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Expatriate Adjustment Process: the Influence of Colonial History and Status Evaluations

Quantitative Study of Expatriate Adjustment Exploring the Relationship Between Expatriates and Their Host Country Supervisors

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Abstract

International assignments have become increasingly common in global organizations. However, a successful assignment requires organizations to take measures to support expatriate adjustment. Research has extensively examined the factors influencing this process, and building on this, the present study introduces a new perspective by incorporating the historical relations between an expatriate's home and host country, as well as the status evaluations made by the host country supervisor, into the research on expatriate adjustment. The impact of these factors in the expatriate context remains understudied. However, based on previous research, it can be assumed that a history of colonization is linked to adjustment, particularly through status evaluations. Additionally, support from the host organization is expected to mediate the relationship between status evaluations and adjustment. A key focus of this study is the relationship between the expatriate and their host organization supervisor. The theoretical framework draws on both the expatriate adjustment model and the social identity approach, which examines expatriate adjustment through intergroup relations.

The study's quantitative data consists of 244 expatriate-supervisor pairs, collected in Russia, a former colonizer of some expatriates' home countries. The primary research method is regression analysis using the PROCESS macro tool, which is applied to examine the mediating effects of both expatriate status and host organization support in the adjustment process. The findings indicate that both status and organizational support play a mediating role in the examined relationships. However, the impact of status on the connection between colonial history and adjustment is more complex than expected, while its influence on host organization support and adjustment is clear. The results provide new insights into the factors shaping the relationship between expatriates and host country supervisors, emphasizing the significance of supervisors' attitudes toward the support expatriates receive from the host organization and its effects on adjustment. The study encourages organizations to invest in developing the relationships between expatriates and their host country supervisors.

Keywords Expatriate adjustment, colonial history, status perception, social support, perceived organisational support

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Ulkomaankomennukset ovat yleistyneet kansainvälisissä organisaatioissa. Onnistunut komennus edellyttää kuitenkin organisaatioilta toimenpiteitä ekspatriaattien sopeutumisen tukemiseksi, ja tutkimus on keskittynyt laajasti tarkastelemaan sopeutumiseen vaikuttavia tekijöitä. Tämä tutkimus tuo uuden näkökulman tutkimukseen yhdistämällä ekspatriaatin koti- ja kohdemaan historialliset suhteet sekä kohdemaan esihenkilön tekemät statusarvioinnit osaksi ekspatriaattien sopeutumisen tutkimusta. Kyseisten tekijöiden vaikutusta ekspatriaattien kontekstissa on tutkittu vain vähän. Aiemman tutkimuksen perusteella voidaan kuitenkin olettaa, että alisteisella historialla on yhteys sopeutumiseen erityisesti statusarviointien kautta. Lisäksi kohdeorganisaatiolta saatavan tuen voidaan olettaa toimivan välittävänä tekijänä statusarviointien ja organisaatioon sopeutumisen välillä. Tutkimuksen keskiössä on ekspatriaatin ja kohdemaan esihenkilön välinen suhde. Teoreettisesti tutkimus pohjautuu sekä ekspatriaattien sopeutumisen malliin että sosiaalisen identiteetin lähestymistapaan, jossa ekspatriaattien sopeutumista tarkastellaan ryhmien välisten suhteiden kautta.

Tutkimuksen kvantitatiivinen aineisto koostuu 244 ekspatriaatti-esihenkilöparista, ja se on kerätty Venäjältä, jossa osalla ekspatriaattien kohdemaista on ollut historiallisesti alisteinen suhde. Pääasiallisena tutkimusmenetelmänä käytetään regressioanalyysiin perustuvaa PROCESS macro -työkalua, jonka avulla tarkastellaan sekä ekspatriaatin statuksen että kohdeorganisaation tuen välittäviä vaikutuksia sopeutumisprosessissa. Tulosten perusteella sekä statuksella, että organisaation tuella on välittävä vaikutus yllä mainittuihin suhteisiin. Statuksen vaikutus alisteisen historian ja sopeutumisen väliseen yhteyteen on kuitenkin odotettua monisyisempi, mutta sen vaikutus kohdeorganisaatiolta saatavaan tukeen ja sopeutumiseen on selkeä. Tulokset tuovat uutta tietoa ekspatriaatin ja kohdemaan esihenkilön väliseen suhteeseen vaikuttavista tekijöistä korostaen erityisesti esihenkilön asenteiden merkitystä kohdeorganisaatiolta saatavaan tukeen ja tämän vaikutuksia sopeutumiseen. Tutkimus kannustaa organisaatioita panostamaan ekspatriaattien ja kohdemaan esihenkilöiden suhteen kehittämiseen.

