

**“LEARNING THE CULTURE IS A KIND OF WORKING TOOL”  
The Acculturation and Adaptation of Finnish Development Co-operation Workers  
and Missionaries in East Africa**

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**Pro Gradu Thesis  
Spring 2001  
Teacher Education Department  
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**ABSTRACT**

Markkanen, T. & Nurminen, J. "Learning the Culture is a Kind of Working Tool". The Acculturation and Adaptation of Finnish Development Co-Operation Workers and Missionaries in East Africa. Pro Gradu Thesis. Teacher Education Department. Jyväskylä University. 2001. 152 pages.

The aim of this study was to describe and interpret the acculturation and adaptation of seven Finnish development co-operation workers and missionaries in an East African country. The study is a qualitative case study with a hermeneutic–phenomenological approach, using a questionnaire and half-structured thematic interview as data collection methods.

Three of the informants had acculturated to the East African culture, i.e., had integrated into the larger society, whereas the remaining four were somewhat separated from it. In their case, one could rather speak about acculturation to the sub-culture of Westerners. As regards the adaptation of the informants, all of them had adjusted to their life routine in this East African country, but only in three cases did the adaptation appear to have increased their fit with the larger society.

The major reason for how the informants had acculturated seemed to lie in their social relations. Those informants who had immersed themselves deepest in the culture had a rich network of social relations among the locals, whereas those separated had primarily Finnish or other Western friends. All in all, social relations appeared to be a channel through which several other factors influenced acculturation. This study concludes that it is important for a person going to live and work abroad to be committed to learning about the local culture and to making an effort to create relations with local people.

**Keywords:** Culture, Acculturation, Adaptation, Development Co-operation Work, Missionary Work, Overseas Effectiveness, Ethnocentrism–Ethnorelativism.

## TIIVISTELMÄ

Markkanen, T. & Nurminen, J. "Kulttuurin omaksuminen on semmonen työväline".  
Suomalaisten kehitysyhteistyöntekijöiden ja lähetystyöntekijöiden akkulturaatio ja sopeutuminen eräässä Itä-Afrikan maassa. Pro gradu -tutkielma. Opettajankoulutuslaitos. Jyväskylän yliopisto. 2001. 152 sivua.

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli kuvata ja tulkita seitsemän suomalaisen kehitysyhteistyöntekijän ja lähetystyöntekijän akkulturaatiota ja sopeutumista eräässä itä-afrikkalaisessa maassa. Tutkimus on hermeneuttis-fenomenologinen laadullinen tapaustutkimus, jossa on käytetty kyselylomaketta ja puolistrukturoitua teemahaastattelua tiedonkeruumenetelminä.

Kolme tutkimushenkilöistä oli akkulturoitunut itä-afrikkalaiseen kulttuuriin eli integroitunut laajempaan yhteiskuntaan, kun taas muut neljä olivat jotakuinkin erillään siitä. Heidän tapauksessaan voitaisiin paremminkin puhua akkulturaatiosta länsimaalaisten alakulttuuriin. Mitä taas tulee tutkimushenkilöiden sopeutumiseen, kaikki heistä olivat mukautuneet omaan elämänrutiiniinsa tässä Itä-Afrikan maassa, mutta vain kolmen kohdalla sopeutuminen tuntui lisänneen heidän soveltuvuuttaan laajempaan yhteiskuntaan.

Pääsyy siihen miten tutkimushenkilöt olivat akkulturoituneet tuntui löytyvän heidän sosiaalisista suhteistaan. Niillä tutkimushenkilöillä, jotka olivat päässeet syvimmälle sisälle kulttuuriin, oli rikas sosiaalisten suhteiden verkosto paikallisten keskuudessa, kun taas separoituneilla tutkimushenkilöillä oli ensisijaisesti suomalaisia tai muita länsimaalaisia ystäviä. Kaiken kaikkiaan sosiaaliset suhteet näyttivät olevan kanava, jonka kautta useat muut tekijät vaikuttivat akkulturaatioon. Tutkimuksen perusteella voidaan päätellä, että ulkomaille asumaan ja työskentelemään lähtevän henkilön on tärkeää olla sitoutunut oppimaan uutta kulttuuria ja näkemään vaivaa ihmissuhteiden luomiseksi paikallisten ihmisten kanssa.

Asiasanat: kulttuuri, akkulturaatio, sopeutuminen, kehitysyhteistyö, lähetystyö, kansainvälinen kompetenssi, etnosentrisyys–etnorelativismi

## PREFACE

Carrying out this study has been an enriching and fruitful though lengthy and laborious process. Having a topic that we ourselves find inspiring has given us motivation and perseverance to go through all the phases of this study. It has definitely been a strength to do this work with a partner: sharing the same questions, fears, challenges and delights has been important for us and we have also received precious support from one and another. We have enjoyed our profound discussions, which have significantly widened our perspective and deepened our understanding. The experience of sharing the process, especially the field trip to East Africa, will be a significant recourse for us also later in life.

Finally, we want to thank our first reader Tuula Matikainen and our second reader Glyn Hughes and all the others who have helped us by reading the drafts of this study and giving valuable comments. Furthermore, we want to express our sincere gratitude to the interviewees, whose contribution played a central role in the accomplishment of this study. We also want to thank the numerous others that have facilitated our work in various ways.

For any possible erroneous interpretations or mistakes we take full responsibility.

Jyväskylä 30.3.2001

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

People from different cultures come into contact with each other more and more often because of increased international co-operation and mobility. They move from one country to another either temporarily or permanently in search of better employment possibilities and living standards, to study, to carry out an international assignment at a foreign post, or even to escape persecution and to find conditions for tolerable human existence. All these different groups face the challenge of how to learn to live in an appropriate and a satisfactory way in a new cultural setting. They not only encounter novel ways of living, thinking and behaving, but also have to adjust their existing habits and acquire new ones. This is called acculturation and adaptation, and it is often a demanding process.

We had both been interested in writing our thesis on a topic related to intercultural communication, due to our own intercultural experience and previous studies in this field – Multicultural Education, International Education, Intercultural Studies, and Studies on Developing Countries. After reflecting on the diverse possibilities we chose acculturation and adaptation. It is a very topical and important issue also in the Finnish context, where more cultural sensitivity is needed due to the increasing amount of immigrants and refugees. In the future in the teaching profession, we will deal with cultural differences and acculturation in our daily work. Thus we need more information on these issues in order to better support students with different cultural backgrounds and also to teach Finnish students to accept and understand cultural diversity. Furthermore, acculturation and adaptation are learning processes, and we have to remember that learning does not end when one finishes school. In this study we will concentrate on acculturation and adaptation from the point view of adults, thus studying one aspect of life-long learning. We will examine how a group of Finnish development co-operation workers and missionaries have acculturated and adapted to one East African country, which we will not name in order to maintain the anonymity of the informants. Another reason why this specific perspective on the area is meaningful for us is that various development co-operation workers and missionaries are teachers by profession, and we are personally interested in working abroad as teachers later in life.



Several studies have been carried out on acculturation and adaptation. One of the most influential researchers in the field is John Berry, who has been studying these issues for three decades. His main focus has been how immigrants settle down in Western societies, but we will use the acculturation strategies and acculturation framework proposed by him to study Westerners working in a developing country – a much less studied area. Acculturation and adaptation are really crucial because they increase a person's cultural sensitivity. Furthermore, they are closely related to his *overseas effectiveness*, the ability to live and work effectively in the cross-cultural environment, i.e., to successfully transfer skills, knowledge and expertise to the local counterparts (Kealey 1990, 5). In other words, the better a Westerner acculturates and adapts to the new culture and country, the better he will be able to contribute to its long-term sustainable development (Kealey 1990; Kealey 1995). Kim (1997, 411–412) states that preparedness plays an important role in how a person acculturates and adapts to a new culture, and attempts are often made to improve this through cross-cultural training and orientation programmes. Thus, with this study we both aim at increasing knowledge on acculturation and adaptation and also want to emphasise the need for intensifying the cultural training in preparation courses and the importance of personal preparation and commitment to learn the new culture.

We crystallised the goals of this study in three questions. We wanted to find out, firstly, how a group of Finnish development co-operation workers and missionaries had acculturated and adapted in East Africa, and what their present state of acculturation and adaptation was. Secondly, we wanted to understand what kind of role social relations played in this process, and finally, what the main difficulties and supportive factors in the process had been. We were somewhat astonished when we realised how little contact the interviewees actually had with the local culture and that most of them, consequently, had not acculturated to it to any significant extent. In their case one could rather speak about acculturation and adaptation to the sub-culture of other Finns and Westerners. As we saw it, the main reason for this was the fact that their social relations were primarily among other Finns and Westerners – not among the locals. All in all, social relations seemed to be the major mediating factor in acculturation and adaptation. Therefore we decided to give ample emphasis to examining the relations and the reasons why building them between the Westerners and locals appeared to be fairly difficult. The third question concerning the

difficulties and supportive factors received much less weight, because within the limits of this study we could not deal with it as deeply as with the social relations, which we considered more significant.

We begin this study by defining the main concepts it is based on, from which we move on to discussing the main theory of acculturation and adaptation. In this, the acculturation framework proposed by Berry (1997), which draws together the most crucial aspects and factors of acculturation, plays an important role. After this, we briefly summarise the main differences between Finnish and East African culture, because to better understand our interviewees' acculturation, it is important to know something about the essence of the two cultures. Thereafter we move to the section explaining the procedure of this study, where we, for example, justify our decisions at the different phases, introduce the principles of the hermeneutic–phenomenological approach which we base this study on, and present our way of applying it. We also discuss reliability, validity and ethical questions, and describe the development of our perspective throughout the study. Following this section we move on to the analysis. There we firstly describe the informants and secondly we report how they had acculturated and adapted. Thirdly we focus on the reasons for their states of acculturation and adaptation, where social support plays an important role, and fourthly we list the difficulties and supportive factors encountered by the interviewees in the new cultural environment. After this we move to the final section. There we summarise our main findings, ponder on their transferability, and reflect on the study and the theories used. We also present the view that we have gained on acculturation and adaptation as a result of this study process, the theories, our findings and reflections. We finish by discussing what kind of practical actions should be taken in consequence of this study and consider the need for further studies.

## **2 BASIC CONCEPTS**

In the following we will briefly describe the basic concepts of this study. First, we will discuss culture, a fundamental aspect in the study. Then, we will preliminarily define the concept of acculturation, the focus of our study, contrasting it to enculturation so that the reader understands their meanings and the basic differences between them. Then we will move on to ethnicity and identity. Ethnicity and identity play an important role in the acculturation process, which can further influence a person's identity. It is also important to outline the meanings of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism here, since a person's place in this continuum has an impact on his acculturation process. After this we will describe the meaning of development co-operation and missionary work, as our informants work in both the fields. The last concept we will deal with in this chapter is overseas effectiveness, i.e., how successfully and satisfactorily a person can work and live in the new country, on which his acculturation and adaptation have a significant impact.

### **2.1 Culture**

The word culture has been used with many distinct meanings, and it can be understood in various ways depending on the context where it is used. If it is referred to in a narrow sense, it is defined as high culture, i.e., arts, music, history, literature, etc. (Salo-Lee 1998, 6). However, when it is understood in its wider sense, it is all the know-how that people need in everyday life. (Hofstede 1992, 19–21; see Gudykunst 1994, 36; see Salo-Lee 1998, 6–7). Porter's and Samovar's (1997, 12–13) definition reflects this general and all-encompassing way of viewing culture since they see it as "...the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving".

Because culture is common to people living in the same social setting, it is always collectivistic. Furthermore, because it derives from these social surroundings, not from the genes, it is learned and not inherited. (Hofstede 1992, 19–21.) Culture gives us the feeling of

ourselves, of our identity, values, ethics, attitudes and lifestyle, influencing our choices in everyday life (Wahlström 1996, 82).

Bennet (1998) further differentiates between *objective and subjective culture*. Objective culture refers to social, economic, political and linguistic systems of a group to its art; subjective culture is comprised of the psychological features characterising a group of interacting people, including the learned and shared patterns of beliefs, behaviours, and values (Bennet 1998, 3). This mental side is indeed very important in culture, and Hofstede (1992, 19–20) has actually defined culture as learned programming of the human mind, which makes the differences between different groups.

The distinction between objective and subjective culture is often illustrated by the iceberg metaphor: only a fraction of culture is visible (Figure 1). This visible part consists of language, manners and, for example, clothing. However, the main part, which includes communication, values, norms and beliefs, is invisible. It is this more subconscious part of culture which often causes problems in intercultural communication. (Salo-Lee 1998, 7–8.)

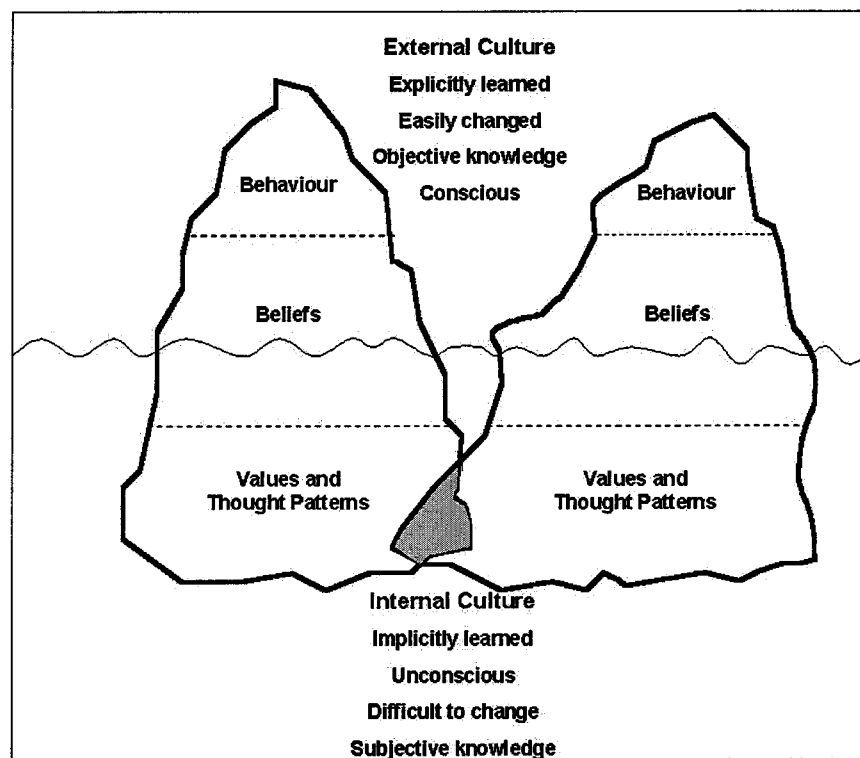


FIGURE 1: Culture as an Iceberg (Weaver 1993, 160)

Culture is often linked only with national cultures. However, also different ethnic groups have cultures, and so do, for example, religious, gender, and socioeconomic groups (Bennet 1998, 5; see also Collier 37–39). Thus, everyone belongs to more than one cultural group.

All in all, there are several definitions of culture. Due to the multifaceted nature of Berry's (1997) theory, which we base our study on and which we will discuss later, we have also chosen to use the concept of culture in its widest sense.

## **2.2 Enculturation, Acculturation and Adaptation**

Groups transmit their culture to their new members through cultural transmission (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen 1992, 17–41). A child acquires the culture in interaction with his parents, other adults and peers: *enculturation* refers to the pervasive and non-deliberate influences, while socialisation means the specific and intentional influences. Enculturation and socialisation need to be differentiated from *acculturation*, learning of the second culture, which can happen at any time in one's life, not necessarily in childhood. (Berry et al. 1992, 18–19.)

Acculturation, which takes place when people from different cultures, with different behaviours, are in continuous and firsthand contact, refers to the cultural and psychological changes (Berry et al. 1992, 19; Berry, in press). Acculturation is both a group-level and an individual-level phenomenon (Berry et al. 1992, 272; Berry, in press). Individual-level acculturation is called psychological acculturation, which includes the changes ranging from relatively easy behavioural shifts to more complicated changes producing acculturative stress (Berry, in press).

Adaptation means the changes that take place in individuals and groups in response to environmental demands (Berry 1997, 13), i.e., the more long-term ways in which people settle down in the new cultural environment (Berry, in press). Some theorists (e.g. Searle and Ward 1990) differentiate between different types of adaptation. Adaptation ranges from well adapted to poorly adapted (Berry, in press). The issues of acculturation and adaptation will be discussed in more detail in section 3.

### 2.3 Culture, Ethnicity and Identity

Culture and ethnicity play an important role in a person's construction of his identity (see e.g. Wahlström 1996, 82; Jenkins 1999, 88). Ethnicity and culture are related, but, according to Ribeau, Baldwin & Hecht (1997, 147), ethnicity refers to the traditions, heritage and ancestry of a group of people, whereas culture means the shared cognitive and material items that are created, shared, and transmitted through communication.

Jenkins (1999) has summarised the anthropological basic model of ethnicity as follows. Ethnicity means cultural differentiation and it is closely related to culture and to some extent the outcome of social interaction. It is not more fixed or unchanging than culture, which it is a component of. Ethnicity is also a social identity that is both collective and individual, externalised in social interaction and internalised in personal self-awareness. (Jenkins 1999, 88.)

As regards identity in general, it can be divided into personal and social identity. Personal identity consists of the individual characteristics distinguishing a person from his group, whereas social identity is comprised of the traits that join him to his group. (Liebkind 1988, 66.) A person belongs to and identifies with different groups on the basis of, for example, home country, ethnicity, gender, profession and religion. As a person usually has various social reference groups, he also has various social identities. These identities overlap and become visible in different contexts. (Collier 1997, 37–39, 43–44; Gowland 1994, 267.)

Cultural identity and ethnic identity are social identities, and as they are linked with each other in many aspects, they are often used overlappingly in the literature. Furthermore, approximately the same phenomenon is sometimes referred to as racial identity. For the sake of clarity, we use here the term ethnic identity, although most of its aspects are valid in cultural and racial identity, too. Nevertheless, the concepts cultural and racial identities occur later in the text when the authors quoted have used these concepts.

In ethnic identity, it is important that a person is aware of belonging to a group and sees traits of this group in himself (Aboud 1988, 6–8; Hall 1996, 2–3), which leads to solidarity towards this group (Hall 1996, 2–3). A person knows that he is somehow different from other groups (Aboud 1988, 6–8); indeed, social identities are strengthened by difference and they divide people into “we” and “others” (Hall 1996, 2–3). Moreover,

identity also includes different beliefs, values and feelings, and a person expresses his identity in his behaviour (Collier 1997, 40–43). A person also has to be seen as an active constructor of his identity (Aboud 1988, 7).

According to Liebkind (1994, 23–24) identities change in the course of the life of a person, and Collier (1997, 42) points out the fact that the visibility and strength of identity are dependent on the context. Acculturation may also influence the identity of a person (Birman 1994; Berry, in press).

## **2.4 Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism**

William G. Sumner (1940, cited in Gudykunst 1994, 77–79), defines ethnocentrism as “the view of things in which one’s own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it”. Everyone is ethnocentric to some extent, and the degree of it is seen in intergroup relations. We tend to interpret and evaluate others using our own background and standards, which may lead us to viewing ourselves as superior to others. Ethnocentric people evaluate things instead of trying to understand them, whereas culturally relativistic people try to understand others’ behaviour in the context of the culture. Vonnegut (cited in Gudykunst 1994) describes this aptly:

A first grader should understand that his or her culture isn’t a rational invention; that there are thousands of other cultures and they all work pretty well; that all cultures function on faith rather than truth; that there are lots of alternatives to our own society. Cultural relativity is defensible and attractive. It also is a source of hope. It means we don’t have to continue this way if we don’t like it. (Cited in Gudykunst 1994, 77–79.)

Intercultural sensitivity develops from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism through stages of *denial*, *defence*, *minimisation*, *acceptance* and *adaptation* to *integration*. In the stage of denial, people may use stereotypes that are based on knowing only a few things about the other culture and its people. In the stage of defence, people have more knowledge and constructions about different cultures, but they attach negative stereotypes to them. In this stage, the feeling of the superiority of one’s own culture is a common phenomenon. (Bennet 1998, 26–30.)

People at the minimisation stage assume that all people are fundamentally the same, all human. They tend to forget the real and deeper differences, accepting only the superficial ones, such as eating customs, living and language. When they move to the stage of acceptance, people for the first time realise that their own behaviour and values may not be the only right way to live. However, although they may accept different ways, they might not like them. This can be compared to the “melting pot” idea, which is that different cultures living in the same society are accepted but they should change their way of life and thinking similar to the majority’s way. (Bennet 1998, 26–30.)

In the stage of adaptation, the use of empathy is accentuated: people have the ability to modify their behaviour as appropriate in a different culture. In general, people in this stage are interculturally sensitive. Finally in the last stage, integration, people see themselves as “interculturalists” or “multiculturalists” in addition to representing their own national backgrounds, and thus see that there is no right or wrong answer. It is said that people in this stage often associate with people from cultures unfamiliar to themselves. (Bennet 1998, 26–30.)

Immigrants’ levels of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism also play an important role in acculturation situations. As ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism affect an individual’s attitudes towards the new culture, they also have an impact on how he is going to act in relation to it and its representatives, and thus regulate acquisition of the new culture. On the other hand, an individual’s ethnocentrism may also start going through a process of transformation as a result to moving to a new culture.

## **2.5 Development Co-operation and Missionary Work**

In this chapter we will briefly discuss development co-operation and missionary work and their basic differences, because our informants are both development co-operation workers and missionaries. As regards the meaning of the word co-operation in general, it refers to all the stabilised work done together that aims at the same goal. Siitonen and Sitari (1990, 8) discuss the two elements of development co-operation: the element of aid and the element of co-operation. It is often difficult to make a distinction between them, but it is the very element of aid that separates development co-operation from other international co-



operation. Earlier, development aid was the term used in general, but nowadays it refers only to the element of aid and the term development co-operation is preferably used, because it emphasises the importance of the element of co-operation. (Siitonen & Sitari 1990, 8–10.)

Another important distinction is that made between Official Development Aid (ODA) and the aid coming from the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's). The former represents the action between governments, whereas the latter is the result of the work of active citizens, and the development co-operation done by missionary organisations is also included in it. (Siitonen & Sitari 1990, 8.) The main difference between NGO work and ODA is probably the more rural and community-based focus of NGO work (Kealey & Protheroe 1995, 49).

Kealey and Protheroe (1995, 30) use the definition of technical co-operation and, according to them, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD has defined it as: "...the whole range of assistance activities designed to develop human resources through improvement in the level of skills, knowledge, technical know-how and productive aptitudes of the population in a developing country". Technical co-operation concentrates on agriculture, education, social services, and health, followed by infrastructure, with a growing portion assigned to public sector policy and management training (Kealey & Protheroe 1995, 30–32).

As regards the development co-operation of Finland, its general premises are as follows: development co-operation is that part of foreign policy through which Finland, by transferring material and human resources to the developing countries, aims at promoting sustainable development and well being in those countries, contributing to the establishment of peace, equality, democratic conditions and human rights in these countries and furthering interaction between Finland and the developing countries (Finland's development co-operation in the 1990s. 1993, 15).

The goal of the Government's development co-operation policy in developing countries is divided into three objectives: to reduce the widespread poverty, to combat global threats to the environment by helping the countries to solve their environmental problems, and to promote social equality, democracy and human rights. (Finland's development policy 1998, 17; Finland's development co-operation in the 1990s. 1993, 15.)

In addition, there are five principles that Finland applies in its development co-operation. Firstly, the prerequisite for granting support is that the developing country is responsible for its own development. Secondly, the developing country has to be willing to develop. These two principles are prerequisites for the third one, sustainable and viable development: without them it cannot succeed. Fourthly, Finland supports action by the developing countries to reform and to adjust their economic structures to the demands of sustainable development and fifthly, Finland participates in co-operation knowing that it is an important but not the only component in its overall relations with developing countries. (Finland's development co-operation in the 1990s. 1993, 16–17.)

As already mentioned, missionary work is done by NGO's. Different Christian churches have their own missionary organisations. In Finland, there are many of these organisations, for example, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland, Finnish Free Foreign Mission, Finnish Bible Society, and Messengers. We have chosen to use the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission as an example and tell about its work, because it is the main missionary organisation of the Finnish Lutheran Church, which is one of the official state religions. Additionally perhaps the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission is the best known in Finland. Furthermore, several other organisations in Finland and abroad do fairly similar work.

As E.-L. Multala (personal communication 22.2.2001) puts it, the main goal of missionary work is different from that of development co-operation since its aim is that the good news about God's love should reach all the nations. Missionary work also includes development co-operation work, but it is even more of a long-term process. In fact, the mediating and concrete goals of missionary work are to lay foundations for an independent national church and to have an influence on positive and sustainable change where people live among difficulties. In those situations, however, the real agents of change are the locals themselves. Although the development co-operation work of missionary organisations is usually done to meet the needs of the local church, it is also meant to benefit the whole community. (E.-L. Multala, personal communication 22.2.2001.)

As regards the very core of missionary work, the most important aspect is to spread Christianity to those that are not Christians yet. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission does its work by training and sending committed missionaries to do missionary

work to places where they are needed. The leading principles of this work are that it is carried out through prayer, studying the Bible, and participating in the sacraments and worship life of the Christian church, and that it is guided by the principle of equal companionship. (<http://www.mission.fi/sls.html>.) The basic belief behind all this is that every human being is valuable, and the other fundamental values of doing missionary work are respect, interaction, co-operation, sharing, and responsibility. Missionary work aims at helping people holistically. (E.-L. Multala, personal communication 22.2.2001.)

All in all, the basic difference between development co-operation and missionary work is that the latter aims at spreading Christianity, a goal that the former does not share. However, some of the working methods and even the values of the two resemble each other, and their work in fact often has acculturative influences on the local culture. Furthermore, people who go to pursue development co-operation or missionary work in developing countries, also face similar kinds of challenges both in their work and in their acculturation and adaptation to the local culture and conditions.

## 2.6 Overseas Effectiveness

When thinking about how a person manages in his work in the new culture and environment, it has to be noted that acculturation and adaptation play an important role in it. Kealey (1990, 5) calls this overseas effectiveness and defines it as the ability to live and work effectively in the cross-cultural setting of an overseas assignment, i.e., to successfully transfer skills, knowledge, and expertise to counterparts in the host country.

Kealey (1990) has constructed a model describing overseas effectiveness on the basis of his study of Canadians in development (1979), which is shown in Figure 2. According to him, overseas effectiveness is comprised of three elements: *adaptation*, *intercultural interaction*, and *expertise*. It is shown that an individual's professional performance is influenced by his adaptation to the environment. The better adapted a person is, the better he is able to cope with the unfamiliar situations, problems and frustrations arising in a new environment, which makes it easier to be competent in his profession. Intercultural interaction refers to a person's interest in the local culture and the capacity for interaction with his counterparts and other locals, knowledge of the local language, and

tolerance of and openness to the local culture and customs. Without intercultural interaction the effective transfer of skills is not possible. (Kealey 1990, 7.)

Furthermore, the figure includes the professional expertise of the person. This is more than just an individual's own training and work experience: in addition, it also includes the ability to be innovative and the ability to adapt knowledge and training to the needs and realities of the local situation. If the person is committed to his job, he is also more likely to be effective. (Kealey 1990, 7.)

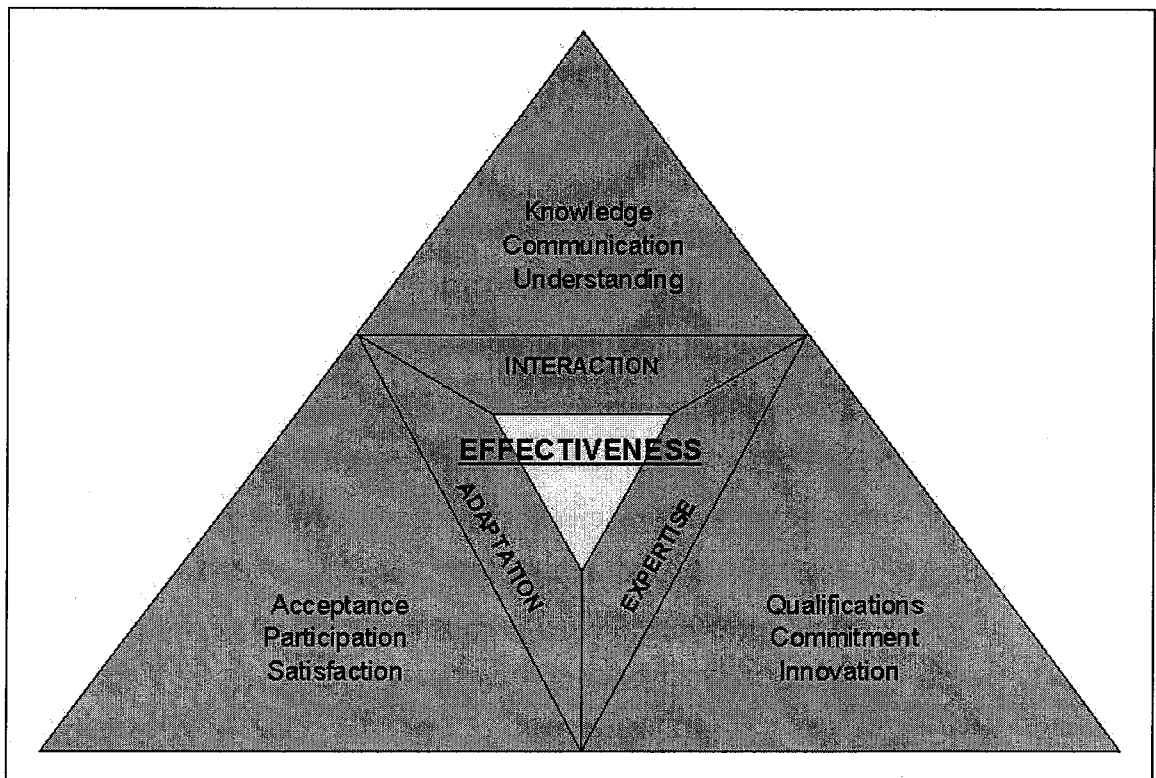


FIGURE 2: Overseas Effectiveness (Kealey 1990, 9.)

In the previous sections we have covered the basic concepts of this study: culture, acculturation, enculturation and adaptation with a preliminary glance, ethnicity, identity,

ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, development co-operation and missionary work, and overseas effectiveness. We will now move on to examine in more detail what different theorists say about acculturation and adaptation and the factors influencing them.

