

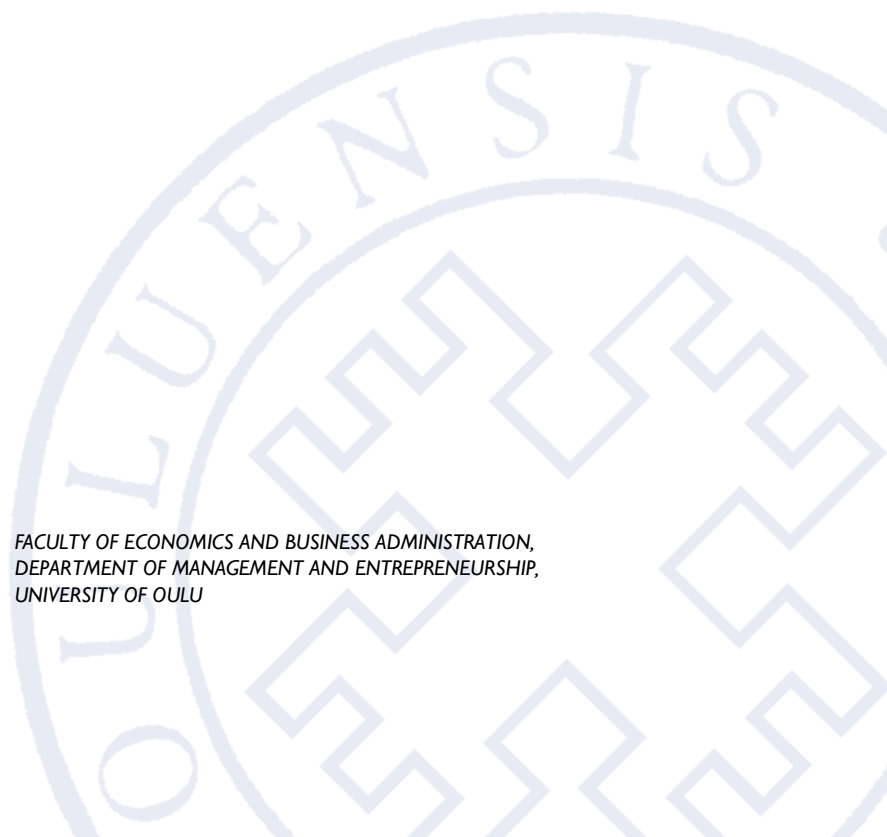
Maarit Heikkinen

ESTONIANISM IN A FINNISH ORGANIZATION

ESSAYS ON CULTURE, IDENTITY AND OTHERNESS

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FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION,
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
UNIVERSITY OF OULU



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MAARIT HEIKKINEN

**ESTONIANISM IN A FINNISH
ORGANIZATION**

Essays on culture, identity and otherness

Academic dissertation to be presented with the assent of
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Abstract

Within the globalization of business, international and cross-cultural management has acquired a greater meaning also among management and organization scholars. Consequently, the debate about the conceptualization and meaning of cultural differences has arisen. This thesis sees culture and cultural identity as inductive and discursive. This means that the traditional understanding of cultures and related identities as being rather fixed is questioned.

Cultural identity, culture and otherness are in this thesis looked through the lens offered by post-colonial theory. As the thesis investigates a Finnish organization operating in Estonia, the adaptation of post-colonial theory is believed to offer interesting insights to the identity construction inside the organization in question. Even though colonialization has never been actual, the relationship between the two countries displays the features of a colonial relationship. During its history, Finland has been taken a role as the “big brother” of Estonia and it has been argued that Estonia has been going through cultural “Finlandisation”. Today, however, the situation may have changed and therefore it is interesting to take a look at whether the post-colonial relations have had an effect on the identity construction and perception building between Estonians and Finns in an organizational context.

As the findings indicate, cultural identity of the Estonian employees is constructed in three discourses and in the same way the Finnish managers are constructing their ideas of the Estonians in various discourses. By treating cultural identity as fixed and objective, it would not be possible to reveal its diversity. In addition, when investigating Estonian identity construction and the construction of otherness by Finnish managers, utilization of post-colonial theory reveals that Estonians do not construct their identities based on the post-colonial array, whereas for Finnish managers it has a greater role. Furthermore, the power construction in the organization is also not a fixed, one-way process, but rather a mutual process affected by multiple identity constructions.

Keywords: discourse analysis, Estonia, identity, post-colonialism

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"The reason most people fail instead of succeed is that they trade what they want most for what they want at the moment."

Anonymous

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In Oulu, August 2009

Maarit Heikkinen

List of original essays

- I Heikkinen M (2006) Estonianism in Finnish organization – a post-colonial view on the construction of Estonian identity. Manuscript.
- II Heikkinen M (2007) Discourses of Estonianism in a Finnish organization – post-colonial perspectives on the construction of otherness. Manuscript.
- III Heikkinen M (2009) Towards hybridity in post-colonial theory – constructing power in an organizational context. Manuscript.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

With the globalization of business, the demand for managers sophisticated in global management and skilled in working with people from different cultural backgrounds has arisen. International and cross-cultural management has thus acquired a greater meaning also among management and organization scholars (Dowling *et al.* 1999, Adler 2002). In this thesis I investigate the constructions of culture, identity and otherness in an organizational context, where Finnish and Estonian national cultures cross. As this cross-cultural context sets the starting point for the research, the discussions about international and cross-cultural management offer a wider theoretical background for the purposes of my thesis.

Cross-cultural management research concentrates on cultures, their differences and the impact they have on organizational behaviour. Traditionally, it has been assumed that a certain stability and objectivity in features and values are typical for a certain culture, making the comparison of the differences between various cultures possible. However, in this thesis my personal leaning is towards the more critical stream of cross-cultural management, where the assumptions of universalism, positivism and objectivity in investigating culture and cultural differences have been abandoned. Furthermore, the ability to notice the exercise of power and emerging hierarchies and inequalities might offer alternative insights into cultural differences. Through this thesis, I wish to emphasise the contextual and relational nature of culture and cultural identity construction, where determining the causal cultural differences are not interesting. Instead, I seek a broader and more comprehensive illustration of culture and identity by approaching them from a constructivist perspective. (see e.g. Burrell & Morgan 1979, Adler 1983, Boyacigiller & Adler 1991, Sullivan 1998, Whitley 1999, Westwood 2001, Vaara & Tienari 2004, Westwood 2004).

Post-colonial theory is the theoretical debate at the centre of my research through which I aim to bring a critical perspective to my research. Colonial discourse claims that colonialism is still one of the most significant influences on Western interpretation of non-Western people, causing for colonialism to have crucial consequences on identity construction (see e.g. Said 1979, Spurr 1993, Prasad 1997, Gandhi 1998, Prasad & Prasad 2002, Kwek 2003, Frenkel 2008, Özkazanc-Pan 2008). This notion clearly forefronts the path for more critically

oriented view toward cultural differences as it brings out the aspects of inequality and colonial power in the investigation of cultural differences. However, most post-colonial research takes the binaric viewpoint to the qualities of the West and the non-West, where the West is seen as superior, advanced and progressive and the non-West as being inferior and backward (Said 1979). This binaric view actually shares the same assumptions as that of traditional cross-cultural management, where cultural differences are universally determined. Therefore my interest is to investigate the discursive and relational constructions of culture from the post-colonial perspective and to look for possible ambivalency of the constructions in both the West and non-West.

The relationship between Finland and Estonia is a specific example of the application of post-colonial theory, which is used in an empirical context in this thesis. The relationship between the two countries displays the features of a colonial relationship, where Estonia represents the non-West and Finland the West. While colonization has never been actual, the divergent histories of these two nations have led to a relationship where their roles as Western and non-Western countries has been emphasised. Finland gained its independence roughly 70 years earlier than Estonia and consequently took a role as the “big brother” of Estonia, whereas Estonia spent those same years under Soviet administration becoming a part of the East, the non-West. It has been argued, that Estonia has been going through cultural “Finlandisation” because of active foreign trade, communication and tourism between these two countries (e.g. Alenius 1998, Berg 2002). However, what of today when Estonia has gained its independence and become a part of the European Union? Is Estonia still the non-West for Finns? Does the post-colonial setting exist between these two nations, and if it does, can it be captured in a simple binaric view? In this thesis my interest lies in looking at the relationship between these two nations more carefully and to investigate whether post-colonial relations have had an effect on the identity construction and perception building between Estonians and Finns. This question will be examined from an organizational context where the organization and its local top management is Finnish and all the employees are Estonians. As the hierarchical structure of the organization also reflects a type of post-colonial power relation, it offers an interesting possibility to investigate those questions from an organizational context.

To summarise, this thesis contributes to the discussion about cultural differences and identities by treating them as *emergent, discursive and relational* and consequently offering an alternative to the traditional, deterministic views of

culture and cultural identity. This thesis concentrates empirically on the relational cultures and identities of Finland and Estonia. These are investigated by assuming that the relationship between these two nations might have features of a post-colonial one, but *it might reflect the post-colonial features very ambiguously* as described previously. Furthermore, a post-colonial relationship is like culture and identity – inductive, discursive and relational. However, the possible existence of a colonial relationship makes the investigation of relational culture differences and cultural identity in and in-between Finland and Estonia especially interesting.

1.2 The empirical work

In this thesis I aim to investigate the constructions of Estonianism inside a Finnish organization located in Tallinn, Estonia. This organization operates in the retail trade and opened its first two outlets in Tallinn in the year 2000. One of these outlets is the source of the empirical material for this research. This outlet employs roughly 120 people, of which all the employees are Estonians with the top management of the organization being Finnish. Therefore, this organization offers a good opportunity to investigate the dynamics of Finnish and Estonian cultures in an organizational context and to utilise the suppositions of post-colonial theory as posited in the previous chapter. The research material consists of interviews of both Estonian employees and Finnish managers.

In this thesis I adopt a discourse analytical thinking, meaning that national identities and related otherness are seen as discursive constructs. Thus, identities are discursively produced, reproduced and transformed (De Cillia *et al.* 1999: 153). In addition, the construction of these identities is seen to take place in a wider context defined by both history and present (Risberg *et al.* 2003: 123). With post-colonial theory offering insights into the wider context of power relations, further fruitful aspects may come to light with the investigation of identity construction from the discourse analytical point of view. The paradigm adopted in this research is constructionist. Because reality is believed to be constructed through discourses, it varies in different contexts. The idea of ongoing construction and reformation of reality is captured in the idea of “ontology of becoming” (e.g. Guba & Lincoln 1994, Burr 1995: 2–5, Cooper & Law 1995).

1.3 The problem setting and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to offer an extensive picture of Estonianism, identity and otherness in a special organizational context by adopting the viewpoint where identity and its construction are seen as relational and critical (see e.g. Burrell & Morgan 1979, Adler 1983, Boyacigiller & Adler 1991, Sullivan 1998, Whitley 1999, Westwood 2001, Vaara & Tienari 2004, Westwood 2004). Therefore, I aim to make a clear cut into the traditional deterministic view on cultural differences and furthermore on the construction of cultural identity (e.g. Hofstede 1980, Hofstede 2001). As the thesis consists of three separate essays, the aim of the research is equally threefold.

- 1) To illustrate the discursive construction of identity in Estonian employees and related otherness and to analyse the meaning of post-colonialism in this identity construction (essay 1).
- 2) To investigate how does the post-colonial array appear in the construction of otherness in the speech of Finnish managers (essay 2).
- 3) To investigate the meaning of the post-colonial perspective in the construction and employment of power of Finnish managers and in the Estonian employees' response to it (essay 3).

The theoretical discussions these essays rely on a partial overlap of overarching concepts and ideas, but the viewpoint with each essay takes a unique stance on the subject. The first essay relies on the theoretical discussion about cultural identity as a discursive construct and as a process of becoming rather than actually being (e.g. De Cillia *et al.* 1999, Morley 2003, Risberg *et al.* 2003, Tienari *et al.* 2005). The construction of otherness in terms of post-colonial theory and dichotomy between the West and the non-West are explained (Said 1979, Prasad 1997, Gandhi 1998, Prasad & Prasad 2002).

The second essay broadens the approach towards post-colonial theory by investigating the construction of otherness in relation to the most central debate in post-colonialism. At one end there is post-colonial theory based on the existence of the evident dichotomy between the West and the non-West, where Western qualities are considered superior and non-West qualities repressed (e.g. Said 1979, Prasad 1997, Gandhi 1998, Prasad & Prasad 2002, Jack & Westwood 2006). At the other end, the call for an ambiguity in post-colonial theory where categories

are not seen as fixed & stabilized (Bhabha 1994, Frenkel & Shenhav 2003, Frenkel & Shenhav 2006).

Continuing the discussion started in the second essay, the third essay examines the debate in post-colonial theory more profoundly. This discussion concentrates on the various streams of post-colonial theory, focusing on the traditional view based on the binarism originated by Said and on the hybrid stream based mostly on Bhabha. In doing so, the essay also reviews the uses of the hybrid stream of post-colonial theory in organization studies (e.g. Wong-Mingji & Mir 1997, Calas & Smircich 1999, Westwood 2001, Kwek 2003, Prasad 2003, Prasad & Prasad 2003, Frenkel & Shenhav 2006). The third essay adopts the hybrid viewpoint to post-colonial theory to illustrate the construction and employment of power. To investigate the power construction from the hybridism point of view Heiskala's (1997, 2001) structural approach to power is adopted.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of an introductory part and the essays. In this introductory chapter I will take a wider look at the general discussions my research contributes towards, whereas the essays concentrate on certain narrower areas of research in the light of its empirical findings.

