Personal name	Rational and decision
Aavik	Tanel	Definitively not a Finnish name (sounds like an Estonian name) → an immigrant → on the immigrant list
Bütün	Güngör	Definitively not a Finnish name (for example ü does not exist in Finnish or in Swedish. Sounds like a Turkish name). → an immigrant → on the immigrant list
Engström	Peter	Both the personal and the family name sound like Swedish names used in both Finland as well as in Sweden (and in other Nordic countries). "Eng" is old Swedish for "äng", meaning meadow, and "ström" means "current". "Eng" is "meadow" in both contemporary Danish and Norwegian. However current is spelled "strøm" in both Danish and Norwegian. The personal name is also a common name used in English speaking countries as well as in some other countries. The family name, however, is definitively of Finland-Swedish or Sweden-Swedish origin. → a native or an immigrant → on the list of uncertain cases and check this out with the company
Langley	Peter	The forename is commonly used in Swedish and in some other Indo-European languages such as English, as well as in countries belonging to other language families. The family name does definitely not sound like a Swedish name → an immigrant → on the immigrant list
Salminen	Yrjö	Definitively a Finnish name, not Estonian. (The family name could be translated into something like 'the person or the family-member from the strait'.) The suffix "-nen" is a very common diminutive in Finnish family names, and could be translated into Swedish and English as "-son" and in Japanese as "-jin". The personal name is also used in Finnish as a translation for Georg, e.g. George III = Yrjö III. → a native → on the native list without any indications of uncertainty
Alina	Jakobson	The forename is not a very typical Finnish name in modern times, but could also be the name of a native Finn, and has become somewhat more common for young Finnish girls. The forename is more commonly used in Estonia (and in Russia?) and in some other countries. The surname could be a native Swedish name, as well as a name in other Nordic countries and a name in English-speaking countries. It could also be a name from Estonia as Estonia has had a Swedish-Estonian minority for centuries. Native vs. immigrant status cannot be inferred. → on the list of uncertain cases and check this out with the company



# ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS



# Maahanmuuttajat suomalaisissa työyhteisöissä: työtoverien väliset sosiaaliset suhteet

Barbara Bergbom, Ulla Kinnunen ja Ari Väänänen

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli analysoida maahanmuuttajien myötä kulttuurisesti monimuotoistuneen työyhteisön työtoverien välisiä sosiaalisia suhteita. Lisäksi tavoitteena oli tarkastella työtoverisuhteissa mahdollisesti ilmeneviä maahanmuuttajaryhmien välisiä eroja. Työtoverisuhteiden laatua lähestyttiin samankaltaisuus vetää puoleensa -paradigman<sup>3, 4</sup>, sosiaalisen identiteettiteorian<sup>18, 19</sup> sekä kulttuurisen etäisyyden käsitteen<sup>22, 23</sup> avulla. Tutkimus toteutettiin postikyselynä, ja vastausprosentti oli 45. Tutkimusjoukko koostui erään kuljetusalan yrityksen maahanmuuttajataustaisista (n = 183) ja kantaväestöön kuuluvista työntekijöistä (n = 186), joista enemmistö (90 %) oli miehiä. Tulokset osoittivat, että sosiaaliset suhteet samasta maasta tulevien tai omaan kulttuuriseen ryhmään kuuluviksi koettujen työtoverien kanssa koettiin myönteisemmiksi kuin muihin työtovereihin. Myös läheisimmäksi koettu työtoveri oli useimmiten samasta maasta tai kulttuurista peräisin kuin työntekijä itse. Läheisiä ja myönteisiä työtoverisuhteita esiintyi kuitenkin myös sekä maahanmuuttajien ja kantaväestön että eri lähtömaista tulleiden maahanmuuttajien kesken. Virosta tulleet maahanmuuttajat kokivat suhteensa suomalaisiin työtovereihin myönteisemmiksi kuin Saharan eteläpuolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta tulleet maahanmuuttajat. Tutkimustulokset viittaavat siihen, että työyhteisöissä kulttuurisesti etäisimmillä työntekijöillä ja niin sanotuilla kulttuurisilla ainokaisilla voi olla muita suurempi riski jäädä ulkopuoliseksi työyhteisön sosiaalisista verkostoista ja ilman sosiaalista tukea – tämä taas voi vaikuttaa kielteisesti heidän hyvinvointiinsa.

► **Avainsanat:** monikulttuurinen työyhteisö, maahanmuuttajat, työtoverisuhteet, sosiaaliset suhteet, kulttuurinen etäisyys

## JOHDANTO

### Tutkimuksen lähtökohta – maahanmuuttajat suomalaisessa työelämässä

Työyhteisöt Suomessa ovat kulttuurisesti monimuotoistumassa, joskin maahanmuuttajia on työelämässä vielä verraten vähän. Vuonna 2006 työllisistä 45 000 oli ulkomaan kansalaisia, mikä oli vain vajaa kaksi prosenttia työssäkäyvistä<sup>20</sup>. Todellisuudessa maahanmuuttajia on työelämässä jonkin verran enemmän kuin tämä tilasto kertoo, sillä Suomen kansalaisuuden saaneet maahanmuuttajat näkyvät tilastoissa suomalaisina. Maahanmuuttajien määrä työelämässä on kuitenkin lisääntymässä, sillä heidän työllisyysasteensa on parantunut koko 2000-luvun<sup>20</sup>. Lisäksi heidän määränsä Suomessa lisääntyy. Vuonna 2007 ulkomailta Suomeen muutti enemmän väkeä kuin kertaakaan itsenäisyyden aikana<sup>21</sup>, ja on odotettavissa, että sekä maahan muuttaneiden että väliaikaisesti Suomessa työskentelevien ulkomaalaisten määrä kasvaa seuraavina vuosikymmeninä. Tulevaisuudessa yhä useammalla työntekijällä on työtoverinaan muista maista tai kulttuureista lähtöisin olevia työtovereita ja työtä tehdään monikulttuurisessa sosiaalisessa ympäristössä.

Suomalaisten suhtautuminen ulkomaalaisten työnhakijoiden vastaanottamiseen on viime vuosina muuttunut myönteisempään suuntaan ja asennetasolla suomalaiset suhtautuvat varsin myönteisesti potentiaaliin maahanmuuttajiin työelämässä ja työtovereinaan<sup>8, 9</sup>. Kuitenkin tutkimustieto siitä, millaisiksi kantaväestön ja maahanmuuttajien suhteet rakentuvat heidän työskennellessään samassa työyhteisössä, on varsin vähäistä sekä Suomessa että kansainvälisesti. Työtoverisuhteiden

laatu on useissa työn stressiteorioissa<sup>ks.12</sup> keskeinen tekijä, joka vaikuttaa sekä työhyvinvointiin että yleiseen hyvinvointiin, joskin tutkimustieto on pitkälti perustunut kulttuuriltaan homogeenisiin työyhteisöihin. Työyhteisön sosiaalinen toimivuus on yhteydessä myös työn sujuvuuteen ja tuloksellisuuteen<sup>ks.2</sup>. Siten on tärkeää selvittää, millaisiksi kulttuurisesti monimuotoisen työyhteisön sosiaaliset suhteet muodostuvat, sekä mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat työtoverisuhteiden kehittymiseen. Käsillä olevassa tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan kantaväestön ja taustaltaan eri kansallisuutta edustavien maahanmuuttajien keskinäisiä työtoverisuhteita.

### Monikulttuurisen työyhteisön työtoverien väliset sosiaaliset suhteet

Työtoverisuhteiden syntymisestä ja kehittymisestä sekä niihin vaikuttavista tai yhteydessä olevista tekijöistä on niukasti tutkimustietoa. Tämä havainto pätee siis myös niin sanottuihin monikulttuurisiin työyhteisöihin. Monikulttuurisissa työyhteisöissä eri maista ja kulttuureista tulleiden työntekijöiden erilaiset kulttuuritaustat ja niihin liittyvät käsitykset ja odotukset sosiaalisesta kanssakäymisestä, mahdolliset kieliongelmat sekä erityisesti ihmisten erilaisuuteen liittyvä varauksellisuus ja ennakkoluulot voivat luoda erityisiä haasteita vuorovaikutuksen onnistumiselle ja suhteiden rakentumiselle.

### Samankaltaisuus ja erilaisuus sosiaaliin suhteisiin vaikuttavana tekijänä

Donn Byrnen samankaltaisuus vetää puoleensa -hypoteesin (similarity-attraction hypothesis & paradigm<sup>3, 4</sup>) mukaan ihmi-

set hakeutuvat itseään muistuttavien seuraan, luottavat erityisesti heihin sekä haluavat olla heidän kanssaan tekemisissä ja yhteistyössä. Byrnen alkuperäiset tutkimukset, joissa hypoteesi sai vahvistusta, koskivat asenteiden samankaltaisuutta. Myöhemmin tutkimukset ovat osoittaneet samankaltaisuuden toimivan myös monien muiden tekijöiden, kuten demografisten tekijöiden, sosiaalisen statuksen, arvojen, kielen ja persoonallisuuden kohdalla puoleensa vetävänä voimana<sup>5, 14, 15, 24</sup>. On kuitenkin todettu, että koettu samankaltaisuus ennakoii paremmin toiseen ihmiseen koettua vetovoimaa ja suhteen koettua myönteisyyttä kuin todellinen samankaltaisuus<sup>7</sup>.

Kulttuurien välisestä samankaltaisuudesta ja erilaisuudesta voidaan käyttää käsitettä kulttuurinen etäisyys. Kulttuuriin etäisyyteen vaikuttavat muun muassa kieli, sosiaaliset järjestelmät, kuten perhejärjestelmät, uskonto, taloudellinen hyvinvointi ja sen jakaantuminen määrättyssä kulttuurissa, sekä arvot<sup>22</sup>. Mitä suurempi kulttuurinen etäisyys vuorovaikutuksessa olevien välillä on, sen vaikeammaksi vuorovaikutus muodostuu ja sen todennäköisemmin syntyy väärintymmäryksiä ja ristiriitoja<sup>22, 23</sup>.

Sosiaalisen identiteettiteorian<sup>18, 19</sup> mukaan ihmiset rakentavat sosiaalista identiteettiään luokittelemalla itsensä ja muut sosiaalisiin kategorioihin. Yksilö luokittelee itsensä ja muut sellaisten kategorioiden perusteella, jotka ovat ilmeisiä tai selvästi pääteltävissä määrättyssä sosiaalisessa kontekstissa, kuten sukupuoli ja etnisyys. Yksilö kokee sisäryhmänä ryhmän, johon hän itse kokee kuuluvansa ja jonka jäseniin hän useimmiten lähtökohtaisesti suhtautuu myönteisemmin kuin ulkoryhmiin kuuluviksi luokittelemiinsa henkilöihin.

Monikulttuurisessa työyhteisössä samankaltaisuus vetää puoleensa -hypoteesin mukaisesti sekä sosiaaliseen identifiointiin ja luokitteluun liittyvät kognitiiviset ja affektiiviset että sosiaaliset prosessit voivat lähteä käyntiin monista eri tekijöistä, kuten sukupuolesta, iästä, persoonallisuudesta, kulttuurisesta taustasta, kielitaustasta tai työhön liittyvistä rooleista tai asemasta. Voidaan olettaa, että kulttuurisesti monimuotoisessa työyhteisössä sekä kansallinen että kulttuurinen tausta voi toimia voimakkaana sosiaalisena kategoriana ja ilmeisenä sekä todellisenä että koetun samankaltaisuuden määreenä ja tekijänä. Kulttuurisen etäisyyden kasvaessa myös vuorovaikutus voi vaikeutua, ja tällä tavoin se voi vaikeuttaa myönteisten suhteiden syntymistä, kun taas kulttuurinen läheisyys voi helpottaa suhteiden solmimista ja myönteisten suhteiden syntymistä.

Aikaisempia tutkimustuloksia maahanmuuttajien ja kantaväestön suhteista voidaan tulkita edellä mainitusta viitekehystä. Nämä aikaisemmat tutkimukset ovat kuitenkin olleet luonteeltaan eksploratiivisia ja kuvailevia eikä niissä ole hyödynnetty mainittuja teorioita, jotka ovat tämän tutkimuksen lähtökohtana. Sosiaalisella identiteettiteorialla taustoitettiin kuitenkin yhtä tutkimuksista<sup>16</sup>.

### Aikaisempia tutkimuksia maahanmuuttajien ja kantaväestön suhteista työyhteisöissä

Israelissa<sup>17</sup> ja Isossa-Britanniassa<sup>16</sup> tehtyjen tutkimusten valossa maahanmuuttajien ja kantaväestön väliset suhteet työyhteisöissä näyttävät vuorovaikutuksen ja työtoverisuhteiden kehittymisen osalta varsin ongelmallisina. Tutkimusten mu-

kaan kantaväestöön kuuluvat ja maahanmuuttajataustaiset työntekijät eivät juuri integroituneet keskenään, vaan työpaikoihin muodostui kansallisuus- tai kulttuuritaustaan perustuvia sosiaalisia ryhmiä, joiden jäsenet halusivat työskennellä keskenään ja oleskelivat yhdessä myös tauoilla. Työn suorittamiseen liittyvää välttämätöntä kanssakäymistä lukuun ottamatta ryhmien jäsenet eivät olleet tekemisissä keskenään, eikä maahanmuuttajataustaisten ja kantaväestöön kuuluvien työntekijöiden välisiä ystävyys-suhteita esiintynyt. Maahanmuuttajat ja kantaväestöön kuuluvat suhtautuivat toisiinsa kriittisesti ja kielteisesti. Tutkijoiden mukaan maahanmuuttajataustaisten työntekijöiden heikko kielitaito vaikeutti heidän integraatiotaan kantaväestöön<sup>16, 17</sup>. Maahanmuuttajien ja kantaväestön kielteisiä suhteita selittivät muun muassa erot työhön liittyvässä asemassa, molemminpuoliset stereotyyppiat<sup>17</sup>, uskontoon liittyvät asiat<sup>16</sup> sekä eri kielten käyttö työyhteisössä<sup>16, 17</sup>.

Suomessa toteutetun Monikulttuurisuusvoimavarana -hankkeen<sup>11</sup> osana tehtiin tutkimus maahanmuuttajien työoloista 16 työyhteisössä, joissa oli sekä maahanmuuttajataustaisia että kantaväestöön kuuluvia työntekijöitä. Tämä tutkimus antaa hieman valoisamman kuvan maahanmuuttajien ja kantaväestön suhteista työpaikoilla kuin edelliset tutkimukset. Valtaosa sekä suomalaisista että maahanmuuttajista oli sitä mieltä, että maahanmuuttajat ja suomalaiset tulevat hyvin toimeen keskenään työpaikalla sen jälkeen, kun he ovat tutustuneet toisiinsa. Maahanmuuttajat kokivat kuitenkin suomalaisiin tutustumisen vaikeampana kuin tutustumisen toisiin maahanmuuttajiin, ja he kokivat suomalaisia useammin, etteivät suomalaiset keskustele maahanmuut-

tajien kanssa työpaikalla. Osa maahanmuuttajista oli kokenut syrjintää, joka oli useimmin ollut epäsuoraa ja ilmennyt muun muassa vuorovaikutuksen välttelämisenä ja etäisyyden ylläpitämisenä maahanmuuttajiin. Useimmin kantaväestön syrjinnän kohteeksi olivat joutuneet kaukaisimmasta maista tulleet maahanmuuttajat. Tutkimuksessa ei kohdistettu huomiota siihen, miten eri maista tulevat maahanmuuttajat tulevat toimeen keskenään.

Edellisten tutkimusten valossa maahanmuuttajat ja kantaväestöön kuuluvat verkostoituvat pääosin niiden henkilöiden kanssa, joilla on sama kulttuuri- tai kielitausta. Tutkimustulokset ovat samankaltaisuusvaikutuksen<sup>3, 4</sup>, sosiaalisen identiteettiteorian<sup>18, 19</sup> ja kulttuurinen etäisyys-hypoteesin<sup>22, 23</sup> mukaisia. Kansallisuuden, kulttuurin ja kielen perusteella muodostuneilla sosiaalisilla ryhmillä on vain vähän vuorovaikutusta toistensa kanssa ja heillä on kielteisiä käsityksiä toisistaan, joskin Suomessa toteutettu tutkimus<sup>11</sup> antaa suhteista työyhteisöissä jonkin verran myönteisemmän kuvan. Nämä tutkimukset eivät käsitelleet kysymystä, missä määrin maahanmuuttajat jäivät ilman sosiaalista tukea tai oliko joillakin määrätyillä maahanmuuttajaryhmillä suurempi riski jäädä sosiaalisten verkostojen ja tuen ulkopuolelle.

Saksassa tehdyssä Hoppen ja hänen tutkimusryhmänsä tutkimuksessa<sup>6</sup> maahanmuuttajataustaisten työntekijöiden havaittiin saavan kantaväestöä vähemmän sosiaalista tukea. Maahanmuuttajataustaiset työntekijät tunsivat itsensä kantaväestöön kuuluvia työntekijöitä useammin sosiaalisesti eristyneiksi sekä saivat heitä vähemmän sosiaalista tukea ja hyväksyntää sekä työtovereiltaan että esimieheltään. Maahanmuuttajaryhmistä



Afrikasta tulleet työntekijät kokivat muita useammin olevansa sosiaalisesti eristyneitä ja jäävänsä ilman sosiaalista tukea. Sen sijaan USA:ssa toteutetusta Amasonin, Watkinsin ja Holmesin kyselytutkimuksesta<sup>1</sup> ilmeni, että maahanmuuttajat eivät kokeneet saavansa kantaväestöä vähemmän sosiaalista tukea työpaikallaan, vaan osin jopa enemmän, sillä ensimmäisen ja toisen polven hispano-taustaiset maahanmuuttajat saivat yhtä paljon tukea angloamerikkalaisilta työtovereiltaan ja esimiehiltään kuin kantaväestöön kuuluvat angloamerikkalaiset. Lisäksi he kokivat saavansa angloamerikkalaisia enemmän sosiaalista tukea hispano-taustaisilta työtovereiltaan. Maahanmuuttajia koskevissa tutkimuksissa tulisikin kohdistaa huomiota myös maahanmuuttajaryhmien mahdollisiin eroihin sen sijaan, että maahanmuuttajia käsitellään yhtenäisenä ryhmänä.

## TUTKIMUKSEN TAVOITE

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli analysoida kulttuurisesti monimuotoisessa työyhteisössä vallitsevia horisontaalisen tason, eli samassa työhön liittyvässä asemassa olevien, työtoverien välisiä sosiaalisia suhteita. Tämän lisäksi tavoitteena oli tarkastella maahanmuuttajaryhmien välisiä mahdollisia eroja. Tutkimuskohteena olleen työyhteisön maahanmuuttajaryhmistä naapurimaastamme Virossa tulleet vironkieliset ovat kulttuuri- ja kielitaustaltaan verraten lähellä suomalaista kulttuuria, ja siksi tämä maahanmuuttajaryhmä arvioitiin kulttuuriselta etäisyydeltään läheisimmäksi kantaväestöön nähden. Kulttuurisesti etäisimpänä ryhmänä suomalaisesta kulttuurista pidettiin Saharan eteläpuolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta

tulleita, joiden lähtökulttuuri, kielet, uskonnot sekä perhejärjestelmät eroavat paljon suomalaisten vastaavista.

