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## **From Working Hard to Being Hard Working : The Maintenance and Mobilization of Cultural Capital among Finnish Migrants in Florida**

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### **Abstract**

This chapter addresses the question of *how migrants can draw from and utilize their cultural capital in their new host environment in the domain of work*. The empirical study was conducted in the Finnish community in Florida, United States, from February to April 2022. Our empirical findings indicate that contextual-level cultural match, the historically built group image, and activities of and in the migrant community may facilitate and guide migrant workers in their adaptation processes and in constructing a bicultural identity, leveraging both home and host cultures. Such an approach does not require the migrants to change or reject their cultural heritage but rather to strategically select and enforce some aspects of it that are most fitting, usable, or positively distinguishing in their host environment.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural adaptation, cultural capital, matching, values, international migration, diaspora, work, hard work, honesty

## INTRODUCTION

In today's global world, it has become increasingly common, possible, and even necessary for individuals to relocate to different countries for work or other reasons for short periods of time, temporarily, or for good. Despite the reason or motivation for relocation (e.g., expatriate, sojourner, or migrant entrepreneur) or the length of the stay, moving to a new country is likely to cause stress and require an individual to change. Consequently, socio-cultural adaptation—or the ability of individuals to adapt to and function in a foreign culture—is becoming an increasingly important skill (Bierwiazzonek & Waldzus, 2016; Huff et al., 2021). Considering the phenomenon's importance to individuals' well-being and to organizations and societies, as the notion of well-integrated migrants may be critical in terms of competitive resources and economic assets (Dana et al., 2019), understanding the factors that drive successful cultural adaptation is of the utmost significance. However, the increasing complexity of the global environment and connectivity of people require researchers to take more systematic approaches and dynamic perspectives. Traditionally, research on socio-cultural adaptation and related processes of acculturation has largely focused on the importance of the “receiving” culture, ignoring the wider range of individual, situational, and cultural-level influences and complexities (Ward, Leong, et al., 2004; Weinreich, 2009). Consequently, an important but empirically less studied question continues to circle around the topic of individual–host country interactivity.

In the field of international business, culture, and cultural differences in particular, is and has long been at the center of various streams of research, but it has mainly been seen as the root and cause of challenges and obstacles at both the organizational and individual levels. Such a limited and negative view of culture inevitably hinders our understanding of the processes and conditions needed to help organizations and individuals adapt to and leverage the benefits of cultural differences (Shenkar, 2001, 2012; Stahl & Tung, 2015). Thus, there has been a call for a more “positive treatment of culture” and its distinguishing features (Cameron, 2017; Stahl & Tung, 2015; Srivastava et al., 2020) and for a more intense focus on the interfaces rather than on the voids between the transacting entities (Shenkar, 2001). From the viewpoint of migrating individuals, recent research has suggested that certain geographical or cultural areas might be more appealing to certain groups of people (cf. Nummela et al., 2021), emphasizing the need to respond to the call to incorporate individual-level attributes and desires into the model (Berry, 2005; Potosky, 2016; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

At a more fundamental level, mobility has permanent consequences on who we are and what we do (Weinreich, 2009; Özkazanc-Pan, 2019). However, to understand how the new forms of belonging and identities emerge from the interplay between cultures, further research is required. Thus, in the field of international migration and diasporas, the focus has started to shift from the deficit-and-problem view to the agency-and-opportunity view (Elo & Minto-Coy, 2019; see also Annique Un et al., 2022). In other words, the state of multiple belonging, formerly seen as a negative feature of diaspora, is now viewed as an advantage, offering, for example, opportunities for networking and facilitating recognition in individuals' entrepreneurial activities (Elo & Minto-Coy, 2019; see also Calhoun, 2003). Extant literature has already shown linkages between mobility and entrepreneurial efforts (e.g., Frederiksen et al., 2016; Nummela et al., 2021) and highlighted the relatively high entrepreneurial activity in migrant communities (Zubair & Brzozowski, 2018). Although these ideas were first found in the entrepreneurship literature, they could also be relevant and applicable to individuals seeking, recognizing, and engaging in any type of work in a new host country. Moreover, although it is suggested that entrepreneurship is affected by both actors and contexts (Welter, 2011), prior studies have neglected to explain how opportunities and activities may emerge from the interplay between the individual, the host population, and the socio-cultural environment (Ozasir Kacar & Essers, 2019).