I will initiate the discussion by reviewing the theoretical basis of the research, namely the area of cross-cultural management. I will shortly describe the central content of this research stream and take a look into its developmental history. Having done that, I will shift the focus to a more detailed investigation of the two central concepts: culture and cultural identity. Those two central concepts will be investigated in relation to cross-cultural management research.

The first chapters are to lay the ground work for the primary thrust of this thesis and after the general discussion in those first chapters about cross-cultural management and its key concepts I will focus on the critical approaches to cross-cultural management. An overview of critical approaches to IM is offered and the uses for post-colonial theory as a critical approach are reviewed.

In the next part of the introductory chapter I will review the theoretical areas and research relating to Estonia and Estonianism. I will first describe the recent history of Estonia, mainly in terms of transition from being a Soviet administered region to that of an independent nation. After that I will discuss the relationship of Estonia and Finland, the two nations the research at hand concentrates on.

The remaining part of this introductory chapter will focus on presenting the empirical research process and the methodology of my research. At this point, I will describe both the proceeding empirical research process and the writing process of this thesis. I will also review the methodological choices adapted in this thesis. Lastly in the introduction chapter, I will provide summaries of the essays.

2 Theoretical overview of the thesis

2.1 The basis for cross-cultural management

In this chapter the aim is to describe the general development of cross-cultural management research to create an understanding of the wider theoretical discussion related to my thesis. The descriptions of the developmental stages of cross-cultural management will show the actual point of contribution of this research. The development roughly proceeds from the search of managerial universals towards noticing the power, hierarchies and inequalities in organizations. The research at hand will offer a viewpoint to the more recent developments in cross-cultural management. To be able to understand this contribution of my thesis, it is appropriate to review the whole developmental history of cross-cultural management.

2.1.1 The development and content of cross-cultural management research

The discussion about international business and its management has increased as organizations have begun to expand their businesses internationally. The increasing importance of global business is forcing companies to face the challenges internationalization carries. The field of international management discusses both about human behaviour in organizations and HRM systems in various countries and multinational firms (Dowling *et al.* 1999). To begin with, the stream concentrating on HRM functions and systems will be left out of the scope and interest of this thesis and will focus only on the first mentioned part of IM, human behaviour. The field investigating the behaviour of people in organizations in different countries is called cross-cultural management, which offers a wide theoretical frame for the research at hand. In short, cross cultural management concentrates on the cultures and their differences and attempts to encompass international and multicultural dynamics. It describes and compares organizational behaviour across cultures and finally aims to understand the interaction of people from different cultures in an organizational context (Adler 2002).

Despite the recent increase of internationalization among companies, the awareness of the problematics of cross-cultural issues in organizations has already

arisen in the 1960s. Early studies such as Harbison's and Myers' *Management in the Industrial World: An International Analysis* (1959) or Farmer's and Richman's *Comparative Management and Economic Progress* (1965), focused on the differences in management systems for the first time. Before then the focus had been on the macro, abstracted and universalistic level of nomothetic theory (Westwood 2001). Both of these pioneer works focused on management as a means toward economic development and the over-riding force of these studies was the assumption that by following scientifically based managerial principles it would be possible to discover managerial universals and thereby apply them in various national contexts.

The focus on cultural aspects in management started to develop in relation to several interrelated research programmes. The first of these studies was the concept of anthropological concerns with culture by Kluckhohn (1951, 1962). The researchers of cross-cultural and international management were utilizing this concept in order to form a precise construction of culture and to make it operational. Secondly, Parson's (1951, 1977) theories of societal evolution, development and the role of cultural values offered a perspective where cultural values were seen to be institutionalized in the social systems. The principle of value orientations was thus key in understanding structures through which society solves problems. The third major research stream in the beginning of cross-cultural management studies concentrated on the debates around modernization, development and industrialization (see e.g. Lewis 1955, McClelland 1961, Bendix 1964). As McClelland (1961) pointed it out, psychologicistic achievement need and motive varies across cultures, but as development and industrialization goes on, the societies' structures, institutions, practices and even values will converge.

After these opening investigations into culture and cross-cultural management, the call for the development of a paradigm, a general theory for the study of culture, arose. Many international management scholars had the aim to generate a theory of culture, which would include a universally accepted and empirically valid construct of culture (see e.g. Child & Tayeb 1982, Triandis 1982, Adler 1983, Adler 1984, Feldman 1986). This debate also included the problem of how to define and understand culture. Is culture a process or a static entity? Do people create their own cultures or is it shaped by stable structures? Do management practices and organizational behaviour follow universal logic or are they determined by local traditions? (e.g. Adler 1984, Adler 2002, Tienari & Vaara 2004).

Geert Hofstede conducted expansive studies of national work related values and presented the results in *Culture's Consequences* (1980). Culture in Hofstede's study is presented as a sum of different dimensions that vary across nations. These differences are then used as indicators of organizational behaviour and as a means to explain differences in various situations. There was a clear need for a theory in this field as pragmatic and practical knowledge of organizations and management was needed due to an ever increasing number of multinational organizations. Hofstede's work offered a fully formed set of universal dimensions which were of use in defining the measures of culture. For these reasons Hofstede's work was, and still is, seminal in the field of cross-cultural management. Hofstede's work has been widely cited and utilised and has become a central paradigm in international and cross-cultural management (e.g. Sondergaard 1994).

Because of its wide utilisation and acceptance, it might be appropriate to take a closer look at Hofstede's studies and his framework. Geert Hofstede collected quantitative data for his studies by conducting survey research on the multinational company IBM in 40 different countries during the first phase. The consequent analysis focused on country differences in answers considering employee values. From the analysis Hofstede found up to five cultural dimensions, which defined the differences between the nations researched. Hofstede argued that national cultures can be described in terms of power distance; uncertainty avoidance; individualism versus collectivism; masculinity versus femininity and long versus short-term orientation. Furthermore, these dimensions allow the formation of culture clusters when the dimensions are compared across various cultures (Hofstede 1980, Hofstede 2001). The main content of Hofstede's five dimensions will be reviewed below:

1. Power distance

The greater the power distance, the more likely it is for employees to accept the hierarchy existing in the organization. In countries where the power distance is low, a democratic management style is appreciated and managers with authoritarian leadership style are considered unequal.

2. Uncertainty avoidance

This dimension describes how different countries accept uncertainty. Societies which are high in uncertainty avoidance adopt more rules and regulations to control the uncontrollable, whereas nations with low

uncertainty avoidance are more open to new and unconventional ways of thinking.

3. Individualism/collectivism

The emphasis on individualism or collectivism inside a society has various impacts on values and behaviour. Nations which emphasise individualism typically assume a rational and task-oriented relationship to the organisation, whereas collectivism typically anticipates an emotional relationship to the organisation.

4. Masculinity/femininity

This dimension distinguishes “hard” masculine societies from “soft” feminine ones. In countries with a strong masculine orientation, men are expected to act strongly and women are to concentrate on nurturing, these countries become career and success oriented. In more feminine oriented nations, gender roles are not as strong and the emphasis is rather on equality, social relationships and well-being.

5. Long/short-term orientation

In long-term oriented nations, this orientation stands for future rewards and perseverance. Inversely in short-term oriented countries, the emphasis is on the past and present and on quick results rather than on perseverance.

To summarise, Hofstede argued that the impact of national cultures override the meaning of organizational culture and values. Organizational behaviour is the result of an individual’s national background. Based on these notions, Hofstede’s main argument is the need to notice cultural differences and their consequences in an organizational context. (Hofstede 1980, Hofstede 2001).

Even though this research stream originated from Hofstede, which aimed to find typologies in cultures and clusters of countries and continues to be a common form in cross-cultural studies, it has also generated much criticism. Some scholars have warned about the uncritical use of Hofstede’s research and questioned its validity (e.g. McSweeney 2002). Even Hofstede himself has argued this point (Hofstede 1991). Furthermore, the criticism primarily concentrates on questioning the assumption that culture can be expressed in terms of objective mathematical language and that its categories are linear and exclusive. Furthermore, some scholars have accused Hofstede of forgetting the contextual nature of culture

construction and concentrating on the causality of national cultures (Hampden - Turner & Trompenaars 1997, McSweeney 2002).

In addition to the criticism aimed at Hofstede's research, scholars following Hofstede's theory have also generated discussion concerning other areas in cross-cultural management where critical deficiencies were noticed. The research on cross-cultural management has been criticised in suffering from methodological problems and from the lack of proper definitions of culture (e.g. Nasif *et al.* 1991). The lack of a unifying culture paradigm has also been identified and attempts to move away from a positivist paradigm have been made (e. g. Boyacigiller & Adler 1994, e. g. Sullivan 1994). In short, the problem of culture in international management is still alive. How should culture be defined and how does it appear?

As has been noted, the space cross-cultural management studies entered into was highly ideological and interwoven and has had an influence on its development (Westwood 2001). The most recent development in cross-cultural management discussion has been the call for further critically oriented approaches – the discussion to which this thesis will contribute towards. The critically oriented approach in cross-cultural management is especially central for my research and will be discussed in more depth later.

2.2 The role of culture and cultural differences in the cross-cultural management discussion

Culture is a crucial component when discussing international and cross-cultural management as it helps organizations understand the impact of national and ethnic cultures on the organization and its everyday activities (e.g. Adler 2002). Therefore it is significant, to take a closer look at the concept of culture and its meaning in cross-cultural management.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, scholars of cross-cultural management are not in complete agreement of the definition of culture. By understanding culture as a system of meanings, it also acknowledges that cultures are seen differently by different people and cannot be objectively determined. There has been numerous attempts to define culture, to which this chapter will offer an overview. What I will emphasize in this chapter is the subjectivity of culture and cultural meanings. Even though the concept of culture traditionally indicates stability and sharing of exclusive cultural qualities, the discussion in this chapter will give some insights into the constantly changing meanings and

conceptualizations of culture and to the varying and increasing cultural impacts, which may question the existence of static and exclusive cultures.

2.2.1 Culture defined

The structural force of any culture is sharing. Culture is shared by the members of a social group (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952) and creates a bond between a group of people, who share similar cultural features. Culture affects the values and attitudes of the individual and consequently also generates action in terms of the values and attitudes adopted. The behaviour of an individual is then affected by the culture of society. The connection of culture, values, attitudes and behaviour is a continuous cycle where culture influences behaviour and behaviour culture (Adler 2002: 17).

Being a widely utilised and investigated concept, culture has been defined in numerous ways by various researchers. The concept of culture has been defined for instance by emphasising the membership in a group, the passing of culture from generation to another or the built-in values that shape both behaviour and the person's perception of the world. Although the word culture is most typically connected to a national culture, it can be applied to any human category: an organization, a profession, an age group, a gender group or a family (Hofstede 2001: 10).

As the variety of definitions for culture is great, perhaps the most commonly accepted definition one is by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952, 181) which is based on their analysis and categorization of more than 100 definitions of culture. Their definition includes the central elements of most definitions, including those mentioned above. This definition sees culture as follows:

“Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditioning elements of future action.”(Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 181)

Hofstede (2001) argues that national culture is actually embedded in “mental programs” that are developed at early childhood and reinforced in school and organizations later in life. He also talks about the “mind” with which he refers to

head, heart and hands (i.e. thinking, feeling and acting), which are connected to beliefs, attitudes and skills. Bearing these concepts in mind, Hofstede's definition of culture can be summarised as follows:

"...the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another"

As Kroeber's and Kluckhohn's definition indicates, it is typical to distinguish a subjective culture from its objective expressions such as behaviour, habits and symbols any outsider can perceive. A subjective culture is viewed as a characteristic way for a certain cultural group to perceive and evaluate the objective expressions of the environment (Triandis *et al.* 1972). Another aspect remarkable in this separation is to notice that objective expressions of culture such as artefacts, symbols and rituals; are easy to perceive by any outsider, whereas the values, norms and beliefs included in a certain culture are typically hidden. The cultural meaning of those visible expressions are invisible as their meanings lie in the way they are interpreted by insiders (Hofstede 2001).

In addition to making the difference between subjective and objective elements of culture, the concept of culture can be approached by stressing either "social practices" or "ideas" a culture offers and produces. The first approach defines culture as:

"Culture is a whole way of life...culture is not a practice; nor it is simply the descriptive sum of the "mores and folkways" of societies – as it tended to become in certain kinds of anthropology. It is threaded through all social practices, and is the sum of their interrelationship."(Hall 1994: 522)

The second approach takes a different view to culture and defines it as follows:

"The sum of the available descriptions through which societies make sense of and reflect their common experiences."(Hall 1994: 522)

The first one sees culture to be democratized and socialized meaning that culture is a social process where common meanings are given, taken, communicated and developed to form a common culture. The second one, is taking a broader view to culture and emphasising the importance to notice all the relationships between all the elements of life. (Hall 1994).

2.2.2 Viewpoints to the definitions of culture

As seen above, there are various views to culture which generate different definitions. What is of interest here, are the various views on what do these definitions of culture indicate. These views can be roughly divided into two: the first one I will call the traditional view and the second the emerging view. The terms I use are connected to important questions concerning culture, the definitions of which have not been sufficiently dealt with in cross-cultural management studies.