Avainsanat Ekspatriaatin sopeutuminen, kolonisaatio-/alisteinen historia, statusarvioinnit, sosiaalinen tuki, organisaation tuki

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Preface and acknowledgements

I want to thank my precious dog, Nipa, for reminding me how important it is to take breaks and for regularly taking me on walks during this project.

Helsinki, 26.01.2025
Linda Virtanen

1 Introduction

Sending employees on international assignments has become increasingly popular in the past decades (Guo et al., 2021; Kraimer et al., 2016). This has shifted the perspective of HR from domestic to global (Bhatti et al., 2013) and made expatriate management an important topic in research (Guo et al., 2021). In expatriate management the aim is to get the full potential out of the overseas assignments by avoiding possible pitfalls and supporting expatriates in various ways during both the pre- and post-arrival periods of the international assignment (Kawai & Strange, 2014).

Expatriate refers to an employee sent to another country by their home organisation to accomplish a certain task or organisational goal (Harrison et al., 2004). By sending expatriates on international assignments, organisations are foremost trying to address the increasing competition in global markets (Olsen & Martins, 2009). Moreover, the typical objectives behind overseas assignments vary between organisational and individual development: organisations use them for business development purposes, cultural transfer, and for developing careers and competences by building coordination within the global organisation and pursuing a more global mindset (Bolino, 2007; Caligiuri, 1997; Dickmann et al., 2008; Takeuchi et al., 2005). Knowledge transfer has also been highlighted as an important reason behind international assignments since, through it, organisations can create new types of networks, for example, between headquarters and subsidiaries, and seek efficiency, innovations, building international experience, and filling skill gaps (Bender & Fish, 2000; DeNisi & Sonesh, 2016; Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016).

However, despite the popularity of international assignments, the risks of failure, manifesting in the forms of, for instance, early returns and ineffective or uncompleted assignments, have been acknowledged (Andersson, 2003; Caligiuri & Santo, 2001; Wang & Varma, 2019). International assignments usually require significant investment from organizations, as the level of support provided to the employees is often greater than in a domestic context (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004), and

therefore, the risk of an unsuccessful abroad assignment has continued to bother both practitioners and researchers (Varma et al., 2016).

In research, a common way of evaluating the overseas assignment's success is through the concept of expatriate adjustment (Black et al., 1991; DeNisi & Sonesh, 2016; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). In this context, the process of adjustment has also been referred to as cross-cultural or multinational adjustment (Black et al., 1991; Harrison et al., 1996; Takeuchi & Chen, 2013). Moving abroad for an international assignment brings significant changes to an employee's life, requiring them to adapt to new cultural norms both at work and in daily life, as well as to different business practices, living conditions, customs, and language, to name just a few (Black et al., 1991).

Research highlights the importance of adjustment, as it reinforces expatriate performance, facilitates successful assignment completion, and enhances overall satisfaction (Aycan, 1997; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Caligiuri & Santo, 2001; Kraimer et al., 2001; Bhatti et al., 2013). Lee and Sucoko (2010) also argue that if expatriates adjust to the general environment of the host country, their performance will be as good as at home. Moreover, it has been highlighted that focusing on expatriate adjustment can not only save money but also support the company's reputation and the well-being of the expatriate in several ways (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Aryee & Stone, 1996).

1.1 Research Gap and Motivation of the Study

Since the stakes are often high with abroad assignments, it is essential to get a better picture of the process of expatriate adjustment. Over the decades, expatriate adjustment has been connected to several factors either enhancing or hindering it (e.g., Black et al., 1991; Aycan, 1997). Based on the literature, an essential factor affecting the adjustment process is the cultural distance between the expatriate's home and host countries. It has been, for instance, argued that the greater the cultural

distance, the more challenging it becomes to adapt to a new environment (Black et al., 1991; Wang & Varma, 2019). Nevertheless, this perspective neglects the fact that the relationship between different countries can vary based on their shared historical past, despite the cultural differences or similarities. Consequently, some researchers have begun to explore the potential influence of colonial history in the expatriate context, suggesting it plays a role in it (Carr et al., 2001; Richardsons, 2021). Yet, what remains to be studied is the relationship between colonial history and expatriate adjustment. It is plausible that the shared and possibly suppressive history with the expatriate's home country affects the way in which expatriates are perceived in their host organisation, and this potentially has consequences for the adjustment process. The processes through which this happens are complex and potentially coloured by both the perceived status of the expatriates and the support they are given in the host organisation.