To address the gaps identified above, we aim to dig deeper into the interactivity between contexts and individuals by asking *how migrants can draw from and utilize their cultural capital in their new host environment in the domain of work*. Regarding the term “cultural capital,” we refer to the Bourdeausian “rucksack approach” from migration studies that defines culture-specific competencies (fitting or not fitting) as those that migrants bring with them to the new country of residence (Bourdeau, 1986; Cutler et al., 2005; Erel, 2010). Thus, we follow the idea that context—both home and host—is an important driver of cultural adaptation (Berry, 1997; Bierwiazzonek & Waldzus, 2016; Ward & Geeraert, 2016), but equally important are the “matching” features of the home and host cultures that individuals can mobilize in the domain of work. We seek to unveil the dynamics between the different levels (individual and contextual) by drawing from the identity literature that puts forth that individual identities are constructed in interactions with others (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Hall, 1991).

To address the research question, we conducted an empirical study of the Finnish diaspora in Florida, United States. A central feature of overseas ethnic communities, diasporas, is their retained affinity for both their native lands and their members. While adapting to their local environments, diasporas often retain elements of the culture, language, religion, food,

family structures, and other cultural features of their homelands. Florida has a unique history as a melting pot of different cultures, hosting many immigrant communities with a “settler nationality” (see Bell, 2009), and the Finnish community was one of the earliest diasporas in the region, established more than 100 years ago. The data analyzed in this study consist of 12 face-to-face interviews with Finnish-origin, first- and second-generation residents in Florida, secondary data, and participant observations collected in the spring of 2022. The study results are expected to enrich our understanding of the conditions and drivers of interactivity by illustrating what specific contents of cultural capital are utilized and how. Despite the focus on the Finnish–Florida context, the results could have a wider impact on the ongoing discussions surrounding international migration, socio-cultural adaptation, and the “positivity” of culture in international business.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The extant literature on cross-cultural adaptation has introduced various individual- and context-level factors that explain and drive successful (or unsuccessful) migration to a new environment. A commonly applied theoretical lens is cultural fit pertaining to both psychological and socio-cultural adjustment (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2014; Ward, Leong, et al., 2004; Ward, Bochner, et al., 2020). These studies have emphasized the interaction between migrating individuals’ personalities, or personal attributes, and the cultural norms in the host country that together determine the adjustment process and its outcome. In other words, cultural fit does not require all personality traits to resemble the host culture’s norms to be adaptive; some characteristics may function as psychological resources and drivers of psychological well-being, while others relate to more tangible intercultural skills and competencies (Caligiuri, 2000; Ward, Leong, et al., 2004). In this study, we focus on the latter domain to understand the dynamics between the contextual and individual levels.

In the literature, there is ample evidence that the societal environment of the host country (i.e., the country of relocation) can be a powerful predictor of cultural adaptation (e.g., Ward & Geeraert, 2016; Wilson et al., 2013). Socio-cultural adaptation is influenced by the amount of contact with host nationals and the length of stay in a new culture (Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005; Ward & Kennedy, 1993), but the specificity of the context(s) also plays a role. Studies have suggested that host country policies, whether they are based on assimilation or multiculturalism (Kunst & Sam, 2013; Ait Ouarasse & Van De Vijver, 2004) and the level of economic development, may facilitate or hinder adaptation (Greenman, 2011). A recent study by Huff et al. (2021) introduced the concept of “historical heterogeneity,” which accentuates

the host country's traditions and history as a variable explaining adaptation. The researchers argued that successful cultural adaptation may be more dependent on a society's long-standing traditions of diversity than on its current situation and outlook (Huff et al., 2021; Richardson, 2022). Prior studies have drawn from the idea that cultural norms, especially those related to the acceptance of foreigners, typically take generations to develop (Leung & Morris, 2015; Schwartz, 2011). Indeed, past migrant generations' positive experiences may generate more positive expectations, motivation, and confidence among newcomers, facilitating their engagement with and adjustment to the host country. Thus, perceiving the host culture as more welcoming could encourage newcomers to engage more deeply, seek out interactions with locals, and adjust their behaviors (Berry, 1997).