The traditional view to culture includes the view that all people in a certain culture are basically the same when it comes to their values, norms, attitudes and even behaviour. All those qualities and beliefs are shared inside a culture. By adopting this view to culture, a single picture of each cultural group, which describes the features and anticipated behaviour of all members of the group, can be separated (e.g. Hofstede 1980, e.g. Adler 2002). This traditional view treats culture as an independent variable. Cultures are homogenous and have a similar and stable basic structure with easily recognizable characteristics (Hall 2003: 85–86, Fougère 2005: 4).

However, it has been argued that the notion of culture as a static phenomenon with no interaction is quite a problematic one (Hall 2003: 85–86, Jack *et al.* 2008). If culture is understood only as a set of given norms and values that separate a certain cultural group from another, this view can be argued to have become narrow and restricted (Hearn 2002). This is increasingly true in a world where globalization is changing traditions and lifestyles to a different direction. This *emerging view* of culture has a strong connection to the call for criticality in IM and cross-cultural management studies which will be reviewed later on in this thesis.

This alternative view towards culture puts forward the possibility that cultures are in fact diffuse and heterogeneous, as they are constructed in a certain context of interactions under certain conditions. Therefore, the seeking of standardized definitions and generalizations can be stopped (Jack *et al.* 2008: 875). This idea of cultures being contextual can also be discussed from the individual perspective. The traditional view of culture is that of something which is shared by all members of a certain group, it can also be viewed as something that shapes the thinking and behaviour of the individual (Adler 2002: 16). The emerging viewpoint indicates the dilemma of combining the personal thought and behaviour of an individual and the sharing of a common culture. Furthermore, the

crucial perception of subjectivity in the view of culture becomes apparent. Each individual in a cultural group might have their own view of their group members. This leads to the question, of what is actually shared if everyone has a different idea of it. The traditional view of culture typically leaves out the meaning of interaction for culture, because it allows the constant construction and reconstruction of culture and thus emphasises the dynamics rather than the stability of culture (Fougère 2005: 3, Jack *et al.* 2008: 875).

Although this alternative view on culture currently is topical (see e.g. special topic of Academy of Management Review vol.33 no.4., 2008), the suggestions to abandon the search for cultural differences and typologies have been rare. The traditional view still prevails and the assumption that culture must be identifiable and persistent over time remains. Thus, the researchers have not yet settled on the idea that knowing culture could actually be an ever-changing process (Jack *et al.* 2008: 875).

In this study I am investigating the viewpoints of Estonian identity construction inside a Finnish organization in Estonia. As Estonia has been going through rapid (cultural) changes and is located on the borders of various cultural impacts, it can be considered appropriate to adopt a definition of culture which allows the existence of ambiguity. The empirical methods and related assumptions of this study support the importance of interaction and the existence of various discourses, which also strengthen the need for an alternative conceptualization of culture.

2.2.3 The role and meaning of cultural differences in management

While the previous section concentrated on the concept of culture at a national level, this section will in turn focus on the organizational context. I would at this point wish to highlight some cultural issues of importance in international business and management. These issues are shortly reviewed as they are more apparent when analysing the material collected from the management of the organization. The aim of the review is to also illustrate the existence of cultural debate in organizational and business contexts. The dilemmas of cultural differences, their existence and “location” are also discussed in organization studies and the problems are basically the same despite the viewpoint taken.

Cross-cultural management raises the question over *cultural differences* and the existence of a universal logic regarding those differences as well as their influence on the field of international business and management. The central

question can be laid out as to whether management practices and organizational behaviour follow a universal logic or are they determined by local tradition (e.g. Adler 2002, Tienari & Vaara 2004: 7). Geert Hofstede's expansive studies presented in *Culture's Consequences* (1980) are perhaps the most known examples of these theories, where culture is seen as being universally definable. Cross-cultural management is not only about a sensitivity to cultural differences, but also about how these differences are taken into account in international interaction (Tienari & Vaara 2004).

The differences between various cultures is key in the discussion of cross-cultural management, where the approach to this area of study should be started by more specifically investigating those differences. The differences between cultures can be approached in two ways. The culturalist approach assumes that the differences are based on different norms, values and beliefs of people. This approach is also characterised in Hofstede's research. The institutionalist approach, is about evaluating the differences based on wider societal and institutional systems and standards (Sorge 2003: 118). It should be noted that these two approaches cannot be separated in such a straightforward manner, institutional systems are given different meanings by individuals and the individuals always act inside a system. Despite this artificial separation, the two approaches nicely illustrate that differences cannot be easily captured simply by investigating only the individual or institutional side, but both sides at the same time (Sorge 2003: 122).

Another major debate in cross-cultural management has been the discussion of whether the organizational forms and practices have a tendency to converge or diverge in various national contexts (see e.g. Quintanilla & Ferner 2003). It has been argued that the market, technological and managerial forces are forcing MNCs to adopt common practices and values, which will eventually lead to a homogenization of organizational practices from around the world. Globalization and integration tendencies, such as the establishment and development of the European Union, have increased this stream of debate as they have been said to strengthen the unifying tendency among managerial practices not just in Europe, but around the world (Tienari & Vaara 2004). On the other hand, the institutional approach (see e.g. Hollingsworth & Boyer 1997) argues that the institutional complexity that MNCs are constantly facing, is leading to a diversity of those practices. This approach points out that organizations make normatively rational choices that are shaped by the social context, outweighing the pressure for convergence and direction to diversity (Quintanilla & Ferner 2003).

In addition to the two oppositional approaches to convergence-divergence dichotomy, there have been calls for an alternative approach that would combine those two streams by concentrating on the interaction between local, national and international influences. Both the “resource-based” view and the “strategic choice” approach, instead of focusing on global tendencies, pay closer attention to particular business situations, where the interaction between MNCs motivation and institutional context of business system are about solving the integration problem in each situation separately. (Quintanilla & Ferner 2003).

2.2.4 The cultural differences in management in Finnish organizations in Estonia

Finnish companies have begun to operate in Estonian markets in an ever increasing volume, which has also generated numerous studies on the issues relating to the motives and interests of Finnish companies to move to Estonian markets. Not to mention the practical and operative issues Finnish companies are facing in this new operative environment. At this point I will be taking a look at these studies and concentrate on the discussion about cultural differences in management between Finland and Estonia. My aim is to give insights into previous studies of cultural differences in the actual context of this research. However, I need to reiterate that these studies view culture and cultural differences as being rather fixed and static. By emphasising the relationality of culture and cultural differences in this thesis, I also admit that the differences should not be treated in such an objective manner. Both Estonian and Finnish management are rather relational and contextual, which should be kept in mind while reading the following literature reviews.

Nurmi and Üksvārav (1995) investigated the differences between Estonian and Finnish organizations and management and found differences on both the cultural and institutional level. In short, management was noticed to be slightly more individualistic in Finland than in Estonia and the Scandinavian style of holding a long-term view was noticed to appear more among Finnish management than with the Estonian one. Moreover, Estonian managers stressed the “hardware” side of the business, while Finnish managers stressed the “soft side” or human side of problems. Finnish managers also knew the field of international management and concentrated more on markets, people and on sales-related issues, while their Estonian counterparts, who were not so familiar with IM issues, were more concerned of the availability of supplies and on the

lack of details of marketing. In summation, the major problem of Estonian managers was noted to be the lack of knowledge of the market economy and the details associated with operating principles and technology.

The differences can be indicated to have been mostly caused by Estonia being a part of the Soviet Union, while Finland at the same time was developing its relationships with the West. However, the similarities between Finnish and Estonian management practices were quite great and Soviet culture was being rejected by the Estonians as soon as it gained its independence (Nurmi & Üksvärav 1995). The Soviet methods of management have been pushed aside during the last 15 years and the new situation has also lead to a change in how managers understand the economic world. Consequently, the identities of Estonian managers have transformed remarkably in recent years. (Aaltio *et al.* 2003: 69)

The differences between Finnish and Estonian organizations and management have also been researched in actual business entry situations, where Finnish companies have started to operate in Estonian markets. Problems have arisen for instance with bureaucracy, communication, decision making skills and the lack of sufficient infrastructure (e.g. Hallberg & Seyed-Mohamed 1999, Salmi 1999, Törnroos 1999). These issues will be given further attention to when the empirical material of this thesis will be investigated, primarily in the second essay, which will concentrate on the interviews of Finnish managers. It is important to emphasise that the search for cultural differences and categories is relative and context-dependent. Therefore, the Finnish and Estonian management style is not straightforward. What is typical for a certain culture is dependent on the evaluator and the context, with these kinds of classifications only offering vague starting points for deeper examination.

2.3 Perspectives on cultural identity construction in relation to cross-cultural management research

In this chapter I discuss cultural identity, its definition, development and the various viewpoints scholars have taken towards it. In the beginning of this chapter I offer definitions of cultural identity and afterwards I will bring forth some of the viewpoints and interpretations of those definitions. My primary interest to cultural identity is its relational or postmodern nature. Similarly to the concept of culture, the concept of cultural identity is intricate and the idea of a static and exclusive cultural identity has been challenged.

2.3.1 Cultural identity defined

The terms “identity”, “personal identity” and “cultural identity” emerged in the humanities and social sciences in 1950s, though corresponding terms have been used previously. Although the concepts behind these terms are problematic and they are used and defined in numerous ways, the term personal identity is mainly used to describe a person’s personal understanding of self and the ways it differs from that of others. Cultural identity, most typically refers to the collective part of the identity, a person who identifies oneself with different communities and groups. Cultural identity is about social relationships, inside a certain cultural, ethnic or national group (Sevänen 2004: 5–7).

As cultural identity can be viewed as one form of social identity, defining it can be brought about through the application of the concept of social identity. Social identity refers to people who cluster together and form different kinds of groups. Social identity is a combination of special features that makes a person similar to other group members (Ferdman 1995: 51). Social identity thus means “the individuals knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional significance to him/her of the group membership” (Tajfel 1972: 2). In summary, social identity is about people defining themselves as members of social collectives (Tajfel & Turner 1979, Turner 1985, Ashforth & Mael 1989).

Social identity theory originates from Henri Tajfel (see e.g. Tajfel 1978, Tajfel & Turner 1979, Tajfel 1982) and relies on the idea of categorization. In short, individuals categorize the world into comprehensible units and recognize their belonging or desire to belong in one or more of these defined categories. According to social identity theory, group membership is developed through a categorization process which includes one to three components. The sense of knowing that a person belongs to a group is called the cognitive component. This membership can then have either a negative or positive connotation, which can then be labelled as an evaluative component. Furthermore, an emotional component refers to the emotions a person has towards his own group and towards others. The emotional component is therefore related to both cognitive and evaluative components, since a person’s membership as well as the value of that membership can be accompanied by either like or dislike or something in between (Tajfel 1978: 28–29).

Cultural identity is constructed in relation to one’s membership to these groups. The main source of cultural identity has traditionally been nationality. As

people are born into a certain nationality and its principles are seemingly clear and visible, it is commonly considered to be the very basis of an individual's identity construction (Hall 2002). However, cultural identity is a wider concept than purely ethnic or national identity. Whereas ethnic identity typically refers to a group with a common origin, national identity is strongly tied to a certain nation, its traditions, values and citizenship. Cultural identity of a particular group is thus only partially determined by their national identity (Hobsbawm 1990: 182, Segers 2004: 74, Sevänen 2004: 34–35).

In addition to illustrating cultural identity through the unity of a certain group, cultural identity is actually constructed through difference. It has been argued that identity can only be constructed in relation to what is it not and what it lacks. Cultural identity has the ability to exclude some traits, characteristics and values that can actually be part of the foundation of any cultural identity, instead of the internal homogeneity and unity (Derrida 1981, Laclau 1990, Butler 1993). Cultural identity thus has two sides: it creates unity for an in-group member and emphasises the differences in relation to out-groups.

2.3.2 Viewpoints to the definitions of cultural identity

The discussion over the conceptualization of cultural identity has obvious connections to the previously reviewed discussion on the developmental streams of cross-cultural management as well as on the role of culture in this specific discussion. It is not only the concept of culture that has taken new form, but there has also been a certain change in the conceptualization of cultural identity, which can be seen as a consequence of changes having taken place during the period of "late-modernity". Although these changes are typically encapsulated in the trend of globalization and other changes in societies, the concept of cultural identity has actually been taking relational forms for a long period of time. The increasing insecurity and minimal stability has only brought this approach of cultural identity more apparent (Hall 2002: 23–24).

In identity construction, people develop representations of themselves in relation to others. Social identities are embedded in social relationships, where people are continuously situating themselves and each other within various social categories. A person's social identity is consequently a sum of all those social identifications at a certain time. As individuals seek to distinguish themselves from others, there is a constant need for a redefinition of their identity. Identity building is thus a situation-specific process, where images of self are built in

relation, in particular to others, and needed to adapt to new situations. (Risberg *et al.* 2003)

Cultural identity and national identity as a component of cultural identity has been under wide discussion during the last decade. There have been various arguments about the content and consequences of these concepts pertaining to cultural identity. Traditionally, national identity has been defined based on territoriality, shared culture, historical memory and related ethnicity of a specific nation state. Lately, a discussion about the meaning of locationality as the basis of cultural or national home and identity of a person has arisen. Furthermore, the main problem in relation to cultural identity has been argued to be the question of which identity the person should choose and how should the possibility be kept open for future identity changes, specifically if the current identity loses its charm or the reasons for its existence disappear. This eschewing of a certain identity may happen because of the fragmentation and globalization of cultures has made cultures and connected identities less monolithic. The goal is therefore to guard the chosen identity, so that the identity category would not disappear or fragment. The main feature of cultural identity is no longer stability, which has made cultural identity an interesting research area in new ways. (Hall 1996: 4, Bauman 2001: 477, Hall 2003, Morley 2003: 164–165).