Kysymyksenasettelu hypoteeseineen, joista viimeinen (H3) perustuu ”saman-kaltaisuus vetää puoleensa”- ja ”kulttuurinen etäisyys/läheisyys”-hypoteeseihin ja kaksi ensimmäistä (H1–H2) myös sosiaaliseen identiteettiteoriaan, oli seuraava:

1. Minkälaisiksi työtoverisuhteet koetaan saman ja toisenlaisen kulttuuritaustan omaaviin työtovereihin?

H1. Sosiaaliset suhteet samasta maasta olevien tai omaan kulttuuriseen ryhmään kuuluviksi koettujen työtoverien kanssa koetaan myönteisemmiksi kuin suhteet muihin kulttuurisiin ryhmiin kuuluvien työtoverien kanssa.

2. Minkälainen on läheisimmän työtoverin kulttuurinen tausta?

H2. Kulttuurisesti monimuotoisessa työyhteisössä läheisimmäksi koettu työtoveri on useimmiten samasta maasta tai kulttuurista peräisin, mikäli heitä on työyhteisössä.

3. Minkälaiset ovat maahanmuuttajaryhmien sosiaaliset suhteet kantaväestöön kuuluvien työtoverien kanssa?

H3. Kulttuurisesti ja kielellisesti Suomea läheisimmästä alueesta kotoisin olevat maahanmuuttajat (Virossa tulleet) kokevat työtoverisuhteet kantaväestöön myönteisemmiksi kuin kulttuurisesti etäisimmistä maista (Saharan eteläpuolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta kotoisin) olevat maahanmuuttajat. Muut maahanmuuttajaryhmät sijoittuvat näiden ryhmien väliin.

## TUTKIMUSAINEISTO JA MENETELMÄT

### Tutkittavat ja aineiston keruu

Tutkimus toteutettiin osana Työterveyslaitoksen tutkimushanketta ”Monikulttuuriset työyhteisöt” vuoden 2006–2007 aikana suurehkoissa kuljetusalan yrityksissä, jonka työntekijöistä vajaa kolmannes oli maahanmuuttajataustaisia. Valtaosa yrityksen kantaväestöön kuuluvista työntekijöistä toimi samankaltaisissa kuljetustehtävissä tai korjaustöissä kuin maahanmuuttajat, mutta pieni osa työskenteli hallinnollisissa tehtävissä. Maahanmuuttajia ei toiminut esimiestehtävissä. Työntekijät tekivät töitä kolmessa eri toimipisteessä, jotka sijaitsivat eri paikoissa, mutta jotka työn sisällöltään olivat samankaltaisia.

Kaikkiaan 847:lle ei-esimiesasemassa toimivalle kuljetus- tai korjaustehtävissä työskentelevälle työntekijälle lähetettiin maaliskuussa 2006 postikysely työntekijöiden kotiosoitteeseen yrityksestä saatujen nimi- ja osoitetietojen perusteella. Kyselyn sai joka toinen satunnaisesti valittu suomalaissyntyinen työntekijä ( $n = 413$ ) ja jokainen maahanmuuttajataustainen työntekijä ( $n = 434$ ). Oletetut maahanmuuttajat saivat kyselylomakkeen 2–4 kielellä (suomeksi, viroksi, venäjäksi, somaliksi tai englanniksi). Lainsäädäntöön liittyen työnantajalla ei ollut tietoja työntekijöiden kansallisuudesta tai kansallisesta syntyperästä, minkä vuoksi maahanmuuttajataustaisuus arvioitiin nimien perusteella.

Kyselyn saaneesta 835 henkilöstä (kyselyistä 12 palautui tuntemattoman tai muuttuneen osoitteen vuoksi) 374 palautti kyselyn, joten vastausprosentti oli 45. Suomalaissyntyisistä lomakkeen palautti

189 (46 %) ja maahanmuuttajataustaisista 185 (43 %). Palautetuista kyselylomakkeista viisi oli vaillinaisesti täytettyjä, joten tutkimusjoukoksi jäi lopulta 369 henkilöä (186 suomalaista ja 183 maahanmuuttajaa).

Katoanalyysi tehtiin keväällä 2007 yrityksestä saatujen henkilöstöä koskevien tietojen perusteella, ja se kattoi 83 % ( $n = 693$ ) kyselyn saaneista työntekijöistä ( $N = 835$ ). Kyselyn saaneista 17 % ( $n = 88$ ) ei enää ollut työsuhteessa organisaatioon eivätkä saadut taustatiedot siksi kattaneet heidän tietojaan. Katoanalyysitietojen perusteella vastaajat ( $n = 281$ ) ja vastaamattomat ( $n = 412$ ) erosivat tilastollisesti merkitsevästi toisistaan iän, sukupuolen sekä kansallisen syntyperän suhteen. Vastaajat (ka = 46,9 vuotta, kh = 0,52) olivat vastaamattomia (ka = 44,3 vuotta, kh = 0,45) vanhempia keskimäärin 2,5 vuotta ( $t(691) = 3.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Naiset (61 %) vastasivat kyselyyn miehiä (39 %) suhteellisesti useammin ( $\chi^2(1) = 6.53$ ,  $p < .01$ ) ja suomalaissyntyiset (47 %) työntekijät maahanmuuttajataustaisia (35 %) useammin ( $\chi^2(1) = 8.96$ ,  $p < .005$ ). Sen sijaan vastaajien ja vastaamattomien välillä ei ollut tilastollisesti merkitseviä eroja työsuhteen vakituisuuden, työsuhteen keston eikä toimipisteen suhteen. On kuitenkin hyvä huomata, että suomalaisten ja maahanmuuttajien vastausprosentit eivät todellisuudessa – silloin kun kaikki tiedot olivat käytössä – eronneet toisistaan.

Kun katotarkastelut tehtiin erikseen maahanmuuttajien ja suomalaissyntyisten kesken, havaittiin seuraavat erot: Suomalaissyntyisten joukossa kyselyyn vastanneet ( $n = 152$ ) ja vastaamattomat ( $n = 174$ ) erosivat tilastollisesti merkitsevästi keskenään ainoastaan toimipisteen suhteen ( $\chi^2(2) = 6.40$ ,  $p < .05$ ) siten, että yhdes-

sä kolmesta toimipisteestä vastausprosentti (32 %) oli selvästi kahden muun toimipisteen vastausprosentteja (47 % ja 51 %) alhaisempi. Maahanmuuttajataustaiset kyselyyn vastanneet (n = 129) erosi tilastollisesti merkitsevästi vastaamattomista maahanmuuttajista (n = 237) ainoastaan iän suhteen ( $t(364) = 2.81$ ,  $p < .005$ ) niin, että he olivat keskimäärin 2,7 vuotta (ka = 45,2 vuotta, kh = 8,4) vastaamattomia (ka = 42,5 vuotta, kh = 8,8) vanhempia.

### Tutkittavien taustatiedot

Enemmistö vastanneista oli miehiä (90 %). Vastanneiden keski-ikä oli 45,1 vuotta (vaihteluväli 24–63; kh = 9,1). Vastanneet olivat olleet töissä nykyisessä työpaikassaan keskimäärin 7,7 vuotta (vaihteluväli 0,1–35; kh = 8,0). Valtaosa (96 %) vastanneista oli vakituksessa työsuhteessa ja kaksi kolmesta (67 %) ilmoitti nykyisen työnsä vastaavan koulutustaan vähintään melko hyvin. Maahanmuuttajataustaiset työntekijät erosivat suomalaissyntyisistä siten, että he olivat nuorempia ( $t(347) = 2.84$ ,  $p < .005$ ) ja heidän työsuhteensa oli lyhempi ( $t(364) = 10.97$ ,  $p < .001$ ) kuin kantaväestöön kuuluvien työntekijöiden (taulukko 1). Maahanmuuttajien joukossa oli myös suhteellisesti vähemmän naisia

kuin suomalaissyntyisten joukossa ( $\chi^2(1) = 7.41$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

### Maahanmuuttajien taustatiedot

Ensisijaiseksi Suomeen tulon syyksi 32 % vastanneista ilmoitti työn. Pakolaisuus oli tärkein maahanmuuton syy 20 %:lle vastaajista, ja vastaavasti 15 % ilmoitti tärkeimmäksi syyksi etnisen paluumuuton (ns. inkerinsuomalaiset). Maahanmuuttajat olivat asuneet Suomessa keskimäärin 8,6 vuotta (kh = 5,2; vaihteluväli 1–24). Maahanmuuttajat olivat kotoisin 41:stä eri maasta, jotka jaoteltiin lähtömaan sekä kieliryhmän ja kulttuurisen etäisyyden mukaan viiteen suurempaan ryhmään: 1) Venäjältä tai entisestä Neuvostoliitosta tulleet sekä ne Virosta ja Latviasta tulleet, jotka täyttivät venäjänkielisen lomakkeen (n = 32); 2) Virosta tulleet viron- tai suomenkielisen lomakkeen täyttäneet (n = 68); 3) Saharan eteläpuolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta tulleet (Somalia, Angola, Eritrea, Etiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kongo, Zimbabwe) (n = 23); 4) entisestä Jugoslaviasta tulleet (n = 19); sekä 5) ryhmä muut (Kiina, Intia, Sri Lanka, Iran, Irak, ”Kurdistan”, Libanon, Algeria, Marokko, Tunisia, Egypti, Israel, Armenia, Turkki, Kreikka, Bulgaria, Romania, Italia, Iso-Britannia, Ruotsi) (n = 40).

**Taulukko 1.** Tutkittavien taustatiedot (% , ka = keskiarvo, kh = keskihajonta, n = 369).

Taustatekijä	Maahanmuuttajat (n = 183)		Suomalaissyntyiset (n = 186)	
	%	n	%	n
Sukupuoli: miehiä	94	172	85	158
Vakinaisessa työsuhteessa	96	175	98	179
Työ vastaa koulutusta (melko tai erittäin hyvin)	66	118	69	127
	ka	kh	ka	kh
Keski-ikä vuosina	43,7	8,7	46,4	9,3
Työsuhteen kesto vuosina	3,8	2,9	11,7	9,3

Edellä mainitut maahanmuuttajaryh-  
mät eivät eronneet toisistaan työsuhteen  
keston, työsuhteen vakinaisuuden taikka  
sukupuolijakauman suhteen (ks. taulukko  
2). Sen sijaan ryhmien välillä oli eroja iän  
( $F_{(4,165)} = 8.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ), maahanmuuton  
syiden ( $\chi^2(28) = 249.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Suomes-  
sa asutun ajan ( $F_{(4, 64.1)} = 24.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ),  
puhutun suomen kielen taidon ( $F_{(4, 62.2)} =$   
13.28,  $p < .001$ ) sekä työn ja koulutuksen  
vastaavuuden ( $\chi^2(16) = 54.79$ ,  $p < .001$ )  
suhteen. Virosta tulleet työntekijät olivat

asuneet Suomessa lyhimmän aikaa ja he  
olivat vanhimpia, kun taas Saharan etelä-  
puolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta  
tulleet olivat asuneet Suomessa kauim-  
min mutta olivat nuorimpia. Saharan ete-  
läpuolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta  
tulleet arvioivat oman puhutun suomen  
kielen taitonsa parhaimmaksi ja Venäjäl-  
tä tai entisestä Neuvostoliitosta tulleet  
huonoimmaksi. Ryhmään muut kuuluvat  
ilmoittivat nykyisen työnsä vastaavan  
koulutustaan muita heikommin.

**Taulukko 2.** Maahanmuuttajaryhmien taustatekijät (% , n = ryhmien suuruus, ka = keskiarvo, kh =  
keskihajonta, n = 183).

	Venäjä tai entinen Neuvostoliitto (n = 32)		Viro (n = 68)		Saharan etelä- puolinen Afrika ja Afrikan sarvi (n = 23)		Entinen Jugoslavia (n = 19)		Muut (n = 40)	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Miesten osuus	97	31	92	62	100	23	95	17	90	38
Vakinaisessa työsuhteessa	100	32	97	66	96	22	90	17	95	38
Työ vastaa koulutusta (melko/ erittäin hyvin)	59	19	79	53	78	18	74	14	38	14
Tärkein maa- hantulosyy (tärkeimmäksi mainittu syy viidestä vaih- toehdosta)	Etninen paluumuutto		Työ		Pakolaisuus / turvapaikan haku		Pakolaisuus / turvapaikan haku		Avo-/avioliitto suomalaisen kanssa	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
	61	17	79	50	78	14	88	15	61	22
	ka	kh	ka	kh	ka	kh	ka	kh	ka	kh
Ikä vuosina	45,1	8,3	47,4	8,0	37,6	6,4	41,2	9,7	40,2	7,4
Työsuhteen kesto vuosina	4,1	2,3	4,1	3,4	2,5	2,1	3,8	1,7	3,5	3,4
Suomessa asuttu aika vuosina	9,2	3,6	5,0	3,8	13,0	3,4	8,6	2,5	11,6	5,7
Puhutun suomen kielen itse arvioitu kielitaito (1 = erittäin huono, 5 = erittäin hyvä)	3,1	0,7	3,5	0,5	4,1	0,4	3,6	0,7	3,8	0,7

## Kyselyiden sisältö

Tutkimuksessa käytetyt kyselylomakkeet kehitettiin tätä tutkimusta varten. Työtoverisuhteiden laatua mittaavia kysymyksiä rakennettaessa hyödynnettiin tutkimuksen aiemmassa vaiheessa tehdyissä haastatteluissa esiin nousseita teemoja. Sosiaalista tukea koskevien kysymysten laatimisessa hyödynnettiin soveltuvin osin Terve Organisaatio -kyselyn<sup>13</sup> vastaavia asteikkoja. Maahanmuuttajille ja suomalaisille laadittiin osin erilliset lomakkeet. Osa kysymyksistä kysyttiin pelkäämään maahanmuuttajilta, kuten maahanmuuttoon liittyvät asiat, ja osa pelkäämään suomalaisilta, kuten asenteet maahanmuuttajia kohtaan. Osa kysymyksistä, kuten sosiaalisia suhteita koskevat kysymykset, oli myös muotoiltava hieman eri tavalla suomalaisille ja maahanmuuttajille. Maahanmuuttajille suunnatun kyselylomakkeen suomenkielinen versio käännettiin viroksi, venäjäksi, somaliksi ja englanniksi. Kulttuurista validiteettia pyrittiin kontrolloimaan ja parantamaan siten, että kääntäjiä pyydettiin ilmoittamaan, mikäli jokin kysymys oli kulttuurisesti tai kielellisesti vaikeasti käännettävissä, jolloin keskustelemalla pyrittiin löytämään mahdollisimman sopiva käsite tai kysymyksen muotoilu. Kyselylomakkeita esiteltiin sekä maahanmuuttajataustaisilla että suomalaissyntyisillä työntekijöillä, joiden kommentit otettiin huomioon kyselyjen lopullisissa versioissa.

### Yleiset taustatekijät

Taustatekijöinä tutkittiin seuraavia: sukupuoli, ikä (vuosina), työsuhteen muoto (1 = vakituinen, 2 = muu), työsuhteen kesto (vuosina ja kuukausina) sekä työn ja koulutuksen vastaavuus. Nykyisen työn ja koulutuksen vastaavuutta arvioitiin asteikolla 1 (ei ollenkaan) – 5 (erittäin hyvin).

### Maahanmuuttoon liittyvät taustatekijät

Maahanmuuton syitä kysyttiin yhdellä kysymyksellä, jossa oli viisi vaihtoehtoa: 1) työ, 2) etninen paluumuutto, 3) pakolaisuus tai turvapaikan haku, 4) avio- tai avoliitto suomalaisen kanssa ja 5) jokin muu syy. Tämän lisäksi kysyttiin, mistä maasta on kotoisin sekä Suomessa asuttua aikaa. Puhutun suomen kielen taitoa mitattiin kahdella osiolla (puhuminen sekä kuullun ymmärtäminen) asteikolla 1 (= erittäin huonosti) – 5 (= erittäin hyvin), joista muodostettiin summamuuttuja (Cronbachin  $\alpha = 0.77$ ). Maahanmuuttajilta kysyttiin myös, onko heidän työpaikallaan muita samasta maasta tai kulttuurista kuin itse tulleita maahanmuuttajia (1 = ei ole, 2 = yksi, 3 = useampia).

### Työpaikan sosiaaliset suhteet

Kysymykset sosiaalisista suhteista kohdistuivat suhteisiin sekä samasta (omasta) kulttuuristaustasta tai kotimaasta että toisesta kulttuuristaustasta tai lähtömaasta tulleisiin työtovereihin. Maahanmuuttajataustaisten kyselylomakkeessa kysymyksiä sosiaalisista suhteista oli 12 ja suomalaisten lomakkeessa 8, aina neljä kysymystä kustakin määrittelystä kulttuurisesta ryhmästä. Nämä neljä kysymystä kohdistuivat 1) sosiaaliseen tukeen, 2) kanssakäymisen määrään, 3) halukkuuteen kanssakäymiseen ja 4) työntekijöiden välisten suhteiden laatuun. Kutakin kysymystä arvioitiin asteikolla 1 (= ei ollenkaan / erittäin huonosti) – 5 (= erittäin usein / erittäin hyvin). Osassa kysymyksiä oli myös vaihtoehtona 0 (= heitä ei ole työpaikallani).

Suomalaisten sosiaalisia suhteita mitattiin kahdella summamuuttujalla, jotka siis koostuivat edellä mainituista neljästä kysymyksestä: 'Sosiaaliset suhteet muihin suomalaisiin työtovereihin' (SuSu) (Cron-

bachin  $\alpha = 0.62$ ) ja 'Sosiaaliset suhteet maahanmuuttajataustaisiin työtovereihin' (SuMa) (Cronbachin  $\alpha = 0.80$ ). Maahanmuuttajien sosiaalisia suhteita mitattiin kolmella summamuuttujalla: 'Sosiaaliset suhteet suomalaisiin työtovereihin' (MaSu) (Cronbachin  $\alpha = 0.72$ ). 'Sosiaaliset suhteet muista kuin omasta kulttuurista tulleisiin maahanmuuttajataustaisiin työtovereihin' (MaMuuMa) (Cronbachin  $\alpha = 0.69$ ) sekä 'Sosiaaliset suhteet samasta kulttuurista kuin itse tulleisiin työtovereihin' (MaOma) (Cronbachin  $\alpha = 0.60$ ). Summamuuttuja (keskiarvona) muodostettiin niille vastaajille, jotka olivat vastanneet vähintään summamuuttujan kolmeen osioon neljästä. Maahanmuuttajien niissä kysymyksissä, jotka koskivat toisia maahanmuuttajia, he saivat kysymyksen asettelun vuoksi itse määritellä, keiden he kokivat kuuluvan samaan kulttuuriseen ryhmään kuin he itse. Peruste on siis voinut olla esimerkiksi etnisyys, kielitausta, klaanijäsenyys, lähtömaa tai suurempi kulttuurinen ryhmä tai maanosa. Summamuuttujan korkea pistemäärä heijastaa sosiaalista integraatiota sekä myönteiseksi koettuja suhteita määrättyyn kulttuuriseen ryhmään kuuluvien työtoverien kanssa.

#### Läheisimmän työtoverin kulttuurinen tausta

Läheisin työtoveri määriteltiin kyselylomakkeessa sellaiseksi henkilöksi, jonka kanssa tekee mielellään yhteistyötä, oleskelee tauoilla ja jonka kanssa puhuu myös yksityiselämästään. Läheisimmän työtoverin kulttuurista lähtötaustaa kysyttiin yhdellä kysymyksellä, jossa maahanmuuttajilla vastausvaihtoehtoja oli kolme: 1 = maahanmuuttaja samasta kulttuurista kuin minä itse, 2 = maahanmuuttaja toisesta kulttuurista ja 3 = suomalainen.

Suomalaisilla vastausvaihtoehtoja oli kaksi: 1 = suomalaissyntyinen ja 2 = maahanmuuttajataustainen.