A widely applied construct incorporating both home and host cultures in predicting adaptation is "cultural distance" (e.g., Demes & Geeraert, 2014; Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005), suggesting that cultures with similarities pair up better than those with differences. However, the construct has been criticized for its simplicity and "illusions," such as its assumption of cultural stability over time and the linearity in the amount of distance and number of challenges (Beugelsdijk et al., 2018; Shenkar, 2001, 2012; Stoessel et al., 2014). The asymmetrical effect of cultural distance was further confirmed by Selmer et al. (2007) in their empirical study of both German and American managers. They discovered that despite the equal cultural distance, it was easier for German managers to adapt to the United States than it was for U.S. managers to adapt to Germany. Thus, although it is important to understand both cultures that are in contact, if we are to understand the individuals in contact (Berry, 2005), we also need to look into various other factors, such as by exploring the situational, motivational, or temporal aspects, to fully understand interactivity. For example, in the case of Chinese immigrants entering and integrating into an engineering culture in Canada, migrants devalued the emotional and relational values endorsed in their home country's culture and instead started to endorse masculine, competitive, and individualistic values, which they perceived to be essential in their new work environment (Shan, 2012).

Berry's model of acculturation is grounded in the idea that individuals' cultural orientation toward the home and host cultures impacts their acculturation strategies in a new environment (Berry, 1997, 2005; see also Ward & Geeraert, 2016). According to the model, migrants choose to either maintain or discard their own home/heritage cultures and to adopt or reject the new host/settlement culture. Although this model offers a usable framework for understanding the variety of individual approaches, it has been criticized for its bipolar conceptualization, mainly focusing on the settlement culture rather than the heritage culture

(Shenkar, 2012). In a recent study, Valenzuela and Rogers (2021) suggested that the selection of the chosen acculturation strategy may depend on a perceived match between immigrants' abilities and traits and the demands of the host culture. They further highlighted that the process of how immigrants draw upon certain personal attributes to meet the demands of the host culture has been inadequately explored. Weinreich (2009) suggested replacing acculturation with the "enculturation" strategy, highlighting the incorporation of any available cultural elements, mainstream or otherwise, that a person considers relevant and thus significant to the construction of their overall identity. Moreover, while acculturation typically indicates migrants' movements on a single continuum toward the adoption of the mainstream "receiving" culture, enculturation equally emphasizes the relevance of the heritage culture in the identity formation process (Weinreich, 2009). Thus, rather than switching their cultural framework (Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2021), they could incorporate, leverage, or even take advantage of it.

The identity literature has put forth the idea that individual identities are constructed and negotiated in interactions with others (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1996). In the case of migrants, however, social negotiations and construction entail more diverse identity dimensions and audiences. In their study, Killian and Johnson (2006) suggested that migrants have at least three distinct identities: immigrant, ethnic, and national/host country. The influence of and interplay between these identities differ depending on the context or situation. Thus, migrants may selectively use different repertoires or traits of their cultures and showcase only a distinct part of themselves. An individual can carry a portfolio of identities and activate them at different times, depending on, for example, the restrictions imposed by social settings and identity audiences (Nagel, 1997). However, this also means that although people can choose how they wish to identify themselves, they cannot always control others' attempts to classify them (Nagel, 1997). For example, Morris et al. (2011) discovered that a sudden increase in the number of migrants in a host country may be perceived as a threat to cultural identity by locals, leading to unwelcoming attitudes that potentially undermine the migrants' cultural adaptation.