### 3 ACCULTURATION THEORY

In this chapter, we will be dealing with the theory of acculturation from several points of view. This way we want to provide the reader with a wide perspective on these issues, so that he can also analyse our interviewees' experiences in East Africa and is able to evaluate the interpretations and conclusions we will be presenting.

The major theorist we refer to is John Berry, who has studied acculturation for the past thirty years and who is often referred to in discussion about acculturation. Most of the research we base this study on has been carried out in Western societies, but because our specific scope on the topic is acculturation of Westerners working in developmental activities in a developing country, we have tried to include also this perspective by applying the study of Kealey (1990). He studied 1,400 people, including Canadian development co-operation workers, their spouses and the national counterparts of the recipient countries, engaged in Canada's development programmes in 16 countries in Africa, Asia, and Caribbean over a three-year period between 1986 and 1988 (Kealey 1990, 1, 29).

We will start by first defining the concepts acculturation, psychological acculturation, and adaptation. Secondly, we will refer to the different types of groups that experience acculturation. Thirdly, we move on to describe acculturation strategies, i.e., the different orientations according to which an individual can act in relation to his original culture maintenance and new culture acquisition in the new society. At the same time we also take parallel identity strategies into consideration and discuss Birman's (1994) differentiated model of acculturation as biculturalism, which combines acculturation strategies and identity strategies, and refer to bicultural competence as defined by LaFramboise, Coleman and Gerton (1993). Fourthly, we will deal with the acculturation framework of Berry (1997). Related to it, we will discuss the influence of the original society and the society of settlement, and describe group-level acculturation and the psychological acculturation process of immigrants, finally considering the influence of factors existing both prior to the acculturation process and arising during it.

### 3.1 Acculturation and Adaptation

The concepts *acculturation* and *adaptation* often overlap in use, but, even though their meanings indeed are intertwined, a distinction between them can be made. Acculturation refers to the cultural and psychological changes which are caused by continuous and firsthand contact with people from a different culture with different behaviours (Berry et al. 1992, 19; Berry, in press). Adaptation means the changes that take place in individuals and groups in response to environmental demands (Berry 1997, 13), i.e., the more long-term ways in which people rearrange their lives in the new cultural setting (Berry, in press). In our study, we mainly hold to Berry's definitions of acculturation and adaptation, but sometimes we may use them as synonyms because of the conceptual confusion between different authors and the fact that the two are different aspects of the same phenomenon.

Acculturation is both a group-level and an individual-level phenomenon (Berry et al. 1992, 272; Berry, in press). When referring to acculturation at the individual level, Berry (1997, 7) uses the term *psychological acculturation* after Graves (1967). The distinction between the group level and the individual level is important for three reasons. Firstly, the changes are different: in group level acculturation the change happens in the culture of the group, while at the individual level it refers to changes in the psychology of an individual, including changes, for example, in identity, values and behaviour (Segall et al. 1999; see also Berry et al. 1992, 272). Secondly, there is a linkage between an individual's acculturation and the acculturation of his group: the collective experience of the group and the changes in it shape the psychological acculturation of the individual (Berry et al. 1992, 272; Berry 1997, 7; Birman 1994, 267; Berry, in press). Thirdly, there are still vast differences in the psychological acculturation of individuals in the same acculturative context. (Berry et al. 1992, 272; Berry, in press; Birman 1994, 261.)

Psychological acculturation includes changes which can be relatively easy behavioural shifts or more complicated changes producing acculturative stress (Berry, in press). Psychological acculturation leads to adaptation, but the outcomes of adaptation may vary (Berry 1997). Adaptation does not necessarily mean that the individuals learn to live in a more appropriate way in the new environment. Sometimes adaptation increases the "fit" between the individual and the environment and sometimes it does not, so it can be seen in a

bi-polar sense ranging from poorly adapted to well adapted (Berry 1997, 14, 20). For example, a person may have his life well established in the new country, but still he may not know the local people and their culture. Thus, in this case the adaptation process has not increased his compatibility with the environment and he could be classified as poorly adapted.

Searle and Ward (1990) have stated that long-term adaptation can be psychological or sociocultural (Ward & Kennedy 1992, 178–179; Ward & Kennedy 1993, 222; Ward 1996, 127). *Psychological adaptation* refers to physical and psychological well being, having a connection with stress and coping processes, while *sociocultural adaptation* is related to new culture learning and behavioural competence in the new cultural environment. Psychological and sociocultural adaptation are also interrelated. (Ward & Kennedy 1992; Ward & Kennedy 1993; Ward 1996.) Aycan and Berry (1996) have introduced a third type of adaptation, *economic adaptation*, which means whether an individual finds employment in the new environment and finds it satisfactory (Berry 1997, 14).

The core of acculturation and adaptation and their different types are summarised in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Types of acculturation and adaptation

	<b>Acculturation</b>		<b>Adaptation</b>		
<b>Meaning</b>	Cultural and psychological changes caused by contact with a different culture		The long-term ways in which people rearrange their lives in a new cultural setting		
<b>Types</b>	<b>Group level acculturation</b>	<b>Individual level acculturation, i.e., psychological acculturation</b>	<b>Psychological adaptation</b>	<b>Socio-cultural adaptation</b>	<b>Economic adaptation</b>
<b>Meaning of the types</b>	Changes in social structure, economic base and political organisation of a group	Changes in identity, values, attitudes, etc.	Psychological Well-being in the new environment	Behavioural competence in the new environment	Satisfactory employment in the new environment



### 3.1.1 Different Types of Acculturating Groups

For acculturation to happen, there has to be continuous firsthand contact between different cultures (Berry et al. 1992, 273). In principle, two cultures could influence each other equally, but in most cases one culture dominates the other, inducing more change in it (Berry et al. 1992, 273; Segall et al. 1999, 301). Thus the concepts “dominant group” and “acculturating group” are often used (Berry et al. 1992, 273).

Different groups come into contact for three reasons: *mobility*, *voluntariness*, and *permanence* (see table 2). Firstly, some groups come to interact with culturally different groups because they migrate to a new country (e.g., immigrants and refugees), whereas others have the culture brought to their original location (e.g., indigenous peoples). Secondly, while some groups come to the process voluntarily (e.g., immigrants), others have no choice (e.g., refugees and indigenous peoples). Thirdly, some groups are in the new culture to stay (e.g., immigrants), but some are there only temporarily (e.g., sojourners, such as students and guest workers). (Segall, Dasen, Berry & Poortinga 1999, 303–304; Berry et al. 1992, 294–295; Berry, in press.) Our informants belong to this last group, sojourners.

TABLE 2: Types of acculturating groups (Segall et al. 1999, 304)

MOBILITY	VOLUNTARINESS OF CONTACT	
	<u>Voluntary</u>	<u>Involuntary</u>
<u>Sedentary</u>	Ethnocultural Groups	Indigenous People
<u>Migrant</u> permanent temporary	Immigrants Sojourners	Refugees Asylum Seekers

Although there are great differences between these acculturating groups, there is evidence that the psychological processes the individuals go through during acculturation are essentially similar for all the groups (Berry 1990, cited in Segall et al. 1999, 304). However, the division of acculturating groups into these categories, as seen in the Table 2, is important. The groups are different in size, power and resources, and moreover, their attitudes, motives, values and abilities also vary notably, and all these factors have a significant impact on the formation of intercultural relations. (Berry, in press.) For example, refugees and sojourners differ considerably in many of these aspects listed, a fact that influences their acculturation and adaptation in various ways.

### 3.1.2 Acculturation Strategies and Identity Strategies

Psychological acculturation and its long-term outcomes, psychological and sociocultural adaptation, are influenced by the strategies an individual uses during his acculturation process. There are two kinds of strategies: *acculturation strategies* are about how an individual tries to live in the cultural setting, whereas *identity strategies* consist of the ways in which an individual thinks of himself in that situation. (Berry, in press.)

Berry (1970, 1974, 1980) has distinguished between four different types of acculturation strategies (Berry, in press). They are made up of an individual's response to two basic issues: firstly, *how much an individual wants to maintain his heritage culture*, and secondly, *how much an individual wants to search for contacts in the wider society*. In other words, it is a question of the proportion of original cultural maintenance and intercultural contact. (Berry et al. 1992, 278; Berry 1997, 9; Berry, in press.)

If one only seeks contacts with the members of the new culture with the intention of absorbing their way of life and forgetting one's own, the acculturation strategy is called *assimilation*. When one only interacts with the members of one's own original culture, not intending to learn the new one, the strategy is *separation*. One can also seek contacts in both cultures, not only keeping the old but also acquiring the new. In this case the strategy chosen is called *integration*. The last choice is *marginalisation* and then one neither maintains his own culture nor is interested in interacting with the people of the new culture. (Berry et al.

1992, 278–279; Berry 1997, 9; Berry, in press.) However, as illustrated in Figure 3, these strategies should be understood rather as continua between opposite poles than as distinct ways of acting.

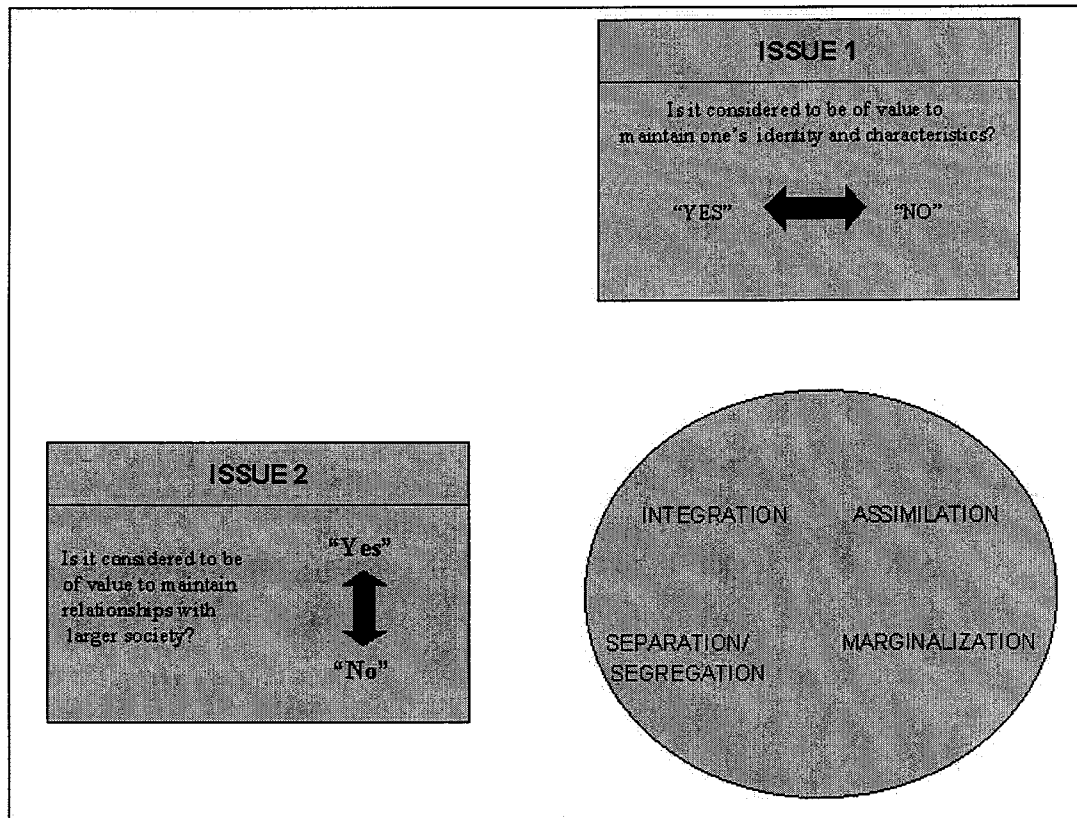


FIGURE 3: Acculturation strategies (Berry 1997, 10)

An immigrants' level of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, already discussed earlier, also affects his acculturation strategies. The more ethnocentric he is, the more threatening he may find the new culture, thus consequently wanting to distance himself from it. On the other hand, if one is already more ethnorelativistic one is likely to be interested in the new culture and seek cross-cultural contact in order to acquire the new culture.

In fact, acculturation strategies can be said to consist of both *attitudes* and *behaviours* (Berry 1990, cited in Berry 1997, 11). Individuals and cultural groups may have varying attitudes towards the different ways of acculturating, and these attitudes influence

their actual behaviours (Berry 1997, 11). Naturally, there is seldom a perfect match between the attitudes and behaviours, but, still, a significant positive correlation can be found between them (Berry, in press). Also, there is a relationship between acculturation and adaptation: individuals aiming at integration are better adapted; assimilation and separation are intermediate alternatives; and those that are marginalised are least adapted (Ward, 1996; Berry, in press).

However, an individual may not be totally free to choose his acculturation strategy: the attitudes of both his own cultural group (see Berry 1997, 10–11; see Kealey 1990, 39–41) and the larger society (Berry 1997, 10–11) influence his choices. In addition, it has to be remembered that one can change one's strategies over time: for example, one may start with assimilation, switch to separation, and finally end up at integration (Berry et al. 1992, 279). Thus, acculturation strategies can be described not only as states but also as processes.

As regards identity strategies, they are parallel to acculturation strategies. They refer to how individuals think of themselves in relation to their culture group membership. Identity strategies are also based on two dimensions: the identification with one's heritage culture and the new culture. These dimensions are independent of each other so that the existence of one does not exclude the existence of the other. Thus, depending on the individual's response to them, approaches similar to acculturation strategies – assimilation, separation, integration and marginalisation – are created. (Berry, in press.)

### **3.1.3 A Differentiated Model of Acculturation and Biculturalism**

In accordance with Berry (1997), also according to Birman (1994, 266), the basic question when studying psychological acculturation is how the individual reacts towards the pressures to give up his original ethnic, racial, and religious characteristics and to adjust to the culture of the larger society. Two approaches towards acculturation can be differentiated in psychology: the first one suggests that the acculturating individual can participate in the new culture at the same time as he maintains allegiance to the original one, while the second one concentrates on how ethnic, racial, or cultural identity is influenced by contact with the new culture (Birman 1994, 266–267). In fact, the first approach has a connection with-

Berry's (1992; 1997; in press) acculturation strategies, while the second approach resembles the identity strategies set forth by Berry (in press).

Birman (1994, 269–270) also refers to the model common in acculturation research, parallel to the model of acculturation strategies by Berry (1997). However, she has developed a differentiated model of acculturation combining both the aspect of behavioural participation in the new culture and the aspect of identification with it, because she sees that neither of these areas alone sufficiently describes the rich variety in styles of acculturation. This model results in as many as sixteen different acculturation styles. Still it has to be remembered that even these typologies are not absolute: the specific cultural, community, family, and other circumstances may create even greater diversity in these patterns. (Birman 1994, 275–277.) In the context of the present study, we are only going to deal with six of them because, in addition to being among the most commonly adopted strategies by acculturating people (see Birman 1994, 277), they are also the most useful ones for the purposes of our study. The six we intend to examine are: assimilation, separation, marginality, blended biculturalism, instrumental biculturalism, and integrated biculturalism.

In the first three of the acculturation styles, either assimilation, separation or marginality is the acculturative orientation of the individual both in his behaviour and in his identity (Birman 1994, 275–277; see also e.g. Berry 1997, 9). As regards the style called blended biculturalism, the individual is bicultural in both his behaviour and identity: he can act competently in both the cultures, and has blended the two in his identity, transcending the limitations of both. This kind of person often seeks the company of others with a fused identity like this. (Birman 1994, 278.)

The instrumentally bicultural individual resembles the blended bicultural in his involvement in the two cultures, but this involvement is only behavioural. He is competent in both the cultures, but as he does not have a sense of belonging to either of the cultures, he experiences psychological marginality, being an outsider in both the worlds. People of this kind often live outside a bicultural or minority community. (Birman 1994, 278–279.)

The integrated bicultural is bicultural in his behaviour, but represents separation in his identity. An integrated bicultural person is behaviourally highly competent in the two cultures, but instead of a blended identity he has a strong identity as a member of his original culture. In other words, he is proud of his ethnicity, culture and race, but still he can

participate in the majority culture as a result of his bicultural competence. (Birman 1994, 279.) This is usually the last – and the most adaptive – phase in the models describing racial and ethnic identity. (Birman 1994, 279; see also La Fromboise et al. 1993, 399; see also Berry 1997, 24.)

### **3.1.4 Bicultural Competence**

LaFromboise et al. (1993) have also approached acculturation from the perspective of biculturalism, and they have created a model of bicultural competence. Various factors including personal and cultural identity, age and life stage, gender and gender role identification, and socioeconomic status play important roles in the development of bicultural competence (LaFromboise et al. 1993, 402).

The model of LaFromboise et al. (1993) divides bicultural competence into six aspects. Firstly, a person needs to have basic knowledge about the history, institutions and everyday practices of the culture, and to know, appreciate and internalise the basic beliefs of the culture. One also has to accept the culture's worldview and be ready to act within its constraints when dealing with the members of that culture. Secondly, he has to recognise bicultural competence as a desirable goal and have positive attitudes towards both the groups, although he would not give them totally equal regard. For this, one has to have contact with and information about the other culture. This aspect of bicultural competence is really important because lack of respect can lead to negative psychological and behavioural outcomes. (LaFromboise et al. 1993, 404.)

The third aspect is that the person has to believe that he can live effectively and in a satisfying manner within the two groups without having to compromise his cultural identity. This has a powerful impact on his ability to develop effective roles in the second culture, to act efficiently in them, to learn appropriate communication skills, retain his roles and affiliations within his original culture and to handle acculturation stress. Fourthly, the person should acquire effective communication skills – both verbal and nonverbal. Fifthly, the individual needs to have a range of behaviours or roles appropriate in that context; the greater their range, the greater the cultural competence. Finally, the individual needs to have stable social networks in both the cultures, which is a sign of successful bicultural existence

and helps to deal with the pressures of living in a bicultural environment (LaFromboise et al. 1993, 404–407).

This model of bicultural competence proposed by LaFromboise et al. (1993) has points of contact both with the integration strategy of Berry (1997, 9) and with the integrated biculturalism style of Birman (1994, 279) because it advocates the importance of behavioural competence in both the cultures, but states that the individual does not have to give the two cultures a totally equal regard, although he has to respect both of them. It also overlaps with Kealey's (1990) model of overseas effectiveness in the aspects of both adaptation and interaction. Like LaFromboise et al. (1993, 404–407), Kealey (1990, 7) also underlines the importance of being interested in the other culture, having knowledge about it, speaking the language, having capacity to interact with the local people, and respecting their culture and its customs.

### **3.2 Acculturation framework**

Acculturation and adaptation never happen in a vacuum, but are influenced by various contextual factors. Thus, the acculturation of a specific group needs to be understood in relation to these contextual factors. (Berry 1997; Birman 1994.) Berry (1997) has combined these factors on the basis of previous research in his acculturation framework (see also Ward 1996). We have decided to use it to facilitate the analysis of the interviews, because it indeed creditably pulls together diverse factors linked to acculturation, many of which are relevant in the case of our interviewees. We first present the acculturation framework in Figure 4, in order to introduce the reader to it and to the relations between the different concepts and factors. After this, we discuss below in detail the issues it contains in order to provide the reader with a deeper insight.

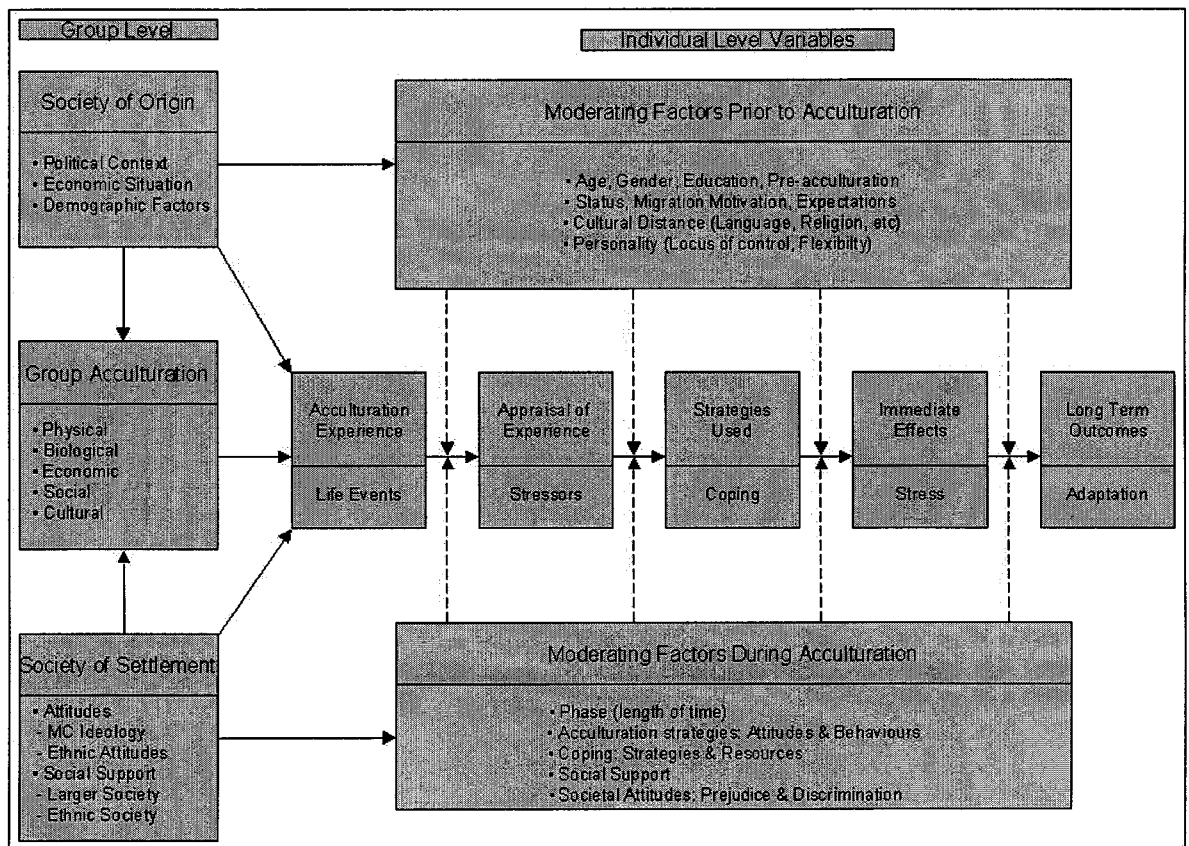


FIGURE 4: Acculturation framework (Berry 1997, 15)

The left hand side in Figure 4 shows group- or cultural level factors, which could be described as *situational variables*, and on the right hand side one finds individual or psychological factors, i.e. *person variables*. The top third of the figure shows the factors existing before acculturation, and the bottom third the factors that arise during the process of acculturation. In the middle are the main group of acculturation and psychological acculturation phenomena ranging from group acculturation to an individual's adaptation. (Berry 1997, 14–15.)



### 3.2.1 Society of Origin

According to Berry (1997, 16), it is necessary to examine carefully the society of origin and the society of settlement to understand acculturation (see also Ward 1996). *Cultural distance*, the dissimilarity between the original culture of the acculturating individual and the new culture, plays an important role in acculturation: the greater the cultural differences are, the more problems he faces in acculturation (Berry 1997, 16, 23).

It is also essential to understand the political, economic, and demographic context of individuals in the society of origin to understand the degree of voluntariness in the migration motivation (Berry 1997, 16). Richmond (1993) has stated that migration motivation ranges from reactive, or involuntary, motivation to proactive, or voluntary, motivation. The former refers to a situation when an individual has to “flee” some negative factors in his original society, whereas the latter refers to cases where an individual wants to maximise net advantage. These contrasting factors are traditionally called push/pull factors in the literature on migration motivation. Professionals, entrepreneurs and temporary workers under a contract are examples of typical proactive, or pull, migrants. (Richmond 1993.) As already mentioned, the interviewees of this study belong to this category.

However, it has to be noted that reactive or push migration motivation does not necessarily have to be related to the larger socio-political context of the individual: push factors may also arise from the personal life situation of an individual. For example, exhaustion and dissatisfaction with one’s work or difficulties in social relations may cause a person to search for employment abroad.

### 3.2.2 Society of Settlement

In addition to the cultural and general contextual issues, Berry (1997, 16–17) sees that the society of settlement influences acculturation in various ways. The immigrants are not totally free to choose how they are going to acculturate in the new society, because their alternatives are affected by the attitudes towards immigration and cultural pluralism of the wider society and of its citizens, i.e., its multicultural ideology (MC Ideology) (Berry 1997, 16–17; Berry, in press; see also Birman 1994, 267). For example, if the ethos in the larger

society is very ethnocentric and the local people do not want to interact with the newcomers, their possibilities for participation and new culture learning are indeed fairly limited.

These attitudes in the society of settlement towards the newcomers' culture and identity maintenance and towards their participation in the new culture form four types of orientations, termed: *multiculturalism*, *melting pot*, *segregation* and *exclusion*. These orientations have an impact on the formation of the acculturation strategies of the migrant individuals: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation, respectively. (Berry 1997, 10–11.) In a multicultural society individuals are allowed both to maintain their original culture and to participate in the new culture, and thus it is easy to pursue the integration strategy. However, as individuals in melting pot societies are encouraged to participate in the new culture and leave their own culture aside, it is the assimilation strategy that works best there. In a society where segregation is the dominant orientation, the minorities are allowed to keep their own culture but mixing with the majority society is not possible, so pursuing the separation strategy works best there. As regards a society with an exclusion orientation, minorities can neither keep their own culture nor acquire the new, therefore marginalisation is their only alternative.

However, there is the danger that this approach gives a too simplistic picture of the situation. In spite of the general attitude of the majority society towards immigration, there are notable fluctuations in the attitudes between different subgroups of people: for example, there may also be groups with negative attitudes, which affect an individual's acculturation. (Horenczyk 1997, 34–35.)

Furthermore, as Horenczyk (1997, 35–36) sees it, the idea of a monolithic majority society, in which an individual should acculturate, is misleading. Rather, migrants may adopt distinct orientations towards the different subgroups, which have different influences on their acculturation and adaptation. (Horenczyk 1997, 35–36.) When thinking about the different subgroups as cultural groups (see Bennet 1998, 5), the culture of which is influenced by various factors including the economic, educational and religious features of the group, it can be asked whose culture it is that an individual is acquiring in the new society.

It is also possible that the primary reference group of an immigrant is not the local people, but the community of other foreigners, the culture of which he acculturates into. For

example, Kealey (1990, 39) found out that the majority of the Canadians working abroad in development co-operation chose the separation strategy and at most 50% of them participated in the new culture to any significant extent.

All in all, it has to be remembered that the social reality in any country is indeed such a rich and complex phenomenon that it can never be exhaustively described by any theoretical model. Therefore, when examining the issues of acculturation and adaptation, one has to be careful not to be blinded by any framework, but to endeavour to know the local reality and its influence deeply in all its many-sidedness.

### **3.2.3 Group-level Acculturation of Immigrants**

Due to the differences between the society of origin and the society of settlement, the immigrant groups usually go through changes in the new environment. These can be divided into physical, biological, economic, social and cultural changes. The physical changes refer to the concrete changes in the physical environment, while the biological ones include, for example, new diet and new diseases. The move to a new country may include alterations in the employment and status of the group, which comprise the economic changes. Social changes, for their part, are about the modifications in the community and social relations. Finally, cultural changes, the very core of acculturation, include a variety of changes, both superficial and more fundamental: for example, new ways to behave, language shifts, and notable changes in values. (Berry 1997, 17.)

Group-level acculturation further influences the acculturation process of an individual (Berry 1997). The level of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism and the preference for a particular acculturation strategy of the immigrant group is likely to have an impact on an individual's attitudes and choices of acculturation strategies.

### **3.2.4 Psychological Acculturation Phenomena**

Individual-level acculturation, psychological acculturation, is illustrated in the central line of Figure 4. How individuals experience this process is highly variable for two reasons: the moderating factors prior to acculturation and arising during acculturation vary and,

depending on their extent, they can be seen as both risk factors and protective factors. Also, there are three different views on the difficulty of acculturation, “behavioural shifts”, “acculturative stress”, and “psychopathology”. (Berry 1997, 17–18; Berry, in press.)

Berry (1997) sees the process of psychological acculturation as comprised of five different phenomena: acculturation experience, appraisal of the experience, the strategies used, immediate effects on the individual and long-term outcomes. In the first phenomenon, the *acculturation experience*, the individual enters the new culture and has to deal with the two cultures in contact. All this forms the acculturation experiences one has to cope with. (Berry 1997, 18; Berry, in press.)

In the *appraisal of the experience*, the individual considers the meaning of these experiences (Berry 1997, 18). The three different views of difficulty in the acculturation process – behavioural shifts, acculturative stress, and psychopathology – enter the scene here. When the experiences are appraised as not being problematic, the changes and the consequent behavioural shifts in the individual are relatively easy. (Berry 1997, 18.) According to Berry (1992), this process consists of three sub-processes: *culture shedding* and *culture learning* include the unlearning of one’s previous behaviours and the acquisition of the new ones appropriate in the new cultural setting, but also some degree of *culture conflict* may occur.

When higher levels of conflict are experienced and the situation is seen as problematic but still controllable, the individual is likely to face acculturative stress. However, when the problems overwhelm the individual and cannot be dealt with, one could speak about psychopathology. In this case the individual acculturates rather poorly: sometimes he withdraws from culture contact (separation) or undergoes culture shedding without culture learning, which results in marginalisation. (Berry 1997, 19; Berry, in press.)

In the third phenomenon of psychological acculturation, *the strategies used*, the individual adopts different strategies to deal with the problematic situation. These strategies can be understood in relation to the four different acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation, which we have already discussed earlier. (Berry 1997, 19.) However, the situation can also be examined using the stress and coping paradigm. Lazarus and Folkman (1984, 141) define coping as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are

appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person". There are two ways to manage stress, problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping: the former is about trying to influence the problem, while the latter refers to trying to regulate the emotions related to it (Lazarus and Folkman 1984, 36, 149–153). Endler and Parker (1990) have proposed one more coping mechanism, avoidance-oriented coping, which means that the individual tries to avoid the problem.

Fourth come *the immediate effects on the individual*, including the physiological and emotional reactions related to the three levels of stress and difficulty in the acculturation situation (Berry 1997, 20). According to Ward (1996, 128–129), there are affective, behavioural, and cognitive responses to stress management. The final stage in psychological acculturation is *the long-term outcomes* (Berry 1997, 20), referring to the three types of long-term adaptation: psychological, sociocultural (Ward & Kennedy 1992; Ward & Kennedy 1993; Ward 1996) and economic adaptation (Aycañ & Berry 1996 as cited in Berry 1997).