Hall (2002, 21–23) has categorized three different types of concepts of identity, which capture different views of an individual's identity quite well. Firstly, he presents the identity of the period of Enlightenment, where identity is an internal and individualistic phenomena and will remain immutably so from birth to death. Sociological subject conception, reflects the growing ambiguity of the world and includes the idea that identity cannot be an independent autonomic entity, but is constructed in relation to others and society. Lastly, the post-modern subject is seen to be a subject, which has no solid and stable identity. Identity is seen to be historically defined. A subject also adopts several identities at the same time, which makes identification to be in continuous change and evolution.

The identity classification of Hall's illustrates the various viewpoints to cultural identity quite comprehensively and also offers a summary of different viewpoints. In this research I conceptualise cultural identity as a constantly changing and reconstructing entity, which is neither solid nor stable. I see cultural identity as being constructed socially and discursively, meaning that the epistemological and ontological bases of cultural identity are rather different than in traditional conceptualisations (see e.g. Giddens 1990). The concepts of social constructionism in cultural identity will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.3 The social construction of cultural identity

The development of the concept of cultural identity can also be captured in the juxtaposition between collectivism and individualism, which has taken various forms in the writings of different theorists such as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Ferdinand de Saussure and Michel Foucault (Hall 2002: 36–44). There has been continuous debate between Aristotelian thinking, with the emphasis on the role of society and community on the individual's life, and the western concept of individualism (Kuusela 2001b: 306–307). However, the theorists of social constructivism form their ideas on the centrality of social interaction and relationships in identity formation. In that sense the Aristotelian viewpoint has been revitalized in a form of social constructivism, where the individual is seen as a social being, living in close relationship to community (Kuusela 2001b: 327).

Identity is an essential element of subjective reality and is argued to be, like all subjective reality, in a dialectic relationship to society. Social constructionists argue that identity is being constructed as social processes, where it is also retained, transformed and reformatted. The role of society in the identity formation process is to define those processes in which identity is being modified and sustained. Social constructionists argue, on the contrary, that the identities produced in these processes are sustaining and modifying the structures of society. To illustrate, this dialectic relationship can be described by indicating ways in which the history of a society produces different identities, but this history at the same time is created by people with various identities. (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 173–174).

The view of social constructivism has challenged the traditional functionalist and psychodynamic models by treating cultural identities as phenomena based on narratives and discourses (Hall 1999: 46, Kuusela 2001a). When national culture as the basis of cultural identity is seen as discourse, it is seen to construct identities people can identify in themselves. These meanings and identities are included in the stories that are told about certain nationalities, which consist of historical stories of the nationality, its origins, traditions and foundations. When nationalities and national cultures are thought of as discourse in this kind of manner, it becomes apparent that they cannot include only a single identity which connects all the individuals in the sameness. Instead they build different kinds of meanings and representations, in which people can either be identified or not, change those identifications and adapt them in a way that is appropriate for different kinds of situations (Hall 2002: 46–54).

2.3.4 Otherness in relation to cultural identity discussion

At this point, it might be appropriate to take a look at a theoretical area at the epicentre of my thesis, which is otherness. Otherness as a concept is closely connected to the discussion on cultural identity and I will now bring forth some definitions and core considerations of otherness in relation to the discussion of cultural identity. At this point I will only briefly overview this concept. As otherness is widely discussed also in terms of post-colonial theory, I will return to the viewpoints taken on otherness in the next chapter, where critical approaches in particular to cross-cultural management and post-colonial theory will be discussed.

It is clear that the separation between “us” and “them” is the very basis of identity construction of each individual and this categorisation can be investigated in terms of otherness. The term other is primarily used to refer to the relationship between the known and the unknown or the norm and the exception. The term can thus be described as a power relation where somebody is understood not only as different but also as being inferior, leading to a hierarchy of people. This means that otherness is not about any differences, they are not seen to be equal or neutral but what make the other inferior and less important than the baseline. (Löytty 2005: 162).

The concept of otherness has a very solid connection to identity construction and has also been discussed from the viewpoint of identity theories. Therein, the main contribution has been to investigate the idea of sameness in contrast to otherness and their meaning in the construction of an individual’s identity (Grossberg 1996: 93–94). As power relations between groups and individuals can be seen to have meaning in identity construction, the concept of who is different and excluded becomes crucial when constructing identity. This indicates that identity is actually constructed through the difference, through a perception of what is not part of the identity and what it lacks, instead of simply concentrating on the sameness, that is the “traditional” conceptualization of identity (Hall 1996: 4–5). Considering otherness in the identity construction process creates an important element in identity construction; by knowing the other it is possible to know ourselves.

When investigating the separation between “us” and the other, the creation and maintenance of social boundaries becomes a central consideration. Social boundaries are maintained through collective identities, which are of interest here as otherness always includes some element of collectivism. Those collective

identities are multifaceted entities and should not be conceptualized as being isolated. When investigating national cultures in light of otherness, other than those based national human collectives, such as organizations, have their meaning there. It is worthy to note that the self and the other are not necessarily separate, they are merged into one another and can be in a sense unbounded. (Neumann 1999: 35–36)

The discussion of otherness has various origins in different disciplines and it can thus be placed into culture research, sociology, anthropology or gender studies (Löytty 2005: 165). The most typical research pertaining to otherness has included various cultural and historical research topics which have strived to identify the physical, symbolical and ideological barriers that separate us from the other. The theory of otherness has also been common with social anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists and literary theorists (Neumann 1999: 3). The research into otherness also has its connections to a wider societal context, as the prevailing culture and society are considered to have a major role in constructing the other. Another major theme in the recent research of otherness has been the issue of power, namely what are the power relations between us and the other and how are they constructed (Paasi 1998: 220–221).

The origins of the separation between the West and the non-West can be seen to originate from the Age of Discovery. This period is highlighted with the European exploration of the world by ocean to discover new trading partners and the onset of the period of Western colonialism of the Non-West (Hall 1999: 84–95). In this discussion, the West is typically defined as civil, rational and supportive of individual rights and liberties whereas the non-West, or in this case the East, represents exclusive, ethnic-based societies characterized by certain anomie (e.g. Feldman 2000: 408).

The groundbreaking studies concerning otherness were conducted by Edward W. Said (1979), who approached the theme of otherness and the juxtaposition between the East and the West by using the discourse of Orientalism. Orientalism captures the distinction, where a type of mythical boundary exists, between Western superiority and the Oriental inferiority. This boundary between the Orient, representing the other, and the West has been molded during the centuries and is thus stratified and complicated. Said (1979) argues that Orientalism should be investigated as a discourse in order to understand how European culture was capable of managing and producing the Orient during the post-Enlightenment period. This has led to a situation where, due to Orientalism, the Orient was not, and still is not, a free subject of thought and action. Furthermore European culture

and identity can be seen to strengthen when juxtaposed against the Orient. (Said 1979: 3).

The discussion about otherness has been noticed to be a central issue when framed with the legitimacy and survival of organizations. Globalization has also altered the basics of otherness and difference and thus made them both more interesting and problematic in an organizational context (Prasad & Prasad 2002: 57). In the discussion of management, the other and otherness is typically understood from the Western point of view as most of the management and other related literature originates in the western world (Westwood 2001). The juxtaposition between the East and the West is thus strong also in the discussion about otherness in management. This West-oriented viewpoint of otherness has made the discussion on otherness concentrate on the categorisation of the other under certain labels in order to make them understandable from the western point of view. A well-known example of this kind of categorisation would be Hofstede's study on different nationalities.

The domination of western representations of the other as displayed above, means that the other is often considered inferior or "less than" (Oseen 1997: 54). Furthermore, the other has frequently been conceptualised as being dangerous, a threat to the western world (Westwood 2001: 265). To summarise, the typical representation of the other is something deficient, backward and primitive (Westwood 2001: 266).

2.3.5 The construction and change of Estonian identity & otherness

Previous research has identified three main sources that have affected the development of Estonian culture. Those sources are also the fundamental elements of identity construction in Estonian identity. The first source is the autocratic policy and command economy of Soviet administration in Estonia; the second the indigenous local culture of Estonia; and the third the impact of western culture originating from the developed nations of western Europe and America (Sztompka 1996: 120–121). Estonian identity is thus constructed in a space with various impacts, which makes it an interesting research topic in relation to the theoretical discussion reviewed above. I will now take a closer look at each of these three cultural impacts in terms of Estonian identity.

The Soviet legacy affects Estonian identity construction because Estonian identity has been constructed in relation to the dominating power of Soviet Union for the past 50 years. Even though the years under Soviet administration are no

more, Estonian identity construction is still more or less about the purging of these Soviet influences and strengthening its Western character. This Russian threat is both external and internal. The external threat stems from Soviet imperial ambitions and the internal one from the presence of over three hundred thousand ethnic Russians in Estonia, comprising its largest ethnic minority. Although comments about the Russian threat have lately been more neutral, there still is a strong Russian influence in Estonian identity construction. (e.g. Kaitila & Widgrén 1998, Feldman 2001: 11).

The importance of the rural way of life in Estonian identity is one example of the influence of Soviet history in Estonian identity construction. During its first period of independence during the years 1918–1940, Estonia emerged as an agricultural and rural state. A common argument in identity construction in Estonia of that time was the centrality of the close link to the land in being Estonian, as around two-thirds of the population was rural. Estonia was invaded by Soviet troops in June 1940 and Estonia became again a part of Russian empire, during the years 1941–1944 Estonia was occupied by German troops, but the Soviet army once again invaded Estonia in 1944. This started a period of mass deportation and genocide, with violence, oppression and collectivization characterising the first years of Soviet rule. Although direct resistance to Soviet rule was difficult, Estonians adopted a means of indirect resistance including preserving their cultural identity and family values as well as the close links to the countryside, which developed during the years of independence. The rural past was seen as idyllic, where the majority of Estonians had their own farm. (e.g. Mae *et al.* 1996, Unwin 1999, Berg 2002).

The Western and European influences are the two other major impacts in Estonian identity construction. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonia has actively identified itself with being a part of Western Europe. During the transition years, there have been drastic changes in the Estonian economy as well as in its political environment, changes which have also been subject to a number of scholarly debates (e.g. Feldman 2001). Estonia joined the European Union in May 2004 and thus gained the official status of being a European nation. As a consequence of these events, the current Estonian identity can be argued to have become strongly European or Western in its orientation.

It has been anticipated that when Estonia adapts parts of itself to Western culture and identity, there will be a resistance towards Europeanism and a desire to preserve a uniquely Estonian identity (e.g. Berg 2002). This resistance has created a fear of the loss of Estonian identity, the origins of this fear originating in

the many external pressures of its history. The re-emergence of an independent Estonian identity and the rapid adoption of European culture and identity has led to a fear of losing again an independent Estonian identity to the influences of Western Europe and the European Union (Kaitila & Widgrén 1998).

Furthermore, the idea of an Estonian “return to Europe” has to be considered, in reference to Estonia having actually been an important part of Europe since the Middle Ages and is now a returning member to Europe (Aalto 1998: 137, Feldman 2001: 10). This approach suggests the adoption of a Western identity is actually nothing new as Estonia is actually reuniting with Europe.

Finally, the local culture of Estonia and the nation’s internal issues are having an effect on identity construction. Estonian identity is often linked with the steady and permanent settlement of Estonian territory. Estonians have a unique relationship with Estonian territory, which emphasises the genealogical and exclusivity to a place of origin (Berg & Oras 2000, Berg 2002).

Furthermore, it has been argued that Estonian identity seems to be available only to indigenous Estonians. There the meaning of Estonian soil and genealogical roots are the most crucial attributes when evaluating Estonian identity (Feldman 2001: 13–14). This concept has a clear connection to the public debate in Estonia during the 1990s. During those years, only citizens of pre-war republics and their direct descendants were automatically given citizenship in Estonia. Citizenship was something which was not self-evident and the lineage of a person had a remarkable role in defining who was Estonian citizen and who was not (Kirch & Kirch 1995: 444, Aasland 2002: 57, Yiftachel & Ghanem 2004: 661). In the Estonian laws of citizenship, citizenship status is also offered to those who follow certain procedures, including learning the Estonian language and demonstrating basic knowledge of Estonian history and the political system of the country. This system can be seen to indicate a deeper aspect of citizenship, a citizen who is morally committed to the state and is interested in the community’s interests at large (Thompson 1998: 113). If this citizenship issue is joined with the cultural identity question of Estonians, it is quite evident that Estonianism and Estonian identity are something valuable and not available to everyone.

What may be concluded from the discussion in this section, Estonian identity is constructed under many pressures, both external and internal. In a way, Estonian identity, its construction and change can be regarded as a unique research topic, as few European countries have undergone such drastic changes in the recent years as Estonia and the other Baltic states. In the light of this discussion, Estonian identity is an interesting research theme and can offer new

perspectives into the wider research field of cultural identity. This discussion will be continued in relation to the empirical material of this thesis, where the questions of Estonian identity will be considered in the light of the collected research material.