Indeed, perceptions and pre-classifications by the constituents of the host country may differ greatly in different domains and situations. These perceptions may also date back in history. In his study of the hybrid identity construction of first- and second-generation Caribbeans in Canada, Plaza (2006) discovered that depending on the domain and groups of the host population, the immigrants either needed to deal with racial stereotyping dating back to the time of colonialism, or they could be more open and proud about their roots and own

cultural ideologies. Similarly, Killian and Johnson (2006) found that belonging to a certain ethnic group gave African women immigrants a low-status image in France, marking them permanently by their place of birth or the milieu in which they grew up. To counteract these negative images, they employed various strategies of refusing certain labels of identity, such as through the management of appearance, “Not-Me” narratives, the redefinition of labels, and the use of educational resources (Killian & Johnson, 2006).

Thus, the experiences of demarcation based on ethnic background may be shaped not only by present relationships, rules, and practices but also by past experiences, indicating that there might be considerable fluidity, but also stability, across generations (cf. Plaza, 2006). Usually, however, classifications or stereotypes are built on “typical” values and oversimplified images that others perceive to reflect a specific group (Helkama, 2015; Schwartz, 2011). Migrant individuals can refuse a given classification or image (Hunt, 2003) or then welcome and leverage it, depending on the nature and type of classification. Fewer studies have focused on the latter, specifically how individuals may maintain and utilize the given classifications in the socio-cultural adaptation process.

## **METHODS**

The data for this chapter stem from a Finnish community located in South Florida. The community centers around Lake Worth and Lantana but has contributed to the construction and development of large areas in the Palm Beach County area since its establishment approximately 100 years ago. At the time of data collection, this included two “club houses” (Finland House and American Finnish Club), several street names sourced from Finnish surnames (e.g., Alho drive), a residential area named by its Finnish builder (Nurmi Isles), a Finnish bakery (Polar Bakery, Lantana), and statues donated by and dedicated to Finns in a public park (Bryant Park, Lake Worth). We describe this settlement as a transnational community stemming from the notion that the “nation” in transnationality usually refers to the territorial, social, and cultural aspects of the nations concerned (Kearney, 1995). What is particular to this community is the dual existence of both Finnish and American elements.

The members of the community identify as “amerikansuomalainen,” American Finns, who actively leverage their Finnish heritage to adapt to the surrounding American culture. The community is residentially scattered but closely tied together through informal networks and ethnic organizations. According to U.S. census data, foreign-born Finns have been present in Florida since at least 1850, growing steadily in number and reaching over 400,000 in 1910. In the 1960s, the foreign-born Finnish population still accounted for over 150,000 people. From

there, the number of foreign-born Finns in Florida began to decline, amounting to approximately 30,000 in 2000. According to the interviewees, the area still houses at least 10,000 Finns. However, nowadays, the majority are “snowbirds” who fly in for the winter season and spend summers in Finland or in the northern states. This has made the community vulnerable, and locals expect that the COVID-19 pandemic has mortally wounded the area in terms of the vibrancy of the winter season.

One of the authors lived in this community in Florida for four months in the spring of 2022. During her stay, she conducted qualitative, semi-structured life-course interviews with 42 members of the community. These interviews enabled the obtaining of detailed information on the life stories of the participants, paying special attention to experiences of identity formation, community, and work. The interview guide was inspired by Atkinson’s (1998; see also Shan, 2012) life story interview protocol, utilizing questions such as “please tell me about yourself,” “where are you from,” “what kind of identity is closest to your heart,” “how active are you in the surrounding community,” “what has been the role of the community in settling into the area,” “please describe your work history,” “what does work mean for you,” “how are Finns perceived in working life in Florida,” and “do you consider yourself entrepreneurial.” The purpose of using life-course interviews was to explore the stories of the people within a society, enabling the retelling of lives across time and the interaction between individual lives and the community (cf. Atkinson, 1998). The interviews were conducted in Finnish and translated by the research team.