### **3.2.5 Factors Existing Prior to Acculturation**

Various factors influence the acculturation process, and in his acculturation framework Berry (1997) has classified them into factors existing prior to acculturation and into factors arising during acculturation. The variation in them partly explains the vast differences between people in psychological acculturation. Berry (1997) has included age, gender, education, pre-acculturation, status, migration motivation, expectations, cultural distance and personality among the factors existing prior to acculturation. In the following section we briefly consider the influence of each of these factors.

#### ***Age***

The process of acculturation is easiest in early childhood, whereas at an older age, for example, when retired, it can be quite problematic (Beiser, Barwick, Berry, da Costa, Fantino, Ganesan, Lee, Milne, Naidoo, Prince, Tousignant & Vela 1988, cited in Berry 1997, 21). Berry (1997, 21–22) suggests that the reason for this lies in the amount of

enculturation an individual has experienced: in the early years an individual has not yet fully acquired his primary culture, so culture shedding is easier then. Perhaps general personal flexibility and adaptability is also greatest then (Berry 1997, 21–22). As regards adults of working age, Kealey's (1990, 46) study of the Canadian development co-operation workers' overseas effectiveness found no significant differences between the different ages.

### *Gender*

According to Berry's (1997) reviews of literature on acculturation, females are at a greater risk of having problems in acculturation situations, which is probably dependent on the relative status and different treatment of women in different cultures. For example, there is a relatively high discrepancy in the role and status of women between Northern European and African countries, whereas the role and status of men do not differ as noticeably.

Interestingly, although Kealey (1990, 46) noted that the adaptation process of female development co-operation workers had been more difficult than that of men, women showed greater overseas effectiveness – to which adaptation and acculturation are related – than men. They were, for example, more involved with the local culture and were more devoted to learning the local language (Kealey 1990, 46). Yet, a generalisation of this kind cannot be made about all women in acculturation situations, because the crucial factors influencing the situation and behaviour of an acculturating woman are very different when comparing a development co-operation worker and, for example, a refugee.

### *Education*

Education usually has a positive influence on an individual's acculturation; if a person is highly educated, he is likely to experience less stress (Beiser 1988, cited in Berry 1997, 22). Various reasons have been suggested for this. Education contributes to problem analysis and problem solving skills. (Berry 1997, 22.) In other words, education improves a person's meta-cognitive skills and learning techniques in relation both to the new language and the new culture, thus, for example, increasing the ability to understand subtle issues, such as the influence of values and worldview on some practices and behaviours, and to interpret ..

complex social situations. Another important aspect Berry (1997, 22) suggests is that education correlates with other resources such as income, social networks and occupational status. Furthermore, a person with a higher education is likely to have more information about the features of the new society, including, for example, its language, history and values (Berry 1997, 22), which are related to the first aspect of bicultural competence as defined by LaFromboise et al. (1993) and also serve as pre-acculturation of some kind.

### *Pre-acculturation*

There are various studies showing that culture-specific knowledge, acquired both before and during acculturation, facilitates sociocultural adaptation (Ward 1996, 132). Knowledge of this kind can be attained through previous intercultural experience and training (Ward 1996, 132). Parker and McEvoy (1993, cited in Ward 1996, 132) found that previous cross-cultural experience facilitated adaptation and helped in dealing with the challenges of the new environment; however, Kealey (1990, 59–60) noticed that although development co-operation workers with previous overseas experience may adapt more quickly and more easily, they are not necessarily more effective in their work in the long run.

As regards training, Deshpande and Viswesvaran's (1993, cited in Ward 1996, 132) meta-analysis on the impacts of cross-cultural training showed that it had a positive impact on the individuals' self-development (e.g., psychological well being and increased self-confidence), interpersonal skills with the members of the new society, understanding of the new social system and its values, ability to learn to act in an appropriate way in the new culture, and work performance. Furthermore, according to Ward (1996, 132), there are various studies showing that language fluency has a positive impact on psychological well being, adjustment and general satisfaction.

### *Status*

If a migrant has high status it is a resource, but many migrants experience a loss of status, and find it difficult to change that in the new society (Aycan & Berry 1996, cited in Berry 1997, 22). The reason for this may lie in the real differences in qualifications or in the

ignorance and prejudice in the new society, but in any case this makes the individual vulnerable to stress (Berry 1997, 22). However, it has to be noted that development co-operation workers go to countries economically less wealthy than their own, and thus, their status is likely to rise, because the relative value and status of their education is higher in the new country, due to the lower standard of education there. Furthermore, their role as a “helper” or an “expert” may increase their power and respect in the new environment. It could also be asked what kind of psychological effects a dramatic increase in status and power has and how it influences a person’s behaviour in work and social situations.

### *Migration Motivation and Expectations*

As already mentioned, Richmond (1993) has described migration motivation using a two-dimensional scale ranging from involuntary, or push, to voluntary, or pull, migration. Kim (1988, cited in Berry 1997, 23) found out that migrants with high push motivation had more psychological adaptation problems, but, surprisingly, migrants with high pull motivation faced almost as many problems. Berry (1997, 23) suggests that voluntary migrants are at risk if they have too high or even unrealistic expectations about life in the new society. Ward (1996, 133) shares this idea stating that one of the hypotheses in acculturation research is that realistic expectations facilitate adjustment.

The motivation to participate in the new culture also has a positive influence on acculturation and adaptation. As regards the study on Canadian development co-operation workers overseas (Kealey 1990, 41–42), it was clear that those who had had a pre-departure desire for contact with the new culture, did indeed participate in the local culture and were more effective in their work. Furthermore, they experienced lower stress and higher satisfaction and were more likely to learn the local language (Kealey 1990, 41–42).

Additionally, it has to be remembered that there may, in fact, be high variation inside the families of, for example, development co-operation workers both in terms of motivation and expectations. A person employed in a developmental project may be much more motivated about the move to a new country than his spouse and children.



### *Cultural Distance*

The general finding is that the greater the cultural distance, i.e., the dissimilarity between the two cultures, the more difficult acculturation is (Berry 1997, 23). As Berry (1997, 23) sees it, the reason for this might lie in the fact that in the case of greater cultural distance more cultural shedding and learning needs to happen; also, great differences may lead to negative intergroup relations that can induce greater culture conflict. In addition to difficulties created by language and cultural and psychological affinity differences, the immigrants' conspicuous physical differences from the local people may also widen the gap between these two groups (Kim 1997, 412). However, Ward and Kennedy (1992; 1993) suggest in their studies that there is a connection between greater perceived cultural distance and sociocultural difficulties. This could be seen to imply that even more crucial than the differences themselves may be the kind of attitude people adopt towards them.

### *Personality*

Personal traits also play an important role in acculturation, and various factors can be either protective or risk factors (Berry 1997, 23). Kim (1997, 412–413), for example, has suggested that openness, strength, and positivity are characteristics useful for an acculturating individual. However, there have not been that many empirical studies on the influence of personality on acculturation, but mainly armchair theorising (Ward 1996, 134–135). Locus of control and extraversion are exceptions, though: there are a few empirical studies on these traits (Ward 1996, 135). For example, Ward and Kennedy (1992) propose that external locus of control caused greater mood disturbance and thus problems in acculturation, while internal locus of control had a positive effect on acculturation. However, there have not been that many consistent findings on these issues, because more important than a trait itself is its interplay with the environment (Berry 1997, 23; Ward 1996, 135; see also Kealey 1990, 49). For instance, a person's social competence, related to extraversion, is an aspect of his personality that is likely to have an important impact on his acculturation: social interaction is a central channel through which a person acquires the new culture, but, on the other hand, what kind of behaviour is socially competent also varies from culture to culture.

Still, we would suggest that interest in people contributes to acculturation. Furthermore, the hobbies and interest of a person are also likely to play their role in it, because they influence how a person orients himself in the new culture and environment and what kind of points of contact he can find with the local people.

### **3.2.6 Factors Arising During Acculturation**

There are also various factors that arise during acculturation and greatly influence the psychological acculturation process of an individual. Berry's (1997) acculturation framework names phase, acculturation strategies, coping, social support and societal attitudes as such factors, and we now examine the possible impacts of each one of them.

#### ***Phase***

The length of time an individual has been experiencing acculturation is related to the quality and quantity of problems he has (Berry 1997, 23). For example, Ward and Kennedy (1992, 185) found that the shorter the time sojourners had stayed in the new society, the more social difficulties they had. Berry (1997, 23–24) refers to the U-curve commonly used to describe the process of acculturation: in the beginning there are only a few problems, then an individual encounters more serious problems, and then smoother and more positive adaptation is achieved. However, there is little empirical evidence for a standard course of this kind (Berry 1997, 24). For example, in Kealey's (1990, 50–52) study, only 10 per cent of the development co-operation workers studied followed a pattern of adaptation parallel to the U-curve, whereas the rest of them showed various other patterns. For example, their satisfaction gradually grew from fairly low to high, or stayed low, intermediate or high throughout the posting (Kealey 1990, 50–52).

#### ***Acculturation Strategies***

Acculturation strategies play an important role in acculturation. Integration strategy is often mentioned as the most successful and marginalisation as the least; assimilation and

separation are intermediate solutions (Berry 1997, 24; see also Birman 1994, 269; see also LaFramboise et al. 1993, 399). As Ward (1996, 134) puts it, the integration strategy of Berry (1997) correlates with both psychological and sociocultural adjustment.

A possible explanation for the superiority of the integration strategy is that so many other protective factors are related to it, including willingness for mutual accommodation, involvement in two cultural communities, which results in two social support systems, and flexible personality. To put it very simply, integration includes two positive cultural orientations, marginalisation two negative, and assimilation and separation one positive and one negative. (Berry 1997, 25–26.)

However, as we have already emphasised, it has to be remembered that people do not just choose their acculturation strategies, because both the majority society's and the minority groups' attitudes towards their acculturation have a great influence on their choices (see Birman 1994; see Berry 1997; see Kealey 1990), and thus there is also a powerful involuntary aspect.

### *Coping*

As we have stated earlier, coping strategies also have their influence on acculturation (Berry 1997, 25). Schmitz (1992, cited in Berry 1997, 25) found out that there was correlation between acculturation strategies and coping styles identified by Endler and Parker (1990): integration correlated positively with task orientation, segregation was positively correlated with emotion and avoidance orientation, while assimilation correlated positively with both task and emotion orientation, but negatively with avoidance orientation.

### *Social Support*

On the basis of previous studies on this issue, there is strong empirical evidence that social support is an important facilitating factor in acculturation and it is linked to wider patterns of psychological well being, as it, for example, lowers stress (Ward 1996, 136). On the basis of various studies on social support in the acculturation situation, both Berry (1997, 25) and Ward (1996, 136–137) conclude it is very beneficial to have both co-national and host

national support systems. LaFromboise et al. (1993, 407) also emphasise that social networks in both the cultures help to manage the life pressures in a bicultural environment, and they have included this as one aspect in their model of bicultural competence.

One crucial issue is also that contacts with members of the new society are valuable in the sense that they provide opportunities to learn culture-specific skills (Ward 1996, 137). However, high host national contact can also be related to mood disturbance (Ward & Kennedy 1992; 1993), because when the host culture is not open and receptive to foreigners, the contacts with the host nationals may be stressful to the immigrants (Ward & Kennedy 1992, 187). In other words, the influence of host culture contact depends on the nature of the relationship between the two cultural groups.

Furthermore, although the contact with co-nationals forms an important aspect of social support facilitating adaptation, it may also become an obstacle to building contacts with the host nationals. For example, Kealey (1990, 39–41) found out that most of the Canadians only related with their countrymen, because it was much easier than participating in the new culture, learning the language, and getting to know the local people (Kealey 1990, 39–40). Moreover, those few individuals who chose to get involved with the local people and culture felt separated from their Canadian countrymen, who perceived such behaviour as threatening, and they experienced extra stress because of this. (Kealey 1990, 41.)

The family seemed to have a similar kind of influence as the relationships with co-nationals. Those who travelled abroad with a family encountered lower levels of stress and were more satisfied than those without a family. However, people without children got more involved with the local culture than people with accompanying children. (Kealey 1990, 42.)

Additionally, the adaptational problems of the spouse may cause increased problems in family relationships. In general, families and couples either grow closer together or further apart. (Kealey 1990, 43–45.) One reason for difficulties might be that the motives and the willingness for going abroad can vary among the family members already in the beginning and the expectations may also be significantly different. Problems in family relationships are likely to make the adaptation and acculturation of the development co-operation worker even more difficult, because much of the energy needed for orienting

towards the new culture and its people is directed to dealing with the issues inside the family.

### *Societal Attitudes*

Birman (1994, 281) emphasises the fact that the environment does play an important role in how an individual can acculturate. Most of the studies where integration was found to be the most successful strategy were actually conducted in multicultural societies (Berry 1997, 24). Thus, acculturation theorists should not over-advocate any particular mode of acculturation as the best, especially in conditions that are oppressive (Birman 1994, 281).

Still, although the attitudes towards immigrants have an impact on their adaptation, the central issue is the immigrants' perceptions of these attitudes. People interpret reality in different ways due to their different personal characteristics and backgrounds, and these interpretations often play a more important role in their life than the actual "objective" reality. (Horenczyck 1997, 38.) In general, an individual's attitudes, motives and aspirations seem to play an important role in acculturation situation.

### **3.2.7 Acculturation and Adaptation – Multifaceted Phenomena**

We have now dealt with several theories concerning acculturation and adaptation. We have defined the meanings of these concepts, introduced the types of the groups that experience acculturation, dealt with Berry's (1997) acculturation and identity strategies, covered the central issues of Birman's (1994) differentiated model of acculturation as biculturalism, and outlined bicultural competence as defined by LaFramboise et al. (1993). Finally, we have also familiarised the reader with Berry's (1997) massive acculturation framework, which includes various aspects related to acculturation, such as the original society, the society of settlement, group-level acculturation, psychological acculturation process and the factors influencing acculturation – both those existing prior to acculturation and those arising during it. One important theorist we have also referred to throughout this presentation is Kealey (1990), who has studied Canadian development co-operation personnel working in several developing countries.

All these theories provide slightly different perspectives on these phenomena, which thus in combination form a picture with more nuances and shades. However, acculturation and adaptation can never be exhaustively captured within the framework of any single theory or even many theories, because reality is always more complex and many-sided than any theoretical model. Nevertheless, if one keeps the limitations of theories in mind and does not apply them in a straightforward way, they can provide a useful tool for examining these phenomena. In the analysis we will indeed utilise several of these theories discussed or significant parts of them to study and interpret our research material. In the following section, however, we will move on to discuss the cultural distance and societal differences between Finland and the interviewees' country of posting.

## **4 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FINNISH AND EAST AFRICAN CULTURES AND SOCIETIES**

It is crucial to understand the cultural distance between the society of origin and the society of settlement in order to be able to understand some of the challenges an individual faces in the acculturation situation (Berry 1997, 16–17, 23). Therefore we will briefly discuss some differences between Finnish and the East African cultures and societies which, on the basis of both our data and our observations, appeared to significantly influence the daily life and consequently also the acculturation of development co-operation workers and missionaries in East Africa. Incidentally, we want to point out that there are really many different cultures in East Africa, even though we often refer to them as a uniform East African culture.

Firstly, we will summarise our observations on some general differences. Secondly, we will outline the theory of cultural dimensions by Hofstede (1992), mentioning how Finland and East Africa differ in these dimensions, and thirdly we will briefly deal with differences in time conceptions.

### **4.1 General Observations**

The country where our interviewees worked appeared to be much more multicultural and heterogeneous in various aspects than Finland. Differently from Finland, there are a great many ethnic groups with their own cultural traditions and languages. Several religions live side by side and people are fairly committed to their religions there, a fact which also adds to the pluralism.

When measured in economic terms, Finland is much wealthier than the interviewees' country of posting. This appeared to be a central issue. Westerners are much richer than the majority of people in East Africa, which has an important impact on their social status and networks in those societies – an issue that we will deal with in more detail later when analysing the interviews. Due to the poorer economic situation, the population's level of education is also much lower in East Africa. This affects not only the people's socio-economic opportunities but also their patterns of thinking and seeing the world,

widening the social, economic and mental gap between East Africans and Westerners. Additionally, there are huge differences between social classes in East Africa: the rich are really rich and the poor really poor there, when perceived from the more egalitarian Finnish perspective.

## 4.2 Dimensions of Culture

Differences between Finland and East Africa can also be examined through theories analysing the aspects in which cultures differ. Hofstede (1992) has proposed four dimensions that can be used to explain differences in communication across cultures: *power distance*, *collectivism–individualism*, *masculinity*, and *uncertainty avoidance* (Hofstede 1992). Finland and East Africa are also included in the theory, and although it has to be remembered that there is variation both between individual East African countries and inside them – and even within Finland – the theory is still likely to be able to provide useful information about the general differences between Finland and the present country of settlement of our informants.

According to Hofstede (1992, 76–202) *power distance* refers to how the less powerful members accept that power is not shared equally in the different aspects of society. In countries where the power distance is relatively high, the employees are very much dependent on their authoritarian boss and they do not question their superiors' orders. In other words, inequality is largely accepted. On the other hand, in countries where power distance is low, the employees easily communicate with their leader and the dependence is reciprocal between them. (Hofstede 1992, 47–48.)

In addition, power distance is also related to family life: the more power distance there is in the culture, the more authority and respect the older people in the family have. Children's opinions are not appreciated in the same way as the opinions of adults. On the other hand, in countries with small power distance, children are encouraged to have their own opinions. (Hofstede 1992, 54–55, 61.) For the purposes of our study it is important to recognise that in Finnish culture power distance is relatively low, whereas in comparison it is rather high in East Africa.



The second dimension of culture difference is *collectivism*. In collectivistic cultures, the family is the most important source of one's identity and it consists of all the people living near including also aunts, uncles and even servants. A person feels lifelong loyalty to his family and expects the family to take care of him. At the other end of this continuum is individualism, and Finland is seen as belonging more to this end unlike East Africa, which has its place at the collectivistic end. In individualistic countries children are raised to be brave and independent and they are supposed to move from home as soon as they are able to live on their own. (Hofstede 1992, 77–78.)

The third dimension of cultural variability is *masculinity–femininity*. In cultures with high masculinity, there is a clear distinction between the sexes. Men are expected to be strong and successful, while women are expected to be kind, modest and caring. At the other end of the dimension is femininity – at the opposite extreme, in feminine cultures both men and women are allowed to be kind and caring. (Hofstede 1992, 122.) In highly masculine cultures people value power, self-confidence, money and success, whereas cultures high on femininity value quality of life, relationships and nurture. (Hofstede 1992, 142–143.) Here, Finnish culture would be low in masculinity, expecting also men to be sensitive. East African culture could be placed at the other end of this continuum, being high in masculinity.

The last dimension, *uncertainty avoidance*, can be characterised as how threatening the people of the culture feel in unsure and new situations. (Hofstede 1992, 163). Where uncertainty avoidance is high, people seem to be busy and nervous and there are various and exact laws. In countries with low uncertainty avoidance people are relaxed, calm and even lazy, and, furthermore, only a few vague laws are passed. (Hofstede 1992, 163, 181.) It can be noted that in Finland uncertainty avoidance is much higher than in East African countries.

### **4.3 Time Concepts**

We will now briefly discuss the different time concepts defined by Hall (1984) and Dahl (1994), because we see that the different time conceptions give illuminating explanations for the problems occurring and mutual criticism often reported in relations between Western

and non-Western people. Furthermore, the categories formulated by Dahl result from a research programme in Madagascar, i.e., in an East African culture, which, therefore, is likely to share some characteristics of the country our interviewees were working in.

Hall (1984, 44–58) differentiates between monochronic and polychronic time, whereas Dahl (1994, 77–84) has divided time concepts into three categories, linear, cyclic and event-related time. In fact, linear time corresponds to Hall's monochronic time conception and event-related time to polychronic time. The time in most Western countries is monochronic or linear (Hall 1984, 45–46; Dahl 78, 81), whereas the major domain of polychronic time is non-Western cultures (Hall 1984, 45–46). Dahl has pointed out that in Madagascar the conception of time is rather event-related, thus polychronic, though the cyclic conception also exists (Dahl 1994, 81).

Monochronic, or linear, time is something tangible (Hall 1984, 48); it is quantitative and it can be divided into units and measured (Dahl 1994, 79). Thus it can also be spent, saved, wasted, lost and so on. As in this view only one thing is carried out at a time, careful selection is needed to decide which things will be attended to, or, in other words, which priorities have to be set. (Hall 1984, 48.) Planning and schedules play an important role in the use of time: control, efficiency, and punctuality are needed, because Western culture is directed towards the future, the end product, and the results (Dahl 1994, 79; see also Hall 1984). Therefore people are oriented to tasks, schedules, and procedures, which often seem to dominate their life (Hall 1997, 278, 281). Both Hall (1984, 48) and Dahl (1994, 79) suggest that without a scheduled time system of this kind, our industrial civilisation might not have been able to develop.

In polychronic time, people are involved in several things at the same time, not only in one as in monochronic time. Time is considered rather as a point than a ribbon or road. (Hall 1984, 46–47.) The future is unknown and nothing is taken for granted, and thus planning does not make sense (Hall 1984, 47; Dahl 1994, 81). Neither can time be measured, but just experienced in a subjective manner. This event-related time is present oriented, and time is only when something is happening: no event is no time and thus time cannot be wasted. Therefore one only takes an action when something happens, not before and neither because of any plan. (Dahl 1994, 80–81.) Furthermore, people with a polychronic or event-centred time concept have a strong orientation to people instead of

tasks and schedules (Hall 1984; Dahl 1994, 81). Family takes precedence over everything else and close friends come after it, and preferential treatment of the in-group is expected (Hall 1984, 54–55).

As regards the cyclic time conception, it is based on the daily and yearly rhythm of nature and the consequent patterns of domestic and agricultural life. In Madagascar, this strongly influences the mental maps and behaviour of the people. The cyclic time concept is past-related, as the same pattern repeats itself in the same way as “always” and man’s task is to adapt to this natural cycle. Time is not considered scarce, there is rather a constant ever-renewing supply of it. (Dahl 1994, 79–81.)

The different conceptions of time do have a strong influence on the actual behaviour of people (Hall 1984; Dahl 1994). Dahl (1994) gives two illuminating examples from Madagascar where the event–action pattern of the event-related time conception is clearly to be seen. In a town in Madagascar nobody took care of the maintenance of the electricity, and it was only when it stopped working that people reacted – and then repairing it was already a major expense. Or, the keeper of an agricultural store ordered new seeds only when they had completely run out, not before. (Dahl 1994, 82–83.) According to Hall (1984, 50), the polychronic time conception leaves its imprint even on how bureaucracy works: bureaucracy is inward oriented and one has to be a friend to make things happen.

Hall (1984, 46, 51) strongly states that these different time systems do not mix, which often causes problems when their representatives interact. As polychronic people perform various things at the same time, monochronic people may interpret a situation as chaos. Furthermore, it is often frustrating for well-scheduled monochronic people when the polychronic people they are dealing with let other people and other businesses interrupt and delay the common activity. (Hall 1984, 44–45, 54–55.) Thus a Westerner who usually automatically perceives things from his profit-oriented linear perspective may judge the representatives of the other time concepts as inefficient, undisciplined, irresponsible, non-productive and non-punctual, without being aware of the fact that he is subjective (Dahl 1994, 83), or, in other words, ethnocentric.

All in all, even though reality is always a much richer and more complex phenomenon than any theory can describe, our impression is that the theories proposed by Hofstede (1992), Hall (1984) and Dahl (1994) may well reflect some essential elements of

the cultural distance between Finland and East Africa. Through them one might be able to understand both one's own behaviour and the behaviour of another person more deeply, and to better cope with their differences. We will return to these theories when discussing the experiences of our interviewees in their country of posting.

## **5 METHODOLOGY AND THE PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY**

Now that we have also examined some of the theories describing the cultural distance between Finland and East Africa in addition to a detailed presentation of acculturation theory, we will move on to consider the procedure of this study. We will start by explaining how and why we chose our research questions. We will continue by briefly defining which features make this a qualitative case study, and go on to see how hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions contribute to our approach. After this we will summarise how reliability, validity and ethical questions have been taken into account when designing and conducting this study. However, we will refer again to these issues in more detail in subsequent chapters, which describe the data collection techniques, sampling, the fieldwork period, the development of our view throughout the study, and, finally, our approach to the interview analysis.

### **5.1 Research Questions**

After choosing acculturation and adaptation as our topic – influenced by our personal intercultural experiences, previous studies, professional needs and personal interests – we undertook a review of the literature on it. As is already clear to the reader, Berry's (1997) acculturation theory acted as a landmark theory for the study, because it dealt with various aspects of acculturation and took the context into account as well. It is also often referred to in acculturation research.

In spite of being interested in acculturation in a more global manner, we decided to focus on development co-operation workers' and missionaries' participation in the local culture and their relationships with the nationals, because these issues have an important impact on their acculturation and adaptation. Furthermore, the relation to the local culture also influences overseas effectiveness (see Kealey 1990), which is important, because if a person's overseas effectiveness is high, his work performance is better and he can act more sensitively in his work.

For the above mentioned reasons, we formulated the research questions as follows:

The main question:

How have Finnish development co-operation workers and missionaries acculturated and adapted in East Africa, and what is their present state of acculturation/adaptation?

The sub-questions:

How are the issues of acculturation related to the social support, i.e., the nature of relationships they have with the local people and with other Westerners?

What have been the difficulties and the supportive factors in the process of acculturation/adaptation?

## **5.2 Qualitative Case Study**

As regards the methodological issues, we came to the conclusion that a qualitative case study best served the topic and the aims of the study. A qualitative case study means, firstly, that the sample size is small, secondly, that we have striven to get a deep and a multifaceted image of the phenomenon being studied, and finally, that our personal insights as researchers have also been allowed to contribute to the study (see Patton 1990). A qualitative case study focuses on the thoughts and meanings that people possess in relation to their experiences and aims at understanding people in their own terms (Patton 1982, 22). It is descriptive but it also tries to find explanations for phenomena: in most cases understanding presupposes viewing the past and the context (Syrjälä, Ahonen, Syrjäläinen & Saari 1994, 11–12).

As regards philosophical orientations, this study combines characteristics both from the hermeneutic and the phenomenological tradition. We will now briefly outline the main ideas of these two approaches and discuss how they are realised in this study.

### 5.3 Hermeneutic–Phenomenological Approach in this Study

Phenomenology aims at describing the phenomenon's essential, structural qualities and at tracing the common features that permeate and transcend diverse individual experiences (Becker 1992, 33; Patton 1990, 69–70). Hermeneutics, for its part, struggles to interpret and to understand different human phenomena in their context (Patton 1990; Turunen 1995; Varto 1996).

Both phenomenology and hermeneutics primarily strive to understand the phenomena from the inside and to reach the perspective of the people studied (see Becker 1992, 33; Turunen 1995, 91, 157; Varto 1996, 58–69). Yet, their definition of understanding is different: according to Perttula (1995, 55) phenomenology focuses on describing people's experiences as they themselves understand them, whereas hermeneutics tries to interpret these experiences.

In other words, especially phenomenology concentrates on the subjective experience and believes that people cannot achieve an objective reality (Patton 1990, 69). It tries to avoid theorising in order not to distance itself too much from the actual experience (Perttula 1995, 9). However, hermeneutics may go beyond the principle that the phenomenon should be seen from the inside as the people studied see it (Turunen 1995). At the second level of hermeneutics, an attempt is made to understand the phenomenon better and deeper by utilising a theoretical framework that can provide a perspective wider than the one it has on itself (Turunen 1995, 94–95, 101, 170). In other words, the phenomenological approach could be seen to partly overlap with the emic paradigm used in social sciences, whereas hermeneutics – especially at its second level – overlaps with the etic paradigm.

Both phenomenology and hermeneutics acknowledge that our existing knowledge acts as a filter through which we see the world, and thus it affects our understanding (see Perttula 1995, 43, 55; Turunen 1995, 88, 91, 157; Varto 1996, 58). Therefore they both have their methods of increasing objectivity, namely, bracketing and the hermeneutic circle. Their aim is principally the same: to become aware of one's own preconceptions and consequently to be able to control their influence on understanding, so that one can see the phenomenon more clearly as it is. (See Becker 1992; Varto 1996.) In bracketing, which is a phenomenological concept, the researcher sets his preconceptions aside (Becker 1992, 37–

38; see also Varto 1996, 87), whereas in the hermeneutic circle the researcher cycle by cycle becomes increasingly able to differentiate between his own preconceptions that distort his view and the actual phenomenon being studied (Varto 1996).

This study is based on the principles of phenomenology and hermeneutics. When thinking about the research questions, we follow the phenomenological paradigm in that we try to understand the acculturation of our informants as they themselves understand it and to figure out what kind of common aspects can be encountered in their individual experiences. The hermeneutic approach is also very central in this study, because various contextual factors play a very important role in acculturation, which thus needs to be understood in relation to its social and cultural environment. Furthermore, we try to combine both description and interpretation, i.e., the perspective of the people themselves and the wider, theoretical perspective. All in all, hermeneutics gets more emphasis in this study than phenomenology, as theory and interpretation have a crucial role in it.

As regards the data-collection methods, phenomenology has had an important impact on them. According to Patton (1990, 70) phenomenological research can be of two different types: the researcher can use data from interviews, or experience the phenomenon himself, which in practice means participant observation. Furthermore, these two approaches can be combined. Our study is primarily of the first type, using in-depth interviews as the main source of information. However, the second type was also utilised to some extent: we carried out the interviews in the country where our interviewees were working, and although we did not do actual participant observation, we experienced the East African reality during the few weeks we stayed there, which importantly contributed to our understanding of the phenomenon. Also hermeneutics often appears to apply these two methods. All in all, Becker's (1992, 32) definition of hermeneutic phenomenology as systematic and interpretative study, where the hermeneutic circle plays a central role, applies to this study quite well.

#### **5.4 Reliability, Validity and Ethical Questions**

Reliability and validity of a study and the ethical questions related to it have an important impact on its value and credibility. We have decided to tackle these issues already here, so



that the reader can follow how we have taken these issues into account at the different phases of the study. We start by defining the meanings of reliability and validity, and then preliminarily cover what they mean at the different phases of the study. After this we briefly refer to generalisations, or rather, the transferability of the results of this study, and finally deal with ethical questions.