The relationship between status and expatriate adjustment is an understudied area, but there are some indications that host country nationals evaluate expatriates based on their social standing (Bader et al., 2017; Olsen & Martins, 2009). The importance of support from host country nationals for expatriates' adjustment is well-documented, and behavioural scientists suggest that host country nationals' attitudes toward expatriates play a crucial role in determining their willingness to provide such support (Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Pichler et al., 2012). Furthermore, some researchers have proposed that status evaluations influence the support provided by host country nationals (Olsen & Martins, 2009; Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016). To address the research gaps and deepen the understanding of expatriate adjustment, it is crucial to examine how an expatriate's perceived status influences support behaviours in the host country and impacts adjustment. Additionally, it is important to explore the potential effects of colonial history on this process.

Moreover, this study will combine the experiences of both expatriates and their host country supervisors. Most of the studies approaching expatriate adjustment use either an expatriate- or host country national-focused perspective, and the relationship between these perspectives is less studied, with a few exceptions (Kraimer et al., 2001; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016). However, there is a

growing need to simultaneously examine the experiences of expatriates and host country nationals to create clarity on how they interact and respond to one another. With this set-up, potential biases can also be better controlled (Michailova et al., 2023; Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016; Varma et al., 2011b; Wang & Toh, 2023).

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This study consists of 5 chapters in total. First, the reader is walked through the theoretical background of the study in Chapter 2, which covers what is already known about expatriate adjustment, colonial history, and status in the expatriate context, as well as the support received during the post-arrival phase of the abroad assignment. Moreover, Chapter 2 covers the development of hypotheses.

Following the literature review and hypotheses development, we proceed to Chapter 3, detailing the data and methods utilized in the study. In this chapter, the applicability of the data for the chosen methods is also assessed. Chapter 4 presents the results, including preliminary, main, and control analyses. Lastly, in Chapter 5, the main findings are discussed in detail, and the implications for both theory and practice are evaluated alongside the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

2 Theory and Hypotheses

The aim of this chapter is to interweave the concept of colonial history into the expatriate adjustment process, as well as clarify the role of status perceptions within it and how these factors together are proposed to affect supportive behaviour in the host organisation and expatriate adjustment in general. The review begins by outlining existing knowledge on adjustment, status, and support in the expatriate context, followed by the development of hypotheses.

2.1 Expatriate Adjustment

Expatriate adjustment has been conceptualized in various ways in research literature over the years, but at its core, it is about thoroughly understanding and reconciling with the new environment. For example, expatriate adjustment has been described as a psychological state that indicates the degree of both work and socio-cultural fit (Aycan, 1997; Black et al., 1991). It is also seen as the degree of comfort in being an expatriate and being familiar with the new host country (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Moreover, it refers to a learning process where expatriates acquaint themselves with the demands and customs of the host organisation (Toh & DeNisi, 2007). Some researchers also refer to it as the absence of conflict and stress, since studies indicate that the change of environments is a stressful situation for expatriates, increasing feelings of uncertainty (Aycan, 1997).

It was already in the late 1980s when researchers proposed that expatriate adjustment is actually a multifaceted concept with several dimensions (Black, 1988; Black et al., 1991). Building on this, in current research, expatriate adjustment is often divided into three different components – work, interactional, and general (also referred to as cultural) adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Kang & Shen, 2018). Leaning on the acculturation literature, the three different dimensions are also called work, socio-cultural, and psychological adjustment in expatriate adjustment research (Aycan, 1997).

The first dimension, work adjustment, refers to job-specific aspects in the host organisation. Sending expatriates on an abroad assignment means at least some level of changes in the requirements and expectations of a job to which the expatriate should adjust, for instance, new customs and standards. Interactional adjustment, on the other hand, refers to adjusting to the style of communication in the host country and creating interpersonal relationships with host country nationals. In more detail, this dimension covers aspects such as language skills and cultural understanding. To continue, general adjustment refers to being comfortable with the new cultural environment, for example, with living conditions, cultural customs, and everyday life in the host country (Black & Stephens, 1989). The multidimensionality of expatriate adjustment is commonly accepted by academics (Shaffer et al., 1999; 2006; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). However, there are also divergent views, for example, on how independent these three dimensions are from each other (Aycan, 1997; Takeuchi et al., 2005).

In 1991, one of the most cited theoretical frameworks of the expatriate adjustment process was published by Black and colleagues (e.g., Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). The model starts with the assumption that the new situation the expatriate faces arouses feelings of uncertainty. The model highlights the role of both the home and host country. To be precise, the first component of the model is called anticipatory adjustment. This refers to the support offered by the home organisation before entering the host country, such as cultural training, but also to the expatriate's previous international experiences that can facilitate adjustment to the new environment. Moreover, the model illustrates the in-country adjustment phase, focusing on four different sets of predictors: job, organisational, nonwork, and individual factors, either enhancing or hindering the three different dimensions of adjustment described earlier (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer et al., 1999).