Of the 42 interviews, all of which informed our understanding of the community, 14 (including four interviews with two participants) were selected for this chapter to reflect on how individuals draw strengths from different cultures. These interviewees were either entrepreneurs (13) or individuals with entrepreneurial attitudes toward work (4). At the same time, these interviewees represented the clearest reflection of both of the two cultures, Finnish and American, whereas others reported that they were primarily Finnish, perceived themselves as American, or perceived themselves as cosmopolitans, with no clear sense of drawing from any cultural heritage. Appendix 1 lists the participants who were interviewed in this study.

In addition to the interviews, the prolonged visit to Florida allowed the researcher to participate in gatherings and events hosted by the Finnish community, such as morning coffee chats at the Finnish bakery, lunch at Kerhotalo (American Finnish Club), meetings of the heritage society at Suomi Talo (Finland House), and the Finnish summer festival. This prolonged and “idle” stay (cf. Coates, 2017) opened access to the casual interactions with and between people, which provided a more profound understanding of the history and the

bicultural makeup of Florida Finns that ultimately informed the data analysis. Secondary data, which were used to understand the historical role and relevance of the early Finnish migrants in the region, consisted of history books written by various authors from that area, pictures, and other historical objects.

## **FINDINGS**

The data in our study suggest that coming from a culture that is seen to possess certain values and characteristics helped the migrants start and run their businesses and engage in other types of work in their host environment. The stereotype given to Finns in the region—labeling them as hard-working, diligent, and trustworthy workers and business partners—inculcated the migrants with a positive image that helped them to boost their self-image in the domain of work. We discovered that the roots of the given stereotype had already been established at the time of the first Finnish settlers arriving in the area in the 1920s. The same stereotype has pervaded until today, and it has been adopted by current migrants in the region. The following explains the premises of the cultural match between the Finnish migrants and the work context (and population) in Florida and shows how the historically built image of the Finns and the activities by and in the diaspora have helped and informed the migrants in adapting to the host society, interactively leveraging both their home and host countries' cultures.

### **Matching the Host Country Context and Migrants' Cultural Capital**

The work environment in the United States is characterized by special features, the most central of which is the value of hard work. The story of the American dream postulates that by working hard, anyone can achieve the “American dream,” which highlights opportunity, economic success, and security (Adams, 2017; Geary, 2019; Waldron et al., 2004). It is also a central component of the nation's story, as immigration has played an essential role in the country's economy and cultural make-up for centuries, being a major source of population and economic growth (Barrett, 1992; Porter, 2010). Many will associate the phrase “American dream” with “the land of opportunity for immigrants,” although attitudes toward migrants have cycled between favorable and hostile since the 1790s (Geary, 2019).

The value of hard work was familiar and equally important to the Finnish migrant interviewees, who perceived work as an intrinsic part of themselves and their lives. Although the value of hard work is and has been central to Finnish people throughout their history (Helkama, 2015; Taramaa, 2009), the American emphasis and pace was yet at another level.

Consequently, the encouraging work environment and interactions with locals further bolstered their diligence and attitude toward work:

It's the way of life (work), which is very strong here... Even my neighbor always says, "You work hard, you work hard, and you work hard." Yes, I work very hard. Work always comes first for Americans. Well, for all of us Finns, it has always been very important as well, and we have worked a lot. But Finnish visitors who come here say that they never work as much in Finland as we do here. (MK)

Although the interviewees stated that working hard was the only way to survive in the host country, they also enjoyed it immensely. They considered themselves to be in a fitting and supporting environment that pushed them to work even harder. Furthermore, they considered themselves to be living the American dream and thus had been integrated into society through their work:

Well, you have to work here. You will always have to work, but we have always enjoyed working like crazy! So, now we're living the American dream. (ER)

However, the tendency and attitude toward the "purpose" and "fruits" of hard work were perceived to be different in their home and host countries:

In Finland, there is a lot of envy. People envy you when you become successful. Here, they say, "Well done, great, and we encourage you." Here, they are proud to have friends who are successful. You boast about it. (JK)

This difference in the interpretation and accepted outcomes may be explained by the origin of the values, where the Finnish value of hard work is the legacy of Lutheranism and the Protestant work ethic and the work itself is valued and cherished (Helkama & Portman, 2019). In the United States, hard work is linked to "dream" and "economic freedom" (Geary, 2019). Thus, although the values are similar, their interpretations vary between the home and host countries.