2.4 Critical approaches to cross-cultural management

Having reviewed the central contents and development of cross-cultural management as well as culture and identity as its specific parts, the focus will now turn to the critical approaches of cross-cultural management. This thesis contributes to critical approaches by utilising post-colonial theory, the content of which will be described in the following chapter.

The utilisation of post-colonial theory in this thesis is basically twofold. Firstly, the relationship between Finland and Estonia has been seen as a traditional example of a post-colonial array, where Finland represents the West and Estonia the non-West. However, the situation has shifted due to Estonian independence and its rapid development towards the West. Post-colonial theory can thus offer insights into the ambiguity of this relationship. Secondly, post-colonial theory offers viewpoints to the construction of otherness both in the context of the West versus the non-West on a more general level. It can thus be useful when analysing the construction of otherness in the research setting in question.

The discussion will start with a review of the content of Critical Management Studies in general, after which the meaning of critical approaches in IM and cross-cultural management will be discussed. I will then proceed to define post-colonial theory and its contribution on this discussion.

2.4.1 Introduction to critical management studies

Critical Theory (CT) was established in Frankfurt in the 1930s to accentuate the autonomy of individuals and to challenge the domination of rationality. The Frankfurt school along with its scholars, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Habermas among others; argued that individuals, their behaviour, beliefs and values are affected by large corporations, media and mass production. They were highlighting that an individual should be given further possibilities to act and think as autonomous beings and the domination of instrumental rationality should be decreased. (Alvesson & Willmott 2003: 2).

Despite the early rise of criticality, social sciences, including organization studies, were until the 1970s dominated by the view that objectives and methods used in social sciences should be the same as those utilised by natural sciences. Structural functionalism, positivism and neopositivism were used in all social sciences (e.g. Giddens 1990, Westwood 2004). During the 1990s the critical approaches emerged within the field of management as a part of the “paradigm wars” and offered alternative or comparative views to Critical Theory. This was mainly inspired by the studies of Burrell and Morgan (1979), based on which the critical openings during the 1980s and 1990s accusing management studies of being too functionalistic and positivistic to be able to capture the complexity of organizational life (Jack *et al.* 2008). It is essential to note that while being groundbreaking, Critical Theory offers one approach to Critical Management Studies. The terms postmodernism and poststructuralism are perhaps the most well known terms to capture the recent developments of critically oriented thinking. Inside those streams, the work and studies of Foucault (1980) and Derrida’s deconstructionism(1981) are examples of Critical Management Studies (CMS), offering diverse viewpoints to investigate management theory (Alvesson & Willmot 2003: 2, Peltonen 2006, Jack *et al.* 2008).

CMS concentrates on the notions of rationality, autonomy, control and the epistemological issues in general. It aims at generating non-objective views to management techniques and on organizational processes by adopting a non-objective ontology and epistemology (e.g. Burrell & Morgan 1979, Alvesson & Deetz 2000). CMS also pays attention to asymmetrical power relations (e.g. Levy *et al.* 2003) and to the taken-for-granted ideologies in organizations (e.g. Alvesson & Deetz 2000, Deetz 2003). Furthermore, CMS offers viewpoints to the dynamic partiality of consensus (e.g. Levy *et al.* 2003) and shared interest and to the distortion processes of communication (e.g. Forester 2003).

Though there are a variety of streams in CMS, the main message remains the same, CMS problematizes management for being perceived as a self-evident and unproblematic process (Alvesson & Willmot 2003: 8). Critically oriented management studies thus see management and organizational phenomena as cultural and historical issues that need serious critical investigation. They pose the question about what do we claim to know about organizational life and how do we claim to know it. Furthermore, CMS studies consider this knowledge by evaluating its origins, purposes and effects (Jack *et al.* 2008).

CMS also calls for wider perspectives in management studies, which means drawing attention away from the management and managerial position itself.

Besides noticing the subordinates, customers and other stakeholders; marginalized groups, such as females and ethnic minorities, should be recognized and their interests should be paid attention to. Through this, it is possible to investigate the tensions between dominant and dominated groups and the ways in which rationality and discourses are used to affirm the power of the dominant ones. It has been argued that management and organizational ideals have implicit post-colonial tradition, which will lead to the suppression of marginal voices (e.g. Prasad 2003, Peltonen 2006: 525). This is one of the starting points of critically oriented IM and especially in post-colonial theory, which the discussion will now turn to. The next sections will offer a brief overview of critical approaches in IM and cross-cultural management in general, after which the attention will focus on post-colonial theory, the stream of critical theory this thesis relies on in its empirical investigation.

2.4.2 Critical approaches in IM

Organization studies were strongly dominated by the functionalistic paradigm during the emergent years of cross-cultural and international management, as described in the previous chapter, it is apparent that the theory of IM and cross-cultural management adopted the same ontology, epistemology and methodological base as other organizational theories have embraced (e.g. Giddens 1987, Westwood 2004, Gavin & Westwood 2006, Peltonen 2006). Therefore IM adopted several conventions that became the orthodoxy in the field. Firstly, there was a presumption that ontological universalism, in which all the elements of an organization are taken to be objectively real and universal. Secondly, change and development was believed to be based upon the economic rationalities of Western development theories all around the world. Lastly, the positivist methodology was presumed to be valid universally and to be able to reveal truths in a standardized manner. These underlying assumptions of IM theory have led to a situation, where the vast majority of studies are quantitative in nature and thus objective, neutral, decontextualized and qualified with a tendency to separate subject and object (Gavin & Westwood 2006).

Although critical considerations are not completely lacking in the current field of international and cross-cultural management, they are still clearly the exceptions to mainstream conversations, which critically oriented openings have not been able to change. The lack of critical approaches in cross-cultural management is remarkable as other management sub-fields, not to mention social

sciences, have been more than eager to adopt these aspects of critical theory. There remains a clear domination of structural-functionalist paradigm in IM and cross-cultural management theory, where methods are abstractive, objectifying, reifying and universalising and the epistemology has little or no reflectivity. (Westwood 2004, Jack *et al.* 2008).

As pointed out above, although not being the mainstream, some attempts to increase the criticality in IM and cross-cultural management studies has come about in the last few decades. International Critical Management Studies Conference and the Critical Management Studies division within the American Academy of Management are examples of this raising of criticality. The openings of criticality accuse the field of cross-cultural management and offer a “narrow vision” leaning on a Western (or American) worldview, assumption of universalism and positivist epistemology. There has been a demand for new approaches to the theory building and openings to new (cross-disciplinary) conversations. IM research should also concentrate on noticing the exercise of power, existing and emerging hierarchies and inequalities. (see e.g. Burrell & Morgan 1979, Adler 1983, Boyacigiller & Adler 1991, Sullivan 1998, Whitley 1999, Westwood 2001, Vaara & Tienari 2004, Westwood 2004, Peltonen 2006).

The adaptation of critical approaches in IM and cross-cultural management can bring new perspectives to the seemingly neutral façade of IM. One example is the representation of culture, which is at the centre of this research and can be taken a closer look of at this point. From a critical perspective, culture can be seen as a vehicle to serve particular interests, instead of being only a neutral matter. Critically taken, culture can be used as a motive to introduce HR practice which serve as a control function or as a means to describe the social context of the less developed, typically non-West, countries. By adopting this critical view, it is possible to challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions regarding culture and to give voice to marginalised groups and individuals in the organization. I will discuss this theme further in the next section, as this notion has a clear connection in terms of post-colonial theory. (e.g. Calas & Smircich 1991, Nkomo 1992).

Another example of the use of critical approaches in IM is their ability to investigate power construction and usage inside an organization more profoundly. Rather than being just a structure or mechanism, power is a consequence of a fundamental asymmetry between groups and individuals. This notion has its significance in the research at hand especially in the light of post-colonial theory as it starts with the idea that power relations cannot be fully understood simply in terms of the behaviour of the dominant group. Instead, power is made possible by

the identity construction of the participants, the colonizer as well as the colonized. The colonized crafts and internalizes the conditions that asymmetry and power usage possible. (Said 1979, Prasad 2003).

As can be seen from this introductory discussion, post-colonial theory is one critical approach which offers new perspectives to IM and cross-cultural management. Being the most central theoretical entity adopted in this thesis, I will next take a more exhaustive look at its developments and contents.

2.4.3 The utilities of post-colonial theory in cross-cultural management research

An overview of post-colonial theory

To understand what are the themes in the discussion of post-colonial theory, it might first be appropriate to take a look at the central concepts of colonialism. Colonialism has been defined as the physical conquest and occupation of one country by another whereas imperialism does not always include direct occupation, but is more about the exercise of political and economic power. The term neo-colonialism refers to the economic dependency of former colonies on the colonizers despite their formal independence (Prasad 2003: 6). In other words, neo-colonialism means the continuation of colonialism in non-traditional means (Young 2001: 44).

The term post-colonialism, is most traditionally viewed to refer to the period following colonialism. As this definition raises the obvious question about the actual point in time when colonialism ended, it is necessary to emphasise other aspects of post-colonialism in this definition (Kwek 2003: 127–128). Post-colonialism is a term that emphasises “a “coming-into-being” of resistances, tensions and struggles against the many guises and effects of colonialism” (Quayson 2000). As Kwek (2003, 128) explains, post-colonialism sees “the world shaped at numerous interrelated levels by the effects of the colonial legacy”.

Western colonialism has had a significant role in shaping the current world order. It involves both the actual conquest of a country and the use of economic and political power which may not involve direct occupation. In addition to economic influences, Western colonialism also aims at cultural and ideological subordination. Post-colonial theory or post-colonialism goals are to investigate the dynamics of this complex process where both Western colonialism and the

anticolonial resistance are evaluated. Post-colonial theory emphasises the ongoing importance of colonialism for people both in the West and non-West. (Prasad 2003: 4–5).

The starting point of post-colonial theory is to recognize the need for global decolonialisation, which would allow achievement of true freedom of people and countries. It both emphasises colonialism as one of the most significant influences of Western interpretations of non-West people and argues that there continues to exist an ongoing influence on neo-colonial encounters to identity construction of the people in the West and non-West. Post-colonial theory is according to Prasad and Prasad (2002, 61), “a social and cultural construction of a fundamental ontological distinction between the West and the non-West” (Said 1979, Spurr 1993, Prasad & Prasad 2002).

Post-colonial theory is not a unitary theory, instead it draws from a wide range of scholarly fields and approaches. Post-colonial theory operates in the interfaces of anthropology, cultural studies, history, sociology and philosophy, not to mention feminism, post-structuralism and Marxism (Ashforth *et al.* 1995, Prasad 2003: 7). For an introduction into the variety of post-colonial views, I will take a short look at four key scholars in the field of post-colonial theory.

Post-colonial theory came into prominence with *Edward Said's* book *Orientalism* (1979). For Said, Orientalism is a discourse with three meanings. Firstly, Orientalism is a field of Western scholarship, which has the Orient as its object of inquiry. Secondly, it is a Western style of thought which captures the distinction between Western superiority and the Oriental inferiority. Thirdly, Orientalism is a discourse enabling the West to manage the Orient. Said's Orientalism is thus strongly leaning on binarism, where the West and the non-West, the Orient and the Occident are in opposition with each other. (Said 1979, Prasad 2003: 9–14).

Said's work indicates that the starting point of the post-colonialist approach is twofold. First, it relies on the idea that colonialism is one of the most significant influences on the West's interpretation of people belonging to different races and ethnicities. Second, it leans on the belief that past and current neo-colonialism has crucial consequences for gender, ethnic, national, religious and other identities in all areas of social life. (Spurr 1993, Prasad & Prasad 2002, Özkazanc-Pan 2008).

Ashis Nandy's work (e.g. 1980, 1983) concentrates mainly on the psychology of colonialism. He emphasises the importance of the “colonization of [the] mind” as the most remarkable aspect of colonialism. This colonization of the mind frequently lasts much longer than the actual colonization, which makes it

important. Nandy refuses to see a clear-cut separation between the West and the non-West, instead he emphasises the hybrid conceptualization of these categories. He further argues that colonialism is a “game without victors”, where both parties are merely victims of colonialism.

Homi Bhabha (e.g. 1990, 1994) seeks support from concepts such as ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity for his view on post-colonial theory. His argument perceives post-colonial discourse as being ambivalent about the boundary between the West and the non-West. Hybridity, on the other hand, refers to the problematic nature of the conceptualization of nationhood and national culture, which in Bhabha’s terms are never innate or essential. These notions make the binary oppositions inadequate for evaluating the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. For Bhabha, the term mimicry is an example of Western ambivalence, as it is a sign of the Western attempt to civilize the other by making it adopt its values and behaviour. This adoption does not appear as mimicry typically ends up only with the imitation of external manifestations of Western values (Frenkel & Shenhav 2003). In the words of Bhabha (1994) “*mimicry repeats rather than represents*” and ends up to a point where the Orient is “*almost the same but not quite*”.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (e.g. 1981, 1987, 1988, 1990) is known as a contributor to post-colonial theory, for instance in terms of First World feminism and the usefulness of deconstruction and Marxism. Spivak (1987: 137) argues that “First World feminists must learn to stop feeling privileged as a woman”. Spivak also argues that women in a subordinate position cannot and are not allowed to speak or be heard as they do not have an adequate discursive position as a speaking subject.