#### Tilastolliset analyysit

Muodostettujen summamuuttujien sisäistä konsistenssia tarkasteltiin Cronbachin alfa -kertoimen avulla ja muuttujien välistä yhteyksiä tarkasteltiin Pearsonin korrelaatiokertoimilla. Ryhmien (2 ryhmää) keskiarvojen välisiä eroja analysoitiin sekä riippuvalla että riippumattomalla t-testillä. Lisäksi keskiarvojen vertailuun käytettiin yksisuuntaista varianssianalyysia (3 ryhmää tai enemmän). Ryhmien parivertailut (post hoc -testit) tehtiin Scheffen testillä. Niissä tapauksissa, joissa varianssien yhtäsuuruusoletus ei täyttynyt, varianssitestinä käytettiin karkeampaa Welchin testiä ja parivertailut tehtiin Tamhanen testillä. Hypoteesin 3 kohdalla haluttiin vakioda riippuvaan muuttujaan yhteydessä olevien taustatekijöiden (sukupuoli, ikä, Suomessa asuttu aika, työn ja koulutuksen vastaavuus sekä maahantulosy) vaikutus. Tämä testattiin kovarianssianalyysilla. Hypoteesin 2 kohdalla analyysi toteutettiin vertaamalla yhden otoksen tapahtumafrekvenssiä normaalijakauman todennäköisyyssarvoon.

#### TULOKSET

##### Kuvailevat tulokset

Maahanmuuttajataustaisista työntekijöistä 92 % ilmoitti, että heillä oli työpaikallaan yksi (7 %) tai useampia (85 %) maahanmuuttajataustaisia työtovereita, jotka tulivat samasta maasta tai kulttuurista kuin he itse. Kaikilla suomalaissyntyisillä työntekijöillä oli sekä suomalaissyntyisiä että maahanmuuttajataustaisia työtovereita. Suomalaisista 91 % arvioi, että heillä

oli useita maahanmuuttajataustaisia työtovereita ja 6 % ilmoitti, että lähes kaikki työtoverit olivat maahanmuuttajia. Valtaosalla työntekijöistä oli siis sekä omasta kulttuurista tai kotimaasta että muista kulttuureista ja maista tulleita työtovereita työyhteisössään.

Sosiaalisia suhteita kuvaavat muuttajat olivat yhteydessä toisiinsa sekä suomalaissyntyisten ( $r = 0,25$ ) että maahanmuut-

tajataustaisten ( $r = 0,36-0,49$ ) työntekijöiden ryhmässä. Taustatekijöistä ainoastaan työn ja koulutuksen vastaavuus oli yhteydessä suomalaissyntyisten työntekijöiden tekemiin sosiaalisten suhteiden arvioihin. Mitä paremmiksi työn ja koulutuksen vastaavuus arvioitiin, sitä myönteisemmiksi suhteet kanssasomalaisiin ( $r = 0,26$ ,  $p < .01$ ) ja maahanmuuttajiin ( $r = 0,15$ ,  $p < .05$ ) arvioitiin.

**Taulukko 3.** Muuttujien väliset korrelaatiokertoimet (Pearson) maahanmuuttajataustaisilla työntekijöillä ( $n = 183$ ).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Demograafiset tekijät</b>									
1. Sukupuoli <sup>1</sup>									
2. Ikä	0.10								
<b>Maahanmuuttajuuteen liittyvät taustatekijät</b>									
3. Suomessa asuttu aika	0.02	-0.08							
4. Puhutun suomen kielen taito <sup>2</sup>	0.04	-0.28**	0.35**						
<b>Työsuhteeseen liittyvät tekijät</b>									
5. Työsuhteen muoto <sup>3</sup>	0.20**	-0.11	-0.04	-0.08					
6. Työsuhteen kesto	0.14	0.26**	0.34**	0.11	-0.07				
7. Työn ja koulutuksen vastaavuus <sup>4</sup>	0.09	-0.05	-0.12	0.08	-0.17*	0.05			
<b>Työtoverisuhteet</b>									
8. Suhteet omaan kulttuuriin ryhmään (MaOma) <sup>5</sup>	0.07	0.05	-0.04	0.22*	-0.08	0.04	0.09		
9. Suhteet suomalaisiin (MaSu) <sup>5</sup>	0.08	0.21**	-0.18*	-0.01	-0.10	0.05	0.23**	0.36**	
10. Suhteet muista maista/kulttuureista tulleisiin maahanmuuttajiin (MaMuuMa) <sup>5</sup>	0.01	-0.11	0.16*	0.22**	-0.06	-0.18*	-0.04	0.49**	0.37**

<sup>1</sup> 1 = mies, 2 = nainen

<sup>2</sup> 1 = erittäin huono, 5 = erittäin hyvä

<sup>3</sup> 1 = vakituinen työsuhde, 2 = muu (määräaikainen työsuhde, tukityöllistetty tai muu)

<sup>4</sup> 1 = ei ollenkaan, 5 = erittäin hyvä

<sup>5</sup> 1 = erittäin huonot/ongelmalliset suhteet, 5 = erittäin hyvät/ongelmaton suhteet

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Taustamuuttajien yhteydet sosiaalisiin suhteisiin maahanmuuttajien ryhmässä on esitetty taulukossa 3. Siitä nähdään esimerkiksi, että työn ja koulutuksen hyvä vastaavuus oli yhteydessä ainoastaan maahanmuuttajien kokemuksiin myönteisiin suhteisiin suomalaisten kanssa. Sen sijaan maahanmuuttajien suomen kielen hyvä puhetaito oli yhteydessä myönteisiin suhteisiin sekä samasta kulttuurista että muista kulttuureista tullessiin maahanmuuttajataustaisiin työtovereihin, mutta ei suhteisiin suomalaisiin työtovereihin.

Taulukosta 4 ilmenevät sosiaalisten suhteiden arviot maahanmuuton synnyn mukaan. Sosiaaliset suhteet sekä omaan kulttuuriseen ryhmään kuuluviin työntekijöihin että suomalaisiin työntekijöihin arvioitiin myönteisemmiksi työn takia muuttaneiden ryhmässä kuin pakolaisuuden tai turvapaikan takia muuttaneiden ryhmässä. Sen sijaan suhteet muista kulttuuritaustoista tuleviin työtovereihin ar-

vioitiin avioliiton takia muuttaneiden ryhmässä myönteisemmiksi kuin työn takia muuttaneiden tai etnisten paluumuuttajien ryhmässä.

Sosiaaliset suhteet saman ja toisenlaisen kulttuuritaustan omaaviin Taulukossa 5 on esitetty työpaikan sosiaalisten suhteiden laatu sekä suomalaisten että maahanmuuttajien arvioina. Taulukosta nähdään, että ensinnäkin suomalaisyntyiset työntekijät kokivat suhteensa suomalaisiin työtovereihinsa merkittävästi myönteisemmiksi kuin suhteet maahanmuuttajataustaisiin työtovereihinsa ( $p < .001$ ). Toiseksi havaitaan, että myös maahanmuuttajataustaiset työntekijät kokivat suhteensa omaan kulttuuriseen tai kansalliseen ryhmään kuuluvien työntekijöiden kanssa myönteisemmiksi kuin suhteensa suomalaisiin tai muista maista tullessiin maahanmuuttajataustaisiin työntekijöihin ( $p < .001$ ).

**Taulukko 4.** Eri syistä Suomeen muuttaneiden sosiaaliset suhteet eri kulttuurisiin ryhmiin kuuluviin työtovereihin (ka = keskiarvo, kh = keskihajonta, yksisuuntainen varianssianalyysi).

	1. Työhön tulo tai työnhaku (n = 59)		2. Avio-/avoliitto suomalaisen kanssa (n = 26)		3. Etninen paluu-muutto (n = 27)		4. Pakolaisuus/turvapaikan haku (n = 36)		5. Muu syy (n = 14)		F	df	parivertailut
	ka	(kh)	ka	(kh)	ka	(kh)	ka	(kh)	ka	(kh)			
Suhteet omaan kulttuuriseen ryhmään (MaOma)	4,2	(0,6)	4,0	(0,4)	3,9	(0,5)	3,7	(0,7)	4,2	(0,6)	3,59**	4, 134	1 > 4
Suhteet suomalaisiin (MaSu)	4,0	(0,5)	3,5	(1,0)	3,6	(0,6)	3,3	(0,7)	3,5	(0,9)	6,28***	4, 47.84	1 > 4
Suhteet muista maista/kulttuureista tullessiin maahanmuuttajiin (MaMuuMa)	3,3	(0,7)	3,9	(0,6)	3,2	(0,6)	3,4	(0,7)	3,6	(0,6)	4,21**	4, 144	2 > 1, 3

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$



**Taulukko 5.** Suomalaisyyntyisten (n = 186) ja maahanmuuttajien (n = 183) sosiaalisia suhteita kuvaavien muuttajien keskiarvot (ka) ja keskihajonnat (kh) (1 = erittäin huonot/ongelmalliset suhteet, 3 = neutraalit suhteet, 5 = erittäin myönteiset suhteet) sekä riippuvien t-testien t- ja p-arvot.

Kansallisuusryhmä	1) Suhteet muihin suomalaisiin (SuSu)		2) Suhteet maahanmuuttajiin (SuMa)		t-testi 1 vs. 2	
	ka	(kh)	ka	(kh)		
Suomalaisyyntyiset	4,00	(0,56)	3,26	(0,82)	11,42***	
	3) Suhteet omaan kulttuuriseen ryhmään (MaOma)		4) Suhteet suomalaisiin (MaSu)		5) Suhteet muista maista/kulttuureista tulleisiin maahanmuuttajiin (MaMuuMa)	t-testi 3 vs. 4 3 vs. 5 4 vs. 5
	ka	(kh)	ka	(kh)	ka	(kh)
Maahanmuuttajat	3,98	(0,59)	3,66	(0,73)	3,39	(0,70)
<b>Maahanmuuttajaryhmät</b>						
Venäjä ja entinen Neuvostoliitto (n = 32)	3,9	(0,6)	3,5	(0,7)	3,3	(0,6)
Viro (n = 68)	4,1	(0,5)	4,0	(0,5)	3,3	(0,7)
Saharan eteläpuolinen Afrikka ja Afrikan sarvi (n = 23)	4,0	(0,6)	2,9	(0,6)	3,5	(0,7)
Entinen Jugoslavia (n = 19)	3,6	(0,6)	3,6	(0,5)	3,2	(0,7)
Muut (n = 26–37)	3,9	(0,6)	3,4	(0,9)	3,8	(0,7)

\*\*\* p < .001, \*\* p < .01, \* p < .05, (\*) p < .10

Tarkasteltaessa sosiaalisia suhteita maahanmuuttajaryhmittäin edellä kuvattut tulokset pätevät Venäjältä, Virosta sekä Saharan eteläpuolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta tulleiden kohdalla (ks. taulukko 5). Myös ryhmään muut kuuluvien kohdalla tulokset olivat pitkälti samansuuntaiset, mutta sosiaaliset suhteet omaan kulttuuriseen ryhmään kuuluvien kanssa ja muihin maahanmuuttajiin eivät eronneet tilastollisesti merkitsevästi toisistaan ( $p \leq .08$ ). Entisestä Jugoslaviasta tulleet kokivat suhteet omaan kulttuu-

riseen ryhmään tai samasta maasta tulleiden kanssa myönteisemmiksi kuin muista maista tulleiden maahanmuuttajien kanssa ( $p < .05$ ), mutta heidän kokemansa sosiaalisten suhteiden myönteisyys suomalaisiin ja omaan kulttuuriseen ryhmään kuuluviin eivät eronneet toisistaan.

Läheisimmän työtoverin kulttuurinen tausta

Yrityksestä saatujen tietojen perusteella pystyttiin arvioimaan, että suomalaissyntyisten työntekijöiden työtovereista 70 %

oli suomalaisia ja 30 % maahanmuuttajataustaisia. Vastanneista suomalaisista 90 % ilmoitti, että heidän läheisin työtoverinsa oli suomalaissyntyinen. Suomalaisen läheisin työtoveri oli merkittävästi useammin suomalaissyntyinen kuin tilastollisesti normaalijakauman perusteella ( $\underline{P} = .70$ ) olisi ollut odotettavissa ( $z = 5,74 > 3,30$ ,  $p < .0005$ ).

Maahanmuuttajataustaisista työntekijöistä ei ollut käytettävissä prosenttimääräistä tietoa siitä, kuinka moni oli samasta kulttuurista tai lähtömaasta peräisin kuin työntekijä itse. Sen sijaan tiedossa oli, että samasta kulttuurista tai lähtömaasta tulleiden määrä oli alle 30 %, koska maahanmuuttajataustaisten määrä koko yrityksessä oli 30 %. Näin ollen tilastolliseksi odotusarvoksi asetettiin  $\underline{P} = 0.30$  sille, että maahanmuuttajan läheisin työtoveri on samasta kulttuurista peräisin kuin hän itse. Analyysistä poistettiin kulttuuriset ainokaiset, eli se joukko (8 % vastanneista,  $n = 15$ ), joka oli ilmoittanut, ettei hänen työpaikallaan ollut muita samasta maasta tai kulttuurista tulleita maahanmuuttajia kuin hän itse. Maahanmuuttajista 84 % ilmoitti läheisimmän työtoverin olevan samasta maasta tai kulttuurista peräisin kuin hän itse, 8 % valitsi suomalaisen ja 8 % toisesta kulttuurista tai maasta tulevan maahanmuuttajan läheisimmäksi työtoverikseen. Maahanmuuttajien läheisin työtoveri oli siis merkittävästi useammin samasta maasta tai kulttuurista lähtöisin kuin tilastollisesti olisi ollut odotettavissa ( $z = 21,72 > 3,30$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). Kaikissa maahanmuuttajaryhmissä läheisin työtoveri oli useimmiten samasta kulttuurista peräisin. Työpaikan kulttuuriset ainokaiset ilmoittivat yhtä usein läheisimmän työtoverinsa olevan suomalainen kuin jostain muusta kulttuurista kuin itse tullut maahanmuuttaja.

Maahanmuuttajaryhmien sosiaaliset suhteet kantaväestöön kuuluvien työtoverien kanssa

Maahanmuuttajaryhmien välillä oli eroja maahanmuuttajien kokemissa suhteissa suomalaisiin työtovereihin ( $F_{(4, 55.1)} = 10.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Virosta tulleet työntekijät kokivat suhteensa suomalaisiin ( $ka = 4,0$ ,  $kh = 0,5$ ) myönteisimmiksi ja merkittävästi myönteisemmiksi kuin Saharan eteläpuolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta tulleet ( $ka = 3,1$ ,  $kh = 0,7$ ,  $p < .001$ ), jotka puolestaan kokivat suhteensa kantaväestöön vähiten myönteisiksi. Virolaisten suhteet suomalaisiin olivat myös Venäjältä tulleita ( $ka = 3,5$ ,  $kh = 0,7$ ,  $p < .01$ ) ja ryhmään muut kuuluvia ( $ka = 3,5$ ,  $kh = 0,9$ ,  $p < .05$ ) myönteisempiä mutta eivät eronneet merkittävästi entisestä Jugoslaviasta tulleiden kokemasta suhteiden myönteisyydestä suomalaisiin työtovereihin ( $ka = 3,6$ ,  $kh = 0,5$ ).

Edellä kuvatut keskiarvovertailut tehtiin myös vakioimalla sukupuolen, iän, Suomessa asutun ajan, työn ja koulutuksen vastaavuuden sekä maahanmuuton synn vaikutus koettuihin suhteisiin kantaväestöön kuuluvien työtovereiden kanssa. Analyysi osoitti, että maahanmuuttajaryhmien välillä oli edelleen eroja ( $F_{(4, 44.4)} = 6.82$ ,  $p < .001$ ), vaikka erojen tilastollinen merkittävyys väheni hieman. Ryhmien väliset erot pysyivät samanlaisina, mutta Virosta tulleiden suhteet suomalaisiin eivät enää eronneet merkittävästi muista maista tulleiden ryhmän arvioista.

## POHDINTA

### Päätulokset

Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitettiin sekä maahanmuuttajataustaisten että kantaväestöön kuuluvien työntekijöiden työto-

verisuhteita kulttuurisesti monimuotoisessa työyhteisössä. Tulokset osoittivat, että sosiaaliset suhteet omaan kulttuuriin tai kansalliseen ryhmään kuuluviin työtovereihin koettiin myönteisempinä kuin suhteet muihin työtovereihin. Tämä näkyi siten, että työntekijät sekä olivat että halusivat olla työpaikallaan eniten tekemisissä samasta kulttuurista tai lähtömaasta tulleiden työntekijöiden kanssa, luottivat saavansa heiltä tarvittaessa tukea varmemmin kuin muilta sekä kokivat tähän ryhmään kuuluvien keskinäiset suhteet toimivimmiksi. Myös läheisimmäksi koettu työtoveri oli useimmilla samasta maasta tai kulttuurista peräisin.

Samankaltaisuusvaikutukseen<sup>3, 4</sup>, kulttuuriseen etäisyyteen<sup>22, 23</sup> sekä sosiaaliseen identiteettiteoriaan<sup>18, 19</sup> perustuneet hypoteesimme 1 ja 2 saivat siis tukea. Ainoa ryhmä, jonka kohdalla hypoteesi 1 ei täysin saanut tukea, oli entisestä Jugoslaviasta tulleet maahanmuuttajat. Tähän ryhmään kuuluvat kokivat kylläkin suhteensa omaan kulttuuriseen ryhmäänsä tai maanmiehiinsä oletusten mukaisesti myönteisemmiksi kuin muista maista tulleisiin maahanmuuttajiin, mutta sosiaalisten suhteiden myönteisyys kantaväestöön ja omaan ryhmään ei eronnut toisistaan toisin kuin muiden maahanmuuttajien kohdalla. Entisen Jugoslavian lähihistorian – sisällissodan ja etnisten kansanmurhien – vuoksi on ymmärrettävää, ettei kaikkiin entisiin maanmiehiin suhtauduta myönteisesti. Koska vastaajat saivat itse määritellä, vastasivatko he asetettuihin kysymyksiin ensisijaisesti kansallisuuden vai kulttuuriksi ymmärtämänsä taustan perusteella, näyttää siltä, että entisestä Jugoslaviasta tulleet ovat arvioineet suhteitaan kaikkiin entisiin maanmiehiinsä. Läheisimmäksi työtoverikseen he kuitenkin ilmoittivat – hypoteesimme

2 mukaisesti – jonkun samasta kulttuurista kuin itse tulleen.

Tulokset myönteisten työtoverisuhteiden kehittymisestä ensisijaisesti omaan kulttuuriseen tai kansalliseen ryhmään kuuluvien työtovereiden kanssa ovat samansuuntaisia aikaisempien<sup>16, 17</sup> tutkimustulosten kanssa. Sen sijaan kantaväestön ja maahanmuuttajien välillä havaitut työtoverisuhteet vaikuttavat myönteisemmiltä kuin edellä mainituissa tutkimuksissa havaittiin, joskin tuloksia on vaikea verrata johtuen erilaisista tutkimusmenetelmistä sekä hieman eri tavoin asetetuista tutkimuskysymyksistä. Vaikka läheisimmäksi koettu työtoveri useimmiten oli samasta kulttuurista peräisin, myönteisiä ja läheisiä työtoverisuhteita esiintyi – toisin kuin Remennickin<sup>17</sup> sekä Obgonnan ja Harrisin<sup>16</sup> tutkimissa työyhteisöissä – myös maahanmuuttajien ja kantaväestön kesken.