### Manifesting and Maintaining the "Hard Working" Stereotype over Time

The image of Finnish migrants as hard-working people was already established in the 1920s, when the first Finnish settlers came to the region and started building the community and its surroundings. At that time, the local community was in a strong phase of growth and development, and a lot of construction work was available. There were many skillful carpenters and craftsmen among the Finnish migrants, and they participated in the development and construction work. Over time, their reputation as skillful, reliable, and hardworking craftsmen

grew. Their construction work still exists today and is visible in various parts of the region, such as the grand houses on Palm Beach Island, reminding the residents of their accomplishments. In the 1940s, a Finnish migrant, Victor Nurmi, bought undeveloped small islands formerly known as Las Olas near Fort Lauderdale, developing them into a prestigious upper-middle-class residential area now known as the Nurmi Isles. The residential Alho drive in Lantana, named and completely built by Finns, has also housed many Finns over the decades. The interviewees seemed to be very familiar with and often referred to the buildings and places built by the early Finns:

In the old days... everything here is built by Finnish migrants. There were big areas in Lake Worth, Lantana, where they were working. So, Finnish people have always been diligent and hardworking, very professional craftsmen and builders. And we are very well known for that. We always discuss how Finnishness is also visible outside, in the exteriors. (MK)

Thus, the past images of the early settlers continue to influence the current residents' perceptions of themselves. Present-day migrants' awareness of the past and of the Finns' central role in the region makes them proud of their roots in the area. Furthermore, the image that was created in the past is being actively maintained by the Finnish community. For example, they actively engage in cultural remembering (Goncharova, 2016) and celebrate the historical past. Thus, rather than defying the historical stereotype or their background, they enforce it in a type of "us-too" rather than "not-me" narrative. An interviewee referred to it as a "*positive stamp*" demarcating both the previous and current generations.

The images from the past are also fortified and maintained by the Finnish community, especially the active clubs and associations (Suomi Talo and Kerhotoalo, meeting places for the Finnish community and locals interested in their events, such as plays and dances) maintaining Finnish culture, heritage, and traditions. Interestingly, the observer-researcher noted that the "Finnishness" innate to the Florida community dates back decades, but the Finnish culture embraced by the community seemed somewhat outdated. For example, reflections on dances every Wednesday and Saturday seemed foreign to the participating researcher. The community organizes activities and gathers people together, but it also disseminates information from the community's history. The role of the Finnish people in the community, and especially the image of Finnish workers as diligent and hardworking, is shared and perpetuated through various stories and books written about the early years (e.g., Hiironniemi, 2021). In addition, in club houses, there are many pictures, ornaments, and objects reminding people of the past.

The concrete settings of the various community venues, namely the club houses and churches built by the Finns, also reinforce these stories.

The maintenance of collective cultural capital is also notable in a more performative way. The community's club houses, administration, and activities are organized and run by community members on a voluntary basis. Depending on the volunteer's role, whether it is cleaning, financial management, preparing coffee and refreshments for the events, organizing flea markets, or impersonating Santa Claus at the Christmas party, the work can be very time-consuming. A general perception among the interviewees was, however, that it was not a problem because the work itself is thought to be very rewarding, giving them "*a lot of joy*." In addition, this work connected to and showcased the migrants' similarity in terms of their perceptions of work in the host culture but in another domain:

What does working mean to you? (Interviewer)

Well, it's in a way my way of life. That's also why I am (working voluntarily) here at (the club house), without pay. (AA)

The quote demonstrates that the migrants have maintained a very strong Finnish cultural practice: joint voluntary work for the common good, referred to in Finnish as "*talkoot*." This means that as the community engages its members in voluntary work, it also makes them participants—enablers, creators, and communicators—in the heritage work. On the one hand, voluntary work promotes desirable attitudes toward the work. On the other hand, it brings people together and engages them in cultural remembering and preservation that also support the maintenance and durability of cultural capital and the perceptions of themselves over time.