Reliability of qualitative research means that the analysis needs to be replicable, whereas validity refers to the extent to which the study measures what it is supposed to measure (Uusitalo 1991, 84–85). There are several issues that have an effect on the validity and reliability of the research during the research process, and because of this, it is important to take into account the whole research process when evaluating them (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1982, 128).

In doing qualitative research it is important to consider the various methods of triangulation that strengthen the study design and contribute to the reliability of the analysis. We utilise investigator triangulation in this study as we are two people studying the same phenomenon: two interviewers to pay attention to the essential issues and to keep up the motivation of the informants and also two analysts to review the data and to draw the conclusions. We have also used theory triangulation: although Berry's (1997) theory of acculturation is the main basis of our study, we have used other theorists' perspectives to broaden our understanding of acculturation and adaptation. However, for several reasons, which will be discussed in the chapter dealing with data collection methods, we did not use much method triangulation, and we acknowledge that this is a weakness. (See Patton 1990, 187, 464–470; see also Tynjälä 1991, 392–393.)

Referring once more to theoretical issues, the quality of the theories used also has an impact on validity. Because all acculturation theories are context-bound and the majority of them are devised in Western countries, it is questionable if they are viable in a different context, in developing countries. In addition, the theories used were based on different ideas of human nature and different biases in acculturation and this might weaken the validity in this research.

The reflective and critical mind of the researcher is a central factor contributing to reliability and validity throughout the study. We paid careful attention to these issues, when planning the data collection methods, conducting the interviews, and analysing the research

material gained, as we will discuss in more detail in the sections dealing with the data collection methods, the field work period, and the analysis.

Tynjälä (1991, 393) indeed underlines the importance of paying attention to reliability by being reflective during the field work period: the researcher has to be conscious of his reactions and feelings and keep a diary of them and the course of the research. It is important to strive to understand the people being studied in their own terms, and try to stay aware of one's own perspective and expectations in order not to let them interfere too much (Tynjälä 1991, 393). As we have seen, this is also the basic principle of hermeneutics and phenomenology. However, it is not possible to avoid the researchers' influence on the qualitative research as he is the instrument of the research, and, because of this, all his experience and personal perspectives have an effect on the study (Patton 1990, 472). Because of this, we have tried to be conscious of our preconceptions and ideas at the different phases of this study; we have kept a research diary, had long conversations on these issues and used the methods of bracketing and hermeneutic circle. We have also included a chapter describing the development of our view throughout the study.

As regards generalising the results of this study, no wide generalisations can be drawn, because the size of sample was limited. However, the concept transferability used by Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Tynjälä 1991, 390) may be more appropriate for the purposes of our study: the results can be transferred to another context depending on how similar it is to the context where the study was originally made. Thus, it is important to report the context and the course of the study in detail so that the reader will be able to estimate the transferability, and also the reliability, of the study (Tynjälä 1991, 390, 395). Therefore we have reported the different phases of our study as carefully and honestly as possible.

As far as ethical questions are concerned, it is important that the researcher is aware of the ethical side of doing research, because only then can he take ethical questions into account in his own research (Tulamo 1994, 371). We have been thinking about and discussing ethical questions from various points of view throughout our study, and we want to refer briefly to the most important aspects here.

According to Tulamo (1994, 368) the three most central ethical requirements regulating the work of a researcher are honesty, fairness in relation to other researchers, and

that the research should not cause any harm to the people being studied. We have done our best to take these requirements into account at the different phases of this study. As regards the third one of them, we obtained written consent from all the interviewees to use the information they gave in the interviews, on the condition that we could guarantee their anonymity. Thus, we have renamed the interviewees in the analysis, we use the term East Africa instead of naming the specific country where the interviewees work, and we avoid giving too precise information about them so that they cannot be recognised. For the same reason we say hardly anything about their sending organisation, but only mention whether they are development co-operation workers or missionaries. It is difficult to find a balance between ethics and reliability here, as for the sake of reliability it would be necessary to describe the conditions and situations in detail, but this, on the other hand, might compromise the anonymity of the informants, which we find even more important.

The questions dealt with in this study are deeply personal and the respondents had to be very open when having to talk about their personal matters and even problems. No one should have to talk about them to a stranger against one's own will. We were aware of this fact, and tried to act sensitively, listen to the interviewees and respect their opinions and feelings.

### **5.5 Choice of Data Collection Techniques**

When we had gone through the basic literature on the topic and chosen our main theoretical framework, we started to search for information about the data collection techniques. After reflecting on the many diverse possibilities, we approached the potential informants, whose selection process we will describe in detail in the next section, with a letter (appendix 1) telling about the study and attaching a questionnaire (appendix 2) to it. However, as already mentioned, the main data collection technique of this study came to be a qualitative, in-depth interview (appendix 3), because we wanted to get a wide and rich perspective on the thoughts and viewpoints of our informants. The interview also gave us the opportunity to motivate the interviewees and the chance to clarify and be more explicit about the issues or even expand on them (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1982, 15). The interview questions concentrated on the issues of actual acculturation in the field, whereas the questionnaire mainly covered

the interviewees' background information that has an influence on their acculturation. The questionnaire reduced the time used in the interview situation and helped our interviewees to get oriented to the interview, as the questionnaires were sent or delivered to them in advance to be filled in before the interview.

As we had chosen the acculturation theory of Berry (1997) to be the basis of our study, we derived our interview questions mainly from it. We went to great lengths to design valid and appropriate questions. We thought them out carefully and got help and feedback from people competent in intercultural issues. We also carried out two pilot interviews in Finland some time before leaving for East Africa in order to test the questions and to strengthen their validity. Both of the two pilot informants had been working in East Africa; one was currently on a holiday in Finland whereas the other had already returned for the present. Through the pilot interviews we also got the chance to practise interviewing and our co-operation in the interview situation, which we thought to be important for reliability.

Getting valid material through the actual interviews in East Africa at the first attempt was very important also because we knew that we could not return there to repeat the interviews. For this same reason the scope of the interview was relatively wide. Namely, even though we had made the pilot interviews and consulted people with personal experience and knowledge of development co-operation and missionary work, we could not fully know in advance which issues would be relevant and central in the specific cases of our interviewees. Furthermore, we wanted to get rich, versatile, and diverse research material, in order to retain some freedom of choice with the focus when analysing the material later in Finland. All in all, we did get abundant material, which could be examined from diverse perspectives and which allowed us to concentrate on different issues.

We would have liked to increase the reliability of the research by observing the interviewees in their every-day work and life contexts. Observation, however, would have been complicated, because the interviewees lived all around the country and we lacked the money and the time that would have been needed for travelling on that scale. We would also have liked to interview the local people with whom the informants were dealing, and ask them their opinions on how these Westerners had acculturated to their culture and acquired the cross-cultural skills needed in that context. However, we had to give up this plan partly for the same reasons as we abandoned the plan for doing observation. The other reason for

this was that doing interviews in a language that was neither our mother tongue nor that of the interviewees would have decreased reliability. Furthermore, different cultural backgrounds might have caused misunderstandings, and it would also have been ethically questionable to ask locals to discuss their opinions of their colleagues, because it might have affected their relations. Also, we might not have got reliable information because locals would perhaps not have had the courage to tell their real opinions. On the other hand, if thinking of the ethical side, we cannot know what kind of influence our interviews had on the informants and their relations in any case.

## 5.6 Sampling

Soon after we had decided the topic of our study, we started to search for contacts with Finnish people working in that East African country. We contacted Finnish organisations dealing with development co-operation and missionary work. Gradually, we got information about potential interviewees, and started contacting them through e-mail. It was a time-consuming process to find suitable interviewees and agree on the time and place for the interviews. The computers did not always work, and the postal system was not always dependable. The interviewees were travelling because of work or holiday, and at that time we did not know the precise schedule of our visit in the country.

As regards the sampling strategy, it came to be a mixture of three different strategies: criterion sampling, convenience sampling, and, finally, maximum variation sampling (see Patton 1990, 169–183). Criterion sampling, incidentally, could also be called purposive sampling. We would have liked to find interviewees homogeneous in certain aspects: the nature of their work, their life and work context, experience in living abroad, and, very importantly, the length of time they had been experiencing acculturation in that specific East African country (criterion sampling/purposive sampling). This would have increased the transferability of the results to a similar group. The specific professional group we were interested in were teachers, due to our own future profession and interests. However, there is a limited number of Finnish people in the country, and we did not have the time and money needed to travel all around the country, where the communications and transport infrastructure are unreliable, and thus we had to be more flexible in our criteria

(convenience sampling). Therefore, we selected interviewees whose work was in one way or another related to education, children, and young people, and required interaction with local people (criterion sampling/purposive sampling). Nevertheless, the interviewees finally chosen were a somewhat heterogeneous group, and thus the sampling method also came to resemble maximum variation strategy. This is a weakness when thinking about the transferability of the results, but Patton (1990, 172) also sees the variation between the informants as a strength: the central themes and shared core experiences are captured. Furthermore, the great diversity between the interviewees does describe the reality very well, because the people working in developing countries vary significantly in terms of their backgrounds, professions, tasks, ideological frameworks, previous experience in development co-operation and living abroad, motivations and aims, family situations, living context and many other factors playing an important role in acculturation. In order to help the reader to draw his conclusions, we have presented the central characteristics and differences of the interviewees as Patton (1990, 172) recommends, in a table at the beginning of the section dealing with the results of the study.

In the end, we selected ten interviewees and started to keep in touch with them mainly through e-mail and gave them more information about our study. This was because we wanted the interviewees to become oriented to the issues we would cover and also to remind them that the time of the interviews was approaching. In the field, three interviewees were left out of the sample for practical reasons, i.e., timetable did not allow us. Seven in-depth interviews can still be considered enough for reaching a sufficient level of saturation in a qualitative case study.

### **5.7 Field Work Period**

We travelled to East Africa in the spring of 2000, and stayed there about a month. In addition to making the interviews, we travelled in different areas and saw both rural and urban contexts where development co-operation workers and missionaries work. We also learned about the education system in that country by staying at a teacher training college and visiting nearby schools.

As regards the interviews, five of them were made in our temporary residence and two people were interviewed in their own homes. At the beginning of every interview, we went through the questionnaire with the interviewee, who could ask for clarification and extra information if needed. The interviews were recorded using two dictaphones and transcribed later in Finland. Their duration varied from about two hours to almost three hours.

Throughout each interview we tried to pay continuous attention to the issues of validity and reliability. In order to strengthen the validity of this research, we tried to be constantly aware of what we were doing and why. We strove to be conscious that the interviewees were really talking about phenomena we were studying. Furthermore, we knew that various factors could reduce the reliability of the information we got. The questions dealt with deeply personal and emotional issues, for example motives, expectations, difficulties and negative feelings. It is naturally difficult to talk about issues of this kind to strangers, especially when informants know that it is for research purposes and will be printed. Additionally, people in general are not always very conscious of their motives, expectations, and feelings, because they do not always think about these kinds of issues very much. Defence mechanisms can also have their influence. Thus, we tried to persuade the interviewees to tell more than they initially did. Still, we cannot be sure, firstly, if the informants told us everything essential and, secondly, if they told the truth all the time, and these things may naturally reduce the reliability of the study.

The interview situation also has an impact on reliability (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1982, 128). It is necessary that the interview situation is peaceful and secure for the interviewee and as free from disturbing factors as possible (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1982, 61). In our research we took this into consideration, trying to create an approving and a confidential atmosphere from the first contacts throughout the interaction by being polite, respectful, and understanding.

As regards the need for comparable, peaceful interview situations, in our research this was impracticable: the interview situations varied a lot. For example, the rooms for the interviews were not isolated from external noise. Neither was it possible to choose interview times suitable for all the parties, and both we and the interviewees were tired in some situations. Furthermore, as researchers we were likely to act somewhat differently during the

first interviews compared to the last ones, because our interviewing technique developed and our understanding about East Africa as an acculturative context deepened through our own experience there (see Tynjälä 1991, 391). Nevertheless, we did our best to minimise the disturbing factors and to control our tiredness in order to make interviews of quality, and in general the interviews went well: the atmosphere was positive and co-operation with the interviewees worked well.

After each interview, the two of us discussed its main content and our impressions related to it, which helped us to differentiate between reality and our feelings and to start constructing an idea of each interviewee.

### **5.8 Development of Our Perspective during the Study**

As we have mentioned, an important aspect of reliability and validity in a qualitative study is that the researcher is aware of his own ideas and preconceptions throughout the study and can differentiate between them and the real phenomenon as well as possible. This is also a central requirement of the hermeneutic–phenomenological approach. Therefore, we have dealt with these issues in our research diaries, personal diaries and various conversations. In addition, we will now report the development of our perspective throughout the study, so that the reader can estimate its influence on our understanding, and thus evaluate the reliability of the study.

When we started to plan this study, we had a preliminary idea of life and work in developing countries that was based on all the information we had received during our lives so far from books, articles, documentary films, and from people we had met who had worked there. At that time we were rather idealistic and assumed that development co-operation workers and missionaries would be in close interaction with host nationals and speak their language.

We started to build our theoretical framework by finding several theories on acculturation and adaptation, which helped us to realise that we were in fact dealing with a fairly complex phenomenon. We also searched for more information about the reality in developing countries and the life of Westerners there by reading and contacting people with experience in development co-operation and missionary work. As a consequence our



thoughts started to change. We heard that Westerners living in developing countries might also have racist attitudes towards the host nationals and that interaction between them was not always that harmonious. We also heard about fenced compounds where the Westerners live separated from the local community, many of them not having much cultural contact with the local people – and all this was a disappointment for us. Furthermore, learning that the local people may also have racist attitudes towards Westerners, raised contradictory feelings. Being both idealistic and not knowing much about the reality in the field, we were too quick to judge Westerners, thinking that they *should* be able to come into close contact with host nationals and their culture, once they had come to live and work there. Thus, in the beginning, we were comparing them to the ideal that we had about development co-operation workers and missionaries.

Before leaving for East Africa, we knew that we would be in the middle of an acculturation process ourselves, and that this would be likely to affect the way we interpreted these issues. For this reason, we reflected on our experiences in East Africa fairly carefully. When we arrived in the country, we were somewhat surprised how separated many Westerners indeed were from the larger society. The huge gap in living standard between them and the majority of the local people perplexed us – and so did the social gap. We were also very astonished to see how much stereotypes based on ethnic origin influenced people's perceptions and ideas of each other in that context. The feeling of inferiority that showed itself in the behaviour of many local people in relation to Westerners complicated making friends with them. We felt confused and sad about this, and it was the topic of many long discussions during the field trip and after it. However, at times we also experienced that some local people had negative attitudes towards us because of our Western origin.

The more we experienced the context ourselves, learnt to know East African cultures and the sub-culture of Western people, and heard from the interviewees about their life there, the more we realised that these issues indeed were very ambiguous and troublesome. We got explanations for some of our questions and doubts, and understood that the living conditions there are hard for a Westerner and it would take a great deal of energy to live like the local people live. Furthermore, we realised that life in Africa contains real dangers and threats: we had interpreted the criticism by the Westerners of the local people as

racism without really comprehending that it was often based on the actual problems they faced in the local context. Thus it was really important for us to see and experience that reality ourselves, because without it our view would have been much narrower and we might have criticised and judged the informants on the wrong basis. However, even though our understanding of the Westerners living there grew significantly, we constantly pondered – and still do – how the evident gap between them and the host nationals could have been better bridged.

The process that we went through could itself be perceived as an example of acculturation and adaptation: we ourselves learnt the very basic assumptions, facts and behaviours needed to manage in that culture and environment. It has to be remembered, though, that a few weeks is not sufficient to really understand the complex reality of that country. Furthermore, we saw just some parts of the country and did not meet such a great diversity of people, neither local nor Western. For example, the local super rich elite, university critics, or members of a distant tribe would all have fairly different views on their country and its cultures.

Another important issue to bear in mind is that our perspective is still inevitably Western, and further, Finnish. Thus we are to a certain extent ethnocentric in our thinking, behaviour and interpretations, a fact that has an impact on this study. This ethnocentrism is also strengthened by the fact that we as Finns interviewed other Finns. Due to our common cultural background we share many self-evident beliefs and views, which, because they are the same, do not become visible nor are questioned. Including some interviewees with a different cultural background or discussing these issues with a local person throughout the study would have given a fresh perspective – perhaps opening up totally new views on these phenomena.

We have now discussed in detail the development of our perspective during this study and the factors that have played a role in it. This way we have followed the principles of the hermeneutic–phenomenological approach, and it has helped us to distinguish between the reality and our own ideas, thus contributing to the reliability and validity of this study. Next, we will discuss how the hermeneutic–phenomenological approach directed the actual analysis of the interviews.

## 5.9 Analysing the Interviews

Influenced by the hermeneutic tradition, we carried out the analysis through cycles of interpretation, cycle by cycle trying to deepen our understanding, finding novel aspects and points of view on the issues. Proceeding this way, we also became increasingly aware of the impact our preconceptions and ideas had on the interpretation, which is a principle not only of hermeneutics but also of phenomenology. With both of us doing the reading separately and then critically comparing the findings through these cycles, we also increased investigator triangulation (see Patton 1990, 187, 468–469).

In the first cycles, we tried to distance ourselves from the theoretical background and our preconceptions in order to be able to see what kind of issues naturally emerged from the interviews. Nevertheless, the theoretical background was likely to have at least some subconscious influence on how we looked at the interviews, since we were rather familiar with it. When we felt that this spontaneous method of reading would no longer be able to contribute to the analysis any more, we consciously returned to the theoretical framework of acculturation and adaptation, because in addition to the interviewees' point of view on the issue, we wanted to attain a wider perspective on it (second level of hermeneutics, see Turunen 1995, 94–95, 101, 170).

From this, we proceeded to creating themes on the basis of the theory, our research questions, and the issues we had found crucial when reading and analysing the interviews spontaneously. We read through the interviews many times trying to classify our findings into categories, which was a phase requiring much critical thinking and self-reflection. The questionnaires provided us with important background and contextual information in the process of analysis, helping us in constructing our idea of each interviewee and in drawing conclusions about them.

If not earlier, this was the point at which the holistic and complex nature of acculturation and adaptation revealed itself to us to the full: it is indeed an interplay of diverse factors, which influence it both directly and indirectly, regulating the impact of each other. Therefore excessive categorisation of the phenomenon would greatly narrow and distort our view. Accordingly, we came to the conclusion that even though we would give

some factors a greater emphasis than others, we would need to pay attention to as many of them as is possible within the limits of a study of this kind.

After we had critically classified the material into themes, remembering that they were related and overlapping, we started writing the result section. Similarly to the preceding phase it was a demanding process, requiring a considerable amount of thinking, questioning, drafting and redrafting, comments from other people, clarifying, balancing between description and interpretation, and reflecting on the reliability, credibility and transferability of the study. We have now described the various phases and aspects of this study from the choice of topic and research questions through to the analysis of the interviews. It is now time to move on to the actual results of the study.

## 6 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The theory in itself represents acculturation as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, but on the basis of our own experience, it is even more complicated to define its diverse aspects and trace the course of the causal relations between them. Many of the aspects overlap, different factors interact to influence another factor, and some influences are indirect. However, there are various alternative ways to study acculturation, make distinctions between the factors and focus on them. The approach we have chosen aims at answering our research questions.

In this section we will proceed as follows: firstly, will shortly describe our interviewees. Secondly, through the theories presented above, we will move on to consider how the interviewees acculturated and adapted and what their present state of acculturation and adaptation was. Thus we answer our main question. Thirdly, in the light of the theories we will discuss which phases of acculturation the interviewees represented and which factors contributed to their acculturation, examining this issue through the social support systems they had among other Westerners and among host nationals. At the same time we shall try to determine how different factors influenced these social relationships. Fourthly, we will shortly summarise what the interviewees themselves found as the main difficulties and supportive factors in their process of acculturation and adaptation to the new country. This way we will also answer our two other questions, one on the influence of social relations on acculturation and adaptation, and the other on the difficulties and supportive mechanisms in the situation of acculturation and adaptation.

As already discussed, this study is hermeneutic–phenomenological in nature, trying to reach the perspective of the people being studied, and therefore description and direct quotations play an important role in it. However, we also try to get a wider perspective on the phenomena through the theoretical framework (second level of hermeneutics, see Turunen 1995, 94–95, 101, 170), and thus this study is also interpretative in nature. It is often difficult to keep description and interpretation clearly separate in a qualitative study. Furthermore, the fact that the issues have filtered through our senses and thinking, leaves at least some imprint on them, and makes pure description impossible.

Nevertheless, as we have already reported our preconceptions and the development of our view, the reader can estimate their influence on our understanding. In a study of this kind interpretation is, in fact, partly the readers' task, which we have tried to facilitate by the in-depth presentation of the acculturation theory in section 3, by detailed descriptions of the interviewees, their context, and acculturation, and by the ample use of direct quotations.

We have translated the quotations from Finnish into English assisted by a native speaker of English also fluent in Finnish. At some points we have cleaned them up by removing some hesitations and rephrasings for the purpose of intelligibility. We have done both the translation and the editing as carefully as possible, taking care that the original meanings are not affected. Three full stops (...) at the beginning of a quotation indicate that it starts in the middle of a sentence, whereas within a quotation they mean that an interviewer has paused for thought. Two hyphens (--) signal that we have cut something out. The direct quotations are also numbered in order to make it easier for the reader to refer to their Finnish versions in appendix 5.

## 6.1 Descriptions of the Interviewees

Before starting the analysis we shall provide background information about the interviewees. In this way, the reader will get some idea of the great diversity of people working in developing countries, he will be able to estimate the validity of our interpretations, and, moreover, he will be able to draw conclusions on how the results could be used and to what kind of people the findings might be generalised. After this we shall move on to the common trends and findings. (See Patton 1990, 172.)

We have summarised the descriptions of the interviewees in Table 3, in order to allow the reader to easily get a general profile of each interviewee and to compare the interviewees. Most of the factors in the table belong to the moderating factors existing prior to acculturation and to moderating factors emerging during acculturation, as defined in Berry's (1997) acculturation framework, supplemented by some other factors that we find to have an essential influence on acculturation.

The interviewees were first *renamed* for anonymity. In Table 3, the *gender* of the interviewees is mentioned in connection with their name. After this, we specify whether the

person is a *development co-operation worker* or a *missionary worker*. This distinction is important because, as already noted in section 2.5, in spite of some similarities between development co-operation and missionary work, they are still somewhat different in aims and nature, a fact which is likely to affect the choices of a person in the acculturation situation.

Then, the length of *time spent in the country* is listed, because this also has a central impact on acculturation and adaptation. This is followed by the *family situation* of the person and whether there are any children accompanying their parents in the posting, because these issues also play a role in the acculturation and adaptation of a person. There were two couples among our interviewees: Markku and Leena, and Raija and Antero. In the former case at the time of the study, the woman was rather in the role of a spouse taking care of the family than involved in work.

The next background variables are *life context* – urban or rural – of the interviewees and the form of *residence* they have – living in a compound or in a private house. These issues are crucial because, as we shall see later, they have a significant influence on the interviewees' social relations and, consequently, on their acculturation.

The next factor in the table is *knowledge of the local language*. This both reflects the motivation of the person to get involved with local people and their culture and influences the practical possibilities to do so. However, it has to be remembered that not only motivation has an impact on the language learning but also many practical factors such as the length of time spent in the country

Information on pre-acculturation, consisting of *previous experience* in living and working abroad, *preparatory courses*, and *personal preparation* are also included in the table, as these issues, according to the theory, are also likely to have an influence on the acculturation and adaptation process. Preparatory courses include courses in development co-operation work organised by developmental organisations, mission courses of Finnish missionary organisations, and courses on the local language and culture in the country of posting financed by the employer. Personal preparation consists of what the people did by themselves to enhance their acculturation and adaptation in the new country, ranging from reading to self-financed language courses.

TABLE 3: Descriptions of the Informants

	<b>Marikku (M)</b>	<b>Leena (F)</b>	<b>Outi (F)</b>	<b>Raija (F)</b>	<b>Antero (M)</b>	<b>Klaus (M)</b>	<b>Maarit (F)</b>
<b>Position</b>	Missionary, developmental tasks	Spouse	Missionary, developmental tasks	Missionary	Missionary	Development co-operation worker	Development co-operation worker
<b>Time spent in the country</b>	9 months	9 months	4 years	3 years, 3 months	3 years, 3 months	9 months	9 months
<b>Family situation</b>	Spouse and accompanying children (aged under 12)	Spouse and accompanying children (aged under 12)	Single	Spouse with children (adult aged) in Finland	Spouse with children (adult aged) in Finland	Spouse and accompanying children (aged over 12)	Single
<b>Life Setting</b>	Urban city	Urban city	Before rural town, now urban city	Rural town	Rural town	Urban city	Rural town
<b>Residence</b>	House in a compound of Westerners	House in a compound of Westerners	Shared house in a small compound	Own fenced house among the locals	Own fenced house among the locals	Own fenced house	House in a compound
<b>Knowledge of the local language</b>	Basic knowledge	Basic knowledge	Speaks fluently	Speaks fluently	Speaks fluently	Basic knowledge	Basic knowledge
<b>Previous experience</b>	Worked and lived in Africa before	Worked and lived in Africa before	None	Worked and lived in Africa before	Worked and lived in Africa before	Worked and lived in Africa before	Worked and lived in Africa before
<b>Courses &amp; preparation</b>	One course earlier, one for this post	One course earlier	None	Two courses earlier, one for this post	Two courses earlier, one for this post	Two courses earlier	One course earlier
<b>Personal preparation</b>	Visit to the country, language course	Visit to the country, language course	Personal language studies, literature, visit to the country	Personal language studies	Personal language studies	Visit to the country	Personal language studies, literature

There are still many other moderating factors in Berry's (1997) acculturation framework, which, for various reasons, are not mentioned in the table. In order to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewees we do not list their ages but state only that they are all middle-aged. This, in fact, is not necessary, because Kealey (1990, 46) found no significant differences in acculturation and adaptation between the different adult age groups. It is also because of anonymity that their exact professions are not revealed. However, they are all well educated, and the work of most of them is in one way or another related to education, children and young people, and requires interaction with the nationals in that country. As regards their status and place in the economic world, all of them have a relatively high status



in that East African country for various reasons, with several consequences for social relations, which will be discussed later.

Considering the other factors from Berry's (1997) acculturation framework, it is not possible to draw any far-reaching conclusions about the personality and coping strategies of the interviewees, and therefore, even though these factors are referred to a couple of times, they are given relatively little emphasis in this study. Cultural distance between Finnish and East African cultures, an important aspect in acculturation, was already discussed above in section 4 in order to enable the reader to draw his conclusions on this aspect, but some attention will still be paid to practical difficulties arising in acculturation that are consequences of this. Motivation and expectations are left out from the table, because they will be discussed in more detail later (section 6.3.1).

Additionally, it has to be noted that Raija and Outi had changed their jobs during the time they had spent in the country. Furthermore, Outi had lately moved from a smaller town to an urban city.

## **6.2 Acculturation and Adaptation of the Interviewees**

In this section, we will concentrate on answering our main research question and thus will present our findings on how the interviewees had acculturated and adapted to the new culture and what their present state of acculturation and adaptation was. In doing this, we will use the theories of Berry (1997; in press), Birman (1994), Ward (1996), and Ward and Kennedy (1992, 1993) dealing with acculturation and adaptation.

We will start by examining the interviewees' acculturation strategies. As we explained in chapter 3.1.2, Berry (1997) has stated that acculturation strategies consist of two dimensions: firstly, the extent to which an individual wants to maintain his original culture and, secondly, the extent to which he wants to seek contacts in the new culture and acquire it. Depending on the relation between these dimensions, four alternative acculturative orientations – assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation – are formed. Moreover, these acculturation strategies consist of both attitudes and actual behaviours (Berry 1997).

Therefore, we will start the examination of the interviewees' acculturation strategies by looking at their original culture maintenance, i.e., their attitudes and behaviours in relation to Finnish culture. After this, we will move on to describe their contacts with and acquisition of the new culture, in other words, their attitudes and behaviours related to East African culture. On the basis of this analysis, we will then conclude what kind of acculturation strategies our interviewees were pursuing. Although acculturation strategies can be defined both as a process and as a state, as we already concluded in the theoretical discussion, we concentrate here mainly on the interviewees' present state of acculturation, because within the limits of our study it is not possible to describe the whole process reliably.

After discussing acculturation strategies, we will briefly examine the identity strategies formulated by Berry (in press), i.e., how the interviewees identified themselves in relation to Finnish culture and East African culture. Then we will combine the two aspects, acculturation strategies and identity strategies, by reflecting on Birman's (1994) differentiated model of acculturation and biculturalism, which combines them and partly overlaps with Berry's theories.

Finally, we will discuss how the interviewees had adapted, reflecting on the issues with regard to the three aspects of adaptation mentioned in the theoretical discussion: psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation and economic adaptation.

### **6.2.1 Acculturation Strategies and Identity Strategies**

#### ***Original Culture Maintenance***

As regards the first dimension of the acculturation strategies, original culture maintenance, all the interviewees found their Finnish roots important and kept up their Finnish culture in various ways. All of them had at least some Finnish friends or acquaintances in the country, some of them took part in parties arranged by Finnish people, everyone kept in touch with his friends in Finland, some of them subscribed to Finnish newspapers or magazines, others

had their servants make Finnish food sometimes, and so on. However, they did all this in a natural and spontaneous way – not according to any specific conscious plan to maintain their heritage culture. Exceptionally, Outi said she tried to read in Finnish as much as she could, since it was very easy to lose the skill of writing good Finnish.

Even though it was not directly stated many times, we got a strong general impression that everyone respected and valued Finnish culture and way of life. When the interviewees talked about the characteristics of the local culture and the problems they had faced in that country, many of them seemed to make an automatic comparison with Finland; the defects were seen in relation to the state of affairs in Finland. Even Outi, who found her stay and relations with the host nationals very positive and enriching, made a strong distinction between the two countries:

*...I appreciate that we have an independent home country, where really many things are so well, although, of course there are problems and defects but if you compare these cultures, we definitely are the lottery winners. (Outi) [1]*

All of the interviewees also said that they had told local people about Finland and Finnish culture, which we interpreted as their appreciation of their own culture and as willingness to clearly identify as Finns. However, Raija said she had been very careful not to do so at the beginning, but when she noticed that people were very interested in hearing these things, she started to tell about it.