Hypoteesin 3 mukaisesti maahanmuuttajaryhmien välillä oli eroja koetuissa suhteissa kantaväestöön. Kulttuurisesti ja kielellisesti Suomea läheisimmältä alueelta kotoisin olevat maahanmuuttajat, eli Virosta tulleet, kokivat työtoverisuhteensa kantaväestöön myönteisemmiksi kuin kulttuurisesti etäisimmistä maista, eli Saharan eteläpuolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta kotoisin olevat maahanmuuttajat. Jälkimmäisestä ryhmästä voidaan todeta, että kantaväestöön nähden pisimmän kulttuurisesti etäisyyden lisäksi alueelta tulleet useimmiten poikkeavat ihonväriltään muita enemmän kantaväestöstä, mikä voi vaikuttaa vähentävästi samankaltaisuuden kokemiseen ja olla syynä vähemmän myönteisiin suhteisiin kantaväestöön<sup>ks. myös esim. 6, 11</sup>.

Maahanmuuttajien arvio omasta puhutun suomen kielen taidostaan ei ollut yhteydessä heidän kokemiinsa suhteisiin

suomalaisiin. Tulos on sikäli yllättävä, että kielitaidon yleisesti uskotaan edistävän sosiaalista integraatiota. Obgonna ja Harris<sup>16</sup> sekä Remennick<sup>17</sup> tulkitsivat laadullisella otteella tehtyjen tutkimustensa tuloksia myös siten, että heikko kielitaito vaikeutti maahanmuuttajien integroitumista työyhteisöön. Voi olla, että vaikka jonkintasoinen kielitaito on edellytys vuorovaikutuksen onnistumiselle ja sosiaaliselle integraatiolle, se ei kuitenkaan edistä suoraviivaisesti myönteisten sosiaalisten suhteiden kehittymistä kantaväestön kanssa. Tosin kyseessä oli itse arvioitu kielitaito eikä objektiivisen kielitaidon mittari.

Puhutun suomen kielen taito oli kuitenkin yhteydessä suhteisiin muista maista tai kulttuureista tulleisiin maahanmuuttajiin: mitä paremmaksi oma suomen kielen taito arvioitiin, sen myönteisemmäksi koettiin suhteet muista maista tai kulttuureista tulleisiin maahanmuuttajataustaisiin työtovereihin. Yhteys on sikäli ymmärrettävä, että suomen kieli voi olla eri maista tulleille maahanmuuttajille ainoa yhteinen kieli, joka luonnollisesti helpottaa vuorovaikutusta. Yllättävää oli, että paremmaksi suomen kielen taitonsa arvioivat maahanmuuttajat kokivat suhteensa myös samasta kulttuurista tulleisiin myönteisempänä. Tässä kyse voi olla esimerkiksi siitä, että suomea osaavasta maahanmuuttajasta tulee suosittu maanmiestensä keskuudessa, kun hän voi toimia kieli- tai kulttuuritulkkina niille, jotka osaavat suomea heikommin.

## Tutkimuksen rajoitukset ja vahvuudet

Tutkimuksen yhtenä heikkoutena voidaan pitää melko alhaista vastausprosenttia, jonka vuoksi tutkimustuloksiin on

suhtauduttava osin varauksella. Tehdyn katoanalyysin mukaan kyselyyn vastamattomat ja vastanneet eivät eronneet toisistaan työsuhteen vakituisuuden, työsuhteen keston taikka toimipisteen suhteen, mutta nuoremmat, miehet sekä maahanmuuttajat jättivät vanhempia, naisia ja suomalaisia useammin vastaamatta.

Tarkasteltaessa maahanmuuttajia ja kantaväestöä erikseen vastanneet maahanmuuttajat erosivat vastaamattomista maahanmuuttajista ainoastaan iän suhteen siten, että vastaamattomat olivat vastaajia nuorempia. Iän yhteys maahanmuuttajien valikoitumiseen voi liittyä myös muihin ikään yhteydessä oleviin tekijöihin, kuten kansallisuuteen tai kulttuuritaustaan. Aineiston valossa näyttää siltä, että Saharan eteläpuolisesta Afrikasta ja Afrikan sarvesta tulleet sekä ryhmään muut kuuluneet olivat Venäjältä ja Virosta tulleita nuorempia. Suomessa tehdyissä kirjallisesti vastattavissa maahanmuuttajien kyselytutkimuksissa somaleiden vastausprosentti on todettu erityisen alhaiseksi, kun taas virolaiset vastaavat usein muita useammin<sup>esim. 10</sup>. Maahanmuuttajat ovat voineet valikoitua myös kielitaustansa ja suomen tai englannin kielen taitonsa mukaan, sillä kaikki maahanmuuttajat (varsinkin ryhmässä muut sekä entisestä Jugoslaviasta tulleet) eivät saaneet kyselyä äidinkielellään.

Suomalaisten kesken ainoa merkitsevä ero oli toimipisteessä: yhden toimipisteen vastausprosentti oli kahdessa muussa toimipisteessä työskenteleviä selvästi heikompi. Tämä voi johtua monesta syystä, kuten erilaisesta – välinpitämättömmästä tai kielteisemmästä – suhtautumisesta työpaikkaa tai työpaikan monikulttuurisuutta kohtaan. Mahdollinen asenteisiin liittyvä systemaattinen valikoituminen voi koskea myös koko aineistoa siten,

että esimerkiksi monikulttuurisuuteen tai työpaikkaan myönteisesti suhtautuvat ja aiheesta kiinnostuneet ovat vastanneet työpaikan monikulttuurisuutta koskevaan kyselyyn muita useammin.

Edellä mainittu vastaajien valikoituneisuus ja se, että tutkimus tehtiin yhdessä kuljetusalan organisaatiossa, jossa vajaa kolmannes työntekijöistä oli maahanmuuttajia ja pääosin miehiä, vaikuttavat tulosten yleistettävyyteen. Työpaikalla tehtävän työn luonne ja sen edellyttämät yhteistyömuodot sekä mahdollisuudet sekä työhön liittyvään että epämuodolliseen vuorovaikutukseen voivat osaltaan vaikuttaa työpaikan sosiaalisten suhteiden kehittymiseen. Myös sukupuoli tai työyhteisön kulttuurisen monimuotoisuuden aste sekä maahanmuuttajien ja kantaväestön määrälliset suhteelliset osuudet työyhteisössä voivat vaikuttaa työyhteisön sosiaalisen kudelman muodostumiseen. Tämän kaltaista tutkimusta olisikin hyvä sekä tehdä muilla toimialoilla että kohdistaa huomiota myös sukupuolen ja kulttuurisen monimuotoisuuden asteen vaikutukseen työyhteisön sosiaalisiin suhteisiin.

Yksi tutkimuksen vahvuuksista on sen teorialähtöisyys, joka erottaa sen kuvatuista aiemmista tutkimuksista, jotka ovat olleet luonteeltaan kuvailevia ja eksploraatiivisia. Tutkimuksen vahvuutena voidaan pitää myös sitä, että tutkimus ei kohdistunut vain maahanmuuttajien ja kantaväestön suhteiden tarkasteluun, vaan huomioon otettiin myös maahanmuuttajaryhmien keskinäiset suhteet työyhteisössä. Maahanmuuttajia ei siis käsitelty homogeenisenä ryhmänä. Tutkimus on tältä osin ensimmäinen laatuaan Suomessa.

## Jatkotutkimustarpeet sekä kulttuurisen monimuotoisuuden mahdolliset sosiaaliset seuraukset työyhteisöissä

Tutkimus tuo esille useita jatkotutkimustarpeita. Ensinnäkin erityisen tärkeää olisi selvittää maahanmuuttajista ja kantaväestöstä koostuvan työyhteisön työtoverisuhteiden yhteyttä työntekijöiden hyvinvointiin ja työtyytyväisyyteen, kuten myös työyhteisön toimivuuteen ja tuloksellisuuteen. Toiseksi huomiota tulisi myös kohdistaa työyhteisön kulttuuriin ainokaisiin. Mikäli työntekijät verkostoituvat ja kehittävät läheisiä ja luottamuksellisia suhteita ensisijaisesti työntekijöihin, joilla on sama kansalliset tai kulttuuritausta, miten ja mistä kulttuuriset ainokaiset, joilla ei ole maanmiehiä tai samaa äidinkieltä puhuvia työtovereita, löytävät paikkansa työyhteisön sosiaalisessa järjestelmässä? Kulttuuriset ainokaiset ovat huomiotta jäänyt ryhmä sekä suomalaisessa että kansainvälisessä maahanmuuttajia ja kulttuurista moninaisuutta koskevassa tutkimuskirjallisuudessa, ja heidän tilaansa ja hyvinvointiaan tulisi selvittää laajemminkin maahanmuuttajia koskevassa tutkimuksessa.

Käsillä oleva tutkimus oli poikkileikkaustutkimus, ja arvokasta olisi tutkia pitkittäisasetelmalla, miten kulttuurisesti monimuotoisen työyhteisön työtoverisuhteet kehittyvät ajan oloon, sekä mitkä seikat vaikuttavat suhteiden kehittymiseen myönteisempään tai kielteisempään suuntaan. Tosin kyselyin toteutetuissa tutkimuksissa erityisesti maahanmuuttajien vastausprosentit jäivät usein hyvin alhaisiksi, mikä vaikeuttaa poikkileikkaustutkimusten ja erityisesti pitkittäistutkimus-

ten onnistunutta läpiviennä sekä heikentää tulosten luotettavuutta. Vastausprosentin nostamiseksi maahanmuuttajille kohdistetuissa kyselytutkimuksissa tulisi kiinnittää erityistä huomiota kyselylomakkeen pituuteen sekä kulttuurisen validiteetin parantamiseen. Kyselylomakkeita on myös tarpeen kääntää mahdollisimman monelle kielelle, joskin kääntäminen on aikaa vievää ja tulee kalliiksi. Koska kaikki maahanmuuttajat eivät tule maista, joissa on totuttu kyselytutkimuksiin, tutkimuksesta ja sen tarkoituksesta tiedottamiseen tulisi panostaa tavallista enemmän. Harkinnanarvoista on myös ottaa kantaa siihen, milloin ja missä määrin haastattelut tai muut vaihtoehdot menetelmät voisivat toimia kyselyitä paremmin.

Työyhteisöissä kulttuurisesti etäisimmillä työntekijöillä voi olla muita suurempi riski jäädä ulkopuoliseksi työyhteisön sosiaalisista verkostoista ja ilman sosiaalista tukea, millä voi olla kielteinen vaikutus heidän hyvinvointiinsa. Jonkin tai joidenkin kulttuuristen ryhmien sosiaalinen eristyminen muista voi vaikuttaa epäedullisesti myös työyhteisön toimivuuteen sekä toiminnan tuloksellisuuteen. Kulttuurisesti monimuotoisissa työyhteisöissä voi olla syytä kohdistaa erityistä huomiota siihen, etteivät jotkut työntekijät ajautu vastentahtoisesti sosiaalisesti eristetyiksi.

Suomessa työyhteisöissä yleisesti käytettävät ilmapiirikartoitukset on rakennettu monokulttuurisille työyhteisöille. Jatkossa olisikin syytä kehittää työyhteisöjen kartoitusmenetelmiä siten, että ne soveltuisivat myös monikulttuurisille työyhteisöille ja kartoittaisivat paremmin

myös esimerkiksi työyhteisön sosiaalista toimivuutta.

Ihmisten välinen koettu erilaisuus voi lisätä varauksellista suhtautumista toiseen ja toimia eräänlaisena tutustumisen kynnyksenä tai esteenä suhteiden syntymiselle, jotka muutoin voisivat kehittyä jopa myönteisiksi. Pidempään kestäneissä suhteissa todellisen samankaltaisuuden merkityksen onkin todettu vähänevän sekä suhteen jatkumisen kannalta että sen kannalta, miten tyytyväisiä suhteen osapuolet ovat suhteeseensa<sup>5, 15</sup>. Sen sijaan mitä tyytyväisempiä esimerkiksi ystävyys-suhteeseen ollaan, sitä paremmin toinen osapuoli koetaan muistuttavan itseä, eli koettu samankaltaisuus lisääntyy<sup>14, 15</sup>. Näin ollen monikulttuurisissa työyhteisöissä tulisi kiinnittää erityistä huomiota työyhteisöjen sosiaaliseen toimivuuteen ja sen kehittämiseen tavoilla, jotka voisivat edistää myönteisten suhteiden syntymistä yli kulttuurirajojen. Työyhteisöille suunnatuissa kehittämisinterventioissa, joilla pyritään edistämään toimivaa monikulttuurisuutta, yhtenä tavoitteena on usein erilaisuuden suvaitsemisen parantaminen. Vaikka tavoite sinänsä on tavoittelemisen arvoinen, interventioissa olisi ehkä syytä panostaa myös samankaltaisuuden kokemuksen lisäämiseen, ihmisten ja kulttuurien erilaisuuden korostamisen sijaan.

”Monikulttuurinen työyhteisö – maahanmuuttajien integroituminen työyhteisöön, työhyvinvointi, työturvallisuus ja yhdenvertaisuus työhönottoprosesseissa”-hanketta (no 104376) ovat tukeneet Työsuojelurahasto sekä työministeriö.

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## Immigrants in Finnish workplaces: co-worker relations

The aim of this study was to analyse the social relations of co-workers in a work community that has become culturally diverse through an influx of immigrants. Another purpose was to investigate the possible differences in co-worker relations between different immigrant groups. The quality of social relations was approached through the similarity-attraction paradigm, social identity theory, and the concept of cultural distance. The study was conducted as a mailed survey; the response rate was 45%. The research group consisted of employees with an immigrant background ( $n = 183$ ) and host-national employees ( $n = 186$ ) in a transport company, the majority of whom were men (90%). The results showed that co-worker relations between those from the same culture or country were perceived as the most positive. Moreover, co-workers from the same culture or country generally had the closest relationships, although other close, positive relationships also existed between immigrants and host-nationals and between immigrants from different countries. Immi-

grants from Estonia regarded relations with the host-nationals as more positive than did those from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Horn of Africa. The results suggest that the culturally most distant employees and those who are the sole representatives from a certain culture may be at a greater risk of becoming outsiders with respect to social networks at the workplace and of receiving less social support, which might in turn have negative implications for their well-being.

► **Keywords:** culturally diverse work communities, immigrants, co-worker relations, social relations

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## **Immigrants and natives at work: Exposure to workplace bullying**

### **Abstract**

*Purpose:* The main purpose of this study was to investigate whether immigrants, when in the minority, are more exposed to bullying at work than natives, and whether immigrants' cultural distance from the host culture increases the risk of being bullied.

*Design/methodology/approach:* The study was conducted as a cross-sectional survey. The participants were immigrant ( $N = 183$ ) and native ( $N = 186$ ) employees in a transport company in Finland.

*Findings:* Whereas immigrants on average were more likely than natives to label themselves as being bullied, the culturally least distant group of immigrants did not differ in this regard from natives. Compared to natives, the risk of being bullied was nearly three times higher in the intermediate distance group of immigrants and nearly eight times higher in the culturally most distant group. The primary type of negative act immigrants were subjected to was social exclusion.

*Research limitations/implications:* It would be advisable for future research investigating immigrants' exposure to bullying to use quasi-objective measures along with a self-labelling measure, and to apply qualitative methods.

*Practical implications:* The heightened risk of culturally distant immigrants to being exposed to bullying might be reduced by improving employees' cross-cultural communication skills and by promoting an atmosphere of acceptance of cultural diversity.

*Originality/value:* The study is an addition to the still scarce literature on immigrants' exposure to workplace bullying, and takes into particular account immigrants' cultural distance from their host culture.

*Key words:* Immigrants, Migrant workers, Workplace bullying, Harassment, Cultural diversity, Cultural distance, Bus drivers

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Workplace bullying is a serious social problem that may have highly detrimental effects on the targets' well-being and health (see Hogg et al., 2011a; Nielsen and Einarsen, 2012, for reviews). Bullying may be defined as repeated, regular, aggressive and negative treatment directed at an employee (or several employees) by one or several co-workers and/or superiors in a situation where the target finds it difficult to defend him/herself (Einarsen et al., 2011). The negative treatment can take different forms – such as social exclusion, humiliation and verbal abuse – the common denominator being that the treatment is experienced as unpleasant, offensive and humiliating by the target (Einarsen et al., 2011).

Workplace bullying is viewed as a multifaceted phenomenon, which can have multiple and often simultaneous causes (Branch et al., 2013; Salin, 2003; Zapf, 1999). It has, however, been proposed that minority groups that differ from the majority may be especially socially exposed and more likely to become targets of bullying (Lindroth and Leymann, 1993; Schuster, 1996). It has been reported that the victims of bullying themselves perceive their dissimilarity to others as one (Vartia, 1996) or the main (Strandmark and Hallberg, 2007) cause of bullying. The first aim of this study was to examine whether immigrants that constitute a minority in a workplace are at greater risk of exposure to bullying than natives. Our second aim was to investigate whether immigrants' cultural distance (i.e., dissimilarity) from natives increases the risk of becoming bullied.

### **Dissimilarity from the majority as a risk factor for immigrants' exposure to bullying: theoretical approaches and empirical results**

According to the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel and Turner, 1986), people build their social identity by classifying themselves and others into social categories that are salient in a certain social context, such as those of gender and ethnicity. Individuals generally perceive their own group (the in-group) in a more favourable light, and those who are dissimilar and categorized into an out-group more negatively. Immigrant status is likely, due to several reasons – such as for instance different appearance and a foreign accent – to be an especially salient characteristic to use as a basis for categorization into an out-group. Immigrants could thus more easily become targets of bullying, as they may “provoke” more negative attitudes in the majority group to begin with.

The social interactionist approach (Felson, 1992; Felson and Tedeschi, 1993) offers yet another perspective to why dissimilarity to others may increase the likelihood of bullying. According to this approach, aggression may be interpreted as instrumental behaviour. Violations of rules and norms are likely to provoke aggressive interactions as a means of socially controlling and inhibiting deviant behaviour. As social behaviour is guided by internalized objective and subjective elements of culture (Triandis, 1994), immigrants are likely to deviate and break the culturally-based rules of natives, and thus be subjected to punishment, i.e. aggression by natives. Cultural distance,

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i.e. cultural dissimilarity, between interacting individuals is also likely to hamper smooth interaction and increase the probability of misunderstandings and conflicts (Triandis, 1994, 2000; Triandis et al., 1994). Accordingly, the larger the cultural distance, the more likely it is that conflicts and problems will arise. Thus, conflicts based on communication problems and misunderstandings are more likely to arise between natives and immigrants and between immigrants originating from different cultures. These conflicts in turn, if repeated, may escalate into bullying.

So far only a few studies have compared immigrants' or ethnic minority members' exposure to workplace bullying with that of natives or ethnic majority members. In this context, it is worth noting that the terms 'immigrant' and 'ethnic minority member' are conceptually different, even if the literature sometimes uses them interchangeably, without providing any definitions. In this study, by immigrants we mean all those who are foreign born and of foreign descent. Ethnic minority members may be – but are not necessarily – immigrants or descendants of people with immigrant backgrounds. While immigrants, as well as well-established ethnic minorities within a country, differ from the majority as regards cultural heritage, immigrants' situations differ in many respects from those of non-immigrants. Well-established ethnic minority groups in a country may be more or less knowledgeable of the culture and language of the majority, while immigrants usually face a completely new situation as regards culture and language. Moreover, established ethnic minorities may be regarded as part of the social texture of a society, while immigrants are newcomers, and as such are more likely to be regarded as outsiders.