Because of the variety of contributors and viewpoints among scholars of post-colonial theory, there is a wider scale of new possibilities for organization studies. The discussion will focus on the utilisation of post-colonial theory in organization studies and give some insights to what themes from post-colonial theory can be of use when researching organizations and management.

Post-colonial theory in organization studies

As noted earlier, organization researchers have not widely adopted critical approaches, specifically in the field of post-colonial theory. Recently, there have been attempts towards a defamiliarization of organizational practices by applying post-colonial theory. Those attempts have aimed at revealing new aspects and

meanings of organizational practices and to develop a fresh understanding of taken-for-granted organizational phenomena. (Alvesson 1993, Alvesson & Deetz 2000).

As colonialism is argued to be one of the most powerful influences on the identity construction of an individual, post-colonialism can provide important insights into the problems of race, ethnicity and cultural marginality also in organizational contexts (Nandy 1983, Prasad & Prasad 2002: 61). Furthermore, it is of immediate relevance when investigating the construction of identity and otherness in relation to dominant versus marginal group dynamics. Post-colonialism can also offer new perspectives into power, control and resistance in organizations (Prasad & Prasad 2002: 61).

In addition to investigating identity construction and related phenomena inside an organization, post-colonial theory can be utilised to provide critical insights into management and organization theory on a more general level. Management practices and discourses can be seen as colonial products as they are developed autonomously of Western products. The discourses provide a language where the non-West is homogenized and represented in negative terms (Westwood 2001: 242, Prasad 2003: 31) As Prasad (2003, 32) explains, “post-colonial analysis can thus reveal colonialist ways of thinking and behaving in the fields of cross-cultural and international management”.

There are several other ways that post-colonial theory can be used in terms of the defamiliarization of organizational theory. For instance, it can offer insights into understanding non-Western management practices, instead of just treating them as an exception from the Western norm. Post-colonial theory can also create an understanding of the construction of cultural, ethnic, racial and sexual boundaries in organizations and have a role in future development of institutional theory in organization studies. (Prasad 2003: 28–33).

Having reviewed the central contents of post-colonial theory and its relevance in organization studies, I will now take a look into its uses in previous studies of Estonia. The aim is to tie-in post-colonial theory, not only to the organizational context, but also to the Estonian national context and maybe offer some insights and openings into the empirical part of this thesis.

Post-colonial theory in Estonia studies

The idea that Baltic countries, including Estonia, are considered former colonies of the Soviet Union is not a straightforward one as the bulk of post-colonial

literature ignores the situation of the Baltic States. This is because of the common identification of the Baltic States with European, rather than Third World mentality. The experience of the Baltic States as colonized nations is very recent and the negative label of colonialism has been wanted to be avoided in these nations. It is quite clear that the definitions of colonialism as domination and control are also suitable in evaluating the Baltic States situation. It has thus been argued that approaching Estonia and Estonian culture in terms of post-colonial theory would offer useful perspectives to its culture, identity construction and in evaluating its history and present. (Moore 2001, 124, Racevskis 2002: 37–38).

Even though the studies on Estonia have not adopted post-colonial theory widely, many of them recognise the juxtaposition of the West and the East, the Europeanisation and Russification in Estonian identity construction (Feldman 2001, Berg 2002). Some of them also approach the concept of cultural Finlandisation of Estonia, where the post-colonial contrast between the East and the West is signified between these two nations. This notion is also brings out the diversity of post-colonial relations as Finland has also formerly been under Russian administration and can now be considered to be “colonizing” Estonia.

Based on the above concept, post-colonial theory can be applied also in research where Estonian and Finnish cultures are in opposition, an overarching part of this thesis. This discussion will thus be continued in the essays that form the whole of this dissertation where the focus will be on the research material collected from a Finnish organization in Estonia.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter I have brought out some of the major developments and debates in cross-cultural management research and reviewed the meaning of culture and cultural identity in this discussion. To summarise, I argue that the same trends are clearly affecting both the general cross-cultural management discussion as well as the discussion about role and meaning of culture and cultural identity. All of these theoretical areas are now moving away from functionalism, positivism and universal ontology. This is also the actual point of contribution in the thesis at hand.

This introductory chapter has offered a short overview of previous research of Estonia that has considered the theoretical areas of cross-cultural management as well as culture and cultural identity. The aim of this overview has been to offer

the reader an empirical setting of the thesis in the light of central theoretical discussions.

3 Considerations of Estonian history

The previous chapter has already offered some insights into Estonian research in terms of cultural differences, culture and identity. In this chapter I will go into further detail on Estonianism and take a look at the recent history of Estonia as well as the historical relationship of Estonia and Finland. These are important in the context of this thesis, as knowing the history and recent developments of Estonia and Estonian culture will be beneficial when analysing the current identity construction of the Estonians.

3.1 Estonian transition – changes throughout the nation

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Estonia among other Eastern European countries was labelled as an economy in transition. Transition is a term that has a clear connotation of change and development. It does not refer to any kind of change, rather about changes that lead to a positive final stage. The term transition also implies that the initial starting point before the changes have taken place is something negative and unwanted. (Lauristin 1997: 25).

In the case of Eastern European countries, it was commonly acknowledged that this transition was pursuing a state of “a European welfare state”. Traditionally, this transition has been seen to concentrate on the change in political and economical environments, including elements such as stabilisation of the economy, privatisation of state enterprises and the liberalisation of trade and prices. However, the emphasis later turned more toward a cultural change in the transition countries and the transition process consequently was seen to include various issues relating to values, symbolic environment, lifestyle and patterns of behaviour (e.g. Lauristin 1997: 30, Salminen & Temmes 2000: 23). It is thus obvious, when concentrating on cultural change; the transition process is in no ways straightforward. The complexity and multidimensionality of this process has generated several studies and models that seek to outline the complex transition process and its parts in more detail. One of the simplest and maybe one of the most known models is Sztompka’s (1996) model which concentrates on the democratization and marketization of a transition country. According to this transition model, these two changes are taking place both in an institutional and a cultural level and those should be analyzed and investigated on both those levels (Sztompka 1996). Nieminen (1994) has, on the other hand, suggested that when analysing the transition process focus should be on three change processes,

namely the systemic change process, structural change process and behavioural change process. This division of change processes is done in order to emphasise the meaning of transition process to the individuals and organizations, instead of just concentrating on macroeconomic changes in the political and economic systems (Nieminen 1994: 6) .

As the above mentioned transition models suggest, transition is a process containing many interrelated components and procedures. The varieties of transition models also illustrate the complexity of the recent history of Estonia as the changes occurring in Estonia are affecting its culture on a broader level. Lauristin and Vihalemm (1997) have identified political, economic, social, cultural and psychological changes, as well as changes in the media and public sphere in Estonia during the years 1988–1997. (Lauristin & Vihalemm 1997: 82–83).

Becoming “a western country” is typically seen to be the main goal of transition, a natural continuation to the transition period from former Soviet countries has been the pursuit of membership in the European Union. In Estonia, westernization and membership in the EU was a major goal throughout the 1990s with EU membership in the year 2004. Additionally to the transition, the issues surrounding European integration and the European Union are having a major role in the recent developments in Estonia and other Eastern European countries. (Raik 2000, Feldman 2001).

Transition as an all-embracing process also affects the cultural identities of citizens in the transition countries. The specific issues relating to Estonian identity will be discussed later in the context of the empirical findings of this research. At this point I wish to emphasise the meaning of *change* in Estonian culture, which can be seen to be an essential element when discussing the questions of cultural identity and otherness in Estonia. Combined with the conceptualizations of identity and the dynamics of otherness discussed in the earlier chapters, this essentiality of change forms an interesting ground for the empirical part of this research. King (2000) aptly explains, “transition can actually be seen as a never-ending search for better solutions”. (King 2000: 125).

3.2 Estonia and Finland – the history and present of their relationship

The relationship between Estonia and Finland has some specific features that need to be highlighted here as the research setting partially highlights the juxtaposition between these two nations. This chapter will offer only a general description about the relationship of these two nations. More specific issues will be discussed in the empirical part of this research whenever they arise from empirical material.

The history of the relationship between these two nations is quite multidimensional and includes both periods of close cooperation and periods of farther distance. While Estonia has spent most of the 20th century under Soviet administration, Finland has been an independent nation with longstanding and developed political, societal and economical systems. This indicates that there are predominant differences in the societal, political and economical development of Finland and Estonia. Despite these differences, the geographical closeness of the two nations is one of the obvious evidences of the close relationship between Estonia and Finland. The two nations are located on the opposite coasts of the Gulf on Finland and the intensive traffic between Helsinki and Tallinn has further diminished the meaning of the 80km distance (Berg 2002: 109). The geographical closeness of these two nations has also increased tourism and interaction between Finland and Estonia, especially between the capitals of Helsinki and Tallinn (Aaltio *et al.* 2003: 66)

Kari Alenius explains “the relationship between Estonia and Finland during the last 150 years is a vicious cycle of admiration and hate as well as anticipation and disappointment” (Kiin 1998: 22). These feelings are mainly connected that Estonia has on many occasions during its history sought support from Finland, often to its disappointment. Despite these disappointments, the bonds between Estonia and Finland have never been entirely severed as Estonians no-one else to turn to. Finland has been an exemplar of a western county for Estonians and acted as evidence of positive developments in political, societal and cultural areas (Alenius 1998: 105, Berg 2002: 109). There is a prevalent big brother – little brother relationship between Estonia and Finland, where the smaller always seeks the support from the larger. This has also meant that Estonia has never had the same importance to Finland as Finland has to Estonia (Alenius 1998: 106).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, “a cultural Finlandisation” has been argued to have taken place in Estonia. In addition to the geographical closeness,

“Finlandisation” has been explained based on the increasing foreign trade and investments, daily commuting and tourism. Estonian membership into the EU has also had some impacts on the relationship between these two nations. These issues are basically related to free trade and freedom of movement of workers all across Europe as well as between Estonia and Finland (Kaitila & Widgrén 1998). As the institutional barriers have been lowered with Estonian membership to the European Union, it can also mean a start to a new era between Estonia and Finland. The impact of the European Union can be actually talked about in terms of Europeanisation or globalization of Estonia, instead of Finlandisation, as the opening of global markets and increasing global impacts in Estonia go beyond Finland (Berg 2002: 109).

Finnish companies have been operating actively in Estonian markets for years. Typically Finnish organizations have started their internationalization process in Estonia, which has been the first step when steering for Baltic and Russian markets. This has been quite easy, due to the above mentioned geographical closeness and the lack of language barrier. The growing markets and low cost level in Estonia are the main inducements for Finnish companies to expand to Estonia. The logistical expenses are lower than in other low cost level countries that are located further away from Finland. (Järvinen 2005: 75–80).

4 Empirical research and methodology

4.1 Research setting and the case organization

The empirical research has been conducted in a Finnish organization located in Tallinn, Estonia. The organization in question operates in the retail trade across Finland and the Baltic countries. The organization provides services in the retail, petroleum, vehicular, hardware and agricultural industries, as well as hotel and restaurant services. In the year 2000, the organization opened two outlets in Tallinn, Estonia. One of these outlets is studied in this thesis. The outlet in question employed approximately 120 members when the interviews were conducted in the autumn of 2004. The Baltic operations of the organization are managed by a Finnish country director of the Baltic countries. The business operations of the umbrella organization are also managed by Finnish managers, with individual outlets managed by local managers. The goal is to replace Finnish management with local people in the future, but is not seen to be possible yet. Finnish managers and their capabilities are seen to be needed as they know the Finnish and the organization's management practices used also in the Baltic countries by adjusting them to the local operational environment. Basically, certain Finnish values and management practices as well as the organizational culture and related values are desired to be imported and maintained in the Baltic business.

The organization in question has been selected for the purpose of this research in order to investigate the relationship and dynamics of Finnish and Estonian culture. As the relationship between Estonia and Finland is a specific one, the confrontation of these two nationalities in an organizational context was considered to be of interest. This was also the reason for the decision to interview Finnish managers and Estonian employees of the company. The research setting emphasises the juxtaposition between these two countries and also the power hierarchies not only between managers and employees, but also between Finland and Estonia. The research material includes interviews of Estonian middle managers of the organization, but in the final analysis I decided not to make any difference between whether an interviewee was at the operational level or in a management position. The reason for this decision was no difference could be discerned if such an artificial division would be made. The interviews were considered to be aspects of Finnish and Estonian identity and culture instead of

organizational practices, which meant there was no need to bring out this separation in the positions and titles of Estonians.

The case organization is not supposed to be “representative”; it is simply one Finnish organization in Estonia and has its own distinctive features when compared with other organizations. I have to admit that study of another organization may have lead to different conclusions. This is not of interest in my research as the research at hand is about adopting the specimen perspective, where the specimen (the organization, its employees and managers and their speech) are seen to be a part of the reality being studied (Alasuutari 1995: 63, Koskinen *et al.* 2005: 64). By adopting this perspective, I do not seek to make any claims about the reality outside the unit researched. The observations and interpretations made in this research are only interpretations made in this certain context. The main contribution in this kind of perspective lies in the ability to give new perspectives and new interpretations of a certain phenomenon. By combining these interpretations into certain scientific discussions, they might better help understand the phenomenon being studied and thus offer insights into this phenomenon in other contexts as well.