*First I didn't tell anything. I thought that I don't want to be someone who changes their culture, that they should do like they do in Finland. Afterwards I have noticed that hey, they actually want to know how it's done in our country, that of course I can tell about it. I mean you don't have to do like we do but it is nice to know. So I have started to tell everything. -- It is natural that people want to reflect on these things, their own life and the life of other people. However, TV is already a big opinion-maker here. (Raija) [2]*

Although everyone had learnt at least some of the customs and practices of the new country, their Finnishness also showed itself in their ways of acting and behaving. Antero, for example, said that he treated women and children in the Finnish way, paying more attention to them and speaking more to them than was usual in that East African country – presumably experiencing conflict between his Finnish values and the local male-dominated

values. As regards Maarit, even though she knew that it would be important to be subtler in expressing opinions and proposals than in Finland, she continued to be outspoken.

*...these members of this team, they like Maarit to say the way things are, and she is outspoken and has courage, and does things as she sees best... (Maarit)*  
[3]

Because Maarit's colleagues did not have the courage to express their opinions to the boss, probably due to the relatively high power distance in the country, her directness had brought her plenty of responsibility that colleagues should have taken. However, Maarit thought that her boss at the working place – a local person – might dislike her directness, and we wondered if action of this kind was also a sign of lack of respect for the host culture.

In brief, it could be concluded that all the interviewees valued their original culture and found its maintenance important, though the ways of doing it and their intensity varied.

### ***Local Culture Acquisition***

The second dimension of acculturation strategies, contacts with the new culture, varied between the interviewees more than the first dimension concerning original culture. As regards the interviewees' attitudes towards the local culture in general, there were both things they valued and things they were critical about, and they saw these issues in relation to Finnish culture. Antero described the aspects he found valuable in the new culture as follows:

*Respect for older people. And then I would say taking care of one's own family, this kind of joint responsibility, this kind of shared fatherhood and shared motherhood. And then these people are by nature pretty much... they live in that very situation where they are just then. When they are happy, they are happy, and when they are sad, they are sad. (Antero) [4]*

In fact, Antero was referring here to aspects of collectivism and event-related time concept that he found positive, and also other interviewees mentioned issues of this kind. It appeared to us that they valued such things that had largely disappeared from Finnish culture where

rapid industrialisation and urbanisation had fragmented the traditional way of life. On the other hand, the aspects that they criticised or were irritated by were issues that they did not have to face to a very large extent in Finland, some of which were related to the cultural distance between the two cultures. To use the words of the interviewees, chaotic traffic behaviour, corruption, unreliability, abuse of aid and passivity were things that many of them criticised or mentioned as problematic. As we see it on the basis of the theories, the interviews, and our observations, the general attitudes of a person in relation to the new culture and country are likely to have an impact on his acculturation attitudes, i.e., the willingness to get acculturated in the new culture. If a person is very critical and negative about several things, he is not likely to find very much motivation and enthusiasm to learn the new language, customs and values. Markku and Antero talked about their criticism and feelings of frustration much more than the others.

As regards the actual acculturation attitudes and the consequent behaviours of the interviewees, every one of them thought that they should learn the language. However, only Raija, Antero and Outi spoke it fluently. The strength of motivation and attitudes seemed to play an important role in this: for example, Raija expressed an opinion that once you have come to the country you need to learn the language, and Antero and Outi appeared to have taken it similarly. However, the difference between them and the others could not be explained just by motivational or attitudinal factors: they needed the local language to perform their work, they lived in a context where they could not manage just through English, and, furthermore, they had lived in the country much longer than the others. Moreover, also Klaus, Maarit, Markku and Leena did have plans to start more efficient language studies as they regarded knowing the language as important for interaction with the local people, but may not have had sufficient time to put their plans into practice yet.

The attitudes towards consciously learning the culture also varied. For example Raija said that it is necessary and that one cannot be in the country without making an effort to learn the culture, whereas Klaus felt that after such a long stay in Africa he did not have to learn the culture that much any more. However, all the interviewees had tried to learn at least something, for example, ways to greet people, to ask about their news, some other practical routines and phrases, and to take the norms of culture into account in order to dress

appropriately. Nevertheless, both the depth of cultural learning and the commitment to it seemed to vary greatly among the interviewees.

*Of course you know certain things, and when we were in the local language course, these behaviour things came out and how you should behave and how it is important to these people that you ask their news and all this. About food of course and about how to dress up and so -- . But it is rather superficial, you would like to know more. (Leena) [5]*

*It is nice to go dancing somewhere and eat local food and all this, that's ok, but I don't know, you don't have to adopt it, it's there and I can be part of it. I can like jump into that and be there, and enjoy and feel comfortable, but I don't know about adopting it... no. (Klaus) [6]*

*I have tried to study this culture mostly, like through being with the people and my aim has been that they give me advice and show me how I should act, and what belongs to their culture. (Outi) [7]*

Both Outi and Raija talked extensively about how they spent time with the local people, shared their daily life with them, asked them to tell about their habits, and tried to understand and learn their culture – and seemed to have progressed quite well in it. Antero had also learnt a great deal of the culture, but in contrast to Outi and Raija, who apparently enjoyed it and found it very interesting and enriching, he was much more critical about it and seemed to have lost much of his interest.

All in all, the cultural learning of these three seemed to be much deeper than that of the other interviewees. It is indeed very different to learn just the basic customs for coping with social situations, dancing in a bar in an urban centre or eating local food at a restaurant than to really immerse oneself in the local culture: to try to understand why the people behave the way they do and to learn what kind of traditions they have and how the culture of different tribes differs.

When looking at this issue through the iceberg metaphor of culture (see section 2.1) most of the interviewees were mainly becoming acquainted with only the very tip of the iceberg of the host culture, whereas Outi and Raija, and also Antero, were trying to dig deeper into it. However, we got the impression that Klaus had also been examining the iceberg of African culture during his earlier posting, having acquired rather much general knowledge and understanding of it, but now he concentrated mainly on his work. Even

though he did not mix much with the host nationals during his free time, this previously acquired understanding helped him to deal in an appropriate way with the problems arising in his work.

As we see it, only Outi, Raija and Antero had acculturated into the local culture to any significant extent in this East African country and they were the only ones that had any deeper contact with the local people. As regards the others, they seemed to have acculturated more to the sub-culture of the Westerners' expatriate community in that country than to the culture of the local people. Due to their relatively high economic level, they could live a Western life with other Westerners there in the middle of Africa, and it differed considerably from the life of the majority of the host nationals, who could not afford to live that way. Their major reference groups were the other Finnish, Scandinavian and Western people, and English was the language through which they communicated with the local people. However, Maarit was an exception in the sense that she did not feel very much at home, neither in the community of the other Westerners nor in the larger society. We will deal with these issues in more detail later in the text.

### *Interviewees' Acculturation Strategies in a Nutshell*

In the above discussion of the interviewees' relation to their original culture and to the new culture, we reached the conclusion that all of them wanted to keep their original culture, but there was considerable variation in their involvement in and acquisition of the new culture. We shall now try to categorise them according to Berry's (1997) acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation.

As we see it, Outi, Raija and Antero showed clear characteristics of integration, since at the same time as they found their own culture important, they were also very much involved in the local culture and had learnt it to a considerable extent, including the language. Klaus, Markku, Leena and Maarit appeared to be closer to separation, because, apart from Klaus, they knew just basic things about the culture, had not learnt the local language, and were not involved in the local community to any significant extent outside of work but only in the community of other Westerners.

In a way, Klaus and Markku seemed to live in two worlds, the world of work time and the world of free time: the former was related to the local community and the latter to the Westerners' community. Leena was more separated from the local community than the men, because as a housewife she had to direct plenty of her time and energy to the family as they had settled down in the new country just recently. Maarit also showed some characteristics of marginalisation: she was not very deeply involved either in the Western or the local community, although she spent some of her free time with other Westerners.

Interestingly, we got the impression that for some of the interviewees the acculturation strategy was a clear choice, whereas others had just ended up with one for various external reasons against their own preference. It appeared to us that Outi, Raija and Antero had clearly aimed at integration and especially Outi and Raija had made much effort to achieve it. Klaus, for his part, seemed to have consciously chosen a more separationist alternative, whereas Markku, Leena and Maarit would have liked to be more integrated into the local community than they were, and Maarit was even somewhat unhappy with the situation.

When comparing the interviewees it must be remembered that Outi, Raija and Antero had spent almost four years in the country and were soon leaving, whereas the others had been under a year there. Individuals can also change their strategies, and it is possible that after getting increasingly used to the practicalities of their life in East Africa, Markku, Leena and Maarit will be able to direct more of their energy to becoming more integrated, if they really want to.

As we have already implied at various times, the amount and quality of contact with the local culture and its representatives played a very central role in the acculturation of the interviewees. The ones that were most acculturated into the local culture also had most social relations among the local people. We will discuss this in more detail in section 7.3.2.

### *Interviewees' Identity Strategies in a Nutshell*

As can be seen from the discussion of the interviewees' relation both to their own culture and the new culture, none of them had abandoned their Finnish identity and "gone native", i.e., changed their identification with Finnish culture for identification with the local culture.



Although especially Outi and Raija had gained plenty of understanding about the local culture, values, and way of thinking and these had also influenced them to a certain extent, one could not speak about the adoption of the worldview of the local culture and identification with it, even in their case. They had rather added new alternatives to their behavioural, value and thinking repertoire than replaced anything.

None of the interviewees aimed at becoming like a local person, thus they were all sojourners and did not plan to stay and live the rest of their lives in the country. They all understood that their own culture was inbuilt in them, and although they could learn new things on the top of it, they would never be able to get as deep into the local culture as the natives – and nobody even expected it from them.

*No you never get into the culture here... into their way of thinking and into all that... not a chance. Sometimes you can get a tiny little touch. (Raija) [8]*

*...I don't think you can ever feel at home here, you should have been living here forever. Living in the culture doesn't go that easily, it is really hard. You should be married to a local or...(Antero) [9]*

*...I am not a local and I'll never be one. I mean wherever I go -- it is that I am different. They see when I arrive in the yard by car, they see the colour of my skin, and they see that I'm not a local and I don't believe that people expect me to behave in a local way. (Maarit) [10]*

Finnish roots were an important part of their identity: it was what gave them strength.

*...we can't change ourselves into an African, we have to be what we are, that we are strong at it. I mean like we don't have to change as persons in this co-operation. Of course we have to adjust, but the people don't expect anything else from us than what we are and that you have to understand, respect and accept. It is, what I may have learned, through trial and error. (Klaus) [11]*

In other words, all the interviewees pursued a separation strategy (see Berry 1997) in the domain of their ethnic identity. They felt Finnish, not local, and were proud of their ethnic origin, although they – depending on each individual – were to some extent able to understand the host culture and vary their behaviour to deal with the host nationals in a more appropriate way.

Birman (1994) combines acculturation at the level of behaviour and at the level of identity in her differentiated model of acculturation and biculturalism, which overlaps with Berry's (1997; in press) acculturation strategies and identity strategies. Briefly, Outi, Raija and Antero appeared to us as clear integrated biculturals, because like all the others they had maintained their identification with their original culture, but had gained considerable knowledge of the local culture and their behavioural competence in it was fairly high. The others rather resembled separation, because their behavioural competence was not that high. To be precise, we got the impression that Klaus's knowledge about the local culture and his behavioural competence in it were fairly good in fact, but because he did not participate much in it outside of work we concluded that he was closer to separation. As regards Maarit, because she did not feel she belonged to either the Western or the local community, but could basically manage in both, she also resembled an instrumentally bicultural person.

### **6.2.2 Adaptation**

Berry (1997) defines adaptation as the changes occurring both in individuals and in groups as a response to environmental demands; furthermore, adaptation may or may not increase the individuals' fit with the new environment. In our study, all the interviewees had adapted so that they could manage their lives in the new country and were relatively satisfied with their stay. However, the actual object of adaptation varied among them: some of them had adapted mainly to the Westerners' expatriate community, while others had adapted to the larger society. In simplified form, one could say that the former group principally lived in the smaller world of Westerners within the larger world of East African reality, which they knew just to the extent that they could manage there – though it has to be remembered that this smaller world had also adapted itself at least to some extent to its surroundings. Others had immersed themselves in this larger world in order to understand it and to be enriched as humans. In other words, adaptation had increased some interviewees' fit with the larger society while the fit of others was not significantly improved, except in relation to the Western expatriate community.

However, adaptation can be examined from various points of view, and it has been divided into three sub-classes: psychological acculturation and sociocultural

acculturation, which are interrelated (Searle and Ward 1990, as cited in Searle and Ward 1992; 1993), and economic adaptation (Aycaan and Berry 1996, as cited in Berry 1997). If our interviewees are looked at from this perspective, the picture acquires a more subtle shading and colouring.

As regards the interviewees' psychological adaptation, all of them reported being relatively well both psychologically and physically. All of their expectations had not been met and the conditions were not perfect, but it was something they had in a way been mentally prepared for. They felt psychologically confident, although at the same time they felt insecure in relation to the real threats in the country: robberies, dangerous traffic, and disease. However, as Antero pointed out, a feeling of insecurity of some kind was important for surviving in a country that in reality was insecure.

Antero's and Markku's speculations on the issues of development and progress and on the state of the affairs in the country seemed to have consumed a good deal of their energy, indirectly affecting their adaptation, though not dramatically. For example, although Antero was fairly critical about many things, he had plenty of contacts with the local people and had learnt a considerable amount about the culture. The psychological well being of those that had come with their family was also influenced by the satisfaction of their family, and in everyone's case this impact was positive. As regards Maarit, she was somewhat ambivalent in her feelings due to her unsatisfactory social relations. In other words, her problems with sociocultural adaptation affected psychological adaptation.

Raija's and Outi's situation was rather the opposite. In their case sociocultural adaptation seemed to facilitate psychological adaptation. Raija describes her feeling of psychological confidence as follows:

*That I am at my own place. That people like me as I like my job and the people. Everything is just right. And it is also good that we are going to Finland in three months, also that is just right. (Raija) [12]*

Both Raija and Outi said that the time spent in that East African country had been very important for their personal growth and had strengthened their self-esteem.

*I have got an awful lot of self-confidence here. I was really shy and sensitive as a child and always just forced myself into all that performing for example. -- Being nervous has disappeared from me, I've been accepted here. Or that I just have been growing up that way. I suppose I've been accepted elsewhere as well, but I haven't felt that way. But here I don't tremble or get nervous about anything. Think about it, isn't that pretty amazing, unfamiliar language and everything... but I'm not nervous, not at all. (Raija) [13]*

In other words, Raija and Outi had not just survived the difficulties in the new country but had gained very much from being there. The major reason for this, as we saw it, might be the fact that they had built such positive relations with the local people and had learnt the language and culture.

As regards the interviewees' sociocultural adaptation, on the basis of the issues already discussed above, we could conclude that it varied greatly, depending on the extent they had acculturated to the local culture and on the extent they had acculturated to Westerners' culture. However, all the interviewees had reached at least some level of functional sociocultural adaptation so that they could live and work in the new country and culture, even though for many of them the major scene of life outside of work was the Westerners' expatriate community.

All the interviewees had adapted well in the economic sense: all of them except Leena had come to the country primarily to work and had had their posts waiting for them even before they arrived – though Raija and Outi had later changed their jobs. Therefore the practical issues of employment and livelihood were in order, but the interviewees' job satisfaction varied, which also played an important role in their general satisfaction. For example, Raija's contentment had increased when she had started a new job, whereas Antero's satisfaction was decreased by the fact that he did not find his work very interesting or rewarding.

However, although the interviewees were economically well adapted in the sense that they had employment and a good livelihood, it could also be claimed that their very high living standard in comparison with the majority of the local people in a way posed an obstacle to deeper adaptation. It created a gap between them and the local people, and they had to work harder to bridge that gap to be able to build relationships and to learn the culture, a task in which some of them had nevertheless succeeded rather well.

In the following section we will discuss why the interviewees acculturated and adapted the way they did. We will argue that social relations played a central role in this process.

### **6.3 Reasons for the Acculturation and Adaptation Outcomes**

In this section, we discuss the reasons why the interviewees succeeded in their acculturation and adaptation in different ways. To trace those reasons, we will use the theoretical background of this study, described in section 3, in which Berry's (1997) acculturation framework plays an important role. However, given the limits of this study and the vastness of the research domain, we will not apply Berry's acculturation framework as such.

Even though the acculturation framework examines acculturation both at the group level and the individual level, our scope is individual level acculturation. We have chosen to only refer to group level issues – in the sense of how they influence individual level acculturation. We do not study acculturation as a process either, but try to find out why the interviewees' present state of acculturation is what it is. Furthermore, in this analysis we do not take all the moderating factors from Berry's acculturation framework into account. We have omitted personality and coping, because we could not study them reliably on the basis of the research material collected with our data collection methods. However, we will add some other factors we found important on the basis of our data: life setting and residence, family situation, which was also mentioned by Kealey (1990), work, church and hobbies as reference groups and channels to the new society. Furthermore, the emphasis we give to the different factors and the way we see their relations differs from Berry's view.

Social support and social relations of the interviewees had an important impact on their acculturation strategies. Berry (1997) considers them just one moderating factor among others; however, we see them as the main channel through which a person both maintains the original culture and explores the new culture. Namely, if a person has contacts mainly just with other Finns and Westerners, he does not have many opportunities to acquire the new culture because a great deal of his time is filled by influences from the original culture. This also works in reverse: the social networks of a person often reflect his acculturation strategy. Therefore, we will analyse our interviewees' acculturation and adaptation from the

point of view of social relations. We will examine how different factors influenced the interviewees' social relations – and consequently their acculturation.

We will begin by first looking at some background factors: the fact that the interviewees were in the situation as sojourners (Segall et al. 1999; Berry et al. 1992; Berry, in press), their motives for coming to work in East Africa and their expectations of this period in their lives (see Berry 1997). The reason for discussing these issues is that we see them as having an important impact on how the interviewees tried to acculturate to the new culture and adapt to the new environment, and, related to this, what kind of social relations they tried to seek.

After this, we will describe in more detail the social support and social relations the interviewees had (see Berry 1997). Then we will move on to analyse how diverse factors influenced this social support and the consequent acculturation: group level acculturation of the Finns and the Westerners in that country, life setting and residence, family and marital status, attitudes towards the Westerners in the larger society, the socio-economic status of Westerners there due to their ethnic origin, education and economic situation, the influence of the interviewees' age and gender on the locals' attitudes, work and other possible reference groups, cultural distance, time spent in the new country and language skills. When studying these factors it is important to remember that this is just one of the several alternative ways to describe and analyse their relations, and, it has to be noted that the factors are in reality interrelated in many ways and form complicated causal networks.

### **6.3.1 Background Factors in the Move to the New Culture**

#### ***Interviewees as Sojourners in the Acculturation Situation***

One important reason why many of the interviewees did not acculturate to the culture of that East African country to any considerable extent was that they were sojourners in the acculturation situation (see Segall et al. 1999; Berry et al. 1992; Berry, in press). In other words, they were migrants who had voluntarily come to work in the country for only a short

period of time, after which they would move back to their country of origin or to somewhere else.

*And I haven't like planned to build up my life here -- I'm here only visiting and offering my expertise... (Antero) [14]*

This temporary nature of the stay, understandably, had an impact on how much time and energy they found it sensible to invest in building relations with the host nationals and in learning the new language and culture. Had they had come to the country to live there for the rest of their lives, the results of their acculturation both at the behavioural and identity level might have been very different. However, although the motivation to get to know the local people and acquire the culture varied considerably between the interviewees, it could be said that these people come to the country principally rather to perform a certain predetermined task there than to fit in with the society. In one way or another, this task was related to developing and changing something in the new country, which could also be perceived as an intention to acculturate host nationals to some of their Western values and practices. Naturally, the Westerners themselves needed to acculturate to some extent at least at a superficial level in order to be able to work with the local people. In a sense, they needed to acculturate to the local culture in order to acculturate the locals to their culture; however, some of them also showed genuine interest in the local culture also for its own sake.

### *Migration Motivations and Expectations*

We hypothesised in advance that a link of some kind might exist between the interviewees' reasons for coming to work in Africa and their actual acculturation. We thought that pull factors might have a more positive impact on acculturation than push factors (see Richmond 1993), although we knew that no simple causal relations could be drawn between them.

Among our interviewees, both pull and push motivation could be found, although pull factors were more common. Five of the interviewees, Klaus, Maarit, Outi, Markku and Leena, reported only pull motivation behind their willingness to go to work abroad. Naturally, we still cannot know whether there were also some personal push factors, which

they did not want to talk about but which might have had an important impact on their acculturation. As regards the contents of these pull motivations, Maarit and Leena mentioned having been interested in Africa in general, whereas Outi was the only one who had been long keen on this specific East African country. Outi and Markku told about their interest in missionary or development co-operation work using their own profession; additionally, Markku said that he had wanted to prove to himself that he was still able to do development co-operation work. Both Leena and Outi also talked about “calling” and the guidance of God; on the other hand, motives of this kind could also be interpreted as push factors.

Klaus’ and Maarit’s motivation was not related to religious issues at all. Klaus had just found the available job interesting, when the previous posting abroad was coming to its end – a fact that on the other hand also was a push factor. Maarit was looking for a job corresponding to her training in Africa, and she also had some requirements concerning the country where she would work.

For Antero and Raija push motivation was central: they were looking for a job and did not find it in Finland. Raija was also interested in practising her profession in the missionary field, and Antero had agreed with the missionary organisation that he would leave for an overseas post, if there was work available.

In contrast to our advance expectations, the question of whether it was pull or push factors that had been central in a persons move to the new country explained hardly anything of the acculturation and adaptation of the interviewees. For example, Raija and Antero, for whom push factors had been very central, belonged to those that had immersed themselves Deepest in the new culture. Rather, instead of the push–pull distinction, the content of the motivations appeared more important. For instance, the extent to which it was work and the extent to which it was cultural or country-specific interest that weighed among the motivational factors, seemed to have an impact on how the individuals acted in the new country, which had a further impact on their acculturation. For example, Klaus’ motives had been work-oriented, and it was indeed his work rather than the culture that he concentrated on. Outi had a cultural and country-specific interest, which led her to seek relations among the host nationals and to explore their culture. This was consistent with Kealey’s (1990)



finding that pre-departure willingness for contact with the culture indeed contributes to acculturation.

As regards expectations, too high or unrealistic expectations may threaten successful acculturation and adaptation of voluntary immigrants (see Ward 1996; Berry 1997). None of the interviewees reported having had very high expectations that would have caused dramatic disillusionments; for example Leena said that she had consciously tried not to raise her expectations too high. These relatively realistic expectations in relation to their life in the country probably partly explained the fact that they were more or less well adapted to their lives there, even though in Western circles. However, most of them had had to face at least small disappointments concerning the host nationals: it had not been so easy to build relationships with them, they had appeared less friendly and trustworthy than expected, and so on. This might have discouraged the efforts of some interviewees at building relationships with the local people, decreased their interest in the new culture and made them retreat into the Westerners' community – and thus indirectly had a negative impact on their acculturation.

### *Pre-acculturation*

As it can be seen from Table 3, every one of the interviewees, except Outi, had been working in Africa before, Klaus for as long as 10 years. Moreover, all but Outi had taken at least one course preparing for working abroad, even though most of them had taken it already earlier, for a previous posting. We would have intuitively thought that previous experience – even though earlier studies are contradictory about its influence – and preparation courses would have had a clear positive impact on the interviewees' acculturation and adaptation. However, we did not find any self-evident or direct relation of this kind. Similarly to what Kealey's (1990) study had shown, previous experience might have helped the interviewees to settle down more quickly and easily, because they already knew what kind of practicalities, problems and feelings were related to the beginning, but in the long run it did not seem to guarantee any straightforward success in dealing with the locals and in acculturating. Neither did preparation courses, even though we cannot know how much they had helped the interviewees in their acculturation to that point in time.

Interestingly Outi, who neither had any previous experience of working in Africa nor had taken preparation courses, seemed to have immersed herself deeply in the local culture and felt very much at home there. As already stated, her long-time interest in this country must have promoted this greatly. Over the years she had gradually prepared herself for working there: she had visited the country, had local friends there already, had read books about the country, and had started studying the local language. Moreover, a very close friend of hers had been working there. All in all, Outi's case shows that personal preparation and commitment to learning about the culture play a much more important role than previous experience and preparation courses. Personal preparation may reflect a person's motivation to acculturate and it facilitates practical possibilities for acculturation. Thus it needs to be considered as an important factor. However, it has to be remembered that not all the Westerners going to work in Africa have that much time to get prepared, because they often have to leave relatively soon after being chosen for the task.

Before moving on to the influence of social support and of various other factors, we will take a brief look at some issues that came out in our study concerning the possible effects of previous experience on working in Africa. For instance, in Klaus' case it had clearly given him realism, which helped him to work more effectively.

*...of course in the beginning I was some kind of an idealist and loyalist and stuff like that. Now I'm like in some realistic state where I'm able to see my own resources, just as they are, and we can utilise them in this kind of a situation better than perhaps someone else could, who comes directly... I have my experience and I get along with people, and I don't expect too much but I'm able to work anyway. (Klaus) [15]*

However, this had not increased Klaus' willingness to learn about the local culture:

*I didn't plan how I would get to know this culture. I have seen Africa for ten years so it's there, there's no need to get to know it especially. (Klaus) [16]*

Perhaps he felt he had already learnt as much of the African culture as was necessary for living and working there. After learning to cope with daily life in Africa a Westerner may indeed think that it is enough and may not be interested in gaining a richer and deeper understanding of the local culture. However, on the basis of Klaus's comments we got the impression that he knew a great deal about African culture. Usually, the deeper a person knows a culture, the clearer he realises that culture is a very complex phenomenon and that

he actually understands very little about it. Therefore we speculated whether Klaus, having realised how difficult it indeed was for a Westerner to understand African cultures and get acculturated there, had got frustrated and, instead of struggling to learn more about it, had given up in one way or another. Tiredness in the face of high cultural distance and difficulties in acculturating may lead to defensive indifference towards the culture. Also, the longer a Westerner has been living and working in Africa, the more he may have in fact acculturated – depending on various other factors – to the culture of the white or black elite there, which, according to our observations, is rather far removed from the daily life of the majority of the local people.

Another influence that previous experience may have is that a person creates conscious or unconscious expectations concerning the new country on the basis of the reality of a previous African country, without realising that there are in fact considerable differences between – and also within – African countries. This is then likely to cause disappointments, which may have a negative effect on acculturation. For example, Leena and Markku made comparisons between the previous and the present country various times during the interviews. Leena said that she was disappointed because in the previous country she had felt that the people were more friendly and easier to make friends with, which was not the case in the new country. Even though they had not had such specific and conscious expectations, it seemed that they might still have had some spontaneous expectations on the basis of their experiences in that other country.

In this section we have discussed how factors such as going to a country as a sojourner, migration motivation, expectations and pre-acculturation, consisting of previous experience, preparation courses, and personal preparation, might have influenced the acculturation of our interviewees. Now we will turn to examining social support, or social relations, as a mediating factor in the acculturation of our interviewees, and will also consider how other factors influenced both social relations and consequent acculturation.

### **6.3.2 Social Support and the Factors Influencing It**

As we have already discussed in the theoretical part, social support plays an important role in acculturation and is related to psychological well being (Ward 1996); moreover, it is very

beneficial to have social support systems both among the co-nationals and among the host nationals (Berry 1997; Ward 1996). In fact, LaFromboise(1993) considers having stable social networks in both the cultures to be one crucial aspect of bicultural competence. Therefore, as we see the issue on the basis of the theory and our own observations, social support influences both adaptation and acculturation in various ways. It improves the psychological well being of an individual and thus facilitates his psychological adaptation. Social relations with other expatriates facilitate the maintenance of the original culture, whereas those with the host nationals provide a channel for acquisition of the new culture and thus also contribute both to acculturation and to sociocultural adaptation.

All the interviewees indeed considered social support the most important supportive factor in the new country. However, as already mentioned, what varied was the amount and source of this support. In general, all the interviewees except Maarit said that they had plenty of human relations in this country, several of them even more than in Finland. Nevertheless, most of them also noted that – for various reasons – these relations were often not as close and deep as those in Finland. As we will discuss in more detail below, the differences in language, culture, living standard and social status complicated the creation of deeper relationships with the locals. Furthermore, the fact that work occupied a great deal of their time often posed obstacles to deepening their relationships even with other Finns and Westerners.

Our interviewees could be divided into two groups depending on the type of social support they had in the country of residence. As already noted, this was also linked to their acculturation strategies.

Klaus, Leena and Markku, and also Maarit, whose acculturation strategies seemed to be closer to separation, had most of their social relations with other Finns and Westerners. Markku and Leena said they had more social relations in East Africa than in Finland and that some of these relationships there might be even closer.

*Here it's like, no matter what the time is, you can go somewhere for a visit or the visitors can come. -- Here we are in those kind of circumstances, that if there is an emergency you can for example wake someone up in the middle of the night. So it is closer that way. (Markku) [17]*

*But I have got good friends here, who perhaps understand these situations better than a Finn, who has never lived abroad. Then you don't really understand this country's problems and of course you're not able to understand these totally absurd things that happen here. But I feel that perhaps other things in life, the friends in Finland understand better. (Leena) [18]*

It appeared to us that the East African reality united the Westerners, since they felt more vulnerable and insecure both in physical and psychological terms there than in Europe. The common difficulties created a sense of togetherness and solidarity between them and they were willing to offer their help to each other, knowing that help would be available also when they themselves needed it. Furthermore, there were places and activities that were mainly just for Westerners, because the majority of the host nationals could not usually afford such things, and the local business and intellectual elite had their own social circles.

However, Raija, Antero and Outi, whose acculturation strategy was closer to integration, had mainly host nationals as their friends. Especially Outi and Raija mentioned various times that they had very good relations among them, in contrast to Antero, who felt that even though he had plenty of local friends the creation of equal relationships was difficult. Outi said she spent 90 per cent of all her time with the host nationals and enjoyed those relations.

*But I have a lot of good friendships, I mean just wonderful relationships among the locals -- my very best friends are locals and there is a home, where I can go at any time, even during the night. (Outi) [19]*

*I've experienced it many times as very positive that I am in the local community and they take me as an equal. That I am allowed to eat the same food as they do, I am allowed to eat it with hands sometimes with them and I'm allowed to see the genuine everyday life. Sometimes someone has promised that I could go and wash the dishes with them, I mean usually a guest is not allowed to do such things... and if I 'm allowed to stay overnight in some home, if there is this kind of situation. I have found these positive. (Outi) [20]*

Nevertheless, she also said that many of the relations were not quite as deep as she had expected in advance in Finland. Still, she seemed to have accepted it and enjoyed the relations as they were without demanding too much, realising that for a Westerner it was not possible to get closer.