In a study conducted in the nursing industry in Denmark (Hogh et al., 2011b), non-Western immigrants – but not Western immigrants – were significantly more often bullied at work than natives. They were significantly more often bullied by co-workers, but not by superiors. In a Finnish study by Aalto and colleagues (2013), immigrant nurses reported being bullied by co-workers – but not by supervisors – more often than natives did. One study conducted in the UK found that ethnic minority members labelled themselves as being bullied at work more often by both colleagues and line managers than the (White) majority members (Lewis and Gunn, 2007). Fox and Stallworth (2005) compared three ethnic/racial (Asian, African-American and Hispanic/Latino) minority groups' exposure to general and racial bullying with that of Whites. While the only group difference as regards general bullying was that Hispanic/Latino minority members were more often bullied than Whites, all ethnic/minority groups more often reported being targets of racial/ethnic bullying (i.e., bullying referring specifically to race or ethnicity) than Whites.

These prior studies thus indicate that while immigrants and ethnic minority groups may be more exposed to bullying at work, there may be group differences: some of the groups are at a higher risk of exposure to bullying while others are not. Furthermore, the bullying of immigrants

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and/or ethnic minorities may occur through different types of behaviours than those directed towards the majority group. However, none of these previously mentioned studies were conducted in companies in which both immigrants and natives (or ethnic minority and majority members) worked in similar jobs. Therefore, such work-related factors as high workload and low job autonomy (Baillien et al., 2011) or lack of constructive leadership (Hauge et al., 2011), which have been shown to increase bullying behaviours at work, were not controlled for. If organizations with poorer working conditions recruit more immigrants (or ethnic minority members) because they have difficulties in attaining native (or majority group) employees, immigrants' and ethnic minority members' higher exposure to bullying could in fact be more a reflection of working conditions rather than immigrant or ethnic minority status per se. Thus in order to rule out these possible alternative explanations, it is important to compare the exposure of immigrants and natives working in the same workplaces, in the same jobs.

### **The present study**

Immigration into Finland has increased considerably in the last twenty years. However, even though the number of immigrants has multiplied during this time period, the proportion of people of foreign origin in the population (5.3% in 2013, Statistics Finland, 2014) remains one of the lowest in Europe. This study was conducted in an urban bus transportation company in the Helsinki capital region, in which about 30% of bus drivers and somewhat less than 10% of mechanics were first generation immigrants (i.e., foreign born and of foreign descent). Although the number of immigrants in Finland is still small, they already make up a substantial portion of the employees in some sectors, such as bus transportation. Bus driving tends to be an occupation into which employees are recruited from a wide variety of ethnicities also in other countries (Evans and Johansson, 1998). From this perspective, a bus driving company seems particularly suitable for examining immigrants' and natives' social relationships at work.

Bus driving is, however, a socially isolating job, with limited opportunities for interaction with co-workers and superiors (Evans and Johansson, 1998; Tse et al., 2006). Despite this, as Glasø et al. (2011) point out, bus drivers are interdependent with respect to connections and the swapping of vehicles. In addition, depending on how the break areas are planned, bus drivers may also spend time together during breaks at depots and common rest stops, as was the case in the company in which our study was conducted. Hence, bus drivers do interact with each other and bullying may occur, even if it could be assumed that the socially isolated nature of bus driving would diminish the probability of this. In fact Glasø and colleagues (2011) found in their study conducted among bus drivers in a large public transportation company in Norway, that as many as 11.6% labelled themselves as victims of bullying. This prevalence rate is high in comparison to that

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of a representative study of the Norwegian workforce (Nielsen et al., 2009), which yielded a prevalence rate of 4.6% using the same measure. The study by Glasø and colleagues thus highlights that although bus drivers mainly work alone, bullying at work does occur, and bus driving may even be a high risk job with regards to exposure to bullying.

Based on the theoretical approaches and empirical studies presented above, we formed the two following hypotheses. When immigrants are in the minority at work:

**H1:** Immigrants are more often bullied than natives.

**H2:** Culturally more distant immigrants are bullied more often than culturally closer immigrants.

In addition, we examined by whom immigrants are bullied and through what negative acts. We pose no hypotheses to these questions, as they are descriptive by nature.

## Method

### Participants and procedure

Data were collected through questionnaires in a large bus company. Those working in administrative (or with supervisory) tasks were excluded from the study, as there were no immigrants among them. All the employees participating in the study worked as either bus drivers (93%) or mechanics (7%). The research project was approved by the Ethical Committee of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. Questionnaires and pre-paid return envelopes were mailed to the home addresses of every other randomly chosen Finnish-born employee ( $n = 409$ ) and all employees of immigrant background ( $n = 426$ ) (for a more detailed description of procedures, see Bergbom and Kinnunen, 2014). A total of 189 natives and 185 immigrants returned the questionnaire, constituting a response rate of 45% (natives 46%; immigrants 43%). Five of the questionnaires were incompletely filled and therefore excluded from the analyses. Thus the remaining actual subject group of this research consisted of 186 natives and 183 immigrants.

The majority of the respondents were male (90%), their average age was 45.1 years ( $SD = 9.1$ , range 24–63) and they had worked in the company for an average of 7.7 years ( $SD = 8.0$ , range 0.1–35). Almost all (97%) of the respondents had a permanent employment contract and two out of three (67%) reported that their current work corresponded with their education at least rather well. The immigrant employees differed from their native colleagues in that they were somewhat younger ( $t(347) = 2.84, p < .01$ ) and had worked in the company for a shorter time ( $t(219,576) = 10.97, p < .001$ ). There were also fewer women among the immigrants than among the native employees (6% vs. 15%,  $\chi^2(1) = 8.38, p < .01$ ).

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#### *Attrition analysis*

An attrition analysis showed that respondents differed from non-respondents with regard to age and sex. The respondents were older (on average 2.6 years,  $p < .001$ ) than the non-respondents, and women responded more often than men (61% vs. 39%,  $p < .01$ ). Respondents and non-respondents did not differ with regard to type of employment contract (permanent/temporary), length of employment or immigrant status (i.e., native vs. immigrant).

#### **Measures**

Two questionnaires, one for immigrants and one for natives, were created in Finnish. They included identical items, but the questionnaire for immigrants also had immigration-specific items. The Finnish questionnaire was translated by bilingual translators into the three most spoken languages among Finnish immigrants, namely Russian, Estonian and Somali, and also into English. The procedures for ensuring the cultural validity and equivalence of the questionnaire items, and for ensuring that the questions would be understood by our prospective respondents, are described in more detail in a study by Bergbom and Kinnunen (2014). Immigrants received the questionnaire in at least Finnish and English, and, depending on the assumed ethnicity, in other languages.

*Exposure to bullying* was measured with one item, preceded by the following definition of bullying: "Bullying and harassment at the workplace is repeated, persistent and continuous negative behaviour. It may be subjugation or insulting treatment. The bully may be a co-worker, supervisor or subordinate." The definition was followed by the question: "Do you feel that you are subjected to this kind of bullying at the workplace?" (1 = *no*; 2 = *yes*). This self-labelling method to measure exposure to bullying with a single item and a definition has been considered to have good face validity, and construct validity (Nielsen et al., 2010; Nielsen et al., 2011).

*The perpetrator's* work role and immigrant vs. native status was elicited by one further question, worded: "Who subjects you to this kind of bullying?" (Response alternatives: 0 = *I am not a target of bullying*; 1 = *one or more Finnish co-workers*; 2 = *one or more immigrant co-workers*; 3 = *immediate supervisor or foreman*; 4 = *other supervisor*; 5 = *subordinate*). The response alternatives concerning the perpetrator were not mutually exclusive, i.e. it was possible to tick more than one alternative.

Exposure to *negative acts*, i.e. specific bullying behaviours, was assessed by one question in checklist form: "How often have you experienced the following situations at work?" The question was followed by a list of seven negative acts (e.g., "Rumours and gossip

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being spread about you”). (All the items of negative acts are depicted in Table 4.) The response alternatives were 1 = *never*, 2 = *sometimes*, and 3 = *often*. In analyses, response alternatives 2 and 3 were collapsed together. Because of space limitations in the questionnaire, it was not possible to include complete master lists of negative acts of existing measures (e.g., NAQ-R; Einarsen et al., 2009; LIPT; Leymann, 1990). The seven items were chosen so that unnecessary duplication would be avoided.

Immigrants were asked to indicate their *country of origin*. The immigrants came from 32 different countries (all except for one individual indicated country of origin); 71% originated from Europe and 29% from outside Europe. Immigrants' *cultural distance* from the host country culture was determined by country of origin and the native language(s) of that country (see Triandis et al., 1994, for measurement of cultural distance). Immigrants were grouped into three groups based on their cultural distance from the Finnish culture and language.

Estonian-speaking Estonians and one immigrant from Sweden were grouped together into the *culturally closest group* ( $N = 69$ ) to Finland. Estonia and Sweden are neighbouring countries to Finland and share many cultural similarities to it. In addition, Estonian and Finnish are cognate languages, belonging to the Finno-Ugric language group and are very different from the Indo-European languages that are spoken in most other European countries. Estonian-speaking Estonians (as opposed to Russian-speaking Estonians) were considered culturally the closest to the host culture, in addition to those coming from Sweden (the only Scandinavian country immigrants came from). Sweden and Finland have historical bonds and have had extensive cultural exchange over the centuries.

Sub-Saharan Africa was considered culturally the most distant region from Finland, and those from this region were grouped together with those from North Africa or other countries outside Europe (who were mainly from the Middle East) into the *culturally most distant group* ( $N = 53$ ). The majority of the respondents in this group were immigrants originating from Sub-Saharan Africa (43%, the largest single group being Somalis) and from North Africa (23%).

The rest of the immigrants, who came from Europe, were grouped into the *intermediate group* ( $N = 60$ ) as regards cultural distance from Finland. As the Russian-speaking Estonians resemble Russians more than Estonian-speaking Estonians in cultural terms (Aasland and Fløtten, 2001; van Ham and Tammaru, 2011), it was considered appropriate to group Russian-speaking Estonians ( $n = 7$ ) into this intermediate group, which for the most part consisted of Russians and those from the Former Yugoslavia.



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*Background factors and control variables.* Of the demographic and other background variables we took *sex* (1 = male, 2 = female) (see e.g., Eriksen and Einarsen, 2004), *age* (in years) (see Samnani and Singh, 2012), *type of employment contract* (1 = permanent, 2 = temporary) and *length of employment* (in years and months) into account in our analyses for their potential confounding effects. Over-qualification, that is, working in occupations below one's educational level or acquired skills, is common among immigrants (Chen et al., 2010), and could be a source of deviance from other co-workers. We therefore measured education-related over-qualification or mismatch in order to control for its effects on exposure to bullying. The *correspondence of job with education* was measured using one item (1 = *very well*; 5 = *not at all*).

*Immigration-related potential confounders.* As immigrants acculturate to varying degrees over time (Berry, 1997), which may influence actual/present cultural distance, *length of residence in Finland* (in years) was measured. There is no prior empirical research on whether immigrants' host national language proficiency is related to their experiences of exposure to workplace bullying. However, we reasoned that immigrants' Finnish proficiency could increase misunderstandings and conflicts with natives – which in turn could be related to bullying. Immigrant respondents rated their *Finnish proficiency* with regard to ability to speak, understand speech, read and write Finnish on a scale ranging from 1 (= *very poorly*) to 5 = (*very well*) (e.g., “How well do you think you can understand spoken Finnish?”). The internal consistence (Cronbach's alpha) of the four-item scale was .85 in the whole immigrant sample and ranged between .74 and .89 in the three immigrant groups.

### **Statistical analyses**

Logistic (binomial) regression analysis (LRA) was used as the primary method of analysis. Hypotheses (1–2) were tested with LRA (with and without controls; see Spector and Brannick, 2011). Control variables were categorized into 2–4 classes while trying to ensure that the number of respondents in each class would be sufficient. The association between categorized potential control variables and exposure to bullying was tested with Cross tabulation and  $\chi^2$ -tests and finally only those control variables that were related to exposure to bullying were chosen as controls when testing the hypotheses. The further research questions were explored descriptively with frequency distributions as well as LRA.

## **Results**

### **Exposure to bullying: Descriptive results**

Out of 359 respondents, 52 indicated (14.5%) that they were bullied at work (10 individuals did not answer the question). Of the seven different negative acts asked about, the most



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commonly experienced was the spreading of rumours and gossip: 25.4% of the respondents reported having experienced this either sometimes or often. The least often reported negative form of behaviour was insulting and offensive remarks, which 11.9% of respondents reported to have experienced at least sometimes. The perpetrators of bullying were most often reported to be a co-worker or several co-workers (41%), a supervisor (39%) or from more than one of the categories of employees offered as options (17%). Even though none of the respondents were formally supervisors, two of the bullied persons (3%) reported that the perpetrator was a subordinate. When indicating that the perpetrator was one or several co-workers, both natives and immigrants reported that the perpetrators were natives (83%; 83%) more often than immigrants (17%; 17%). It may be noted that when responding to the question about the perpetrator, a somewhat higher share of respondents indicated they were bullied than when they were asked about bullying using the self-labelling measure (17.3% (59 out of 341) vs. 14.5%).

Of the potential control variables, only (shorter) length of employment and (poor) correspondence of work with education were significantly associated with exposure to bullying (Table 1), and thus chosen as covariates when testing H1. Of the two immigration-related background variables, Finnish proficiency was associated with exposure to bullying, and taken as an additional covariate when testing H2.

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**Table 1.** Relationship between background variables and exposure to bullying at work

Background variable	Not bullied ( <i>n</i> = 307)		Bullied ( <i>n</i> = 52)		$\chi^2$
	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)	
Sex					0.09 <sup>ns</sup>
Female	31	(83.8)	6	(16.2)	
Male	274	(85.6)	46	(14.4)	
Age (in years)					6.22 <sup>ns</sup>
24–36	45	(77.6)	13	(22.4)	
37–46	106	(86.2)	17	(13.8)	
47–54	89	(90.8)	9	(9.2)	
55–63	54	(90.0)	6	(10.0)	
Employment contract					0.13 <sup>ns</sup>
Permanent	295	(85.8)	49	(14.2)	
Temporary	9	(81.8)	2	(18.2)	
Length of employment					7.98 <sup>*</sup>
–2 years	59	(85.2)	10	(14.5)	
2 < years ≤ 5	104	(80.0)	26	(20.0)	
5 < years ≤ 10	61	(88.4)	8	(11.6)	
10 < years	82	(93.2)	6	(6.8)	
Correspondence of work with education					11.75 <sup>**</sup>
good	215	(89.6)	25	(10.4)	
neither good nor poor	47	(82.5)	10	(17.5)	
poor	42	(72.4)	16	(27.6)	
Immigrants' Finnish proficiency <sup>a</sup>					8.70 <sup>*</sup>
Rather poor	24	(77.4)	7	(22.6)	
Neither poor nor good	73	(85.9)	12	(14.1)	
Good	32	(64.0)	18	(36.0)	
Immigrants' length of residence in Finland					4.89 <sup>ns</sup>
1–5 years	51	(86.4)	8	(13.6)	
6–10 years	42	(79.2)	11	(20.8)	
11 years –	36	(69.2)	16	(30.8)	

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> Categorization based on the mean of the composite score of Finnish proficiency (possible scores ranging from 1 = *very poorly* to 5 = *very well*) as follows: rather poor = below 3.00; neither poor nor good = 3.00–3.75; good = above 3.75

\*\*  $p < .01$ . \*  $p < .05$ . ns = non significant

### Testing H1 and H2: Risk of being bullied among natives and immigrants

When comparing immigrants on average with natives, immigrants' risk of exposure to bullying at work was three times higher (OR = 3.10, 95% CI = 1.38–6.95,  $p < .01$ ), also after adjustment for length of employment and correspondence of work with education (Table 2).

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Thus, H1 seemed to receive support when immigrants were treated as one group. However, when immigrants were broken down by their cultural distance from the host culture into three groups, the risk of being bullied in the culturally closest group of immigrants did not differ from that of natives (Table 2). The risk of exposure to bullying was nearly three times higher among immigrants in the intermediate group ( $OR = 2.81, 95\% CI = 1.06-7.47, p < .05$ ) and nearly eight times higher among immigrants in the most distant group ( $OR = 7.77, 95\% CI = 2.88-20.90, p < .001$ ) than that of natives, when adjusted for the two control variables. Thus, H2, stating that culturally more distant immigrants are bullied more often than culturally closer immigrants, seemed to receive support.

H2 was however tested further among immigrants by adjusting for Finnish proficiency in addition to the two previous controls (length of employment and correspondence of work and education). Immigrants in the most distant group were at a four times higher risk of exposure to bullying ( $OR = 4.22, 95\% CI = 1.31-13.63, p < .05$ ) in comparison to immigrants in the culturally closest (reference) group, but the risk of exposure to bullying did not significantly differ in the intermediate group ( $OR = 1.97, 95\% CI = 0.63-6.20, p = .25$ ) from that of the closest group. Thus, these results were in line with H2, as the most distant group was bullied more often than the culturally closest immigrants.

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**Table 2. Prevalence of bullying at work among immigrants and natives**

Variables	N	Prevalence of bullying		Model 1 <sup>a</sup>		Model 2 <sup>b</sup>	
		<i>n</i>	%	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Immigrant status							
Natives (reference)	185	14	7.6	1	Reference	1	Reference
Immigrants	174	38	21.8	3.43 ***	[1.77, 6.56]	3.10 **	[1.38, 6.95]
Natives vs. immigrants of different cultural distances							
Natives (reference)	185	14	7.6	1	Reference	1	Reference
Culturally closest immigrant group	69	6	8.7	1.16 ns	[0.43, 3.16]	1.26 ns	[0.41, 3.84]
Culturally distant intermediate group	56	12	21.4	3.33 **	[1.44, 7.71]	2.81 *	[1.06, 7.47]
Culturally most distant immigrant group	48	19	39.6	8.00 ***	[3.62, 17.72]	7.77 ***	[2.88, 20.90]

Notes. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.

<sup>a</sup> Unadjusted model. <sup>b</sup> Adjusted for length of employment and correspondence of work with education.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*  $p < .05$ . ns = non significant.

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### Perpetrators of bullying and subjection to different forms of negative acts

Immigrants were significantly more likely to be bullied by native co-workers than were natives ( $OR = 3.46$ ,  $95\% CI = 1.23-9.76$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (Table 3). Immigrants were also more likely than natives to report that they were bullied by people from more than one of the categories of perpetrators offered as options ( $OR = 10.22$ ,  $95\% CI = 1.28-81.57$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The risk of being bullied “solely” by supervisors or immigrant co-workers did not significantly differ between immigrants and natives (Table 3).

**Table 3. Prevalence of bullying by different perpetrators among natives (n = 177) and immigrants (n = 164)**

Perpetrators	Prevalence of bullying			
	<i>n</i>	%	OR	95% CI
Bullying by native co-workers				
Natives (reference)	5	2.8	1	Reference
Immigrants	15	9.1	3.46 *	[1.23, 9.76]
Bullying by immigrant co-workers				
Natives (reference)	1	0.6	1	Reference
Immigrants	3	1.8	3.28 <sup>ns</sup>	[0.34, 31.85]
Bullying by supervisors <sup>a</sup>				
Natives (reference)	9	5.1	1	Reference
Immigrants	14	8.5	1.74 <sup>ns</sup>	[0.73, 4.14]
Bullying by perpetrators belonging to several categories of employee <sup>b</sup>				
Natives (reference)	1	0.6	1	Reference
Immigrants	9	5.5	10.22 *	[1.28, 81.57]

*Notes.* OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.

<sup>a</sup> Response alternative ‘immediate supervisor or foreman’ was collapsed together with alternative ‘other supervisor’ into one category ‘supervisors’. <sup>b</sup> Those who ticked more than one alternative for perpetrators. Responses included in this category are not included in the two other categories above.