Laurent (1986) argued that in the context of multinational corporations people’s nationality is the best explanation for most of the differences in people’s assumptions. People might even become more national in situations were various cultures cross inside an organization. Based on this notion, I argue that an organizational context can be especially fruitful contex to investigate the national differences. Furthermore, I admit that the organizational context may not have a great meaning in all the parts of this research. The identities constructed and the discourses found may be more to do with cultural and national variants than with the organizational context.

4.2 Discourse analytical thinking

As pointed out in previous chapters, the contribution of this research lies in the view it takes on culture and cultural identity. National identities and related otherness are in this research seen as discursive constructs, which means that they are discursively produced, reproduced and transformed (De Cillia *et al.* 1999: 153). The construction of these identities and otherness is always taking place in a wider context defined by both history and presence. Risberg *et al.* (Risberg *et al.* 2003: 123) argue that the post-colonial approach may offer a useful perspective when investigating discursive constructed identities as it provides insights into the

wider context of power relations. By adopting a similar approach to discourse analysis in this paper, it is possible to combine post-colonial theory and the concepts of otherness as well as encapsulate the methodological choices of this research into one consistent entity.

The discourse analytical method adapted in this research is close to what Koskinen *et al.* (2005) call the macro level of discourse analysis. The interest lies mainly in the cultural processes that have an effect on the construction of national context. I am thus not aiming to investigate how the language use affects to the action in concrete situations as micro level discourse analysis does. The research at hand investigates those cultural processes by investigating the constructions of Estonianism, Estonian identity and otherness. Furthermore as the study concentrates on the construction of otherness and is reliant on the critical perspectives of IM, the discourse analytical approach adopted in this study can also be labelled as critical. The attempt is to investigate if the discourses used are a means to support the goals and objectives of the Finnish managers of the company and if so, how are they actualised. (Fairlough 1997, Koskinen *et al.* 2005: 207–214).

The adapted discourse analytical method can also be clarified by using Alvesson's and Karreman's (2000) dimensions of discourse studies. In this thesis I see discourses to offer clues to construction of cultural identity and otherness, instead of just unrevealing something about the pure language use. Discourses thus incorporate cultural meanings, construct the subjectivity of the person and frame his action. Besides, discourse is understood to be a way to structure the social world, not just a textual phenomenon in micro-context. The discourses found can therefore reveal some information on non-discursive phenomena but only in the highly local domain of social reality under study. The particular organization is the context of the discourses and I am not claiming that the discourses found in this study would be universal. Alvesson and Karreman (2000) call this discourse analytical approach as *close range/determination* approach which refers to this local situational context and on the tight connection between discourse and meaning.

The paradigmatic approaches of this research are closely related to the assumptions and spirit of the methodological foundation of discourse analysis research and concepts included in social constructionism. Therefore the paradigm used in this research can be labelled to be *constructionist*. This indicates that reality is believed to be constructed through discourses, which vary in different contexts and among different people. Since the world is viewed to be socially and

discursively constructed, the identities are in a constant state of transformation. This view has been named as the “ontology of becoming”, which emphasises the ongoing construction and reformation of reality. (Potter & Wetherell 1987, Guba & Lincoln 1994, Burr 1995: 2–5, Cooper & Law 1995, Kuusela 2001a: 21, Phillips & Jorgensen 2002: 6–5).

4.3 Conducting the empirical research and methods of inquiry

The empirical material has been collected during the fall of 2004. The employee interviews were conducted during the first week in Tallinn. The interviews of Finnish managers were conducted in November 2004 in Tallinn as well. All the interviews took place at the conference room of the organization. All the interviews were later transcribed, with a total of 223 pages of research material.

The empirical research process initially began in the spring of 2004, when I was about to start my PhD studies and doctoral thesis. In March 2004, I sent my first research request to the Finnish headquarters of the organization and received a positive response later on during the spring. The interviews were settled to be conducted in one outlet of the organization. After that I contacted the manager of the specific department store and settled the number of times and length of the interviews. The interviewees were selected and invited by the manager of the department store as it was easier for the manager to contact the employees. I only asked the manager to select interviewees from all the departments, all ages and of both genders.

All the interviews were conducted as partially structured thematic interviews, while a general outline of general themes was decided before the interviews it was not in the form of a questionnaire. The employee interviews focused on the thoughts of the interviewees on working in a Finnish company as well as about Finns and Estonians and about national culture and its meaning. The interview of the managers concentrated on themes such as the history of the organization in Estonia as well as the interviewee’s own background, challenges and opportunities of working and living in Estonia, general conceptions about Finns and Estonians and about the meaning of nationality and national culture in an organizational context. Each interview structure shifted as the discussion was allowed to concentrate on those issues the interviewee was more interested and eager to discuss about.

Because I cannot speak Estonian, the employee interviews had to be conducted either in Finnish or English. Most of the younger interviewees would

rather discuss in English while the older ones in Finnish. In two interviews an interpreter was needed. This may have brought some distortion to the empirical material, but on the whole I did not find the language issue to be a problem. All the interviewees were very eager to get their message across, even if they did not know a certain word or phrase. They spoke very openly about their personal life and history, about their fears and hopes. One of the interviewees started the discussion by telling me that she was a bit frightened about the interview as she did not know what to expect. But as she met me and noticed that I am “just a young woman”, she told me that the fear disappeared. Although the language of interviews varied, in this thesis all quotes have been translated to English with a literal interpretation.

During the employee interviews I noticed a clear saturation of the data. The interviewees often started to repeat themselves and therefore I could stop the interviews knowing well that I would not get any more information out of them. The total amount of employee interviews was 14.

The interviews of the management were conducted in November and also in those events I found the atmosphere to be relaxed and informal. Of course the content of the managerial interviews was highly different from that of the employees, as the managers were talking more from a “business oriented” perspective, which was actually the idea to begin with. However, they were also evaluating, quite deeply, the meaning of being Finns in Estonia and the organization being Finnish and operating in Estonia. In my research I interviewed all three Finnish managers of the organization and I believe I have received an extensive picture of their opinions. The themes they were talking about were in many parts quite identical, but every one of them was telling of their own personal perceptions.

The research process proceeded purely inductively (see e.g. Dubois & Gadde 2002). The only preconception when entering the field was to research Estonianism, Estonian identity and the confrontation of two cultures in an organizational context. All the theoretical considerations came later as I started to slowly analyse my material and gain theoretical knowledge of the debates and discussions in this research area. This process of analysis will be described in the following section.

4.4 Analysing the material

How have I ended up to the discourses and conclusions as they appear in this thesis? This is a question which has no straight answer. First of all, the differentiation between the data collection and analysis stage in qualitative research is difficult. According to Silverman (2000), the analysis begins when the researcher starts to classify things in order to take notes. Secondly, it is difficult to name the actual point in time the analysis stage actually ends, even though the analysis could be seen to have ended a long time before the finalisation of the thesis. I believe the discourses found their meaning more clearly during the writing process, even though their content did not change. This leads to the question of how can data collection, analysis, and writing be separated? It is not a straightforward or clear-cut process and should be kept in mind when reading my descriptions of the analysis and writing process.

The analysis has been a complicated and multi-phased process and has taken plenty of time. Before arriving at the final discourses, there have been many variations during the analysis phase. Even though it might have been possible to choose another path at some point of the analysis, I strongly believe that I would have arrived at the same discourses and results. The discourses were not obvious, but became quite apparent after careful investigation of the research material. In this section I attempt to explain the logic and proceedings of my analysis which resulted in the discourses be more closely scrutinized in the essays attached in this thesis. The essays will also provide a more specific description of the analysis of specific parts of the research material.

I feel it important to point out that at the beginning of the process I only had some initial ideas about what I am looking for in the field. The questions relating to the cultural identity of Estonians have been of interest from the beginning, but the other theoretical areas have arisen as the research has progressed. I entered the field in the early phases of my research, simply seeking to gather material about the notions of people representing Estonian and Finnish cultures inside a Finnish company. Although I had no initial ideas what I would find, there are naturally always some expectations and preconceptions present, even if they were on a subconscious level. In retrospect, I feel that it was wise not to be weighted down with theoretical baggage when I initiated the study. The theoretical considerations began later after I had finished the interviews and started to categorize the data. When I evaluated this choice afterwards, I found it to be very beneficial, as it

made possible to analyse the material without restrictions and to be open to every possible findings and thoughts that arose from it.

I began the analysis from the employees' interviews as those were conducted first. At first I used a keyword analysis, where I simply looked for keywords in the material. At that point, the keyword could be any of the central words or themes the interviewees talked about. After that my goal was to arrange these words into categories, which could then be formulated into discourses. The categories appeared to be difficult to find and seemed overlapping. When thinking about this phase afterwards, I can easily see that at this point there was a clear lack of focus in my analysis. Even though I was aware that the questions of cultural identity were my initial interest, the material was confusing me by being so rich in data. I was at this point formulating theme categories, not only about strictly cultural identity, but also about themes relating to the company and other work related issues. Having done that, I was even more confused. I had gathered all the main issues and themes from the interviews and I wanted to find the connections between them. What I had then, was ideas of interviewees about being an Estonian, being an employee of the company and their thoughts about the company. I had three different theme areas and no focus; no apparent connections between all of them and no idea what to do.

The difficult phase in the analysis described above was problematic, but a solution was found. It is difficult to evaluate the critical point when the solution became apparent, but I guess the answer was finding the actual focus. My focus on cultural identity, namely on Estonianism and on Estonian identity, caused me to notice that actually all of the themes can be seen to be crystallized in Estonianism. Ultimately every idea and thought can find its meaning in relation to cultural identity. After that the discourses began to slowly take on their final shapes. With their final form found, I proceeded to place them through a multi-phased evolution looking for their appropriate contents. In the first version of the final discourses there were four of them, but a discourse named "the historical discourse" was eventually combined with the European discourse and thus the final number of discourses by employees ended up at three.

The first phase of the analysis of employee interviews was difficult, equally so was the analysis of the interviews of the managers. Since the Finnish managers talked more about business and the company than their Estonian employees, the focus was very different and it was hard for me to orientate to the new perspective. The material was, again, very rich and multifaceted and there were many openly told stories and cases included in the narrative of the management. The analysis

was basically proceeding in the same kind of manner as did the analysis of the employees' interviews. By finding the keywords I ended up with thematic categories and finally discourses. In this analysis process there were different formulations of the final discourses before they reached their final form. Actually the key to the solution was the notion that no matter what and how the managers were talking, they always assumed a certain difference between the Finns and Estonians. When I considered this notion further, I was able to find the most interesting feature; even though a difference between these two nations and nationalities always exist, the managers were constantly taking different points of view. The difference can be seen as not always a negative, but at some points should also be considered to be positive.

The phases described above became the descriptions of each discourse. The work continued with further analysis of the meanings and identities of the discourses being constructed with the analysis connected to the existing theoretical base. At this point the theme of otherness became apparent; I noticed that otherness was actually at the centre of all of these discourses. The issues of post-colonialism and the juxtaposition between the East and the West were also becoming clearer in the material and were taken into consideration on the theoretical level as well.

The analysis process I went through has features of an analytic induction, where the aim is to continue drafting the discourses until finding those in which all the cases could be described. As Becker (1998: 195) described the process, "you develop and test your theory case by case". The result of this kind of analytic induction is an interpretation, which describes the research material with a few basic concepts (Koskinen *et al.* 2005: 235); the discourses of the employees and managers.

Neither of the discourses of the employees or managers is exclusionary. They were used not only in parallel but separately. Some of the interviewees used all the discourses, some of them only one. Even though some of the discourses might have been used more than others, all the discourses were treated in this research as equal. All the discourses are a part of the reality of the interviewees and therefore are equally important to me as a researcher, even if some of the discourses may have been used more often than others.

The discourses found will be presented in short in the next chapter, where I will provide summaries of the three essays. The complete results of the analysis process described above can be found in the complete essays attached to this thesis.

4.5 The writing process: about the essay-form

The writing process of this thesis has in many phases proceeded in conjunction with the above described analysis process and the proceeding of analysis have thus affected the directions of my writing. The empirical findings have encouraged me to read and write about certain theoretical discussions. Many of the early writings, which do not appear in this final dissertation, have been saved as “bin ends” in a file. The first drafts primarily concentrated on identity and cultural identity in general. After the discovery of post-colonial theory becoming such a prominent theme in my thesis that both identity and otherness became two other important themes.

Until the year 2006, I thought I was writing my thesis as a monograph. At the time it seemed to be a natural choice and I had not even thought about other options. In May 2006 I participated in the EURAM conference in Oslo with my own conference paper, which became the first essay of this thesis. At the same time I was struggling with the interview material and trying to find a path for the analysis in order to be able to combine the discourses of Estonian employees to those of Finnish managers. Despite several attempts, they still remained separate entities and I was unable to formulate a conclusion that would cover them both. The viewpoint of the Estonian employees and the Finnish managers seemed to be too different. At the end of the same year, I was preparing a paper for next year’s EGOS conference, the one that became the second essay of the thesis at hand. Somewhere at that point my supervisor suggested the possibility of an essay-form thesis, where I could utilise those two conference papers.