#### Utilization of Cultural and Social Capital in the Domain of Work

According to the interview data, the host environment offered many possibilities and encouraged the migrants to enter and engage in different types of work. Whether they had businesses of their own or were employed by others, the "Finnishness" was perceived to be a clear advantage in the eyes of the employers, partners, or collaborators:

Being a Finn gives you a lot of benefits. It has definitely helped me because people respect it. I have been working (cleaning houses) in a very good neighborhood here, and the word has gone around. They really respect the fact that I am a Finn. I have been told that many times... (MK)

Although they identified with the ideals of the American way of working, the interviewees also noted some controversies in local business conduct, which were in stark contrast to their cultural ideals and conduct. This was especially the case regarding the value of honesty, which is central to Finnish national identity (Helkama & Portman, 2019). This juxtaposition and value conflict was particularly evident in interactions with other foreign-origin businesses that were infamous for being unreliable and untrustworthy. Reportedly, doing business with some “other migrants” always included risks, which the Finnish migrants also had experiences of:

You can't trust anybody here. Just today, I drove to see a car that was supposed to be in good condition, but it was crap. So, before you have the names on the paper and money in our pocket, you can't trust anyone. It's that simple. (JT)

The interviewee continued and positioned himself partly from the prevailing business culture:

Business-wise, I am more American, but if you look at the basic stuff about life, honesty, and so forth, then yeah, I'm Finnish. (JT)

This negative attitude toward some migrants prevailing in the business environment did not deter Finns. Even if the Finns identified strongly with the American dream, they maintained their national values of integrity and honesty, which helped them distinguish themselves from the notorious “other migrants.” The interviewees highlighted that the Americans' trust in the Finnish people made it easier for them to do business, impacting their economic performance. Thus, when positioning themselves in the host context, they purposefully emphasized the group-specific cultural traits that were appreciated by others and distinguished them from the other locally based migrant groups. In other words, they deliberately emphasized their origins to create a positive and desired image. The Finnish origin did not go un-noticed in interactions with others. On the contrary, migrants even used it to influence the perceptions of others. When asked if their response to the question “Where are you from?” is Finland, an interviewee explained:

Yes, absolutely, always. It is also that Finns are considered trustworthy and honest. And it creates the image that I can be trusted, too. Especially in business, honesty is the top priority. (JT)

This positive and distinguishing feature made the Finnish migrants enforce and cultivate this part of their national identity, making them feel even “more Finnish” in a context where such features are not generally prevailing:

It (being Finnish) is somehow refined here. It has become stronger than it was in Finland. In Finland, certain things are normal and regular, nothing special, but here, we become even more Finnish in certain aspects. (AA)

In addition to utilizing the positive image of being a Finn, the interviewees also highlighted the important role of the Finnish diaspora in their work endeavors. This was evident, especially among the newcomers, who were establishing themselves and their businesses in the region. They could, for example, get help and advice from other community members for many practical matters, such as bookkeeping and facilitating and hastening their adaptation. This guidance was particularly important in situations where the migrant worker was not very fluent in the native language. Reportedly, getting advice in their mother tongue eased their anxiety in adapting to a new business or work environment whose customs and terminology were unfamiliar to them.