\*  $p < .05$ . ns = non significant.

When comparing natives’ and immigrants’ risk of being subjected to different forms of negative acts (Table 4), the only difference found was with regard to social exclusion: The risk of social exclusion was twice as high among immigrants than among natives ( $OR = 2.26$ ,  $95\% CI = 1.32-3.87$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

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**Table 4. Prevalence of encountering different forms of negative acts**

Forms of negative acts	N	Sometimes or often		OR	95% CI
		<i>n</i>	%		
Rumors and gossip being spread about you					
Natives (reference)	177	52	29.4	1	Reference
Immigrants	174	37	21.3	0.65	[0.40, 1.06]
You are not talked to, not listened to or are ignored					
Natives (reference)	175	25	14.3	1	Reference
Immigrants	172	47	27.3	2.26**	[1.32, 3.87]
You are repeatedly reminded or your errors and mistakes					
Natives (reference)	172	37	21.5	1	Reference
Immigrants	173	39	22.5	1.06 <sup>ns</sup>	[0.64, 1.77]
Your work and its results are continuously criticized					
Natives (reference)	171	19	11.1	1	Reference
Immigrants	172	28	16.3	1.56 <sup>ns</sup>	[0.83, 2.91]
Insulting or offensive remarks are made about you (e.g., habits and background) or your private life					
Natives (reference)	173	17	9.8	1	Reference
Immigrants	171	24	14.0	1.50 <sup>ns</sup>	[0.77, 2.90]
You are subjected to false allegations					
Natives (reference)	173	27	15.6	1	Reference
Immigrants	170	26	15.3	0.98 <sup>ns</sup>	[0.54, 1.75]
You are given unreasonable or impossible tasks					
Natives (reference)	168	28	16.7	1	Reference
Immigrants	165	25	15.2	0.89 <sup>ns</sup>	[0.50, 1.61]

*Notes.* OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval. \*\* $p < .01$ . ns = non significant.

### Discussion

Our first hypothesis, based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel and Turner, 1986), received support when immigrants were treated as one group, that is, immigrants were more likely to label themselves as targets of bullying than natives. The second hypothesis, which assumed that among immigrants, the culturally most distant immigrant group is at the highest, and the culturally least distant group at the lowest risk of exposure to bullying, also gained support. However, the culturally least distant immigrant group did not differ from natives as regards exposure to bullying.

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This may imply that natives categorized only those immigrants perceived as differing the most from natives into an out-group, the members of which were treated more negatively than others. The least distant immigrant group consisted nearly exclusively of Estonian-speaking Estonians, who in turn were the most numerous among immigrants. This may suggest that a larger relative size of minority group acts as a protective factor against bullying, while members of smaller minority groups are singled out and are at greater risk of bullying. Even if the relative size of a minority group were an important factor affecting the risk of the minority members' exposure to bullying, the results pertaining to H2 would still seem to indicate that cultural distance increases the risk of bullying in line with the cultural distance hypothesis (Triandis, 1994, 2000). As previously stated, this may indicate that when the majority members socially categorize themselves and immigrants into in- and out-groups, immigrants that deviate the most from the majority are categorized into an out-group that provokes the most negative attitudes.

We believe that the results suggest that cultural clashes due to cultural differences are at least partial factors in bullying processes. A Danish study (Hogh et al., 2011b) found that whereas non-Western immigrants were more exposed to bullying than natives, Western immigrants were not. Hogh and her associates did not use cultural distance from Denmark as the basis for the categorization of immigrants. It seems, however, that on average, those categorized as non-Westerners in their study may be regarded as culturally more distant from the Danish host culture, than those who were categorized as Westerners. We thus interpret the findings of the study by Hogh and colleagues to be in line with our own.

As cultural distance between interacting persons increases the likelihood of communication problems and misunderstandings (Triandis 1994, 2000), it may be that the more culturally distant that immigrants are from natives, the more conflicts may arise between immigrants and natives, which over time may escalate into bullying. Furthermore, the more culturally distant that immigrants are from natives, the more they are also likely to violate the culturally-based norms of natives. Thus it could also be that attacks against and the bullying of immigrants considered to behave "inappropriately" may be used as a means to force immigrants to assimilate into the dominant culture of the majority group. It must, however, be noted that the immigrants in the culturally most distant group originated mainly from Africa, particularly from Sub-Saharan Africa, and their skin colour was the darkest. Thus an alternative, or an additional, explanation to the heightened risk of becoming bullied could be related to physical appearance. That is, the bullying could actually be an expression of racial discrimination.

Immigrants were at a higher risk than natives of becoming bullied by native co-workers. This result is in line with two Nordic studies on immigrant nurses (Aalto et al., 2013; Hogh et al., 2011b), albeit that these studies did not differentiate between the perpetrators' native vs. immigrant

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status. Immigrants were also much more likely to be bullied by several parties, that is, by both co-workers and superiors. In a previous study on bullying among bus drivers, conducted in Norway (Glasø et al., 2011), co-workers were clearly the most frequently perceived perpetrators of bullying, even if superiors were also perceived as bullies. As already noted, the prevalence of bullying among bus drivers in the study by Glasø and associates was high in comparison to a representative study on workplace bullying (Nielsen et al., 2009) in Norway. Unfortunately, Glasø and associates did not report whether there were immigrants among their respondents. This high prevalence of bullying may be a reflection of the nature of the job or of the working conditions in this sector. However, if it is the case that immigrants are subjected to bullying more often than native employees, the high prevalence could also be a reflection of the fact that, in many countries, immigrants comprise a large proportion of bus drivers.

Glasø and associates (2011) point out that as bus drivers mainly work alone, a general feeling of isolation could make them more vulnerable when attacked by others. There may be moments in the job that are especially frustrating and conflict provoking. Failure to adhere to schedule when swapping vehicles has been pointed out as one such moment (Tse et al., 2006). We propose that these critical situations may be affected by values and cultural differences; for example, the degree to which a bus driver prioritizes adhering to schedules or providing good customer service (e.g., waiting for clients who are late). Thus, some situations in the job which highlight the culturally more distant immigrants' and natives' different values may cause conflicts that escalate into bullying (see Fevre et al., 2012, for the role of values in ill-treatment). The bus company we studied was a public company that had undergone major organizational changes a few years earlier. Despite being a public company, it had to compete with private bus companies in a fiercely competitive market situation. This competition is likely to be reflected in increasingly difficult working conditions. As organizational changes have been shown to be related to an increase in ill-treatment (Fevre et al., 2012), this may also be one cause for the relatively high bullying rates in the company we studied, even if all employees were not at equal risk.

Our study demonstrated that immigrants were on average twice more likely to be socially excluded than natives. Immigrants were, however, not subjected to the other types of negative acts more than natives. As immigrants were on average more than three times more likely to label themselves as bullied, the results taken together indicate that immigrants, when bullied, are subjected to social exclusion in particular, and probably also to other types of negative behaviours that were not measured in our study. Fox and Stallworth (2005) found in their study that ethnic minorities suffered racial/ethnic forms of bullying (i.e., bullying referring specifically to race or ethnicity) in particular. It could thus be that immigrants labelling themselves as bullied were particularly subjected to racial/ethnic bullying not covered by our items of negative acts.



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### **Strengths and limitations**

The study has limitations, two of which merit special discussion. Firstly, because of the relatively low response rate, it is possible that respondents have been systematically selected in ways that affect the representativeness of the sample, and thus the generalizability of the results. The response rate is, however, within the average range of voluntary studies conducted in organizations (see Baruch and Holtom, 2008), and as such not exceptionally low. Moreover, immigrants and natives did not differ as regards response rate.

Secondly, our measure of exposure to bullying does not come without limitations. Self-labelling measures are widely used, and, especially when presented with a definition of bullying, are regarded as valid measures of bullying (Nielsen et al., 2010, 2011). There might however be cultural differences as regards the threshold to labelling oneself as a victim/target of bullying and/or as regards what is considered as acceptable interpersonal behaviour. Experiences related to immigration may also affect the threshold. Thus, in future research on culturally diverse populations, it would be advisable to use quasi-objective measures for exposure to bullying (e.g., exposure to specific bullying behaviours using predefined cut-off points) along with a self-labelling measure. The co-use of these two different type of measures has also been recommended as a best practice approach by Nielsen et al. (2010). Moreover, even though we have credence in the validity of our self-labelling measure of exposure to bullying, we consider that it would have been better to employ a more widely used self-labelling measure, such as the question in the QPS-Nordic instrument (Dallner et al., 2000). This would have rendered our results more directly comparable with other studies. Another limitation related to our measurement of bullying pertains to the need to understand the kind of behaviours the respondents had experienced that led them to label themselves as being bullied. Ethnic minority and White majority members seem to be bullied through different tactics, particularly when the perpetrators are supervisors, but also when bullied by co-workers (Lewis and Gunn, 2007). Moreover, as previously noted, it may be that immigrants were particularly exposed to ethnic/racial bullying. Thus, qualitative insights from interviews of participants on their experiences of bullying and ill-treatment would have strengthened the study. Qualitative insights could also have shed some light on why cultural distance was related to exposure to bullying. That is, to what degree the cause lay in cultural clashes or racial discrimination.

One of the major strengths of our study is that it is an addition to the still scarce literature on immigrants' (and ethnic minorities') exposure to workplace bullying. In addition, it is among the first studies to introduce the concept of cultural distance into the bullying literature. A second strength is that the respondents worked in the same workplace and the majority of them in the

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same job (93% as bus drivers), which reduces the confounding effects of job tasks as well as those of work environment conditions (e.g., quality of leadership). An additional advantage with this company-specific approach is that we know for sure that immigrants were in the minority at the workplace, as well as the exact proportion of immigrants of all employees.

### **Practical applications and future research**

Our study clearly indicates that immigrants, when in the minority and particularly when culturally distant from natives, may be at an increased risk of exposure to workplace bullying. A practical implication of this is that workplaces with native and immigrant employees should take measures in order to prevent bullying. Training aimed to improve employees' cross-cultural communication skills and constructive conflict solving could decrease misunderstandings and conflicts stemming from cultural differences and prevent conflicts escalating into bullying. Investing in creating an accepting atmosphere of cultural diversity may reduce aggressive attempts on the part of the majority to coerce culturally deviating persons to conform to the norms of the majority group. This is not to say that organizations do not need ground rules for accepted behaviour in order to function effectively. Culturally diverse organizations might benefit from conscious reflection on the boundaries between accepted and unaccepted ways of conduct. This should however be done in ways that do not unnecessarily highlight perceptions of interpersonal dissimilarity, as a strengthening of dissimilarity perceptions may lead to stronger "them" and "us" categorizations. Focusing on common goals, such as work goals, may lead to the de-categorization of co-workers into in- and out-groups. It is possible that interpersonal dissimilarity is a factor that alone leads to a heightened risk of exposure to bullying. Bullying is, however, often multi-causal and dependent on factors that enable it to take place (Salin, 2003). Thus, promoting zero tolerance of bullying, constructive leadership and decent working conditions is also important in the prevention of bullying (e.g., Baillien et al., 2011; Devonish, 2013; Hauge et al., 2011).

It would be important for future research to shed more light on the mechanisms which place immigrants in the minority at a heightened risk of being bullied. If those in the minority have a higher status and more power than those in the majority, their minority status is unlikely to be accompanied by a heightened risk of exposure to bullying. However, when those in the minority have equal (or less) power and social status, minority status is likely to lead to an increased risk of victimization. The relative size of a minority group – and the relative sizes of different minority groups, such as culturally different immigrant groups – may also be decisive in the group dynamics that influence bullying. Thus, research is also needed on what kind of role minorities' size(s), relative to the majority's size, plays in the bullying processes. It would be especially valuable to gain knowledge on how to create a socially inclusive organizational culture, in which both immigrants

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and natives could thrive. Lastly, although workplace bullying, by definition, may be considered as only occurring between members of an organization, employees serving customers may also be exposed to different kinds of harassment and ill-treatment by their customers (see Bishop and Hoel, 2008; Fevre et al., 2012; Yagil, 2008). Especially in jobs where the employees mainly work in isolation from co-workers in tasks that involve intensive customer service, such as bus drivers, repeated ill-treatment by customers may be highly detrimental as regards job satisfaction and health. Thus, future research is also needed on immigrants' (and natives') exposure to ill-treatment by customers in service intensive jobs.

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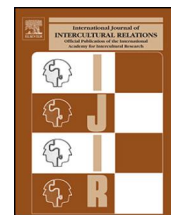
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# Immigrants and host nationals at work: Associations of co-worker relations with employee well-being

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate how co-worker relations are associated with psychological well-being and job satisfaction among immigrants and host nationals working at the same workplace. Among immigrants, we examined co-worker relations with co-culturals, host nationals, and foreign immigrants, whereas among host nationals, we focused on co-worker relations with co-nationals (i.e. co-culturals) and immigrants. The study was conducted as a survey, of which the response rate was 45%. The participants consisted of immigrant ( $n=164$ ) and host national employees ( $n=186$ ) in a transport company (in Finland), the majority (90%) of whom were men. Co-worker relations were measured with a composite score, tapping broadly positively experienced relations and their frequency as well as the desire to interact with a defined group of co-workers. The results showed that all kinds of co-worker relations were positively associated with psychological well-being and job satisfaction. However, the co-worker relations between host nationals and immigrants were more strongly associated with job satisfaction than relations between these and other co-workers. Thus, attention should be paid to fostering the development of positive intercultural co-worker relations, as this may positively impact immigrant as well as host national employee well-being; job satisfaction in particular.

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## 1. Introduction

Western workplaces are becoming more culturally diverse due to increased migration and the international mobility of today's workforce. Employees are thus increasingly working together with people from other cultures. So far, studies on the effects of ethnic work group diversity have mainly focused on work group outcomes such as productivity and creativity; studies on interethnic relations and social interactions at the workplace have been less frequent (Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt, 2003; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Even less attention has been paid to how social relations in culturally diverse workplaces are related to the well-being of employees, and to the ways in which co-cultural and inter-cultural co-worker relations associate with employee well-being.

An impressive body of research, conducted mostly monoculturally in Western cultures, suggests that social relations and social support at work are predictive of both employees' general well-being and work-specific well-being, of which job satisfaction is an example (e.g. Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; De Bacquer et al., 2005; Ng & Sorensen, 2008; Stansfeld, Fuhrer, Shipley, & Marmot, 1999). The quality of social relations at work is one of the central factors in several work stress

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theories (see Kahn & Byosiere, 1992). It has also been argued that social relations are of paramount importance for well-being, because people have an innate need for social interaction, connectedness and to be accepted; that is, a need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Co-worker relations, regardless of their cultural source, may fulfil this need. Positive intercultural co-worker relations may also have an additional beneficial effect on well-being, by teaching the immigrant about the new country's culture. In a culturally diverse workplace, these relations may offer helpful resources not provided to the same degree by co-cultural relations. In this study, by immigrants we mean all those who are foreign born, of foreign descent and are residing in a host country for an extended period of time, excluding expatriates on assignment, international students and long-term tourists. By host nationals we mean native born nationals; this does not include second generation immigrants.

On the basis of cross-cultural adjustment theorizing (see Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001), we expect that co-worker relations with host nationals may be especially important for immigrants to thrive at a workplace. These relations may provide assistance and opportunities to learn the norms and rules of a host cultural workplace. We argue that when a significant share of co-workers consists of immigrants originating from cultures other than those of host nationals, this will change the social environment in complex ways, which will also affect host nationals. Thus, research on the associations of co-cultural vs. intercultural co-worker relations with well-being among host nationals is also needed, even if this has not previously attracted much attention in research.

In sum, this study adds to the existing literature by investigating intercultural and co-cultural co-worker relations and their associations with immigrant and host national employees' psychological well-being and job satisfaction. This knowledge is important for understanding social relations as well as for finding ways in which to enhance employee well-being in culturally diverse workplaces.

## 2. Association of co-worker relations with well-being

### 2.1. *The need to belong and employee well-being*

Social relationships – whether conceptualized as social integration, social networks, social ties or social support – have shown to have powerful effects on individual well-being (Berkman, Glass, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000). The aspect of social relations at work that has been studied most often within work and organizational psychology, including occupational health, is the amount and quality of social support. Several longitudinal and prospective studies have shown poor social support at work to be predictive of impairments in well-being (e.g. De Bacquer et al., 2005; Niedhammer, Goldberg, Leclerc, Bugel, & David, 1998; Stansfeld, Clark, Caldwell, Rodgers, & Power, 2008; Stansfeld et al., 1999).

Meta-analyses have shown that co-worker and supervisor support is also an important antecedent of job satisfaction (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Ng & Sorensen, 2008). Job satisfaction refers to work-specific well-being, and is defined by Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2012, p. 347) as “an evaluative state that expresses contentment with and positive feelings about one's job”. While job satisfaction is important as an aspect of employee well-being per se, it is also of interest because meta-analyses have shown that poor job satisfaction associates particularly with workplace withdrawal, in the form of, for example, absenteeism and turnover intentions (Fried, Shirom, Gilboa, & Cooper, 2008; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Tett & Meyer, 1993).

It has been proposed that social support from colleagues and supervisors has both direct and indirect positive effects on well-being. The evidence to date, however, lends more support to a direct relationship between these two, at least with regard to psychological well-being and job satisfaction (de Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman, & Bongers, 2003; Häusser, Mojzisch, Niesel, & Schulz-Hardt, 2010), which are the well-being outcomes examined in the present study. The reason for this direct, as opposed to an indirect, effect of social support on well-being could be that social support is primarily effective because it partly fulfils an essential psychological need for social inclusion and belonging. Social belongingness has been viewed by several scholars as a fundamental and innate psychological need, the fulfilment of which is important for well-being (e.g. Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Williams, 2007; Williams & Nida, 2011). That satisfaction of the need to belong – or the need for relatedness, as Deci and Ryan (2000) name the construct – is universally associated with greater well-being, has received support in some cross-cultural studies (Church et al., 2013; Sheldon, Cheng, & Hilpert, 2011).

According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), satisfaction of the need to belong involves two criteria; firstly, frequent and positively experienced interactions with people, and secondly that these interactions take place in the context of stable and enduring relationships. Working adults spend a large part of their time at work, where they interact with the same co-workers for extended periods of time. The workplace thus provides a context in which the need to belong can be satisfied, to varying degrees. We expect that the need to belong of employees who have positive co-worker relationships and frequently interact with these co-workers is more likely to be satisfied. Therefore the psychological well-being of these employees is better and they are more satisfied with their jobs than employees who lack these kinds of co-worker relations. Moreover, we believe that the cultural source of co-worker relations does not necessarily affect their ability to satisfy the need to belong. Thus co-cultural relations, as well as intercultural relations, are also positively associated with employee well-being and job satisfaction.

**H1.** Among host nationals, co-worker relations with co-culturals (H1a) and immigrants (H1b) are positively related to psychological well-being (H1a1–H1b1) and job satisfaction (H1a2–H1b2).

**H2.** Among immigrants, co-worker relations with co-cultural (H2a), host nationals (H2b) and foreign immigrants (H2c) are positively related to psychological well-being (H2a1–H2c1) and job satisfaction (H2a2–H2c2).

### 2.2. *Immigrants: the specific importance of host national co-worker relations*

As already stated, co-worker relations, in terms of positive and supportive interaction, may be primarily associated with well-being through satisfaction of the need to belong. Intercultural and co-cultural co-worker relations may, however, also be associated with well-being through additional mechanisms. One suggested mechanism is the helpful role of host national relations in immigrants' adjustment to a host cultural workplace (Amason, Allen, & Holmes, 1999). Theories and models on cross cultural adjustment – such as Bochner's functional model of friendship networks of foreign students (Bochner, McLeod, & Lin, 1977; Ward et al., 2001), and Ward and her associates' theory on psychological and sociocultural adjustment (see Ward et al., 2001) – stress the significance of host national contacts and the opportunities of cultural learning that these contacts provide in cultural transitions.