Maarit differed from the others in the sense that she seemed to have neither that many good Western friends – even though she spent some of her time with them – nor local friends. This was why we thought she had some characteristics of marginalisation in addition to separation. She told us that she felt lonely. As she put it, she had fewer relations in the country of posting and less contact with distant friends than she had had in her previous home country.

*...I would almost like to say that I don't actually feel anyone to be... really like, like a friend... (Maarit) [21]*

She went on to say that there would not be anyone to turn to if she got into real difficulties: she felt she could share only her joys with people there but not deeper personal issues and negative feelings. Perhaps the situations where the Westerners met as a bigger group were not suitable for sharing more serious issues and she did not have many opportunities to discuss in private with someone. Furthermore, as a single person she lacked the support of a spouse or partner that many other expatriates probably had. As a result, she said she had to discuss more personal and serious issues with the friends outside the country.

Interestingly, not only for Maarit but also for others, an important part of social support seemed to come from outside the country of posting. This appeared to serve both as a tie to the interviewees' original culture and to give them at least indirect mental support for the process of acculturation and adaptation in the new country. Most of them kept in close touch with their friends and relatives in Finland and elsewhere in Europe through e-mail, letters, and telephone calls. E-mail appeared to be especially useful, since it provided the possibility of quick and almost real-time communication. Antero, Raija, Leena and Markku also indicated that they enjoyed having visitors from Finland, which in a way could be seen to be a form of social support.

Support from the sending organisation could also be interpreted as a form of social support in some cases. Although there was not very much support for some interviewees, some of them mentioned that such things as professional guidance, newsletters, e-mail messages, telephone calls and a generally positive attitude from the sending organisation were valuable for them. In addition, Outi spoke very warmly about the support of her church in Finland, which had also sent her to East Africa: for example, she

found it very valuable that the church members prayed for her. Furthermore, contact with the other people working for the same organisation in the same country was perceived as important by many of the interviewees.

Returning once more to the interviewees' social support among the host nationals, it was interesting that besides Outi, Raija and Antero, the others would have wished to have local friends but did not. Leena, Markku and Maarit had come to the country with the intention of finding also local friends, and in Maarit's case this wish was especially strong. She said that it was not nice to be in Africa and to spend hardly any time with African people. We felt that she would have liked to have the local community as her primary reference group instead of the community of the Westerners.

*Well I expected that it would have been easier to get to know the locals and then that way get into local life and local everyday life. But it has been quite hopeless. (Maarit) [22]*

*...I would never have believed that I am so much bothered about not having those local friends. (Maarit) [23]*

As regards Klaus, we got the impression that even though he was not very bothered about not having relations with the locals outside of work and had accepted the situation as it was, he still had a positive attitude towards it.

Why had some of these people then created various forms of good relations with the local people and others had not, even though almost all of them had had the same intention? One part of the answer may lie in the strength of motivation: perhaps some of them were not committed enough to really make an effort to overcome the cultural gap and to even make some sacrifices to build those relations. For example, Outi expressed her strong motivation for this several times, whereas Maarit said, disappointedly, that she was not ready to start specifically to search for the relations, if they were not naturally and spontaneously created. We got the impression that attitudes and the strength of motivation can sometimes exceed the influence of the external factors. However, attitudes and motivation provide only a partial explanation for social relations, because external factors also determine various things.

There are, indeed, different factors that influence the interviewees' opportunities for creating human relations in the country of posting. In the next section we shall discuss

these factors, starting with the group level acculturation of the Finns and Westerners, and moving on to life context, residence, nature of the work, church membership and hobbies, family, social status and place in the economic world, age and gender, cultural distance, language skills and the length of time spent in the country.

### *Group Level Acculturation of the Finns and Westerners*

Group level acculturation has an impact on an individual's acculturation (see e.g. Berry 1997; Birman 1994). According to Berry (1997), migrant groups usually change remarkably as a consequence of living between two kinds of cultural influences: moving to a new country includes physical, biological, economic, social and cultural alterations (Berry 1997). When Finnish people move to Africa, the change in the physical environment is remarkable indeed, and they are exposed to infectious diseases that are much more serious than those encountered in Finland. Though the fear of diseases may tie the Westerners to a lifestyle that distances them from many host nationals, the physical and biological aspects are still less important in acculturating to the larger society than the economic, social and cultural ones. Finnish people are often relatively better off in Africa than in Finland as the prices are lower there; from the point of view of the majority of the host nationals they are in fact really rich. This, with other factors such as good level of education and ethnic origin, places them in the upper middle class or high class in the country where, due to relatively high power distance, class boundaries are much more visible than in economically and socially more egalitarian Finland. The culture of Finns living abroad also seems to go through changes, but it is difficult to reliably describe those with such a short experience. Nevertheless, we got the impression that due to the low prices, they can, for example, eat out and undertake things such as excursions much more than they perhaps could in Finland. Furthermore, in bigger towns where there are many Western people working and living, the atmosphere is more international than in Finland, and the Finns may have several Western contacts. Similar ethnic and cultural characteristics and economic situation unites the Westerners and creates a contrast between them and the host nationals.

Finnish people rarely go to work in African countries as a large group at the same time, and thus Finns do not experience acculturation as a group simultaneously. However, in



some places in Africa there are Finnish communities, the size of which changes regularly, as some people come to work in Africa and others return to Finland. In one way or another the Finnish way of life has already been established where such a community exists. In other words, the Finns already there have done some of the “preparatory work” for the acculturation and adaptation of the newcomers, who therefore do not necessarily have to start their acculturation process to the larger society from the very beginning, but they may rather absorb the way of life of the Finnish community. This might make it easier for them but also limit their chances to experience the African reality.

We have already implied that the group level culture of the Finns and the Westerners appeared to us as somewhat separated from the larger, African, society. This was likely to have an impact on acculturation at the individual level. When many others had also chosen the separation strategy, it might feel more natural and socially acceptable than if the ethos among the other Finns and Westerner had been pro integration. We speculated that perhaps the newcomers quite quickly adopted the assumption that seemed to be alive among the Finns and Westerners; namely, that there was not much deeper interaction between them and host nationals and that it would be difficult. All in all, the group level acculturation of the community of Finns and Westerners in that East African country was also likely to have had an impact on the adoption of acculturation strategies and general attitudes of our informants. In fact our findings on the influence of the expatriate community seem to be congruent with Kealey’s (1990) results, as discussed in the following section, which deals with how this influence was further regulated by other factors, including life setting and residence.

### ***Life Setting and Residence***

Where a person lives affects his acculturation in various ways. It, firstly, defines how many other Finns or Westerners live in the vicinity. This further influences the opportunities for creating relations among other Finns and Westerners and modifies the extent to which their group culture – including the acculturation strategy at the group level – influences the person. Secondly, it plays an important role in the person’s practical opportunities for interaction with the host nationals. Thirdly, the local people’s attitudes towards Westerners

and Western culture also vary depending on location. This also has an impact on the interaction and regulates how much the Westerners need to adjust themselves to be able to participate in this interaction.

We speculated that the fact that Klaus, Markku, Leena and Maarit lived in bigger cities had indeed had an influence on their choice of acculturation strategy. There are usually more Finnish and Western people in urban settings, and they thus have the opportunity to form human relations networks amongst themselves. The co-nationals employed by the same organisation easily get to know each other, and people holding posts of a similar kind naturally have much in common. The similarity of the basic characteristics of culture in Western countries, especially when contrasted with African culture, increases the affinity between the Westerners. This is further strengthened by the common difficulties they face in their every-day life in Africa. Where there are various Westerners, it is also easier to form a common Western group culture and live according to it in world of their own alongside the larger society than it would be if there were only a handful of Westerners around.

In contrast to the others, Raija and Antero lived in a town where there were very few other Westerners. Therefore, they did not have many opportunities to build relations with Westerners or be influenced by their group culture. This seemed to have had facilitated the creation of relations with the host nationals and led them towards a strategy of integration instead of one of separation.

However, it was not only the urban–rural contrast that influenced our interviewees' acculturation but also the form of residence. We got the impression that living in a fenced compound with other Finns and Westerners had further tied Markku, Leena, and Maarit to the community of other Finns or Westerners. Leena, for example, mentioned that she and her husband had many Finnish friends from the compound they lived in. In addition to being a supportive factor probably facilitating their psychological adaptation, this was also likely to distance them from the larger society and diminish their opportunities for acculturation and sociocultural adaptation. Maarit said that living in the compound isolated her from the local people and their daily life, even though some local people also lived in the compound. She had been thinking about the opportunity of finding a house somewhere else, but had given it up mainly because of security concerns:

*In other words, this life of an expatriate is like... if you have a car, worth something like twenty thousand dollars, no one is going to believe that you don't have anything in your car or in your house. I mean, you have to have that guard, at the gate...(Maarit) [24]*

The security questions were something that all the Westerners needed to consider. Those that did not live in a compound but in a private house usually had a wall around it and guards at the gate. In general, the life arrangements resulting from security considerations inevitably seemed to widen the gap between the Westerners and the local people.

Interestingly, Outi showed that living within a community of Finns and even in a compound did not necessarily direct the choice of acculturation strategy in a certain direction. There had been some local people living in the compound in the town where she had lived the first three years of her stay in that country. She had made friends with those people, who had also become an important link to the larger society outside the compound and thus essentially facilitated her integration. The other Finns had not understood Outi's relations with the local people; they had somehow perceived them as threatening and would have liked Outi to adopt their own way of life. Thus, differently from for example Markku's and Leena's case, the other Finns had not thus been very much of a supportive factor in her psychological adaptation. Rather they had posed obstacles to her acculturation and sociocultural adaptation. Outi had, nevertheless, kept to her path and tried her best to find a balance between the locals and the Finns.

As already mentioned, we got the impression that the difference between urban and rural settings also had an influence on the attitudes of the host nationals. In urban towns, influences of Western culture were much stronger and more visible than in very rural and outlying communities. Therefore, people there might be more in favour of westernisation, with a stronger admiration of Western culture and an enthusiasm to copy it, and in an atmosphere of this kind Westerners may be allowed to be Westerners without demanding them to adjust very much. In other words, the need of the Westerners to acculturate to the local culture may sometimes be reduced by the locals' willingness to acculturate to Western culture. Furthermore, people in larger towns may be different in the sense that it is not as easy to create relations with them as it is in the countryside.

In addition to life setting and form of residence, also marital status and the existence of family regulated the interviewees' relations both towards the other Westerners and towards the host nationals.

### *Marital Status and Family*

In line with Kealey's (1990) findings, our study also revealed that family functioned as a form of social support for the interviewees, but having children also diminished their contact with the local culture, thus reducing their opportunities for acculturation and sociocultural adaptation. Additionally, what appeared important to us were the locals' attitudes towards the interviewees' marital status and existence of family and their consequent influence on interaction.

All the interviewees that were married, i.e., Klaus, Leena, Markku, Raija and Antero, indeed emphasised that support from the spouse and discussions with him or her were important. Because East African cultures are collectivistic cultures, family is a much more important reference group there than in Finland (see Hofstede 1992), an idea which was strongly confirmed by our observations during our stay. As there may not be that many other alternative reference groups, the family's importance as a source of social support is also stressed for a Western expatriate in the new and different environment; it must be especially valuable at the beginning when everything is new, there are various stress factors, and one does not know many new people yet.

As already stated, however, our impression was that family may also distance the Westerners from the local people for various reasons. Depending on the age of the children, a lot of the parents' free time and energy is directed to them, and not much is left for building contact with the new culture.

*For me, still, the most important thing is that our family is well, and our kids are feeling fine and that there still remains a kind of peace and harmony at home -- I feel that our own family is the essential, and only after that can we start thinking if we have resources to give somewhere else. So, that kind of a calling I have. Many people would want to go straight away to help this country and its people, but I feel that I have the responsibility for our family and for our children's future and for their survival in a new country. (Leena)*  
[25]

Markku and Leena actually saw their posting in East Africa also as a chance to spend more time with the family. Furthermore, they perceived it as an opportunity for their children, for example, in the sense of learning English. It was very important for them that the family enjoyed their stay and this had a considerable impact on their satisfaction with their posting in East Africa.

Parents also need to think about the health and security of their children, a factor which influences where they can live and the living standard required. Furthermore, due to the fact that their stay in the new country is usually just temporary and they will return to Finland to continue their lives, the parents may often be concerned – consciously or unconsciously – that their children become socialised to Western culture, which has an impact on how and with whom they spend their time. The children get Western friends through international schools and hobbies, which again also influences the social relations of their parents.

*For example our kids have friends, and through them, we've got to know their parents, who could be from any country, but usually not locals. And this way these social networks are built, which are somewhere else than the life here.*  
(Klaus) [26]

Antero's and Raija's children were already adults and were not with them in East Africa. It seemed that they thus had a more flexible timetable and more freedom. Antero and Raija indeed had more relations with the locals than Klaus, Markku and Leena, who had their children with them. This, however, was also influenced by factors other than the mere absence of the children.

As family and children are so highly regarded in East Africa, the existence of a spouse and children is likely to increase the status of an expatriate in the local community. Both Maarit and Outi were neither married nor had children, which is very unusual in East Africa. They, in other words, lacked a primary reference group and their life situation was also somewhat different from that of the local women of their age, who very rarely lived alone but with a spouse, children or some relatives. People need to have things in common to identify with each other and to make friends, and their single status decreased the number of things they could share with the local women. Women living alone may even be

perceived as strange by the locals. Outi did not say anything about the reactions towards her marital status; perhaps the local people were accustomed to female missionaries being sometimes single and not having a family. However, a comment of Maarit's may well reflect how she had experienced the attitudes of the local people:

*And then I have to tell about this crazy situation that I am neither married nor have kids. (Maarit) [27]*

Interestingly, the social support situation of Outi and Maarit was very different: Outi had plenty of local friends and a couple of close Western friends, whereas Maarit did not feel anyone to be a real friend. We came to the conclusion that singleness can be either a threat or an opportunity. On the one hand, a single person can be left really alone, if he or she – for various reasons – does not find friends in the new country. On the other hand, a single person does not have any responsibility for family and children and can thus direct all his or her time and energy left over from work to building relationships with other people and to learning about the host culture, and, moreover, he or she does not have to think about the security of the family.

We have now discussed how factors such as group level acculturation, life setting, residence, marital status and family, have influenced the social relations of our informants and thus also their acculturation. We will now examine how the attitudes towards Western people in the larger society influence their social relations and acculturation. We start by briefly describing these attitudes, move on to examining the social and economic status of the Westerners as perceived by the local people, and then discuss its influences on the relations between the two groups. Also, we will briefly examine how the age and gender of an interviewee affected the locals' attitudes towards him or her.

### ***Attitudes towards Westerners in the Larger Society***

Consistent with Berry's (1997) theory, this study also showed that the society of settlement had its impact on the acculturation and adaptation of our interviewees in various ways. However, as it appeared to us, it was the historical factors, i.e., the legacy of colonialism with segregation between blacks and whites, living in the minds of the people, rather than

any well-formulated immigration policy that played a crucial role. Many host nationals were used to thinking that white people were somehow superior to them. They took it as natural that whites were separated from the larger society, and they behaved on the basis of this presumption. This complicated the creation of closer and more equal relationships between them and the Westerners, and made the formation of expatriate communities and the Westerners' withdrawal to them appear an easier and acceptable alternative.

As Horenczyk (1997) has emphasised, however, the local society was not a homogeneous group of people with uniform attitudes and behaviours in this case, either. The country was built up of diverse ethnic groups all with some cultural patterns of their own. Furthermore, there were huge differences in the population in terms of education, westernisation, and attitudes towards Western culture.

### *Interviewees' Social Status and Place in the Economic World*

Even though there was variation in the attitudes of the local people, one very general tendency was that Westerners were perceived to have a higher social status and place in the economic world. As we shall see, this had various consequences: excessive respect, hidden bitterness, utilitarian aspirations, and different economic opportunities for spending free time. All these issues complicated the interaction between Westerners and locals and thus affected Westerners' acculturation.

The reasons for the high status of our interviewees in that society were many. As already mentioned, due to the colonial background of the country, westerners were highly regarded and many local people felt inferior to them, but they were also sometimes hated and criticised by some local people, especially intellectuals, politicians and business leaders.

However, the influence of this generally higher social status of Westerners was further accentuated by high power distance in East African countries (Hofstede 1992). All our interviewees were also well educated and had an "expert position" at their work place or in their local community in the East African country. Furthermore, they were much better-off in economic terms than the majority of the local people.

*...they kind of imagine that a white is something higher and greater than they are themselves, because I have money, and I mean, money is one of the most important things, and education is another -- for me it has not necessarily been nice in every situation if they have tried to lift me to a higher level -- as I see it, it has had the effect that they somehow set us in a different position than themselves. (Outi) [28]*

Issues of this kind were brought up several times by the interviewees. Also Markku, Leena and Maarit said that the host nationals often put themselves in the background and did not dare to express their opinions, which Maarit called the fear of the white man.

These status differences and especially the different economic situation indeed complicated the interviewee's daily interaction with the locals, making it more difficult to create closer relationships with the local people. As we saw it, both attitudes and practical issues played an important role in this.

*I mean it's awfully hard to make friends really properly because you are so "big", but in this community I have rather good friends. We aren't that equal, because I have money and they don't necessarily have... (Antero) [29]*

*Yes there are many Finnish people that visit us, but locals – there are only a few. I wonder if they find it difficult to come to a foreigner's home or not, but not that many have come to our place. (Markku) [30]*

*Perhaps the question is, even though you would not quite admit it, the difference in living standard. I mean, our living standards are just so different. (Markku) [31]*

The difference in living standard may also have been the main reason why Klaus preferred to keep the two spheres of life, work and free time, separate.

*...their living conditions are so plain that it is not so easy for them to invite a guy like me -- Perhaps it is the same if we invite some local colleagues -- it may be that even after such a long stay in Africa it might be hard to find it natural and easy. You might feel a bit stiff, is it a bit too fine here at our place and something like that. (Klaus) [32]*

Klaus had said earlier that he and his African colleagues felt equal and talked at the same level at work, which he found very positive. We speculated that perhaps he had reasoned



that this feeling of equality would have been destroyed if he had invited his colleagues to his home where the gap in living standard between them would have become more apparent.

Furthermore, Markku said that economic differences created an obstacle to spending free time with the local people: the locals just could not afford to spend their free time in the same way as he, his family, and their Finnish friends did, because, for example, eating out and trips would have been too expensive for the host nationals. Even though he presented this issue as a practical problem, we were wondering whether it also was attitudinal to some extent.

All in all, we concluded that high status both in social and economic terms may have a two-fold impact on the acculturation and adaptation of Westerners. On the one hand, respect may give them more power, facilitate their work and increase their satisfaction, which further contributes to their psychological well being and psychological adaptation. On the other hand, too much respect and feeling of inferiority on the part of the local people perhaps creates distance and complicates the creation of close relationships. There may also be hidden resentment and bitterness due to historical factors, and perhaps the whites are not accepted as members of the local community at a deeper level. All this decreases their opportunities to learn about the local culture, which, with the possible feeling of not being accepted, is likely to have a negative impact on their acculturation and sociocultural adaptation.

Moreover, the fact that Westerners are more wealthy not only creates respect and distance, but also often leads to utilitarian tendencies in the host nationals. We got the impression that the local people in a corresponding societal and economic situation also face similar kinds of problems: Antero said that people often think they can take from the one who has a lot. However, a white skin further aggravates this tendency. This causes negative feelings in white people and makes it difficult for them to trust local people. All this complicates the creation of equal and trusting relationships. Antero brought up these issues several times:

*...there are different prices for black and white here. Or, it is not fixed in any way, but they look at the person... and they classify you as rich, and you are fleeced for extra... I mean this is what is crucial. That everyone strives to maximise profits. And anyone who experiences it knows the feeling that they are trying to cheat me. (Antero) [33]*

*There is no chance of having close relationships like that...it is a safety question. I don't want them to know about me so much, because there are always these ulterior motives...(Antero) [34]*

As already mentioned, security questions also create the need for living behind walls, which may further distance white people from local people. The issues related to a higher living standard and living behind walls and their influence on relations with local people are complex, and practically all the Westerners working there need to take them into consideration. Leena concluded her thoughts about the way of life as a Westerner as follows:

*...I mean when we are Finnish, it doesn't mean that we need to even think about living somewhere on a farm and so on. I feel like it doesn't make any real difference in which kind of a house you live here, but what kind of attitude you have towards these locals. How you meet these locals and do you welcome them. I think that makes much more difference than if you lived the same way. In a very primitive way and as a Finn all your resources are wasted on surviving there and trying not to get sick. That is not natural... Yes, it's important to keep your health and your mental health so that you are able to do the job you came here to do. (Leena) [35]*

### ***The Influence of Age and Gender on the Attitudes of the Locals***

In our study, age and gender as such did not seem to have much impact on the acculturation of our informants; rather, how the host nationals perceived those traits on the basis of their culture played a more important role. Age and gender affected the status of the interviewees and consequently the way the locals treated them, which might have had some further influence on their acculturation and adaptation.

Antero referred a couple of times to his position as a man who is relatively old in the local society:

*...men are highly regarded here and even more if you have a little bit of grey in your hair. (Antero) [36]*

*...I'm so terribly old. On that local scale I am so really high. I am very much honoured, I have grandchildren! (Antero) [37]*

Other men, Klaus and Markku, did not bring out the local people's reactions to their gender. Perhaps their gender facilitated their relationships with the local people and they had got so used to it that they did not find it important enough to mention. However, Markku once referred to gender issues in the new culture, pointing out that there women were thought to be men's property.

Raija seemed to have experienced the consequences of this kind of thinking in practice. She talked about how she had found it difficult to accept that people in the beginning had regarded her only as a wife of her husband and as the mother of her children, but not as an individual person. She said she felt good and calm if people respected her as a woman. In a way, she had got used to the Western role of the woman and the local people had got used to the African role of woman, and there had been a conflict when those images had clashed and she had felt frustrated, which might have made her adaptation and acculturation more difficult in the beginning.

Furthermore, Maarit said that she felt very different from the local woman as she had many more opinions and she expressed them. Perhaps her different way of acting on the basis of different role expectations as a woman created distance between her and the local women, reduced the common ground needed for identifying with each other, and thus complicated the creation of relationships and diminished her possibilities for acculturation and sociocultural adaptation.

On the other hand, Leena and Outi did not bring out gender issues. Leena perhaps did not have that much contact with local culture that she would really have faced these problems, whereas Outi was so deeply involved in it that she might have got so used to it that she no longer paid much attention to it.

The impression we got is that men in a way receive respect automatically, whereas women need to make more effort to be accepted and taken seriously. This is likely to affect the psychological well being of women when they have to cope with feelings of being underrated, something also noted by Berry (1997). Therefore, in this case being a man could be one facilitating factor in acculturation. For women, on the contrary, gender might be a complicating factor.

We have now considered how the attitudes in the wider society and the perceptions of the locals of Westerners' social and economic status and their age and gender

influenced their acculturation. Next we will have a look at the alternative reference groups through which the Westerners could build relations with the host nationals and learn about their culture. We will discuss work, church and hobbies as such channels and consider the differences between our interviewees.

### *Work, Church and Hobbies as Channels to the Larger Society*

All the interviewees, besides Leena, had come to this country to work, and the work community indeed was one important way of creating relationships with host nationals. All the interviewees had local colleagues except Leena, who was a housewife and who felt that this to some extent limited her chances of getting to know local people, although she had got some contacts through her husband's work. However, there were great differences even in how the other interviewees had really been able to utilise work as a channel for building friendships with the locals and for acquiring the new culture.

Raija and Outi had created many important relationships through work, and also for Antero it had been a way of getting to know lots of people. In contrast, for Klaus, Markku and Maarit the relationships from work belonged primarily just to work time and they did not spend their free time with their colleagues. Klaus somehow perceived his work time and free time as separate spheres of life:

*...it does not have to be that you need to be together also during leisure time in order to be able to work together. Cultures can be different, during leisure time one can live in a different world than during working hours. (Klaus) [38]*

For him not having local friends during free time seemed to be a conscious decision and he was happy with the situation.

*We could invite people home but on the other hand you feel that work is work and after there is something else. (Klaus) [39]*

Perhaps Raija, Outi and Antero had tried from the beginning to extend their relations from work also to free time; they, in other words, may have had different aims than Klaus, for example.

Although work in principle created opportunities to get to know local people, it could also limit the possibilities for building friendship with people. This was the case of Maarit: work seemed to dominate her life and she travelled a lot because of her work.

*There are some of these locals there, but we all have those kind of jobs that even the neighbour is wonders if I live there or not. I'm on the move a lot, he is travelling, there's a lot to be done in the field that no, there in the neighbourhood it stays just sort of on the greeting level. (Maarit) [40]*

In other words, she did not have the time needed for building relationships:

*The question is that in the first place you need to have time together with someone to become close. You need to have the chance... to share thoughts or at least to have a chance to chat. When there is no chance, there is no way to become close. (Maarit) [41]*

Perhaps having the social role of a development co-operation worker or a missionary also has an impact on acculturation, because the nature of the tasks puts different demands on people. We got the impression that work was what dominated the life of development co-operation workers. They had come to the country to carry out a certain task, which did not necessarily require a very deep knowledge of the local culture, something which further influenced their goals and choices.

*...we have rather come here to do the work than to adapt and like integrate in that environment. (Maarit) [42]*

In contrast, getting into close contact with the local community appeared to be an integral part of the work of a missionary.

*...a missionary leaves for a longer time and... commits herself to living with the people, eating their food and many times to overnighing in those conditions, even though the home is this way different. However, quite many times we have to share peoples' everyday life. (Raija) [43]*

Maarit's answer to the question "have you consciously tried to take in the culture of this country" reveals something essential about the role of culture in work:

*No, not otherwise than that I'm able to behave properly in the situations which call for different behaviour. I mean that learning the culture is mainly a kind of working tool. (Maarit) [44]*

In other words, knowing the local culture is an important tool in work for both the development co-operation workers and missionaries. However, due to the nature of their work, missionaries seemed to need a bigger and more sophisticated culture tool than the development co-operation workers.

One of the reasons for this may lie in the fact that the people the development co-operation workers and missionaries worked with differed greatly from each other in terms of their educational and social-class background. The African colleagues of development co-operation workers were highly educated people, and both Klaus and Maarit said that they did not really feel that cultural differences had a big influence on communication with them. Perhaps higher education could be seen as a form of acculturation to Western culture, because the formal education system and a great deal of its content had come to Africa primarily from – or through – Western culture, thus reflecting its worldview. Therefore, Klaus and Maarit shared education as common ground with their colleagues, and consequently they themselves did not have to adjust so much since their colleagues had already adjusted. However, missionaries involved in this study worked closer to the grass-roots level, dealing with various kinds of people, and often with the less educated ones, who thus had less acculturation to Western culture. Therefore, the missionaries needed to bridge the cultural gap to be successful in their work by learning and adjusting.

*We are with all of them, beggars, and the people from the countryside, farmers, nomads... those are the people we are working with. (Raija) [45]*

We also speculated that one reason why the development co-operation workers did not meet their local colleagues in free time might be that during that time the colleagues lived more in the African way than during their working hours. Consequently the cultural gap between them and the Westerners widened, and thus it was more difficult to meet during that time. On the other hand, development co-operation workers' local colleagues were perhaps also used to foreign experts who come and go continuously and travel much during their stay. Thus the local counterparts might have lost their interest in making an effort to get

to know these “visitors”. Yet, in church and NGO contexts the situation may be different (in smaller communities in rural areas), since there are fewer foreigners and more continuity in interaction.

As Outi saw it, similar motives and goals in life created intimacy with the host nationals. Perhaps the fact that the missionaries, Outi, Antero, Raija, Markku and Leena, shared the Christian faith with their local colleagues helped to some extent to bridge the cultural distance and made making friends easier. However, for Markku and Leena the church, though important, still seemed to be a somewhat separate sphere of life: we got the impression that they were rather “visitors” than long-term “participants” of the church.

*Well we have some good friends, mostly through work and then some who are there at the church.-- I'd say they are quite much related to that work and church but not as much to leisure time. (Markku) [46]*

Perhaps they had not been in the country long enough for them to really establish their relations within the church.

Especially for Outi, Antero and Raija church, however, was an important reference group where many of their social relations were centred. It was something that they belonged to and where they felt accepted and cared for. For example, Antero said that the church people were always very concerned that he and Raija were fine and they were very willing to offer their help. Furthermore, work and church were to a large extent overlapping spheres in Outi's, Antero's and Raija's lives, which further facilitated the creation of relationships. In their case church indeed appeared to be an important gateway to the larger society and was likely to have a very positive contribution to their acculturation and adaptation.

All in all, alternative reference groups based on a common hobby or interest are perhaps more difficult to find in East Africa than in Western societies, and this is also greatly influenced by one's life context. Thus, especially in rural areas the church plays an important role as an instance offering newcomers opportunities for building social relations. Without this link, a person's chances of building relationships would be much more limited. Maarit had noticed this in her own life:

*And because I'm not really the type that I'd go to church and I don't bother going there for the sake of getting to know people there -- then that social circle is left out -- and also you could go somewhere in a Rumba-restaurant or somewhere else to sit and meet people that way, but well, there are not so many of them there either -- there are actually no such places where you would go in the evenings. (Maarit) [47]*

### ***Cultural Distance***

Berry (1997, 23) has argued that the greater the cultural distance is, the more difficult the acculturation process is. The cultural distance between Finnish and East African culture is extensive and its consequences were seen in our study: our interviewees had various difficulties in their acculturation.

It appeared to us, indeed, that as a consequence of these great differences between the two cultures the majority of our interviewees did not acculturate to any significant extent to East African culture, but rather to the smaller subculture of other Westerners. It is understandable that it is easier to settle down and feel comfortable and accepted among other Westerners, whose culture is not that far from one's own. Moreover, the relatively high cultural distance between Finnish and East African culture may be one reason why the acculturation that had happened was only behavioural and none of the informants had really acculturated at the level of their identity.

As we pointed out above, the different interviewees were dealing with people from different sub-cultures, and that might have had its effect on how people experienced the cultural distance. Klaus' and Maarit's colleagues were highly educated, and they noted that the meaning of cultural distance diminished at work. On the other hand, the people with whom Raija, Antero, Outi, Markku and Leena were working, were not as educated and had not absorbed many Western values or ways of thinking. They were thus dealing with wider cultural differences.