Furthermore, their first customers or employers often came from within the community or through the community members' connections. Thus, in a sense, the community operated as a link between migrants and work/business opportunities by providing opportunities to interact with and access other community members' networks. In establishing these new relationships, trust, rather than prior experience, was often the decisive factor. One interviewee explained this when asked about the relevance of the Finnish community in their settlement into the region:

I would say it has been huge. I am an entrepreneur, and I am almost fully employed by a company that has been established by Finns... So it (the Finnish community) has definitely made things easier. We don't engage very much with Finnish people in our leisure time, but in business, we do. Let's put it this way: Finns prefer to buy from other Finns because they are reliable. (MA)

Sometimes, the demands or ideas from the community members even guided the entrepreneurs to recognize business opportunities and enter certain business fields:

We have had all kinds of businesses. It doesn't matter what it is. But initially, they (community members) came to us with lots of ideas, like why don't you start mowing lawns? And that's how we started our lawn-mowing business. (ER)

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter addressed the question of *how migrants can draw from and utilize their cultural capital in their new host country in the domain of work*. We looked into the interfaces between the contextual and individual levels and sought to explore factors driving interactivity and facilitating migrants' adaptation. While there seems to be more research on migrants

rejecting or devaluing their distinctive home culture characteristics, we presented an opposite type of case, where the migrants successfully utilized and even emphasized their cultural capital facilitating their adaptation. Our empirical findings indicate that contextual-level cultural match, a historically built group image, and activities of and in the migrant community may facilitate and guide migrant workers in their adaptation processes and in constructing a bicultural identity (Brannen & Thomas, 2010), leveraging both their home and host cultures. Such an approach does not require the migrants to change or reject their heritage culture but rather to strategically select and enforce some aspects of it that are most fitting, usable, or positively distinguishing in their host environment. However, the successful selection of these traits requires matching individual-level attributes with socially desirable features, where the experience of past generations, comparisons to other migrant groups, and feedback from external audiences are pivotal.

The difference between acculturation and enculturation processes is that the former is inclined toward the settlement culture, while the latter emphasizes settlement and heritage cultures equally in individuals' adaptation and identity formation processes (cf. Berry, 1997; Weinreich, 2009). The findings of this study also highlighted the relevance of both cultures, but rather than seeing the process on a continuum, moving toward either end, we should look for the crossings of the lines as opposed to specific positions on them. In other words, we suggest that adaptation does not necessarily require giving up the culture of origin (see Ryder et al., 2000). We believe that our study enriches the understanding of migrant identity construction by illustrating how migrants can build partly overlapping yet unique bicultural identities by identifying with both cultures (Brannen & Thomas, 2010). We show how individuals may build linkages over time and across the home and host cultures. The process is situational and dynamic, leading to the creation of a new, negotiated identity (see also Freedman & Tarr, 2000). According to Malkki (2008), the homeland is one of the most powerful unifying symbols for mobile individuals, but it can be constructed in different ways in different settings. In our case, migrant identity was negotiated and founded in the domain of work. Our empirical study illustrates one case of a slightly differently reconstructed homeland, where some features were positively enforced (honesty) and others dismissed (language) based on the perceived contextual and situational relevance.

As a response to the call for more research on contextualized settings and their impact on international migration (Elo & Minto-Coy, 2019), this study offers a historically and geographically specific explanation of the Finnish migrants' settlement in Florida. Moreover, the study shifted the lens away from the historical victim perspective of diasporas to a more

modern stance (Brubaker, 2005) by illustrating how the Finnish community in Florida has thrived by maintaining and utilizing its cultural capital. In doing so, the community has persisted over time, showing a long-standing and stable status in society (Dana et al., 2019). Thus, it matters not only where one goes but also who went there first. The experiences of earlier migrants may create strong and enduring impressions in the host environment and among its population, and in the migrants' perceptions of themselves. Thus, in addition to the host society's heritage and historical stances (Huff et al., 2021), we emphasized the early settlers' role in present day migrants' lives and status in society.

Finally, we believe that our findings could advance the "positivity" of cultural discussions in the field of international business. We have shown how foreign cultures can also be evaluated and matched by their compatible features. In this study, this was found to occur through values that transcended countries, companies, professions, types of employment, and even generations. It was geographically confirmed and bounded in past and current experiences and utilized for economic benefit. These findings could be relevant and applied to migrant entrepreneurship studies that seek to understand how to capitalize on distinctiveness and conformance in the international business arena (Abd et al., 2019), how cultural capital can be formed and utilized differently (e.g., Andrejuk, 2017).

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