The integrative model of Black et al. (1991) has contributed to the research by considering several types of antecedents of adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Furthermore, it has been validated in several studies, and the important role of both the home and host organisations in expatriate adjustment has been acknowledged (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Caligiuri & Santo, 2001; Shaffer et

al., 1999). Nevertheless, Caligiuri (2000) highlights that host country nationals are often the best source of supporting the expatriate's adjustment to the new environment by offering them both work- and non-work-related support. Moreover, it is argued that support offered by the home organisation, such as pre-training before the overseas assignment, cannot compensate for the support given in the host country (Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Caligiuri & Santo, 2001).

The model by Black and colleagues (1991), however, has faced criticism for being too dominant in the field, with the risk of neglecting other proposed models and important perspectives. The model has also been criticized for placing too much emphasis on the perspective of a single actor in the adjustment process. For instance, many of the studies supporting the model have used methods prone to biases such as cross-sectional and self-reported data. (Kraimer et al., 2016.) The alternative, yet very similar, model of Aycan (1997) shed some more light on organisational factors such as the interaction and socialization at the post-arrival period highlighting the role of the host country nationals in the adjustment process (Arman & Aycan, 2013; Kraimer et al., 2016). Gradually the focus in research has shifted more towards the relationship and interaction between expatriates and their host country nationals (Takeuchi, 2010; Toh & DeNisi, 2007).

Building on this, the relationship between expatriates and their host country supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates has been referred to as one of the key factors in the expatriate adjustment process (Toh & DeNisi, 2007). One of the most studied factors influencing expatriate adjustment in the post-arrival phase is the support provided by the host organisation, as well as how various characteristics of expatriates impact the behaviours and attitudes of host country nationals (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Kraimer et al., 2001; Mahajan & Toh, 2014; Shaffer et al., 1999; Toh & DeNisi, 2007). Before delving deeper into the role of support, we introduce a less-studied concept that has the potential to significantly influence adjustment through interaction between expatriates and host country nationals.

2.2 Status

Status is a less researched concept in expatriate literature, but a few researchers have started to highlight its importance (Bader et al., 2017). Status refers to a comparative evaluation between individuals or groups. In expatriate research, status evaluations are based on various sources and are often conceptualized in different ways. (Bader et al., 2017; Belhoste & Monin, 2013; Toh & DeNisi, 2007.) It is also relevant to note that some expatriate literature also refers to 'prestige,' which can be treated as a synonym or close term for status (Olsen & Martins, 2009).

One research stream in the expatriate context focuses specifically on so-called low-status expatriates (Sunguh et al., 2019; Özçelik et al., 2019). In these studies, host country nationals make a distinction between high and low status expatriates based on their origin and nationality, often leading to a situation where expatriates from developing countries are seen to hold less status than expatriates from western or more developed countries. In this regard, the political and economic state of the expatriate's country of origin, along with the prestige of their job and educational qualifications, often determine the perceived status of an expatriate. (Haak-Shameen et al., 2023; Gullekson & Dumaisnill, 2016; Sunguh et al., 2019.) Even though this research stream studies expatriates with a different background than the mainstream expatriate literature with well-educated expatriates in their prestigious jobs, the observations made are important from the expatriate's perspective. For instance, it is argued that low status expatriates typically need more support to pull it through in the new environment (Haak-Saheem et al., 2023).

Moreover, Bader and colleagues (2017) divide status in the expatriate-HCN context into two: demographically based status in society and status in the organisation. They argue that, for instance, social class influences the interaction between expatriates and host country nationals and that the abroad assignment often changes the status of an expatriate as the status in the host country can differ greatly compared to that which one held at home. Status in an organisation, on the other hand, refers to seniority, meaning professional experience or organisational tenure that is connected to higher status in some countries. (Bader et al., 2017.)

Status differences can cause maladaptive behaviour and attitudes in the expatriate-HCN context. For instance, Gullekson and Dumaisnil (2016) argue that status differences affect the way in which expatriates are able to express emotions in the host organisation since there are different rules of display between high and low status expatriates (e.g., Tiedens et al., 2000). Having a lower status may lead to more suppressed emotions and experiences compared to having a higher status. These propositions indicate that status is an important factor affecting expatriate's well-being on their abroad assignment and that it is important to better understand what the possible sources of status are and how status influences the adjustment process. (Gullekson & Dumaisnil, 2016.)