However, the literature on the social relations between immigrants and host nationals at work is scarce and has paid little attention to how co-cultural vs. host national co-worker relations are associated with well-being. Two studies (Amason et al., 1999; Wang & Sangalang, 2005) are exceptions in this regard, as they take into account the source of support when looking at the social support – well-being link among immigrant employees. In the study by Amason et al. (1999), social support received from host national (Anglo-Americans) co-workers was negatively related to the emotional acculturative stress of Hispanic immigrants. Social support provided by co-cultural co-workers was however unrelated to acculturative stress. In Wang and Sangalang's (2005) study of Filipino immigrants, perceived support from Canadian-born (host national) co-workers correlated positively with job satisfaction, whereas support from peer immigrant co-workers was not related to job satisfaction. Two other studies, one conducted in Germany (Hoppe, 2011) and the other in the US (Hoppe, Heaney, & Fujishiro, 2010), also showed that social relations at work are particularly important for immigrants' well-being. However, these studies did not differentiate between the cultural source of social relations. The study conducted in Germany indicated that social support provided by superiors and co-workers was more important for immigrants' than host nationals' (Germans) well-being, and the US study indicated that support from supervisors, who were predominantly Whites, appeared to have stronger relations with the well-being of immigrants (Latino) than with that of Whites.

Thus, on the basis of the cross-cultural adaptation theories and empirical studies outlined above, we expect that immigrants' relations with host national co-workers may be especially beneficial. Host nationals are probably more knowledgeable and experienced than fellow immigrants as regards how processes culturally function at the workplace, and may thus provide valuable support and help in the acquisition of the cultural skills that help navigation at the workplace. The smoother and less confusing working at a workplace is, the less stressful and more satisfying the job is likely to be perceived as. Although relations with co-cultural and other immigrant employees may also be beneficial from the cultural learning perspective, the cues given by host nationals are likely to be more accurate.

**H3.** Among immigrants, co-worker relations with host nationals are more strongly related to psychological well-being (H3a) and job satisfaction (H3b) than relations with co-cultural and foreign immigrants.

### 2.3. *Host nationals and co-worker relations with immigrants*

To the best of our knowledge, no studies have yet explored the associations between co-worker relations with co-cultural vs. immigrants and well-being among host nationals. Thus we lack knowledge on host national employees' well-being in terms of the cultural source of co-worker relations and social support. Qualitative studies have, however, shown that the social dynamics of workplaces with both host national and immigrant employees may impose challenges and problems in the form of socially exclusive practices, for example, which affect host nationals as well as immigrants (Ogbonna & Harris, 2006; Remennick, 2006).

We thus argue that when a significant share of host nationals' co-workers are immigrants, this will alter the social and cultural environment of the workplace in several ways. This may, to varying degrees, also require adjustment on the part of host nationals. Like immigrants, host nationals have to face cultural barriers when interacting with co-workers from different cultures. One recent study in the US showed that larger proportions of immigrant and ethnic minority co-workers at a workplace are associated with lower job satisfaction among Whites (Hoppe, Fujishiro, & Heaney, 2014). The authors interpret this finding to be a consequence of the lowered social standing and occupational prestige that is associated with having an increased number of immigrants and ethnic minority members as co-workers. Lowered job satisfaction could, however, also be related to the social and stressful challenges associated with working in a culturally diverse workplace.

The two previously mentioned studies (Hoppe, 2011; Hoppe et al., 2010) indicated that social support at work is more important for the well-being of immigrants than for that of host nationals. At present, however, it is not known whether interaction with and social support provided by immigrants are associated with host nationals' well-being to the same degree (and direction) as interaction with and support provided by co-cultural. Thus, in addition to the above mentioned hypotheses (H1–H3), we examined (RQ1) whether or not among host nationals, co-worker relations with immigrants are as

strongly related to psychological well-being and job satisfaction (and the relationship has the same direction) as relations with co-cultural. Due to a lack of prior research, we did not pose a hypothesis for this research question.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Context of the study

Over the last two decades, Finland, which forms the context of the present study, has transformed from a country of emigration into a country of immigration. However, even though the number of immigrants has multiplied during the last 20 years, the proportion of people of foreign origin in the population (4.8% in 2011, [Statistics Finland, 2012](#)) remains one of the lowest in Europe. Immigrants in Finland live mainly in the Helsinki area – where the current study was conducted – and in another two of the country's largest cities. Although the number of immigrants in Finland is still small, in some sectors – such as transportation – they make up a substantial portion of the employees.

This study was conducted in one of the largest urban bus companies in the Helsinki capital area, in which about 30% of the bus drivers were first generation immigrants. Bus driving tends to be an occupation into which employees are recruited from a wide variety of ethnicities: this is also the case in other European countries, as well as in North America ([Evans & Johansson, 1998](#)). From this perspective, a bus driving company seems particularly suitable for examining co-cultural and intercultural co-worker relations. However, as bus drivers mainly perform their work alone, social isolation is a stress factor of their work ([Tse, Flin, & Mearns, 2006](#)). Despite this, as [Glasø, Bele, Nielsen, and Einarsen \(2011\)](#) point out, bus drivers are interdependent with respect to connections and the swapping of vehicles. Depending on how the break areas are planned, bus drivers may also spend time together during breaks at depots and common rest stops, as was the case in the company in which our study was conducted. Thus, even if urban bus drivers mainly work in isolation from their colleagues, they nevertheless interact with co-workers, and still have opportunities to develop social relationships in their work.

#### 3.2. Participants and procedure

This study was part of a larger study on multicultural work organizations conducted at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH). Data were collected through questionnaires distributed in a bus-driving company ( $N = 1350$ ) in the Helsinki capital city region. Those working in administrative tasks were excluded from the study, as there were no immigrants among them. The rest of the employees worked either as bus drivers (93%) or mechanics (7%). Just over 30% of the bus drivers and just under 10% of the mechanics were first generation immigrants. The research project was approved by FIOH's Ethical Committee.

Questionnaires and pre-paid return envelopes were mailed to the home addresses of every other randomly chosen host national employee (bus drivers and mechanics, in non-supervisory positions,  $n = 409$ ) and all employees of supposed immigrant background ( $n = 426$ ). According to the employer, all immigrant employees were first generation immigrants (i.e. there were no second generation immigrants). Due to legal restrictions, the employer had no registered information on the national background of the employees, therefore immigrant background was inferred from personal and family names (see [Mateos, 2007](#), for a review on name-based ethnicity classification methods). This method was deemed appropriate for inferring immigrant status because of the short history of immigration in Finland (in modern times) and the fact that the country has been culturally highly homogeneous until recently.

The constructed list of presumed immigrants and a list of uncertain native cases were checked with supervisors and secretaries from the company and necessary corrections were made before the final classification. A cover letter was enclosed with the questionnaire, explaining the relevant background information of the study and the voluntary nature of participation, as well as the procedures ensuring confidentiality. Two reminders were sent to non-respondents.

A total of 189 host nationals and 185 immigrants returned the questionnaire, constituting a response rate of 45% (host nationals 46%; immigrants 43%). Five of the questionnaires were incompletely filled in and therefore excluded from the analyses. Thus the resulting participant group of this research consisted of 186 host nationals and 183 immigrants.

The immigrants came from 32 different countries; 71% originated from Europe and 29% from outside Europe. Of the Europeans, the largest groups were Estonians (59%), Russians (19%) and those from the former Yugoslavia (15%). Those from countries outside Europe originated mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa (43%, the largest single group being Somalis) and North Africa (23%), and the rest were mostly from the Middle East.

#### 3.3. Attrition analysis

Attrition analysis showed that respondents differed from non-respondents in terms of age and sex. The respondents were older (on average 2.6 years,  $p < .001$ ) than the non-respondents, and women responded more often than men (61% vs. 39%,  $p < .01$ ). Respondents and non-respondents did not differ in terms of type of employment contract (permanent/temporary), length of employment or immigrant status (i.e. host national vs. immigrant). Immigrants' and host nationals' attrition was also analyzed separately. The immigrant respondents differed from non-respondents only in that they were older (on average 2.7 years,  $p < .01$ ). No significant differences were found between host national respondents and non-respondents.



### 3.4. Measures

The questionnaires – one for host nationals and one for immigrants – were specifically constructed for this study. The questionnaire for immigrants was translated by bilingual translators from Finnish to Estonian, Russian, Somali, and English. Back translations were not used, but as an attempt to control and improve the cultural validity of the items, the translators were asked to inform the researchers whenever in doubt of the appropriateness of a question, or if they felt that the question was difficult to translate correctly. In these situations, suitable concepts and formulations were found through discussion. The questionnaires were piloted – using a different sample – on both host nationals and immigrants, whose comments (related to, e.g. correctly understanding the questions) were taken into account in the questionnaires' final versions. Immigrants received the questionnaire in at least Finnish and English, and, depending on the assumed ethnicity, in other languages.

*Co-worker relations* were measured with four-item scales. One item on social support and another item on the quality of social relations were taken, with modifications, from the Healthy Organization Survey (Lindström, Hottinen, Kivimäki, & Länsisalmi, 1997). In addition, as they rose as central themes in the interviews held at the beginning of the study, the amount of interaction and the desire (or reluctance) to interact with others were also each given an item on the questionnaire.

The *host nationals'* questionnaire included two scales, one measuring co-worker relations with co-nationals (i.e. in the Finnish context, relations with co-cultural) and one measuring co-worker relations with immigrants. The *immigrants'* questionnaire in turn included three scales; co-worker relations with co-cultural, co-worker relations with host nationals and co-worker relations with immigrants originating from cultures other than one's own (i.e. foreign immigrants). The four items (see above) in each scale pertained to (a) social support ("When needed, do you get help and support from [e.g. your Finnish co-workers]?"), (b) the quality of co-worker relations ("How do employees [e.g. with Finnish and immigrant backgrounds] get along at your workplace?"), (c) the amount of interaction ("How much do you interact at your workplace with [e.g. Finnish co-workers]?"), and (d) the willingness/desire to interact with others ("How much would you like to interact at your workplace with [e.g. Finnish co-workers]?") The cultural source of relations [marked by, e.g. in the examples items above] was specified on the basis of the relations that the scale was intended to measure. All questions were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (=never/very well, no problems/not at all) to 5 (=very often/very poorly, many problems/very much). Items (c) and (d) also included an additional sixth response alternative: 0 = no such co-workers at my workplace. Items (a) and (b) in the scale measuring immigrants' relations with co-cultural included an additional response alternative: 0 = no others from the same culture at my workplace. Before calculating the sum scales, the coding of the items in each scale was reversed if needed.

The scales' reliabilities were checked separately in the case of culturally different immigrant groups with sufficiently large samples (i.e. Estonians, Russians, Former Yugoslavians and Sub-Saharan Africans) to ensure cross-cultural reliability. The internal consistency of two of the three scales for those from the former Yugoslavia was extremely low (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  .11 and .36). As the scales were thus not reliable measures for this immigrant group, all those from the former Yugoslavia ( $n = 19$ ) were excluded from all analyses testing the hypotheses, as well as from the descriptive results. For the other three immigrant groups, the range of reliabilities was .55–.76, which can be considered satisfactory considering the small number of items per scale striving to cover the various sides of social relationships (Schmitt, 1996; Streiner, 2003).

Exploratory factor analyses (EFAs), with maximum likelihood as an extraction method, were performed separately for the five different scales (i.e. immigrants' three scales and host nationals' two scales) in order to examine their construct validity. The EFAs extracted only one factor from each scale with an eigenvalue above 1 (range 1.85–2.52) and each factor explained 46–63% of the variance of the scale in question. Each item's factor loadings on the relevant scale were above .30 (range .32–.95). It must be noted that even if only one factor was extracted from each scale, the range of loadings within factors were generally large, and the variance explained by the factors ranged from modest to moderate. These analyses suggest that these measures could be further improved. However, as the scales were new, and aimed to tap different sides of positive social relations with co-workers in terms of both frequent and positively experienced interaction, we considered the scales satisfactory, despite being suboptimal. To quote Little (2013, p. 111) "if the theoretical ideas being tested are new and have merit, the underdeveloped nature of the measures can be excused".

In sum, the host nationals' (native Finns') co-worker relations were assessed using two scales: co-worker relations with co-cultural (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .62$ ) and co-worker relations with immigrants (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .80$ ). Correspondingly, the immigrants' co-worker relations were assessed with three scales: co-worker relations with co-cultural (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .62$ ); co-worker relations with host nationals (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .74$ ); and co-worker relations with 'foreign' immigrants (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .69$ ). A high score on each scale reflects frequent interaction and perceived positive relations with co-workers belonging to a particular cultural group. When answering the questions pertaining to other immigrants, the immigrant respondents could themselves decide on how to define culture or who they regarded as belonging to the same culture as themselves. Thus the basis used may have been, for example, ethnicity or a larger cultural group or area, language, clanship, country, or a larger geographical area or continent. Immigrants were also asked if they had co-workers from the same country or culture as themselves (1 = none, 2 = one, 3 = several).

*Psychological well-being and job satisfaction.* Psychological well-being was assessed using two scales, emotional well-being and energy/fatigue, from the Finnish version (Aalto, Aro, Aro, & Mähönen, 1995) of the RAND 36-Item Health Survey 1.0 (Hays, Sherbourne, & Mazel, 1993). RAND-36 has been extensively used internationally and has also proven to be a reliable, valid and usable measure of the life quality of the Finnish population (Aalto, Aro, & Teperi, 1999). Aalto et al. (1999) found, however, that these two scales correlated highly with each other in Finland, and both scales had an item which, in

principal component analysis, loaded on the other scale more than its own. These two scales are thus not as distinctive constructs in Finland as they are in the US – from where the survey originates.

The items of the two scales were preceded by the common beginning: “How much of the time during the past four weeks. . .”, after which the items of emotional well-being (e.g. have you been happy?) and energy/fatigue (e.g. have you had a lot of energy?) were rated on a scale of 1 (=never or very seldom) to 6 (=very often or continuously). These two scales correlated very highly among both host nationals ( $r = .85$ ) and immigrants ( $r = .80$ ), suggesting that they may not be distinct. The EFA for host nationals extracted only one factor of all the items with an eigenvalue above 1 (eigenvalue 5.85, variance explained 64.96%, range of loadings .74–.82). The EFA for immigrants extracted two factors with eigenvalues above 1. However, all the items loaded more highly on the first factor than on the second. Therefore a one-factor solution was considered a better solution for immigrants. The one-factor solution for immigrants had an eigenvalue of 4.98 and explained 55.34% of the variance, and the loadings ranged from .65 to .79. Internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) was .93 among host nationals and .90 among immigrants as a whole (range of  $\alpha$  in the four immigrant groups: .72–.92).

*Job satisfaction* was assessed with a single item from the Healthy Organization Survey (Lindström et al., 1997), which measures general job satisfaction: “How satisfied are you with your current job?” (1 = very satisfied; 5 = very dissatisfied). A meta-analysis by Wanous, Reichers, and Hudy (1997) has shown single items on general job satisfaction to be valid and reliable measures of general job satisfaction.

*Background factors and control variables.* Of the demographic and other background variables we took sex (1 = male, 2 = female), age (in years), type of employment contract (1 = permanent, 2 = temporary) and length of employment (in years and months) into account in our analyses. As over-qualification, i.e. working in occupations below one’s educational level or acquired skills, is common among immigrants and is related to job satisfaction and psychological well-being (Chen, Smith, & Mustard, 2010), we measured education-related over-qualification or mismatch in order to control for its effects on the outcome variables. The correspondence of job with education was measured with one item (1 = very well; 5 = not at all). Unfortunately job type (i.e. bus driver or mechanic) was not included in the questionnaire – hence we could not use this as a control.

*Immigration-related background variables.* In addition, on the basis of the literature on background factors related to immigration that have shown to be associated with the variables of interest of the current study, we assessed the following: (a) primary reason for immigration (eight alternatives, e.g. work, marriage, and refugeeism or asylum-seeking) (Ward et al., 2001), (b) length of residence in Finland (in years) (e.g. Kashima & Loh, 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1992), and (c) immigrants’ perception of their oral Finnish language proficiency (e.g. Kashima & Loh, 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1992). Immigrants assessed their oral Finnish language proficiency (speaking and listening skills) using two items (e.g. How well do you think you can understand spoken Finnish?) on a scale of 1 (=very poorly) to 5 (=very well). Cronbach’s alpha of the two-item scale was .77. In addition, immigrants were asked to indicate their (d) country of origin.

### 3.5. Analysis of data

The variables were checked for normality, and all variables, except for length of employment among immigrants, were deemed to follow the normal distribution sufficiently in order to allow the use of linear analyses. Hierarchical regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses. In these analyses, we followed Spector and Brannick’s (2011) recommendations on the use of control variables. The hypotheses were tested both with and without controls. An intended control variable was used only if the control variable was related to the dependent variable among either host nationals or immigrants. Both the controlled and uncontrolled results are reported if the results deviate significantly, otherwise only controlled results are reported.

In the regression analyses among host nationals (H1), co-worker relations with co-culturalists were entered in Step 1, followed by co-worker relations to immigrants in Step 2, and in Step 3, background factors were entered in order to control for their effects. The analyses of immigrants (H2) were correspondingly conducted in four steps. H3 and RQ1, regarding differences in the strength of associations, were tested more rigorously by comparing the 95% confidence intervals (CIs) of the beta-coefficients [ $\beta \pm (\beta/t)$ ] of different kinds of co-worker relations. The significance level for accepting a hypothesis was set at  $p < .05$ , although significance levels higher than this are also presented.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Sample characteristics and descriptive results

The majority of the respondents (excluding those from the former Yugoslavia) were male (90%), their average age was 45.3 ( $SD = 9.0$ , range 24–63 years) and they had worked in the company for an average of 7.7 years ( $SD = 8.0$ , range 0.8–34.9). Almost all (97%) of the respondents had a permanent employment contract and two out of three (67%) reported that their current work corresponded to their education at least rather well.