This suggestion actually opened a whole new possibility for me. The struggle with a monograph could end and I could concentrate on publishing papers, which seemed to be easier for me to handle. The monograph had expanded to such an extent that it had become elephantine to the point of no longer fitting the theoretical frame. Single essays were easier to handle, the perspective narrower, making them easier to actualize. The choice to write an essay-form thesis was not only a relief but also greatly affected my motivation, which was at low ebb at this point. The choice gave me hope that the thesis might actually be finished some day.

Although the decision to write an essay-form thesis was a relief at first, it also brought up problems later on. Having finished the three essays, I started to write this introductory chapter, which became another challenge for me. In the introductory chapter the perspective needed to change again from the narrow

focus of the essays to a wider theoretical focus. The main difficulty arose with the danger of repetition. How much of the themes covered in the essays in the introductory chapter do I need to repeat? This question was in the end actually the greatest problem of the writing process and I struggled with it until the very end. Whereas the structure of a monograph is quite a straightforward one (see e.g. Koskinen et al. 2005), an essay form thesis has to be structured differently and sets its own challenges. The main problem for me was my attempt to make the introductory chapter and essays function as separate entities; in my view the essays should be independent and anyone could read them separately from each other or the central thesis, whereas the introductory chapter should offer at a glance the wider theoretical background of the research and offer an overview of all the three essays. As I wanted to retain my view of these structural choices, I admit that the thesis at hand includes some repetition – mostly in terms of the theoretical sections. The empirical findings are not presented in the introductory chapter at all, as I have only wished to concentrate on the essays.

To summarise, I came upon a solution which may distract the more literal reader, but one which I believe to be a consistent one. The theoretical discussions are reviewed more widely in the introductory chapter and in the essays I concentrate more strictly on the theme of each essay. This will of course cause some overlap of the same discussions. The empirical findings are only presented in the essays with each offering something new. The discourses and the analysis around the theoretical frame I discovered to be the main contribution of my thesis.

5 Summaries of the essays

5.1 Essay 1: Estonianism in a Finnish organization – Post-colonial view on the construction of Estonian identity

This essay was written in 2005–2006 and basically provides the initial starting point for the whole research process. Actually the viewpoint taken in this essay was at first supposed to be the overarching concept of the whole thesis. However, the research process took quite a different path at some point in the middle, and this essay remains to represent the early phase of my PhD project.

This essay relies on a theory-based discussion about cultural identity as a discursive construct and as a process of becoming rather than actually being. The viewpoint adopted in this essay emphasises that nationalities or cultural groups do not include only a single identity which connects all its members to that sameness. Instead, the idea of a “postmodern” cultural identity becomes central. Identity construction is a rather situation specific process, where identity is socially constructed and needed to adapt in new situations. (e.g. de Cillia 1999, Tienari *et al.* 2005, Risberg *et al* 2003, Hall 1999, Morley 1999).

This essay also exploits the construction of otherness in terms of post-colonial theory and the dichotomy between the West and the non-West (e.g. Said 1979, Prasad, A. 1997 & 2002, Gandhi 1998). The essay investigates the identity construction of Estonian employees in a Finnish company and is especially intent to look at the influence of the post-colonial array in the identity construction of the non-West.

Based on these two discussions the aim of the paper is twofold. Firstly, the essay aims *to illustrate Estonian identity construction* inside a Finnish organization in Tallinn, Estonia. Secondly, the essay will *examine the identity construction in relation to the construction of the otherness* and *to illustrate the meaning of post-colonial perspectives to the construction of otherness as well as cultural identity* from the Estonian perspective.

This essay is based on the findings gained from interviews of Estonian employees of the company. The analysis resulted with three discourses which construct Estonian identity differently and from different viewpoints. The discourses are partly overlapping and are not exclusive or tied to a certain interviewee. Instead, one interviewee may have used all the three discourses. They thus illustrate the variety of identity constructions.

The European discourse is building a “new” Estonian identity, where change and belief of a brighter future are essential components. The discourse is strongly tied to Estonian attempts to become a Western oriented European nation and this European mentality is believed to bring new and positive aspects to Estonians. One aspect of this development is, quite naturally, the joining of Estonia to the European Union. Basically these positive changes are believed to increase freedom and raise the standard of living. Change is seen as a very essential concept in this discourse as the discourse emphasises the move away from the “old” Estonian identity towards the “new” European one. In this discourse the other is found among the old Estonians, who are unwanted and represent the past.

In *the governmental discourse*, the Estonian identity is defined by the government. This identity is not desired, but Estonian citizens are unempowered to change it. This discourse is based on the tension between the government and the citizens, where the Estonian citizens are forced to accept the identity constructed by the government. In this discourse, the Estonian government represents the other; an external institution that is set apart from its citizens, even though it has the power to define Estonian identity, where citizens have to adapt to those changes.

The traditional discourse constructs an Estonian identity where “traditional” cultural features, home and family are essential. Traditional discourse strongly concentrates on the lineages of Estonians as well as on home and its meaning. Lineages define who the real Estonians are; having a home in Estonia is not enough to be a real Estonian, especially if lineage points elsewhere. In the traditional discourse, otherness is constructed through ethnicity with the non-ethnic Estonians forming the group of others.

As a conclusion of this essay, I argue that inside a Finnish organization Estonian identity and related otherness is constructed in relation to *other Estonians and Estonian history*, not mainly in relation to other nations (e.g. Finland). In addition to the national boundary, the most important boundary that defines Estonianism is *time*, which gains its meaning in relation to history, presence and future of the Estonian nation. This notion also confirms the idea of a diminishing role the nation-state plays (Guba & Lincoln 1994, Burr 1995: 2–5, Kuusela 2001a: 21). This notion also indicates that *the post-colonial array* should not be overestimated when analysing Estonian identity construction and related otherness in an organizational context. Lastly, the results of this research indicate that when dealing with otherness, discussion should not be settled in terms of *clear categorization*. As the analysis in this paper shows, the other cannot always

be totally separated from the self, and furthermore individuals who belong to the group of others may wish to move further away from the group of others. Otherness can thus take a variety of forms in different situations, which should be emphasised when investigating otherness.

5.2 Essay 2: Discourses of Estonianism in a Finnish organization – post-colonial perspectives on the construction of otherness

The second essay of the thesis shows the proceedings of my research towards post-colonial and more critically oriented thinking. The essay was written during the years 2006 and 2007 and was actually the turning point for the orientation of my research. At this point of my research process I decided to change tact and write my thesis in essay-form. This essay is more critically oriented than the first one, having a different viewpoint to Estonian identity as the essay is based on the empirical material collected from the Finnish managers of the organization. Namely, this essay investigates *how the post-colonial array appears in the construction of otherness in the speech of the Finnish managers of the organization*.

The essay relies on post-colonial theory as a framework to investigate the construction of otherness. The main theoretical starting points of post-colonial theory to be utilised in the essay include the notion of colonialism as one of the most significant influences on the West's interpretation of people belonging to different races and ethnicities. The belief that past and current neo-colonialism has crucial consequences for gender, ethnic, national, religious and other identities in all areas of social life. (Spurr 1993, Prasad & Prasad 2002, Özkazanc-Pan 2008).

The discussion on post-colonialism indicates the existence of an evident dichotomy between the West and non-West. This dichotomy is actually an elaborate system of hierarchical binaries, which are systematically privileging the Western qualities and repressing the non-Western ones. These binaries label the West to be active, centre, civilized, developed and modern, whereas the non-West is seen to be passive, periphery, primitive, backward and archaic. In short, these dichotomies support the position of the West as a superior zone and give justification for colonialism (Prasad 1997: 290–291, Prasad & Prasad 2002: 61–62). However, the critique of post-colonial theory is also recognized, as the critique addresses the notion that post-colonialism is failing to perceive the

differences between the colonized as well as colonizer nations and discusses them as if they were one uniform group (Gandhi 1998: 168–169).

Also in this essay, the empirical findings are crystallized in three discourses Finnish managers of the organization implement when describing Estonians. *The difference discourse* emphasises the differences between the Finns and the Estonians in a sense that these obvious differences are likely to cause problems between these two nationalities. Finns find it hard to tolerate certain differences, such as bureaucracy and thus find the Finnish ways to be better. This discourse also brings out the idea of universalism in business. Universalism being something that everyone all over the world is expected to respect. Therefore Estonians and their certain cultural features and practices are given a negative label.

The adaptation discourse also emphasises the cultural differences between the Estonians and the Finns. It is also a discussion about the cultural challenges as well as the opportunities cultural differences offer in an organizational context. In this discourse the concept is to respect Estonian culture and to learn from it. The different culture offers challenges and possibilities both for the whole company and for the managers personally. The difference is seen as a positive phenomenon, which can be utilised when developing the business in Estonia, but also when Finnish managers develop themselves as individuals or managers. The discourse emphasises learning and development as a typical feature for Estonians; they are learning the Finnish or Western ways to do things and at the same time Finns are also learning something from the Estonians.

In *the organizational discourse*, the organization culture becomes salient as it is seen to over-ride the meaning of national culture. In this discourse the meaning of national cultures is ignored and the discussion is turned into the organizational culture and its meaning in identity construction. Similarly, the differences are discussed about based on organizational culture; differences arise when Estonian employees have not been able to adapt to a feature or issue inherent in the organizational culture. This discourse emphasises the idea, that the main source of identity is membership to the company. The organizational culture also serves as an umbrella concept for the company to connect all its employees.

In all three of the discourses, one thing is common: in every discourse Estonians are seen to be different from Finns. This means, that in general Estonians are positioned in otherness in all three discourses. The major separation is done between the Finns and Estonians as the managers' discourses lean on the idea that Estonians are the other in every situation and the major boundary

defining otherness is a national one. This notion also serves as the first conclusion of this paper: in the discourses of Finnish managers operating in Estonia the construction of the otherness is based on national boundaries.

When looking at the discourses found purely through the lens of post-colonial theory, the conclusion could be drawn that the colonial array defines the relationship between Estonian employees and Finnish managers in this organizational context. However, this notion does not tell the whole truth as all the discourses take a divergent view towards otherness. In addition, every discourse also suggests a different view towards adaptation; they offer differing insights into questions, such as who should adapt, why and how.

The difference discourse most strongly leans on the ideas of post-colonial theory about the Eastern inferiority as otherness. The adaptation discourse also sees Estonians as the other, but the discourse emphasises the positive sides of this perceived otherness. This otherness is seen as a means to develop the capability of Finns as managers and a possibility to learn new things both personally and professionally. The otherness is seen here as a possibility. The organizational discourse acknowledges the difference, but that is basically all that this discourse has in common with the previous two. As the name of this discourse indicates, it concentrated on the organization and mostly on organizational culture issues. Organizational culture is seen as a remover of national differences and consequently takes on the role of a reducer of post-colonial power and hierarchy. To summarise, the conclusions of this study indicate that even if the post-colonial array is the main issue defining otherness in an organizational context of this kind, otherness also takes on forms that are not typical for post-colonialism.

5.3 Essay 3: Towards hybridity in post-colonial theory – constructing power in an organizational context

The third essay is written in the years 2008 and 2009. It is theoretically oriented but includes also an empirical part, which is at this point illustrative in nature. The last essay aims to review the debate considering *binarism and hybridism in post-colonial theory* and to uncover *their meaning in relation to organization studies and to power in particular*. Having done that theoretically, the paper will illustrate these differences empirically and analyse *the construction of power of the Finnish managers and the Estonian employees' response to it in a Finnish organization in Estonia*.

The essay starts from the idea that post-colonial theory based on the notion of binarism (Said 1979), might not be adequate for analysing the power construction in a context where Finnish and Estonian cultures cross inside an organization. Instead, this context is opening interesting possibilities to illustrate the uses of Bhabhaian hybridism in the analysis of power construction

Whereas binarism is seeing power to be defined by the resources and structural forces that coerce the behavior of dominated, the Bhabhaian perspective, as well as other critical perspectives and postmodern approaches, is understanding power as relational; power comes apparent when it is exercised. (Foucault 1980, Foucault & Gordon 1980, Townley 1993: 520, Peltonen 2006: 530).

Power relations are usually approached in international management studies in terms of empirically observable organizational authority. To replace this approach, the focus should be turned into the construction of power in the course of organizing the relationships and identities of the main actors; power thus emerges not only from managers, but also from other participants and actors who accept the roles, rules and responsibilities as the basis for their participation. (Latour 1986, Peltonen 2006: 529–530).

To investigate the power construction from the hybridism point of view Heiskala's (1997, 2001) structural approach to power is adopted. This approach sees power as a network of relations and identities as a sort of state of this network. This means that identities are not determined independently of and prior to the power relation. In this network of power relations power is not one-sided in a way that *a* would have power over *b* and *b* would have no power. The power relation between two actors is mutual and the mechanism of power shapes the identity of each. (Heiskala 1997: 245–246).

The empirical part of the essay shows that the power construction in a Finnish organization in Estonia is mainly mutual and relative. Although also distributive power based on Finnish (postcolonial) superiority is employed, the mutuality is clearly steering the power construction. Based on the analysis and following Heiskala (1997), I argue that in the Finnish organization investigated the organizational culture actually is that mechanism of power which produces the Estonian and the Finnish identities and ties the up to a single relationship.

As a conclusion of the third essay, I argue that the traditional postcolonial array, the binaries between the East and the West, might be a possible source of power, but the power cannot be seen as tied to this binary opposition. Furthermore, the power construction is not only about the West's power over the non-West as

binarism suggests. Instead, the power is spread more equally between several actors in the network and it is not tied to a certain institution or structure.

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