As regards the four dimensions of culture proposed by Hofstede (1992, 76–202), all of them were noted by our interviewees. Power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity were referred to as problematic, whereas collectivism was in general considered positive. For example, the practical consequences of power distance often became visible in the work setting and were accentuated by the interviewees' Western background:



communication between the boss and other people in higher positions did not work very well among the locals. Maarit, who did not usually feel the influence of cultural difference very much in her work place, describes the situation:

*The only situation where I can actually notice it [the difference], and what on the other hand annoys me, is that people don't come and talk about things directly – I mean it is something like wallpapering, that it seems fine and however things aren't fine. (Maarit) [48]*

The last dimension of culture difference proposed by Hofstede (1992, 163), uncertainty avoidance, also came up clearly in the interviews. Many of the interviewees, who as Finns were high in their uncertainty avoidance, thought that the host nationals, who were low in uncertainty avoidance, were too lazy and did not take any responsibility, which caused frustration and questioning among the interviewees. Frustration like this is also related to the difference in dealing with time: a person coming from a Western, monochronic and work-oriented culture has difficulties to understand a polychronic, social life orientated and event-related culture, where people only take action when something is happening but do not plan things beforehand (Dahl 1997, 80–81).

Our study seemed to confirm the validity of what Kim (1997) pointed out about the influence of clearly differing physical characteristics as a factor widening the gap caused by language and cultural differences between expatriates and locals. We often felt that our white skin colour in a way stigmatised us and posed a barrier between the locals and us. It was the feature that drew all the attention from everything else that we were and evoked certain stereotypes in the local people making them think that a set of some other characteristics was automatically linked to our skin colour. It often took time and effort for a local person we were talking to get over his stereotype and to approach us just as human beings, individuals and personas without any predetermined characteristics. However, we noticed that also we had stereotypes about the local people, which complicated communication.

On the basis of our own experience we could thus conclude that the different physical characteristics, especially skin colour, were also likely to widen cultural distance between our interviewees and the locals. However, it has to be remembered that it indeed is not the actual physical difference that is crucial but the perceptions and ideas people attach

to it. We assume that in our study historical issues were the powerful factor influencing people's perceptions and their consequent behaviour.

All in all, one cannot talk about any cultural differences as an objective issue; rather, it has to be considered how people actually experience the differences. Here the degree of a person's ethnocentrism or ethnorelativism (Bennet 1998) enters the scene. The more ethnocentric a person is, i.e., the more he thinks that his way of seeing the world and behaving is the only correct alternative, the more disturbing he is likely to find cultural differences. Furthermore, knowledge and understanding of the other culture help to deal with the differences. For example, when a Westerner understands the logic behind the behaviour of an African acting according to the polychronic or event-related time concept, it is much easier for him to adopt a calm and appropriate attitude towards it and not be irritated. We got the impression that also in our interviewees' case deeper understanding about the values and world-view governing the behaviour of the local people would have been very useful.

### *Time Spent in the Country and Language Skills*

What also appeared to have an important impact on social networks and acculturation was the time spent in the country. There was a clear difference in the relations between those that had spent almost four years in the country and those that had been there less than a year. It has to be remembered that even in Finland a Finn that moves to a new place builds a somewhat different social network in four years than in one year – and there are no cultural and language differences to complicate relations.

When one moves to a new country, settling down in the new environment is a challenging process and not that much time and energy is left over for building close relationships. Furthermore, the longer the time one has spent in the new country, the better one has got used to the way of life there and the more chances one has had to learn the local language and culture, gaining deeper understanding of the cultural differences that may cause difficulties in communication with the local people.

Outi, Raija and Antero spoke the local language and they communicated mainly through it. The others mostly knew just some words and phrases they needed for greeting

people and doing shopping, but did not really *speak* the language. Knowing the local language had an important influence on the relationships with the locals: Raija, Antero and Outi, who spoke the local language fluently, had plenty of relationships with the local people, whereas the others, who did not know the language, had far fewer relationships. However, all the interviewees recognised the importance of language in creating contacts.

*...that of course I have noticed, that the language is terribly important, knowing the local language would be important, and we do mean to continue studying it now. I mean that is the key to getting close to these locals, even if they speak English, but if you know their language, they would straight away respect you differently and you could get into their way of thinking in a quite different way. (Leena) [49]*

Knowing the local language even lowers the prices:

*There is of course now this shortcut: because we speak the local language, I'm placed kind of like in the middle, but if we spoke English, it would be a totally different thing. For us, who speak the local language, there are different prices even though we are white and English-speaking people have their own prices. (Antero) [50]*

In Raija's and Antero's case, not knowing English very well was an obstacle to creating relations with other Westerners.

*I can't speak English well enough. I should study more. It is one of those things that prevents me from getting to know, for example, this white elite who live here, I haven't got to know them at all, because they use English. And when Antero can't speak English even as much as I do, it has been somehow hard to get to know that part of the population. (Raija) [51]*

Perhaps the fact that Raija and Antero did not have the language to communicate with other Westerners – and there were hardly any other Finns around – facilitated the creation of relations with the locals and contributed to Raija's and Antero's acculturation and adaptation to the local culture and the larger society.

## 6.4 Difficulties and Supportive Factors

In the following section we will begin by concentrating on the difficulties that development co-operation workers and missionaries are likely to face in the field. Then we will go on to the factors that are supportive in acculturation situations. We will present what the interviewees found important in their own situation and what kind of supportive factors they think they would have needed. In addition, we will examine our own findings from the study and try to build some links to the theory presented earlier.

### 6.4.1 Difficulties

In accordance with previous studies, all of the interviewees in this study had also faced difficulties right after they arrived in the country and started to settle down. These difficulties seemed to arise from facing the new environment at the same time as being tired and having to take care of all the practical issues, i.e., getting permits and insurance, finding places to get food, water and medicine, trying to unpack and set up home, getting to know people and learning to act in the new culture. All these new things connected with arrangements and getting used to the hot and humid climate took a lot of energy and time. Furthermore, there was the fear of diseases and of the dangerous traffic at the same time. For some of our interviewees this also caused stress and depression. As regards Leena, this is how she experienced the difficulties in the beginning:

*So much new stuff came and at the same time you try to unpack and take care of the kids and find where the shops are. And at the same time we had inflammations of the ear and had to go to the doctor, and it felt that... always there was someone knocking on the door and wanting to come and look who has moved here. It felt like it was a continuous flood of new things, I mean it felt like my head was going to explode. (Leena) [52]*

What we observed was that our interviewees did not have so much privacy in this culture as they had been used to. We could also say that the majority of them lacked social support and would have needed it more. All the interviewees mentioned that contacting close friends and relatives in Finland was difficult and consequently they did not get so much support from

them. In a situation where they did not know the local language and the people felt distant, support from Finland would have been important.

In the long run, deeper cultural differences were experienced as difficulties. Almost all of the interviewees complained that bribery and corruption were really hard to accept. People often tried to take advantage of Westerners and they felt they could not trust the host nationals. Furthermore, this led to Westerners not feeling safe in the country and having to isolate themselves from the locals to a certain extent. As was already mentioned, this was a factor that created distance between the members of the two cultures, thus preventing the creation of supportive and trusting relationships. Consequently, many other interviewees felt they did not have enough social support, which they experienced as a difficulty.

It came out among the interviewees that there had been frustration with local people's – as the interviewees saw it – irresponsibility and inefficiency. They felt that the locals did not seem to know how to plan and organise their things. We interpreted this as a consequence of the different time concepts, according to Hall (1984, 44–46, 54–55), who has stated that it is common that due to these different time systems people often feel situations to be frustrating. Furthermore, Dahl (1994, 83) has stated that Westerners, who usually automatically perceive things from their profit-oriented linear perspective, may judge people representing different time concepts and think they are irresponsible and non-productive. As we see it, the work these people had come to do in Africa was scheduled according to the Western, monochronic time concept, but it had to be carried out in a polychronic culture with representatives of that culture. Thus, it was hard to make locals, who sometimes lived in difficult socio-economic situations, to take responsibility and be as efficient as Westerners were, which caused frustration and stress.

From the point of view of Leena and Markku, worry about their children and how they would adjust was experienced as a difficulty. They also mentioned that they did not have so much money to spend as they had been used to, and they had to control their children's activities and their own spending. As Leena was a housewife at home, she lacked a reference group from work and she felt it was hard to get into local life. As regards Markku, he was critical of himself and said he was often frustrated thinking whether he was efficient or not. Was he helping and doing any good at all?

Maarit mentioned that some problems had arisen in the working place and the social relations there. She also felt lonely, a fact that complicated her acculturation situation. Raija and Antero did not have their children with them and they missed them, and they both had also suffered much from tropical diseases, which felt especially difficult.

In the beginning Outi had different kinds of problems than the rest of the interviewees, because her difficulties were related to Finnish people in the field. As mentioned above, other Finnish people living in the compound had somewhat different goals and opinions than she had. They did not like the fact that Outi spent a lot of time with the locals and they would have expected her to live like the rest of them. Living in the compound in a way restricted Outi's life, because she had to report about everything she did and everywhere she went and when. This may be connected to the link between group level acculturation and individual level acculturation: collective experience shapes the psychological acculturation of the individual (Berry, et al. 1992, 272; Berry 1997, 7; Birman 1994, 267; Berry, in press.). Outi did not enjoy living in the compound and in the urban city. Moreover, she was also bothered by the fact that the host nationals often lifted her to a higher position than themselves, because she was a Westerner.

Only Klaus mentioned very few difficulties in addition to the ones in the beginning. He had accepted the hardships and knew that he should see beyond them.

*There are no difficulties, the kind you would not be aware of or which you wouldn't cope with. (Klaus) [53]*

#### **6.4.2 Supportive Factors**

The findings of this study suggest some characteristics and attitudes that are helpful in the acculturation situation. First of all, the basis is that one's own life and, where relevant, one's marriage should be well balanced; only after that is working and successful acculturating possible. It is desirable for the person to be open-minded and patient, but also humble and modest. As was mentioned in the theory section of this study, interest in different cultures and people, and willingness to learn from others are crucial – without them a person is not likely to acculturate. This is also made clear by Kealey (1990, 7) and LaFromboise et al. (1993, 404).

A person has to be realistic and understand that he cannot make massive changes, but the work is still valuable. He should accept there are difficulties and defects and try to see beyond them. It also became apparent that it is important to know oneself and have self-awareness. Furthermore, a person should accept himself as being different and should not demand too much, neither from oneself nor from others. Inner motivation, for example, a sense of calling in missionary work, facilitates acculturation. Furthermore, if people see their post as an experience, not only as a task to be done, they are much more likely to bear setbacks and difficulties. General life experience is also an important advantage in dealing with the new culture and novel situations:

*I guess experience of life has a role in it. When you have experienced this and that and you have just survived. I've been playing the survivor. (Antero) [55]*

According to Ward (1996, 132), there are various studies showing that language fluency has a positive impact on adjustment and general satisfaction. Among our interviewees, language skills were mentioned several times as a desirable supportive factor. As already mentioned, Antero, Raija and Outi spoke the local language fluently, which helped them to get deeper and more equal contacts with the locals. This was a major support as they got acceptance and help in learning culture-specific skills from the local people. Raija reflected and commented on the feeling she had in the beginning when she did not know the language yet as follows:

*Probably the most difficult thing with the language is that you feel stupid. And every one else thinks I'm stupid. Or oneself feels that all the others think I'm stupid. But not anymore... it has helped a lot. (Raija) [54]*

Previous experience of development countries was mentioned as a supportive factor, just as Parker and McEvoy (1993, cited by Ward 1996, 132) found: previous cross-cultural experience facilitates adaptation and helps in dealing with the challenges in the new culture. It appeared to us that the most important supportive factors are viable social relations and knowing the local language and culture. Also, knowing enough about cultural differences and accepting them is crucial.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

In this section, we will, firstly, start by examining the core of the findings related to our research questions and secondly, we will consider their transferability. Thirdly, we will reflect on the reliability and validity of this study. Fourthly, we will move on consider the theories used and how they contributed to this study, and summarise our conclusions on the basis of them and our findings. Fifthly and finally, we will review the practical significance of the findings and suggest useful areas for future studies.

### **7.1 Reflection on the Study**

We were able to obtain answers to all the three research questions, as specified at the outset of the study. The main question concerned the acculturation and adaptation of Finnish development co-operation workers and missionaries in East Africa. We could conclude that the majority of the interviewees did not acculturate to East African culture to any significant extent, and even though they adapted to their lives in that country, adaptation did not increase their fit within the larger society. The major reason for this lay in their social support.

Specifically, the amount of the social support they got from the host nationals had a direct impact on the level of their acculturation, because it was these relations that offered them opportunities for acquiring local culture and language. For example, Outi had a rich network of social relations among the local people, and as a consequence, she also appeared to be well integrated in the local culture and the larger society. However, Leena, for instance, had not had opportunities to make friends among the host nationals and to acquire the local culture through those contacts, and she was somewhat separated from the larger society. Still, relations with other Finns and Westerners were significant in the sense that they contributed to the interviewees' psychological well being, thus facilitating their adaptation and indirectly also their acculturation. Maarit's problem appeared to be that she did not feel at home among the other Finns and Westerners either, which decreased her satisfaction and, consequently, her psychological well being and adaptation.



The importance of social relations as the mediating factor in acculturation was the central finding of this study. This was examined in the first sub-question. We noted that diverse factors, as presented earlier, influence acculturation through social relations. This finding on the crucial role of social relations in acculturation should have several practical consequences. People who go to live and work abroad need to realise how important it is to build relations with the host nationals in order to acculturate to the new culture, because this is a central pre-requisite for increasing their overseas effectiveness. They also have to realise that this is not an automatic process, but requires effort and commitment. Furthermore, it can be noted that the two informants who had the most fulfilling relations with the local people, had also acculturated and adapted in a more successful way than the others. Additionally they were the most satisfied with their stay in that country and felt that it had really enriched them as human beings and contributed to their personal growth. This would be a desirable situation for all workers going overseas, because that way they could both enjoy their stay abroad more and also be more effective in their work. It is our sincere hope that this study can contribute to the development of practical methods for enhancing success in building relations and in acculturating. This is a challenge not only to the individuals but also to the sending organisations.

As regards the second sub-question concerning the difficulties and supportive factors in acculturation and adaptation, this study has identified a large number of such factors. The interviewees had similar kinds of views concerning which issues were difficulties and which were supportive factors in the process of acculturation and adaptation. This information about the matters commonly faced in East Africa may be beneficial for the people who are preparing to live and work there.

## **7.2 Generalisations and Transferability**

As we have already noted, far-reaching generalisations naturally cannot be made on the basis of this study, because as a qualitative small-scale study it does not have statistical strength of evidence. However, on the basis of our observations during the research visit, and of anecdotal evidence, we feel justified in speculating, albeit tentatively, that these kinds of tendencies are somewhat common in cross-cultural encounters related to development

and missionary situations. Also, it was striking how similar our results were to Kealey's (1990) findings on people working in Canadian developmental projects, and Kealey's study took place over a three-year period and involved 1,400 people in 16 countries, not only in Africa but also in Asian and Caribbean regions. The fact, then, that our findings are consistent with many of those in Kealey's extensive study, suggests that these tendencies may be somewhat common.

As we have already observed earlier, the concept of generalisation may not be so meaningful in this study; instead, the concept of transferability might be more appropriate (see Lincoln & Guba 1985 as cited by Tynjälä 1991). This means that the results may well be transferable to a similar kind of context. Still, we have to remind the reader of the diversity and complexity of the factors linked to acculturation; the meaning and influence of a factor is a result of its interplay with the environment; in one context a certain factor may acquire a much more dominant role than in another. Therefore, we have provided the reader with detailed information about the context and procedure of the study so that he can evaluate the applicability of the results.

### **7.3 Validity and Reliability**

We have made considerable effort to take the issues of validity and reliability into consideration from the outset of this study and done our best to attend to them throughout the entire process. We have striven to be open and critical, questioning our preconceptions, ideas and the theories used, influenced by the hermeneutic–phenomenological approach. Nevertheless, a crucial issue to remember is that our viewpoint is still that of a Westerner and our own cultural background is the filter through which we see these issues. Thus, in a further study it would be very valuable to include also the perspective of the host nationals.

As regards other issues related to validity and reliability, the fact that the phenomenon studied is somewhat complex and intricate, leads to the question whether we have been able to consider all the essential issues influencing it. It might have simplified the execution of the study if we had consciously chosen to concentrate on only a few factors presented in the theory, but, on the other hand, retaining a wider perspective enabled us to acquire richer research material.

Throughout this study, we have asked ourselves whether we have understood the interviewees right or whether we have made incorrect interpretations. Did they mean what we thought they meant? Furthermore, were they honest? In a future study we would use several data collection methods, i.e., increase method triangulation, which would result in more evidence for the findings and the interpretations and thus make the results more reliable, but within the limits of this study it was not possible.

In the end, the hermeneutic approach received even more emphasis in this study than we first planned, and, consequently, phenomenology had a less important role. Therefore, contextual factors and theoretical speculations received more emphasis than the descriptions of the experiences of individual informants. This, in fact, may have taken us closer to the second level of hermeneutics and thus widened and deepened our perspective. Still, it is important that the reader is aware of this methodological emphasis.

Despite our acknowledged inexperience and the limited nature of the study, we feel that during the 18-month process our understanding and perspective on this phenomenon has significantly widened and deepened as a result of countless discussions, reasoning, reading and, most importantly, through the field visit. This has increased our competence in doing a study in this area, thus enhancing the validity and reliability of this study.

#### **7.4 Theoretical Considerations**

Berry's (1997) theory proved to be a very useful foundation for this study. It greatly facilitated our task of constructing the questionnaire and the interview questions and thus enabled us to obtain rich research material suited for the purpose. Berry's acculturation framework successfully combined a great diversity of factors that affect acculturation, helping us to see that we needed to consider several issues and aspects when studying this phenomenon. In addition to the framework, also the acculturation strategies formulated by Berry were a functional tool in examining and categorising the complex and multifaceted research data.

Although the many-sidedness of Berry's theory was an evident strength, this very quality also made it complicated. The causal relations between the factors proposed by

Berry were hard to clarify, a fact that confused us several times. Also, some concepts overlapped and it was difficult to distinguish between them. For example, the distinction between acculturation and the concept sociocultural adaptation, which Berry had borrowed from Ward and Kennedy (1992, 1993), did not become totally clear.

Furthermore, the context of this study differs remarkably from that of Berry's, because he has developed his theory in the context of immigration in Western societies. Therefore it is not necessarily so appropriate for examining Westerners acculturating and adapting in developing countries; or rather, the factors included in it need to be viewed from a different point of view. For example, the attitude of the society of settlement towards a refugee coming to a European country is very different from that towards a development co-operation worker in a developing country. The issues concerning status, power relations and personal resources in the two situations are almost opposite. Furthermore, the concept of economic adaptation Berry has included in his theory acquires a totally different meaning in these situations.

Berry was indeed the major theorist in our study, but also other researchers helped us to give our view contrast and depth. Birman's (1994) differentiated model of acculturation and biculturalism combined acculturation at the behavioural and identity level in a convenient way. What we found significant was that at several points our findings were congruent with the results of Kealey's (1990) study on Canadians working in developing countries, which, as we already noted, suggests that some of the findings may be transferable to the same kind of contexts. There were similarities, for example, in the tendencies to build relations mainly among co-nationals and other Westerners and to create sub-cultures of Westerners, which was inclined to separate them from the host nationals.

Both Berry and Kealey proposed social support and relations only as one factor among many others influencing acculturation and adaptation. However, as a result of this study we gained a different perspective on the role of social support and relations in acculturation and adaptation situations. Explicitly, social relations cannot be placed in the same category with the other factors, because they are not equal in weight: therefore, we would place the factor of social support and relations in a central position in the model describing acculturation.

On the basis of the theories used, the findings of this study, and our own reasoning related to them, we tentatively propose a model demonstrating our present understanding of the phenomenon studied. This model, shown in Figure 5, is a hypothesis of the possible linkages between different factors and conceptions related to acculturation and adaptation in the individual level in development co-operation and missionary work situations, presenting social relations as an important mediating factor and also including the concept of overseas effectiveness. It represents a cyclic view on acculturation and adaptation. In other words, the earlier factors included in it do not just linearly influence later factors, but the later factors also have an impact back on the previous factors, which may thus gain different meanings and functions in subsequent cycles.

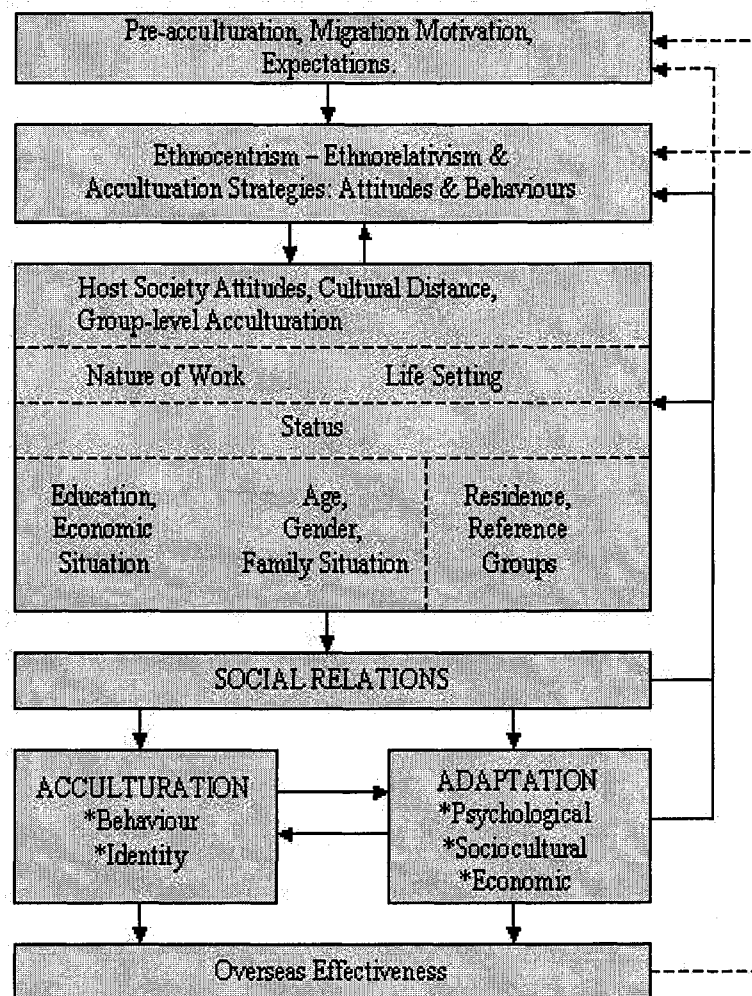


FIGURE 5: Social Relations as a Mediating Factor in the Process of Acculturation

In the uppermost box of the model are the person's original pre-acculturation, migration motivation and expectations, i.e., how much the person has already found out about the new culture, the reasons why he has left for the new country and what he expects of his stay there. These issues influence the contents of the second box, his ethnocentrism–ethnorelativism and acculturation strategies, which are comprised of acculturation attitudes and actual behaviours. For example, how much the person has found out about the new culture in advance (pre-acculturation) may influence his stage of ethnocentrism–ethnorelativism, or, his motives for moving to the new country are likely to be linked to the extent to which he wants to acquire the culture there.

Ethnocentrism–ethnorelativism and acculturation strategies have an important impact further on what kind of role several factors, placed in the third box, will have on the person's social relations, found in the fourth box, and through them onwards to his acculturation, adaptation, and overseas effectiveness. As the arrows show, the person's ethnocentrism–ethnorelativism and acculturation strategies are in a constant interaction with the practical factors in the third box: the former influence what kind of meaning the latter receive and the latter also reshape the former, i.e., ethnocentrism–ethnorelativism and acculturation strategies can be modified during the process.

We have divided the factors in the third box into five sub-groups. However, a crucial thing to note is that these sub-groups are neither separate nor in order of importance. Rather, the factors in them are interrelated and linked in several ways, but for clarity we group them on the basis of the connective factors we found important. In the first group there are wider societal factors, which the person cannot significantly influence: host society attitudes towards the person, cultural distance between his original culture and the new culture, and group-level acculturation of his co-national group and the larger group of Westerners. In the second group, there are the nature of his work and life setting, whether it is urban or rural. The posting usually determines also the life setting in advance, and because a person normally stays in the same work place until the end of the posting, the life setting does not change, either. Third comes the status of the person in that society, which is influenced by several issues; the issues in the remaining two sub-groups also influence it. In the fourth sub-group, there are listed education, economic situation, age, gender and family

situation, which are all somewhat permanent factors related to the person, differently from the contents of the fifth sub-group, residence and reference groups, which are issues that the person can more easily influence.

A crucial issue that we want to emphasise, however, is that all the factors listed in the sub-groups receive their meaning through the people's perceptions and attitude towards them. For example, even though cultural distance as such also affects social relations, more important is the attitude the person adopts towards it, i.e., whether he finds it a huge obstacle to making friends or an interesting challenge that can be met. Or, more important than the actual economic situation of the person is the meaning it receives in that context, the way it influences people's attitudes towards him, and how he himself regards it and the local people's attitudes towards it – these are the issues that significantly affect his social relations. Or, gender as such does not influence the person's capacity to build social relations, but it affects his status, people's attitudes towards him and his practical opportunities for whom he can spend time and make friends with, when and where.

Social relations, found in the fourth box, are the important channel through which these diverse factors influence the person's acculturation and adaptation, which are demonstrated in the boxes on the fifth level. Acculturation can happen both in the aspects of behaviour and identity, whereas adaptation can be divided into psychological, sociocultural, and economic spheres. Acculturation and adaptation in practice overlap and influence each other in various ways, as the arrows show. Still, we define acculturation more as the acquisition of the culture, whereas adaptation concentrates more on the adjustment to the actual environment and situation. Both influence the person's overseas effectiveness, mentioned in the final box, i.e., his ability to live and work successfully and in a culturally sensitive way in the cross-cultural setting.

As already mentioned, the model is cyclic. Therefore there are recursive arrows from several boxes. The person's acculturation and adaptation have a retroactive influence on his ethnocentrism–ethnorelativism and acculturation strategies, and thus through them on the rest of the cycle again. However, already the social relations have a retroactive impact on these factors and also on those in the third box. If a person goes for another posting, the level of his acculturation and adaptation during the previous posting influence his pre-acculturation and the formation of his migration motivation and expectations and

consequently the whole cycle again, and so does the acquired overseas effectiveness, as the broken line arrows show.

This model could well be tested in further studies to see if it has wider strength of evidence. Possibly, it could also be used in training for people going to work overseas to show them the essential aspects that are important to take into account when in field.

### **7.5 Practical Applications and Ideas for Further Studies**

In accordance with earlier studies, we wish to underline the importance of learning to understand the local culture in order to be competent in working in a cross-cultural environment. We have shown above that it is almost impossible to “get into” the culture without having any social relations with the host nationals. In this study, the informants who had most relations with the locals also got deepest into the local culture and, furthermore, also enjoyed their stay most. Therefore, we want to stress the importance of taking culture learning seriously from the very beginning of the process leading to working abroad.

It is very crucial that the person going abroad is himself interested in the culture and is ready to make an effort to prepare himself for the posting, including getting information about the country and the culture. Additionally, he needs to be committed to working on learning the language and culture when in the country. One of the informants in this study is an especially good example of successful culture orientation and personal preparation. She neither had previous experience of working abroad nor had she participated in any preparation courses; however, she was very active in preparing herself for working in that East African country. Also, when she got to the country, she was exceptionally interested in the culture and the local people. Personal motivation, preparation and commitment appeared to contribute to acculturation more than preparation courses and previous experience.

In addition to taking an applicant’s cultural orientation and motivation into account when making selections for the posts, the sending organisations need to consider culture issues more seriously in all their actions. Getting to know the culture, learning the language, and becoming a participant in the larger society should be a natural part of the overseas post: it should already be part of the job description. The preparation courses.



should prepare people for finding a good balance between work-orientation and acculturation. They should include more training also on culture itself, cultural differences and the reasons for them. They should concentrate more on this than just discussing the visible part, the surface, of the iceberg of culture. It is much more useful to dig into the part which lies below our consciousness, i.e., the value and worldview issues deep down in it, than to just learn by heart basic habits and customs on the surface. In other words, it is crucial to really learn to understand the meanings of culture and its different logic. We felt that it would have helped our interviewees in many ways in their work, human relations and acculturation, if they had really understood the fundamental cultural principles directing the behaviour of the host nationals – and those directing their own behaviour. If a Westerner realises that also his way of thinking and behaving may be strange when perceived from another perspective, it is easier for him to be empathic and also accept the circumstances and the people as they are. In other words, it is a question of becoming aware of one's own ethnocentrism and the need to become more ethnorelativistic. The training in ethnorelativism should be started already during the preparation course. Furthermore, it would be important that the preparation courses give the workers tools for analysing the new culture and the influence of cultural differences on intercultural interaction and co-operation at work, so that they could reflect on their experiences, see the difficulties in a wider perspective and learn from all this. Also, if they understood deeply the concept of overseas effectiveness and its aspects, they could consciously develop it themselves.

Language and culture go hand in hand, and thus language learning should be an integral part of the preparation; in fact, the sending organisations are partly responsible for creating possibilities for the employees to take part in language courses. Furthermore, it would be important to guarantee that employees have enough time just to settle down in the new country in peace. If a person has to start a new job immediately at the same time as establishing his life in the new environment, he is likely to be exposed to a considerable amount of stress. In the opposite case, having a good start has a positive effect on other crucial issues in the process of acculturation: it enables more successful culture and language learning and also sustains one's motivation towards getting to know people. These aspects are also the prerequisites for long-term success in work, and thus they are of crucial importance for the sending organisation as well.

All in all, it would be important to give the workers not only professional but also psychological and cultural support. It would be crucial for them not to feel that they are totally alone in the field, but that their employer knows their situation and is willing to support them. The sending organisation could employ mentors specifically for counselling and supporting people in the field in their acculturation, adaptation and social relations. This could happen, for example, through e-mail, because it provides a quick and cheap means of communication. Important qualities for these mentors would be personal experience in working and living overseas and possessing cultural and psychological knowledge. Moreover, the local counterparts of the Western workers are the best specialists on their own culture and society. It would be important to think of how this expertise of theirs could be used more efficiently to support the acculturation of their Western colleagues. How could the relations between them become those of constructive discussion, mutual learning and support?

If the sending organisations place emphasis on cultural issues and the importance of acculturation and local relations, it is likely to have an important impact on their employees' attitudes and actual behaviour. In fact, it would be interesting to study further what the attitudes of sending organisations are towards cultural learning. Furthermore, it would be useful to know how it shows in their employees' attitudes, their actual cultural competence and their success in their work, or, to put it in Kealey's (1990) terms, their overseas effectiveness. In general, overseas effectiveness would be a vital field for further study: what are the prerequisites for implementing projects that have positive long-term impacts and what kind of characteristics and competences are required from the people employed in them? We may suppose that acculturation and overseas effectiveness are closely linked, but how do the actual causal relations function? How is ethnorelativism linked to overseas effectiveness?