Employees with immigrant backgrounds differed from their native colleagues in that they were younger (44.0 vs. 46.4 years,  $p < .05$ ) and had worked in the company for a shorter time (3.7 vs. 11.7 years,  $p < .001$ ). There were also fewer women among the immigrants than among the natives (5% vs. 15%,  $p < .01$ ). The immigrants had lived in Finland for an average of 8.5 years ( $SD = 5.3$ , range 1–24). The most common primary reason for immigration was work (40%), followed by ethnic

**Table 1**

Intercorrelations (Pearson, bivariate) between variables among host nationals ( $n = 186$ , above the diagonal) and among immigrants ( $n = 164$ , below the diagonal).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Sex <sup>a</sup>		-.00	-	-	.15*	-.06	.15*	-.01	.03	-	-.06	.08
2. Age	.01		-	-	.13	.43***	-.03	-.03	.01	-	.18*	.06
3. Length of residence in Finland	-.00	-.08		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Oral Finnish language proficiency <sup>b</sup>	.01	-.31***	.36***		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Employment contract <sup>c</sup>	.12	-.07	-.06	-.06		.20**	.09	.08	-.01	-	.09	.04
6. Length of employment	.18*	.27***	.36***	.15	-.10		.10	.09	-.04	-	.03	.00
7. Correspondence of work with education <sup>d</sup>	.08	.10	-.13	.07	-.17*	.06		.26***	.15*	-	.07	.22**
Co-worker relations												
8. with co-cultural	.09	.01	-.01	.27**	-.08	.03	.10		.25***	-	.18*	.16*
9. with host nationals/immigrants <sup>e</sup>	.11	.22**	-.17*	-.01	-.08	.05	.20*	.37***			.26***	.31***
10. with foreign immigrants <sup>f</sup>	.02	-.14	.17*	.27**	-.07	-.19*	-.11	.48***	.37***			-
11. Psychological well-being	-.05	-.03	.02	.08	.05	-.13	.23**	.21*	.31***	.25**		.48***
12. Job satisfaction <sup>g</sup>	.01	.13	-.07	-.11	-.05	-.10	.43***	.22**	.46***	.21*	.60***	

Note. <sup>a</sup> 1 = male, 2 = female; <sup>b</sup> 1 = very poorly, 5 = very well; <sup>c</sup> 1 = permanent employment contract, 2 = temporary employment contract; <sup>d</sup> 1 = not at all, 5 = very well (original direction reversed, as in all statistical analyses); <sup>e</sup> Below the diagonal immigrants' relations with host nationals; above the diagonal host nationals' relations with immigrants; <sup>f</sup> Immigrants' relations with immigrants who are not co-cultural; <sup>g</sup> 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied (i.e. original direction reversed, as in all statistical analyses).

\*  $p < .05$ ,  
 \*\*  $p < .01$ ,  
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

repatriation (Finnish-Ingrian returnees, 19%), marriage/common law marriage to a Finn (18%) and refugeeism (15%). The majority (92%) of respondents with immigrant backgrounds reported that they had at least one (8%) or more (84%) co-workers from the same country or culture as themselves. All native Finns had both co-cultural and immigrants as co-workers. Thus the vast majority of respondents had co-workers of both the same and different cultural backgrounds.

The correlations among the studied variables (except for the primary reason for immigration) are presented in Table 1. All measures of co-worker relations were associated with psychological well-being and job satisfaction among both host nationals ( $r = .16-.31$ ) and immigrants ( $r = .20-.47$ ). The different co-worker scales also correlated with each other ( $r = .25$  among host nationals;  $r = .36-.49$  among immigrants). Of the background variables, the correspondence of work with education appeared to be the most relevant variable in terms of its associations with the outcome variables (measures of well-being) among both immigrants and host nationals. The primary reason for immigration was not related to either psychological well-being or job satisfaction.

#### 4.2. Testing associations of co-worker relations with psychological well-being and job satisfaction among host nationals (H1 and RQ1)

The hierarchical regression analyses for host nationals used to test H1 are summarized in Table 2. In line with H1, co-worker relations with co-cultural were positively related to both psychological well-being (H1a1) and job satisfaction (H1a2) among host nationals in the first step of the analyses. However, the addition of co-worker relations with immigrants to the equation in the second step of the analyses rendered the association of relations with co-cultural insignificant, whereas co-worker relations with immigrants still associated positively with both outcome variables (H1b1 and H1b2). This was also the case after introducing the control variables (i.e. age and/or correspondence of work with education) in the final step

**Table 2**

Summary of hierarchical regression analyses on psychological well-being (left) and job satisfaction (right) in the host national sample.

	Psychological well-being				Job satisfaction			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	95% CI <sup>a</sup>	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	95% CI <sup>a</sup>
Co-worker relations with co-cultural	.19*	.13	.13	.06 to .21	.16*	.09	.04	-.03 to .12
Co-worker relations with immigrants		.22**	.22**	.14 to .30		.28***	.27***	.19 to .34
Age			.17*				-	
Correspondence of work with education			.00				.20**	
$\Delta R^2$	.03*	.05**	.03		.03*	.08***	.04**	
$R^2$	.03*	.08**	.11**		.03*	.10***	.13***	
$N$			170				179	

Note. Standardized beta-coefficients from each step;  $\Delta R^2$  change in variance explained in each step;  $R^2$  total variance explained.

<sup>a</sup> Confidence intervals (CI) with controls in final step.

\*  $p < .05$ ,  
 \*\*  $p < .01$ ,  
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

(see Table 2). Thus, all the sub-hypotheses of H1 were supported. Support for the sub-hypotheses regarding relations with immigrants (H1b1 and H1b2) was however stronger than that for the sub-hypotheses regarding co-cultural co-workers (H1a1 and H1a2).

The 95% CIs of the beta-coefficients of the two kinds of co-worker relations partially overlapped both with and without controlling for age and correspondence of work with education, when regressing on psychological well-being (see Table 2). However, a comparison of the CIs of the beta coefficients of co-worker relations with co-culturals and of co-worker relations with immigrants in the regression on job satisfaction showed no overlap of the CIs, either without controls or when controlling for correspondence of work with education. Thus, in answer to RQ1, we can conclude that among host nationals, co-worker relations with immigrants were more strongly related to job satisfaction than relations with co-culturals.

#### 4.3. Testing associations of co-worker relations with psychological well-being and job satisfaction among immigrants (H2 and H3)

The corresponding hierarchical regression analyses for *immigrants* are presented in Table 3. When testing H2, regarding *psychological well-being*, co-worker relations with co-culturals (H2a1) were positively related to psychological well-being in the first step of the analyses. However, when co-worker relations with host nationals were introduced into the regression in Step 2, this association became insignificant. In contrast, co-worker relations with host nationals were significantly related to psychological well-being (H2b1) in Step 2. The relationship continued in Step 3, when co-worker relations with foreign immigrants, which were not significantly related to psychological well-being, were introduced. These results remained the same in Step 4 with the control variables (i.e. age and correspondence of work with education). However, if the order of variables in the analysis was reversed so that co-worker relations with foreign immigrants (H2c1) was introduced in an earlier step, the variable was significantly associated with the outcome variable until co-worker relations with host nationals were introduced in the regression. Thus, the results were in line with H2a1–H2c1: co-worker relations with co-culturals (H2a1), with host nationals (H2b1) and with foreign immigrants (H2c1) were all positively associated with psychological well-being. The support was, however, strongest for H2b1.

When the differences of the strengths of the associations were statistically checked by comparing the 95% CIs of the beta-coefficients (in the final step), the CI of the beta for co-worker relations with host nationals overlapped with the CI of foreign immigrants, but not with the CI of co-culturals (Table 3). These results were valid both with and without controls. Thus, H3 was partially supported in terms of psychological well-being (H3a): even though the strengths of the associations between co-worker relations with host nationals and foreign immigrants and psychological well-being did not differ, co-worker relations with host nationals were more strongly associated with psychological well-being than co-worker relations with co-culturals, as expected.

Co-worker relations with co-culturals were significantly associated with *job satisfaction* (H2a2) in the first step (Table 3). However, the variable lost its significance when co-worker relations with host nationals were introduced to the equation. Co-worker relations with host nationals (H2b2) associated significantly with job satisfaction in both Steps 2 and 3, as well as in the final step with the control variable (i.e. correspondence of work with education). Co-worker relations with foreign immigrants (H2c2), introduced in the third step, were not significantly related to job satisfaction. However, introducing co-worker relations with foreign immigrants to the equation before co-worker relations with host nationals rendered the association significant. In sum, H2a2–H2c2 were supported among immigrants in terms of job satisfaction, but more strongly so with regard to co-worker relations with host nationals (H2b2) than co-worker relations with co-culturals (H2a2) and foreign immigrants (H2c2).

When controlling for correspondence of work with education, the CIs for co-worker relations with host nationals (H3b) did not overlap with the CI for relations with co-culturals or with the CI for relations with foreign immigrants. That is, the beta

**Table 3**

Summary of hierarchical regression analyses on psychological well-being (left) and job satisfaction (right) in the immigrant sample.

	Psychological well-being					Job satisfaction				
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	95% CI <sup>a</sup>	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	95% CI <sup>a</sup>
Co-worker relations with co-culturals	.19 <sup>†</sup>	.09	.03	–.00	–.03 to .03	.21 <sup>†</sup>	.04	.04	–.01	–.10 to .08
Co-worker relations with host nationals		.28 <sup>**</sup>	.25 <sup>**</sup>	.21 <sup>†</sup>	.11 to .32		.44 <sup>***</sup>	.44 <sup>***</sup>	.35 <sup>***</sup>	.27 to .44
Co-worker relations with foreign immigrants			.14	.18	.08 to .29			.01	.12	.03 to .21
Age				–.10					–	
Correspondence of work with education				.21 <sup>†</sup>					.33 <sup>***</sup>	
$\Delta R^2$	.04 <sup>*</sup>	.07 <sup>**</sup>	.01	.05 <sup>†</sup>		.04 <sup>*</sup>	.16 <sup>***</sup>	.00	.10 <sup>***</sup>	
$R^2$	.04 <sup>†</sup>	.11 <sup>***</sup>	.12 <sup>**</sup>	.17 <sup>***</sup>		.04 <sup>*</sup>	.21 <sup>***</sup>	.21 <sup>***</sup>	.30 <sup>***</sup>	
N				124					131	

Note. Standardized beta-coefficients from each step;  $\Delta R^2$ , change in variance explained in each step;  $R^2$ , total variance explained.

<sup>a</sup> Confidence intervals (CI) with controls in final step.

<sup>\*</sup>  $p < .05$ ,

<sup>\*\*</sup>  $p < .01$ ,

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>  $p < .001$ .



for co-worker relations with host nationals was significantly stronger than the betas for the two other co-worker scales. The same held true without the control variable. Thus, H3 was supported in terms of job satisfaction (H3b) among immigrants, i.e. relations with host nationals were significantly more strongly related to job satisfaction than co-worker relations with co-culturals and foreign immigrants.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Main results

The first two hypotheses of the study, stating that co-cultural, as well as intercultural co-worker relations are associated with psychological well-being and job satisfaction, were supported among both host nationals (H1) and immigrants (H2). That is, those employees who felt that they received support and help from their co-workers when needed, perceived co-worker relations as good and unproblematic, had frequent and desired interaction with their co-workers, enjoyed better psychological well-being, and were more satisfied with their jobs than employees who lacked these kinds of relations. This could imply that, as expected, social interaction and supportive and positive relations with co-workers may – regardless of the source of relations – enhance employee well-being through satisfying the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2001). As we did not measure the need to belong, its role as a mediator in the relationship is only theoretical. Nevertheless, positive and frequent interaction with co-workers fulfils the conditions set for satisfying the need to belong.

The third hypothesis (H3), claiming that among immigrants, co-worker relations with host nationals are more strongly associated with psychological well-being and job satisfaction than co-worker relations with co-culturals and foreign immigrants, received full support with regard to job satisfaction but only partial support with regard to psychological well-being. Thus as we argued on the basis of theories on cultural adjustment (see Bochner et al., 1977; Ward et al., 2001), co-worker relations with host nationals may be especially beneficial because, as well as satisfying the need to belong, they provide immigrants with opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge that help them thrive at the workplace. This in turn is positively reflected in their well-being; in job satisfaction in particular. Relations with host nationals may also enhance well-being by providing easier access to different kinds of resources at the workplace, and better channels to influence issues at work. Yet another explanation may be that among those who are in the minority, co-worker relations with those belonging to the majority may better satisfy the need to belong than relations with minority members in a culturally diverse workplace. This is because these relationships may make the minority members feel that they are part of the workplace as a whole. As job satisfaction describes context-specific well-being, it is understandable that the positive effects of co-worker relations with host nationals are more clearly seen in the work domain than in context-free well-being, that is, psychological well-being.

It is, however, worth noting that contrary to our expectations, co-worker relations with host nationals and with foreign immigrants did not differ with regard to the strength of their associations with psychological well-being among immigrants. Thus, these relations appear to be equally important for immigrants' psychological well-being. Very speculatively, we suggest that relations with immigrant co-workers who originate from cultures other than one's own may provide opportunities to better interpret and understand the host culture and the culturally diverse workplace, which is then positively reflected in overall psychological well-being. For example, sharing interpretations with a foreign immigrant (i.e. somebody in the same shoes but with different cultural lenses), may provide a deeper understanding of issues at the workplace than interpretations made through the more myopic lenses of one's own culture.

Among host nationals (RQ1), co-worker relations with immigrants were more strongly associated with job satisfaction than relations with co-culturals. However, the strength of the associations of the two kinds of co-worker relations with psychological well-being did not differ. Previous studies on workplaces with immigrant and host national employees (Hoppe, 2011; Hoppe et al., 2010) suggest that social relations and social support are not as important for host nationals' well-being as they are for that of immigrants. Our study, however, indicates that when host nationals have immigrants as co-workers, interaction and positive relations with these are positively and more strongly associated with their job satisfaction than relations with co-culturals. Co-worker relations with immigrants may thus be of particular importance for host nationals' job satisfaction. It is possible that this association has remained unidentified because the sources of social support and relations have not been differentiated. Interaction and positive social relations with immigrant co-workers may help host nationals acquire skills such as improved cross-cultural communication skills, which enable them too to navigate and thrive in a culturally diverse workplace, and thus make their jobs more satisfying. However, this issue certainly needs further study in the future before we can make firm conclusions.

### 5.2. Study limitations and strengths

The study has several limitations, the most serious pertaining to the validity and reliability of the measures used. Therefore, the results and conclusions of this study have to be considered with certain caution. The EFAs point out clearly that the measures could be improved. Moreover, the reliability of three of the five co-worker scales were sub-optimal, although close to the level generally considered as adequate (.70). As the number of items in each scale was only four, and they were intended to capture different sides of co-worker relations (see Schmitt, 1996; Streiner, 2003), we consider the construct validity and internal consistencies satisfactory, although indeed sub-optimal. In addition, as already stated, the scales were new; therefore their underdeveloped nature may be excused (Little, 2013).



The fact that the co-worker scales did not hold for those from the former Yugoslavia (meaning that these respondents had to be excluded from the study) and that the original scales of RAND-36 had to be collapsed into one scale highlights one of the inherent problems when studying immigrants from different cultures: the difficulties associated with the cross-cultural applicability of used measures. Even if culturally diverse immigrants are studied as one group – as in our study – care should be taken to ensure that the measures used are as reliable and valid as possible for culturally different immigrant groups. This is an issue which has not always received enough attention, at least in occupational health studies on immigrants.

A second major limitation of the study has to do with the generalizability of the findings. Because of the relatively low response rate we cannot overlook the fact that the respondents may have been systematically selected in ways that are reflected in the results. It may, however, be noted that the response rate of our study was not any lower than that of other (published) studies of voluntary participation conducted in other organizations (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). In addition, the available background information on respondents and non-respondents showed the only difference to be that among the immigrants, the respondents were older than the non-respondents. There was no difference between the response rates of the host nationals and immigrants. Nevertheless, it is possible that there were differences between the response behaviour of immigrants and host nationals. As all immigrants did not receive the questionnaire in their mother tongue, immigrant respondents may have been selected because of their cultural background and proficiency in Finnish or English. Differences in familiarity with questionnaires may also be a more common reason affecting response behaviour among immigrants more than among host nationals, as native Finns are in general used to receiving questionnaires from a young age.

The study was conducted in only one organization, where the employees were mainly men, about two thirds were host nationals, and one third immigrants. This may also affect the generalizability of the findings. The respondents were mostly urban bus drivers and thus the degree to which the results can be generalized to apply to other occupational groups, and in particular to occupations with more intense social interaction among co-workers, is not known. The associations found may have been stronger in more socially intense jobs in which collaboration is more prominent. However, the reverse may also be true. As urban bus drivers' jobs may be especially socially demanding because they work alone serving customers, they may be particularly dependent on co-workers and in need of positive social interaction with them. Thus, this may have accentuated the observed associations between co-worker relations and well-being outcomes (see Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

A third major limitation is the cross-sectional design of the study, which precludes the causal inferences of the associations found. The associations found could also have been caused by reversed causality. That is, it is possible that employees who enjoyed higher levels of psychological well-being, and in particular those who were more satisfied with their jobs, were prone to see their co-worker relations, especially inter-cultural co-worker relations, in a more positive light than others. Fourth, as the study used only self-reported measures, common method variance is a potential source of inflated relations, although it has been argued that common method variance does not automatically inflate associations measured with self-report measures, and that the criticism of self-report measures is overstated (Spector, 2006). Fifth, the back translation method was not used in the study, although special attention was given to ensure the cross-cultural equivalence of the items by discussing the questions with the translators and piloting the questionnaires on both immigrants and host nationals.

Despite these limitations, the study has several significant strengths. First and foremost, it is an addition to the existing scarce literature in that it differentiates the cultural source of co-worker relations. To our knowledge, this is the first study to investigate how co-worker relations with co-culturals vs. immigrants are associated with employee well-being among host nationals.

A second strength of the study is that the majority of the respondents worked in the same occupation and in the same tasks (93% as bus drivers), which decreases the confounding effects of the job. Unfortunately we were not able to identify the respondents (7%) who worked as mechanics in order to control for job or to exclude mechanics from the analyses. A third strength is that we took into account several background factors – general as well as immigration related – and could control for their potential confounding effect if needed, as was the case with the correspondence of work with education. The fourth strength of the study is the translation of the questionnaire from Finnish into four languages. The translation of questionnaires has been shown to increase the response of immigrants and to reduce the gap between immigrants' and natives' participation, which is common, especially in epidemiological studies (Moradi, Sidorchuk, & Hallqvist, 2010). Moradi et al. (2010) conclude that this participation-increasing effect of translated questionnaires may more likely be a result of removing the psychological barrier of feeling excluded – i.e. providing a sense of social inclusion – than of removing the language barrier.

### 5.3. *Conclusions and future research*

Our study suggests that intercultural, as well as co-cultural co-worker relations are important for employee well-being in workplaces consisting of immigrants and host nationals. The reason for this may be that social relations satisfy the need to belong. Furthermore, co-worker relations between immigrants and host nationals may be especially important for both immigrants' and host nationals' job satisfaction – at least when a significant share of employees are immigrants. We believe that this is because these relations provide both immigrants and host nationals with the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to operate and thrive in a culturally diverse workplace. Employees in general may tend to develop more positive and supporting co-worker relationships with co-culturals than with co-workers with different cultural backgrounds (Byrne, 1971, 1997; Ogbonna & Harris, 2006; Osbeck, Mogghaddam, & Perreault, 1997; Remennick, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Interventions aimed at fostering and supporting the development of co-worker relations between immigrants and host nationals are thus advisable.

In order to enhance the credence of the findings of our study, replications with more valid and reliable measures are necessary. Our co-worker scales measured broadly different facets of social relations, and should rather be conceived as indexes that tap different sides of co-worker relations than as scales of unidimensional constructs (see Streiner, 2003). Ward and her associates' studies suggest that it is the quality, rather than quantity, of host national relations that has a positive impact on the psychological well-being of immigrants (e.g. Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000). However, quantity may also be of relevance if the quality of the contact is positive (see Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Thus, in future studies it would be worthwhile further exploring the role of quality and quantity of social relations, albeit with high quality measures.

It would also be important for future studies to determine the mediating mechanisms behind the finding that relations between immigrants and host nationals are more strongly related to job satisfaction than other co-worker relations. Longitudinal studies that could shed light on the possible causes and consequences of intercultural and co-cultural co-worker relations are also needed. The relative proportions of immigrant and host national employees are likely to affect the formation of co-cultural vs. intercultural co-worker relations, possible cultural changes at the workplace, and the functional importance of these different kinds of co-worker relations for employee well-being. Thus, in future research, it would be worthwhile exploring the effects of the proportions of immigrants and host nationals, and the effect of changes in these on co-worker relations and well-being. In many jobs today, immigrants are a majority and host nationals a minority: future research should focus on these kinds of workplaces.

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