It would be interesting to know the degree of ethnocentrism or ethnorelativism Western workers going overseas exhibit. A follow-up study could be carried out on the development of their ethnocentrism–ethnorelativism, its impacts on their acculturation, social interaction and relations with the local people and long-time success in the work throughout the time in the country. How do Westerners coming from different countries differ in these aspects and for what reasons?

A further follow-up study could examine the quality of interaction between locals and Westerners. How do the locals see the co-operation and different situations and how do they perceive their Western counterparts? How about the Westerners' view in comparison to that of the locals'? What are the main differences in these aspects in development co-operation situations in different countries with colonial and non-colonial backgrounds?

In this study, we noticed that the group-level acculturation of the Westerners did indeed have an impact on the acculturation of individuals. There are communities of Westerners in developing countries that have specific "compound cultures" of their own. It would be interesting to carry out a sociological case study concerning the features of these sub-cultures and the relations between the minority communities and the larger society. We got the impression that these compound cultures may separate individuals from the larger society rather than facilitate their integration into it. How could these sub-cultures support their members' acculturation also into the larger society?

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**APPENDICES****Appendix 1: Letter to the Interviewees**

Jyväskylä 22.3.2000

Arvoisa haastateltavamme,

Kevät täällä Suomessakin tekee tuloaan ja muistuttaa meitä siitä, että matkamme Itä-Afrikkaan lähestyy ja gradumme empiirisen osuuden kerääminen alkaa pian. Olemme todella iloisia, että olet suostunut haastateltavaksi suomalaisten työntekijöiden akkulturaatiota ja sopeutumista itäafrikkalaiseen kulttuuriin käsittelevää graduamme varten – ilman haastateltaviahan tutkimuksestamme ei tulisi mitään!

Lupasimme aiemmassa sähköpostiviestissä lähettää Sinulle kyselylomakkeen taustatietojasi koskien. Se säästää meiltä paljon aikaa haastattelutilanteessa. Toivomme, että täytät lomakkeen ajatuksella ja tuot sen mukana haastattelutapaamiseemme. Jos lomakkeen rivit eivät riitä, voit hyvin jatkaa vastauksia paperin toiselle puolelle.

Käsittelemme sekä lomakkeessa että haastattelussa esille tulleita tietoja luottamuksellisesti ja säilytämme haastateltaviemme anonymiteetin.

Jos Sinulla on vielä jotain kysyttävää, meihin voi ottaa sähköpostitse yhteyttä ennen lähtöämme (Johanna 14.4. ja Tiia 19.4.).

Parhain terveisin,

Tiia Markkanen  
e-mail: [ttmarkka@st.jyu.fi](mailto:ttmarkka@st.jyu.fi)

Johanna Nurminen  
e-mail: [jmnurmin@st.jyu.fi](mailto:jmnurmin@st.jyu.fi)



**(Appendix 1 continued)**

Jyväskylä 22.3.2000

Dear Interviewee,

The spring is drawing closer here in Finland as well, reminding us of the fact that our journey to East Africa is approaching and the collection of the data for the empirical part of our Master's Thesis will start soon. We are really glad that you have agreed to be interviewed for our Master's Thesis concerning the acculturation and adaptation of Finnish workers to East African culture – without interviewees we could not do this study at all!

We promised in an earlier e-mail message to send you a questionnaire concerning your background information. It will save us a plenty of time in the interview situation. We hope that you fill in the form with thought and bring it with you to the interview. If the lines on the form are not enough for you, you can continue your answers on the other side of the sheet.

We will handle the information collected both in the questionnaire and the interview confidentially and retain the anonymity of our interviewees.

If you still have something to ask, you can contact us through e-mail before we leave (Johanna 14.4. and Tiia 19.4.).

Best Wishes,

Tiia Markkanen  
e-mail: [ttmarkka@st.jyu.fi](mailto:ttmarkka@st.jyu.fi)

Johanna Nurminen  
e-mail: [jmnurmin@st.jyu.fi](mailto:jmnurmin@st.jyu.fi)

**Appendix 2: Questionnaire****Kyselylomake taustatiedoista**

Nimi: \_\_\_\_\_

Ikä: \_\_\_\_\_

Koulutustausta:

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Millaista työtä teit Suomessa?

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Oletko osallistunut ulkomailla asumiseen ja työskentelyyn valmistaville  
orientaatiokursseille? Jos olet, minkä tahon järjestämiin ja milloin?

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Aiempi asuminen ulkomailla (maa, kesto ja tarkoitus):

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Miksi lähdit tähän maahan?

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**(Appendix 2 continued)**

Miten valmistauduit elämiseen ja työskentelyyn täällä?

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Miten kauan olet asunut täällä ja kuinka kauan aiot vielä asua?

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Mitä odotit ajalta täällä (maa, ihmiset, työ, elämä, sopeutuminen)?

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Miten työsi ja toimenkuvasi muuttui tänne tullessasi?

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Miten asut täällä?

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Miten elinolosuhteesi muuttuivat muuttaessasi elämään Suomesta tänne?

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**(Appendix 2 continued)**

**Questionnaire on Background Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational background:

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What kind of work did you do in Finland?

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Have you participated in orientation courses preparing for living and working abroad? If you have, who were they organised by and when?

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Previous living abroad (country, duration and purpose):

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Why did you come to this country you are living in now?

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**(Appendix 2 continued)**

How did you prepare for living and working here?

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How long a time have you stayed here and how long a time are you still going to stay?

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What did you expect of the time here (the country, people, work, life, adaptation)?

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How did your work and responsibilities change when you came here?

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What is your form of residence here?

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How did your life conditions change when you moved from Finland to live here?

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### Appendix 3: Interview Questions

#### TEEMAHAASTATTELURUNKO

##### Taustatietoja (Acculturation framework)

- Kyselylomakkeen läpikäynti ja tarvittavat tarkennukset

##### Akkulturaatioasenteet ennen lähtöä

- Mitä ajattelit ennen lähtöäsi paikallisesta kulttuurista? Mitä ajattelit siihen tutustumisesta?
- Mitä ajattelit paikallisista ihmisistä?
- Mitä ajattelit tulevista ihmissuhteista tässä maassa?
- Miltä ajatus muutosta tänne tuntui? Miten perhe suhtautui lähtöön?

##### Akkulturaatioprosessi, akkulturaatiostressi ja selviytymiskeinot

- Muistele kokemuksiasi ja reaktioitasi heti tähän maahan tultuasi. – Miltä tuntui?
- Toteutuivatko odotuksesi? Miten? (vrt. kyselylomake)
- Tuntuiko jokin vaikealta alkuaikoina? Mikä? Mitä tunteita nämä asiat sinussa herättivät? Miten käsittelet näitä tunteita?
- Mitkä asiat auttoivat selviytymään vaikeuksista?
- Kuinka vieras kulttuuri on vaikuttanut sosiaaliseen kanssakäymiseesi?
- Millaisia tunteita koet sosiaalisissa tilanteissa paikallisten kanssa?
- Onko sinulla enemmän vai vähemmän ihmissuhteita? Olivatko ne läheisempiä vai etäisempiä kuin Suomessa?
- Mitkä asiat vaikuttivat siihen, että joidenkin kanssa tuli läheisemmäksi?
- Kuinka vieras kulttuuri vaikutti käsitykseesi itsestäsi?
- Kuinka asennoitumisesi ja tuntemuksesi maata ja sen ihmisiä kohtaan vaihtelivat ajan myötä?
- Miltä tuntuu nyt?
- Tunnetko olosi jo kotoisaksi? Jos tunnet, missä vaiheessa huomasit tuntevasi näin?

##### Akkulturaatiostrategiat (akkulturaatioasenteet ja käyttäytyminen)

- Millaisena koet tehtäväsi tässä maassa? Mitä haluat edistää?
- Mitkä ovat mielestäsi kehitysyhteistyön tavoitteet?
- Puhutko paikallista kieltä? Jos puhut, niin miten olet sitä oppinut/miksi et puhu?
- Oletko tietoisesti pyrkinyt omaksumaan paikallista kulttuuria? Miten?
- Oletko omaksunut paikallisia tapoja?
- Onko joitakin tilanteita, joissa erityisesti käyttäydyt paikallisittain?
- Mitä tämän kulttuurin piirteitä arvostat? (arvot, elämäntapa, käyttäytyminen)
- Miten tuot omaa kulttuuriasi esille paikallisten kanssa?
- Mitä kerrot itsestäsi ja Suomesta heille?
- Mitä suomalaisen kulttuurin piirteitä arvostat?

**(Appendix 3 continued)**

- Miten ylläpidät suomalaista kulttuuria?
- Keiden kanssa vietät vapaa-aikaasi? Missä merkeissä?
- Keiden koet olevan ystäviäsi? Oletko ystäväystynyt paikallisten kanssa?

**Kohdekuulttuurin suhtautuminen kehitysyhteistyöntekijän kokemana**

- Miten paikalliset suhtautuvat sinuun?
- Miten se vaikuttaa vuorovaikutukseenne?

**Sosiokulttuurinen ja psykologinen sopeutuminen**

- Miten elämäsi tässä maassa ja tässä kulttuurissa sujuu?
- Mitkä ovat suurimmat vaikeudet elämisessä täällä? Entä ilonaiheet?
- Mitkä asiat ovat vaikeuttaneet sopeutumistasi uuteen maahan ja kulttuuriin?
- Mitkä asiat taas antoivat voimia ja tukea sopeutumiseen?
- Mitkä ovat olleet omat vahvuutesi sopeutumisessa?
- Mitä resursseja olisit kaivannut itsellesi lisää?
- Oletko saanut tukea sopeutumiseesi sinut tänne lähettäneeltä taholta?
- Millaista?
- Mitä olisit kaivannut lisää?
- Tunnetko olosi turvalliseksi ja varmaksi täällä?
- Pelkäätkö jotakin? Mitä?
- Oletko tyytyväinen elämääsi täällä?
- Miten aiot hyödyntää täällä kokemaasi ja oppimaasi myöhemmin elämässä?

**(Appendix 3 continued)****THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE THEMATIC INTERVIEW****Background information (Acculturation framework)**

- Going through the questionnaire and specifying some things if needed

**Acculturation attitudes before leaving**

- What did you think about the local culture before leaving? What did you think about getting to know it?
- What did you think about the local people?
- What did you think about the coming relationships with the people in this country?
- How did you feel about moving here? What was the attitude of your family towards moving?

**Acculturation process, acculturation stress and coping strategies**

- Remember your experiences and reactions straight after coming to this country. -- How did you feel?
- Did your expectations come true? How? (Compare with the questionnaire)
- Did something feel difficult in the beginning? What? What kinds of feelings did these things arouse in you? How did you deal with those feelings?
- Which things helped you to get over difficulties?
- How has the different culture influenced your social relations?
- What kinds of feelings do you experience in social situations with the local people?
- Do you have more or less social relations? Were they closer or more distant than in Finland?
- What kinds of things influenced whether you got closer with some people?
- How did the different culture affect your concept of yourself?
- How did your attitude and feelings toward the country and its people change with time?
- How do you feel now?
- Do you feel at home here already? If you do, when did you notice you were feeling so?

**Acculturation strategies (acculturation attitudes and behaviour)**

- How do you find your task in this country? What do you want to promote?
- Which are the goals of development co-operation in your opinion?
- Do you speak the local language? If you do, how have you learnt it/why do you not speak it?
- Have you consciously tried to take in the culture of this country? How?
- Have you adopted some habits of this country?
- Are there some situations where you especially behave in the local way?
- Which features of this culture do you appreciate? (values, way of life, behaviour)
- How do you bring out your own culture with the local people?
- What do you tell them about yourself and Finland?
- Which features of the Finnish culture do you appreciate?



**(Appendix 3 continued)**

- How do you keep up Finnish culture?
- Who do you spend your free time with? How?
- Who do you feel to be your friends? Have you made friends with local people?

**Attitude of the target culture towards the development co-operation worker as experienced by him**

- What kind of attitude do the locals have towards you?
- How does it influence your interaction?

**Sociocultural and psychological adaptation**

- How does your life in this country and in this culture go?
- What are the greatest difficulties in living here? How about the delights?
- Which things have made your adaptation to the new country and culture more difficult?
- Which things have given you strength and support for adaptation?
- Which have been your own strengths in adaptation?
- Which resources would you have needed more?
- Have you got support for your adaptation from the organisation that sent you here?
- What kind of support?
- Is there something you would have needed more of?
- Do you feel safe and secure here?
- Are you afraid of something? What?
- Are you satisfied with your life here?
- How are you intending to utilise what you have experienced and learnt here later in life?

**Appendix 4: The Consent Form****SUOSTUMUS**

Suostun siihen, että Tiia Markkanen ja Johanna Nurminen saavat käyttää antamiani tietoja pro gradu -tutkielmaansa ja sen pohjalta kirjoitettaviin artikkeleihin. Henkilöllisyyteni ei tule julki tutkimuksen missään vaiheessa.

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Aika ja paikka

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Allekirjoitus

**CONSENT**

I consent that Tiia Markkanen and Johanna Nurminen are allowed to use the information given by me for their Master's Thesis and for writing articles based on it. My identity will not be revealed at any point of the study.

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Place and time

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Signature

## Appendix 5: The Selected Quotations in Finnish

*"... sitä mä arvostan että meillä on itsenäinen kotimaa jossa on todella monet asiat on erittäin hyvin, vaikka tottakai on epäkohtia ja heikkouksia, mutt jos verrataan näitä kulttuureja niin ehdottomasti me ollaan niitä lottovoiton saaneita."* (Outi) [1]

*"Ens alkuun mä en kertonu mitään. Mä aattelin ett en mä nyt halua olla mikään heidän kulttuurinsa muuttaja ett täytyy tehdä niinkun Suomessa tehdään. Sitt mä oon huomannu myöhemmin ett hei noihan halua tietää ett miten tehdään meillä, että kyllähän mä nyt sitä voin kertoa. Ett eihän sitä nyt tarvii tehdä niin kuin meillä mutt onhan se hauska tietää. Niin oon sitt alkanu kertoa kaikkee. -- Se on ihan selvä ett ihmiset halua peilata näitä asioita, omaa elämäänsä toisten elämään. Kuitenkin televisio on jo suuri vaikuttaja täällä"* (Raija) [2]

*"... nää tiimin jäsenet tykkää niin että toi Maarit niinku sanoo mitenkä asiat on, ja on suorapuheinen ja uskaltaa, ja tekee asiat niinkun hän katsoo oikeaksi tehdä..."* (Maarit) [3]

*"Vanhempien kunnioitusta. Ja varmaan sitte tätä omasta suvusta huolehtimista, tämmöstä yhteisvastuuta, tämmöstä yhteistä isyyttä ja yhteistä äitiyttä. Ja sitten nää on hyvin pitkälle luonteeltaan...ne elää siinä tilanteessa missä ne on silloin. Kun ne on ilosia niin ne on ilosia ja kun ne on surullisia niin ne on surullisia."* (Antero) [4]

*"Kyllähän sitä nyt tiettyjä juttuja tietää ja ku oltiin paikallisen kielen kurssilla ni tulihan sielläki näitä tämmösiä käyttäytymisjuttuja ja miten pitää käyttäytyä ja miten se on tärkeetä näille ihmisille kuulumisten kyseleminen ja kaikki tämmönen. Ruuasta tietysti ties ja pukeutumisesta ja näin --. Mutt se on aika semmmosta pinnallista, haluais enemmän."* (Leena) [5]

*"On kiva käydä jossain tanssimassa ja syödä paikallista ruokaa ja kaikkee tämmöstä, ne on ihan OK, mutt en mä tiedä, ei nyt tartte omaksua sitä, se on siinä ja mä voin olla osa sitä. Mä voin niinku hypätä siihen ja olla siinä ja nauttia ja tuntee itteni niinku comfortable siinä mutta että mä omaksuisin... en."* (Klaus) [6]

*"... mä oon pyrkiny opiskelemaan tätä kulttuuria enimmäkseen sen kautta ett mä oon ihmisten kanssa tekemisiss ja mä oon pyrkiny ett he neuvo, ja osoittaa mulle että miten mun täytyy toimia, ja mikä kuuluu tähän heidän kulttuuriinsa."* (Outi) [7]

*"Eihän täällä kulttuuriin ikinä pääse sisälle... siis siihen ajattelumaailmaan ja kaikkeen siihen... ei mitään toivookaan. Pieni joku hipaisu voi joskus olla."* (Raija) [8]

**(Appendix 5 continued)**

"... ei kai täällä voi koskaan kotonaan ollakkaan, pitäisi olla asunu täällä aina. Ei se kulttuurissa eläminen käy niin helposti, se on tosi vaikeeta. Pitäisi olla naimisissa paikallisen kanssa tai..." (Antero) [9]

"...en mä ole tšekäläinen eikä musta tšekäläistä ikinä tuu. Ett meen mä mihin tahansa -- niin kyllähän mä oon erilainen. Ne näkee kun mä tuun autolla sinne pihaan, ne näkee mun ihonvärin, ja ne näkee ett mä en oo tšekäläinen enkä mä usko että ihmiset olettaa mun ihan hirveen tšekäläisesti käyttäytyvän." (Maarit) [10]

"... eihän me voida muuttua afrikkalaisiks, meidän pitää olla se mikä me ollaan, ett me ollaan niinku siinä vahvoilla. Ettei meidän pidä niinku muuttua ihmisinä tässä yhteistyössä. Täytyy tietenk in sopeutua, mutta ei ihmiset täällä odota meiltä mitään muuta kuin sitä mitä me ollaan ja se täytyy niinku ymmärtää ja arvostaa ja hyväksyä. Ett se on, mitä mä oon ehkä oppinu, pitkän kaavan kautta." (Klaus) [11]

"Ett mä oon omalla paikallani. Ett minusta pidetään niinku mä pidän työstäni ja ihmisistä. Kaikki on ihan kohdallaan. Ja on hyvä myös että pääsee kolmen kuukauden päästä Suomeen, sekin on ihan kohdallaan." (Raija) [12]

"Mä oon saanu hirveesti itsetuntoo lisää täällä. Mä oon ollu kauhean ujo ja arka lapsena ja aina vaan pakottautunu kaikkeen esittämiseen esimerkiks. -- Mult on hävinny jännittäminen, mut on hyväksyty täällä. Tai mä oon kasvanu vaan sitten sillä lailla. On varmaan muuallakin hyväksyty mutt en mä oo kokenu niin. Mutt en mä täällä vapise enkä jännitä yhtään mitään. Ajatelkaa, eiks oo jo aika ihmeellistä, vieras kieli ja kaikki... mutt ei mua jännitä, ei tippaakaan." (Raija) [13]

"Enkä mä oo sillä tavalla aikonu rakentaa elämäni tänne -- Mä oon täällä vaan käymässä ja tarjoamassa asiantuntemustani..." (Antero) [14]

"... tietenk in alkuun mä olin jonkinlainen idealisti ja solidaarinen ja yhtä sun toista. Nyt mä oon niinku jollain realistisella tasolla missä mä nään ne omat voimavarat sellasenaan, jotka voidaan hyödyntää tällasessa tilanteessa paremmin kuin ehkä joku muu voisi, joka tulee suoraan... mulla on sitä kokemusta ja mä tuun toimeen ihmisten kanssa enkä mä odota liikoja mutta kumminkin pystyn työskenteleen." (Klaus) [15]

"En mä oo niinku suunnitellu miten mä tähän kulttuuriin tutustuisin. Mä oon nähny Afrikkaa kymmenen vuotta niin se on siinä, ei siihen tarvii erikseen tutustua." (Klaus) [16]

"Tää on sillai, että olipa kello kuinka paljon tahansa niin melkein voi mennä johonkin kylään tai vieraat voi tulla. -- Täällä ollaan semmosissa olosuhteissa, että jos on hätä ni voi vaikka yöllä herättää. Ett on tää sillätavalla läheisempää." (Markku) [17]

**(Appendix 5 continued)**

*“Mut oon mie kyllä saanu täällä hyviä ystäviä että ne ehkä ymmärtää taas näitä asioita paremmin kun taas suomalainen, joka ei oo koskaan asunu ulkomailla. Et sää silloin ymmärrä näitä tämän maan vaikeuksia etkä tietysti pysty ihan samalla tavalla puhumaan. Ei ne pysty käsittämään joitaki ihan älyttömiä juttuja mitä täällä tapahtuu. Et mut ehkä muuten niinku elämässä tapahtuvia asioita ni koen että Suomessa olevat ystävät ymmärtää paremmin.” (Leena) [18]*

*“...mutta mull on tosi paljon hyviä ihmissuhteita, siis aivan ihania ihmisuhteita paikallisissa -- mun kaikkein parhaat ystäväni on paikallisia ja mull on semmonen koti mihin mä voin mennä ihan millon vaan, vaikka yöllä.” (Outi) [19]*

*“Mä oon kokenu monta kertaa hyvin positiivisena että, mä oon paikallisessa yhteisössä ja mua pidetään samanvertasena. Se että mä saan syödä sitä samaa ruokaa mitä he syö, mä saan syödä sitä joskus käsin niitten kanssa ja mä saan nähdä ihan sen niitten arkipäivän. Joskus joku on luvannut että mä saan mennä tiskaamaan astioita heidän kanssaan, eihän yleensä vieraan anneta tehdä sellaisia... ja ett jos mä saan olla jossain kodissa vaikka yötä, jos on semmonen tilanne. Mä oon kokenu nää positiivisina.” (Outi) [20]*

*“...mun tekee melkein mieli sanoo että en mä oikeestaan koe kenenkään olevan...ihan semmonen, ystävä...” (Maarit) [21]*

*“No mä oletin, että ois ollu helpompi tehdä tuttavuutta paikallisten kanssa ja sitä kautta sitten päässy siihen paikalliseen elämään ja paikalliseen jokapäivään kiinni, mutt se on ollu, aika toivotonta.” (Maarit) [22]*

*“...mä en niinku ikinä ois uskonu että mua häiritsee niin kauheesti se, että niitä paikallisia ystäviä ei oo.” (Maarit) [23]*

*“Eli siis tää on semmosta tää expatriotin elämä täällä, että jos sull’ on tommonen kahenkymmenen tuhannen dollarin auto pihassa, niin ei kukaan usko ettei sull oo autoss eikä talossa yhtään mitään. Ett se pitää sitt aina olla se, vahti, portilla...” (Maarit) [24]*

*“Mulle on kuiteskin tärkeintä se, että meiän perhe on hyvin, että lapsilla on hyvä olla ja vielä on kotona säilyny semmonen sopu ja rauha --. Mie koen ett oma perhe on se ensiarvosen tärkeä ja sitte vasta katotaan mihin muuhun on resursseja Ett tämmönen kutsumus mulla on. Monellahan voi olla, että ne heti haluis lähtee auttamaan tätä maata ja kansaa, mutta mie koen että mulla on vastuu meiän perheestä ja lasten tulevaisuudesta ja niitten selviämisestä uudessa maassa.” (Leena) [25]*

*“Esimerkiks meidän lapsilla on kavereita ja me on tutustuttu meidän lasten kautta heidän vanhempiin, jotka saattaa olla sitte ihan minkämaalaisia tahansa, mutta yleensä ei paikallisia, ja sitä kautta tulee sitte tämmösiä sosiaalisia verkostoja, jotka on niinku jossain muualla kuin se tavallinen elämä täällä.” (Klaus) [26]*

**(Appendix 5 continued)**

*"Ja sitt joudun kertoon tätä älytöntä tilannetta ett en mä oo naimisissa eikä oo lapsiakaan."*  
(Maarit) [27]

*"...he niinku kuvittelee että valkonen on jotakin korkeampaa ja suurempaa kun he ite. Sen takia että mulla on rahaa ja tuota, raha nyt on yksi niitä kaikkein tärkein, ja koulutus toinen -- minusta se ei oo välttämättä ollu kaikissa tilanteissa ihan kiva asia että jos ne on pyrkiny nostamaan korkeammalle tasolle. "* (Outi) [28]

*"... ett se on hirveen vaikee ystäväystyä noin niinku perusteellisesti, koska on niin suuri, mutt tässä työyhteisössä mulla on ihan hyviä kavereita. Ei me mitenkään tasavertaisia olla, koska mull on rahaa ja heill ei välttämätt oo..."* (Antero) [29]

*"Kyllä meillä suomalaisia käy paljon kylässä, mutta paikallisia vaan muutamia. Onko heillä sitten kynnys tulla ulkomaalaisen luokse vai ei mutta et meille ei oo tullu kovinkaan monta."*  
(Markku) [30]

*"...ehkä siinä on just, vaikei sitä niin myöntäskään, sitä et on niin iso elintasoero. Että me ollaan niin eri elintasoa."* (Markku) [31]

*"...ne on niin vaatimattomat ne omat olot ettei se oo niin helppoo heiänkään kutsua sit jotain meikäläistä – Se on vähän kun mekin kutsutaan meill kotiin jotain paikallisia työkavereita -- se saattaa olla että näinkin pitkän ajan Afrikassa olon jälkeen olis vaikee tuntee sitä sellaseks luonnolliseks ja helpoks. Siinä voitaa olla vähän jäykkiä ja ajatella et onks meillä täällä vähän niinkun liian hienoa ja jotain tämmöstä."* (Klaus) [32]

*"...täälön valkosilla ja mustilla eri hinnat. Eli tääl ei oo millään tavalla määrätty vaan katsotaan ihmistä ja luokitellaan rikkaaks, et toltä nyhdetään... semmonen pettäminen mikä on niinku keskeinen. Jokainen pyrkii maksimoimaan voiton. Mistä vaan rahaa ja millon tahansa. Ja joka kokee sen, tietää tunteen et ne yrittää sumuttaa mua."*  
(Antero) [33]

*"Ei oo mitään mahdollisuutta siihen, ett olis sillai läheisiä suhteita. Se on turvallisuuskysymys. Ett en mä halua ett ne tietää musta aivan hirvittävän paljon, koska ne on taka-ajatukset aina..."* (Antero) [34]

*"... se että ku me ollaan suomalaisia ni ei meiän tarttekaan ajatellakkaan että meiän tarttis asua tuolla jossain maalattiolla ja sillä tavalla. Mie koen että ei sillä oo kauheeta merkitystä minkälaisessa talossa sitä asutaan täällä vaan että minkälainen suhtautumistapa sulla on näihin paikallisiin. Miten sie kohtaat nää paikalliset ja otatko sie ne vastaan. Minusta sillä on paljo suurempi merkitys kun sillä että asutko sinä samalla tavalla. Hyvin alkeellisesti ja sulla kaikki voimavarat mennee suomalaisena siihen ett sie pysyt hengissä siellä ja ett sie et sairastu. Se ei oo luonnollista... Kyllä se on tärkee että pysyy terveenä ja mielenterveys pysyy kunnossa ja että pystyy tekemään tätä työtä minkä takia tänne on tullu."* (Leena) [35]

## (Appendix 5 continued)

"... miehiin täällä suhtaudutaan hyvin kunnioittavasti ja varsinkin jos on vielä vähän harmaata niin vielä enemmän." (Antero) [36]

"... mä olen niin hirveen vanha. Siinä paikallisen kulttuurin arvosteluasteikossa mä oon kauheen korkeella. Mä oon hirveen kunnioitettava, mul on lastenlapsia!" (Antero) [37]

"Et sen ei välttämättä tarvi olla niin, et täytyy olla myös vapaa-aikana yhdessä jotta pystys toimimaan yhdessä. Kulttuurit voi olla erilaisia, toinen voi elää muussa maailmassa niinku vapaa-aikana kuin työaikana." (Klaus) [38]

"Me taas voitais pyytää kotiin mut sit toisaalta tuntuu et se työ on se työ ja sitten on jotain muuta." (Klaus) [39]

"Ett kylhän on siellä niinku muutama näitä paikallisia, mutt me ollaan kaikki sellasess työssä, että naapurikin välillä ihmettelee, että asunko mä siellä vai en. Mä oon paljon reissussa, hän on paljon reissussa, paljon on kenttätöitä, että, ei, ei, siinä naapurustossa se jää ihan semmoseks tervehtimistasolle että." (Maarit) [40]

"Siinä on siis ihan siitä kysymys, että ensinnäkin että jonkun kanssa voi läheiseks tulla ni pitää olla sitä yhteistä aikaa. Pitää olla mahdollisuus...jakaa niitä jatuksia tai, ees mahdollisuus puhua ihan höpöhöpöjä. Kun ei sitä mahdollisuutta oo, niin ei sitä mitenkään tuu läheiseks." (Maarit) [41]

"... me ollaan tultu tänne enemmän niinku sitä työtä tekemään kun sopeutumaan niinku integroitumaan siihen ympäristöön." (Maarit) [42]

"... lähetystyöntekijä lähtee pitkäks ajaksi ja...sitoutuu elämään ihmisten parissa, syömään heidän ruokiansa ja monesti yöpymään niissä olosuhteissa, vaikka koti on tällä tavalla toisenlainen. Kuitenkin aika usein joudutaan sen ihmisen arkee jakamaan." (Raija) [43]

"En, en muuten kuin että osaan vaadituissa tilanteissa käyttäytyä niinkun asiaan kuuluu. Ett se on lähinnä se kulttuurin omaksuminen semmonen työväline." (Maarit) [44]

"Me ollaan kaikkien noitten kans, kerjäläisten ja maaseudun ihmisten kanssa, manviljelijöiden, paimentolaisten...niiten kanssa me tehdään työtä." (Raija) [45]

"No meillä on muutamia hyviä ystäviä lähinnä ton työn kautta tulleita ja sitte joitaki jotka on tuolla kirkossa. -- Sanotaan et ne aika paljo liittyy just siihen työhön ja seurakuntaan mutta ei niinkään vapaa-aikaan." (Markku) [46]

"Ja sit ku mä en oo ihan kirkossa käyvää tyyppiä, enkä mä jaksa mennä sinne senkään takia, että mä tutustuisin ihmisiin siellä -- niin se sosiaalinen piiri jää sitten pois -- Ja sitt tietysti vois käydä jossakin rumba-baarissa tai jossakin muualla istumassa ja tavata sillä tavalla ihmisiä, mutt niitäkään ei ole siellä niin paljon --ei siellä oikeen sellasii paikkoja oo missä illalla kävis." (Maarit) [47]