2.3 Support in Host Country Context

The role of support in expatriate adjustment has been highlighted in research, for example, by stating that *"a successful adjustment is considered to be a function of both managerial competencies and organizational support provided prior to and during the assignment"* (Aycan, 1997, p. 435). Consequently, support has been widely studied from different perspectives. From the expatriate's perspective, support is often studied through their evaluation of organizational support, which is conceptualized as perceived organizational support (POS). Another popular perspective focuses on host country nationals' willingness to offer support to the expatriates. Overall, the role of support, regardless of how it is approached, is an important factor facilitating expatriate adjustment in the form of socialization (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Mahajan & Toh, 2014; Shaffer et al., 1999; Sokro et al., 2021).

An expatriate often requires a higher level of support in the host country compared to their regular position and environment (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004), and expatriate researchers have highlighted the importance of perceived organizational support in several studies (Kraimer et al., 2001; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Caligiuri et al., 1999; Shaffer et al., 1999). Perceived organizational support is seen as an important source

of social support, and it refers to an employee's overall beliefs of the extent to which the organization is willing to support them in various ways, meaning, for example, having their back and caring about their well-being through different types of human resource management policies and other types of practices (Sokro et al., 2021). Perceived organizational support is often divided into career, adjustment, and financial support, but it can also refer to more practical support, such as language and cross-cultural training (Cole & Nesbeth, 2014; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Based on all this, employees evaluate how valued and cared for they feel by their organization (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Kraimer et al., 2001; Sokro et al., 2021).

Overall, studies indicate that expatriates are prone to evaluate the way in which they are being treated and valued in the host country environment (Sokro et al., 2021). Perceived organizational support enhances the learning process that is related to adjusting to the new organization and country (Bauer & Green, 1998; Perrot et al., 2014). For example, several researchers have connected perceived organizational support to all three dimensions of expatriate adjustment and especially to the dimensions of work and interactional adjustment as it reduces stress and provides clarity in uncertain situations (Caligiuri et al., 1999; Kawai & Strange, 2014; Kraimer et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2013; Shaffer et al., 1999).

Support from the standpoint of host country nationals also refers to socializing the expatriates to the new environment (Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016). The role of organizational insiders, such as co-workers, supervisors, and subordinates, is emphasized in facilitating the socialization of expatriates and enabling them to work effectively on their international assignments. From this perspective, support is categorized into role information support and social support, both of which are essential for expatriate adjustment. (Toh & DeNisi, 2007.)

Support in the form of role information refers to all kinds of information sharing that helps the expatriate to cope in the new role and work environment. Host country nationals can share their knowledge about the expected behaviour at the workplace, share expectations toward expatriate's performance and help expatriates to understand the organisational practices, culture and community. (Toh & DeNisi,

2007; Varma et al., 2011a.) Sharing this type of knowledge not only helps expatriates to adjust but also to perform better by decreasing the feelings of uncertainty related to the new episode in life (Olsen & Martins, 2009; Shay & Baack, 2006). Both theoretical and empirical evidence supports the idea that role clarity particularly facilitates work adjustment (Aycan, 1997; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Black et al., 1991; Toh & DeNisi, 2005).

However, when sent on an international assignment, expatriates not only leave their previous job behind but also their home country social networks as well. Therefore, researchers have focused on how building new professional and personal relationships with host country nationals influences expatriates' adjustment and performance (Varma et al., 2016). Another aspect of support provided by host country nationals is social support, which includes emotional and moral assistance, such as reassurance and encouragement, as well as practical help with daily life in the new country, fostering the feelings of inclusion (Toh & DeNisi, 2007). Studies show that social support enhances all three dimensions of expatriate adjustment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005).

While host country nationals' support is crucial for expatriate adjustment, it is not always provided, and in some cases, even discriminatory behaviour may come into question (Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Varma et al., 2011a). This raises questions about the factors affecting the expatriate-HCN relationship and the mechanisms influencing it. Research suggests that a key process influencing the degree of support given is the categorization of expatriates as either ingroup or outgroup members (Pichler et al., 2012; Toh, 2003; Varma et al., 2006; Varma et al., 2011b). This research stream stems from the social identity approach *(SIA)*, covering social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) and self-categorization theory (Turner, 1987). The approach has been successfully applied to organisations and multinational organisation contexts since the 1980s (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Sending expatriates on an international assignment creates a cross-cultural context shaped by intergroup dynamics, and the social identity approach helps us to understand the social psychological mechanisms that influence host country nationals' motivation to offer support (Toh & DeNisi, 2003, 2007; Olsen & Martins, 2009).

The starting point of this approach is an assumption that part of an individual's identity is derived from a social group membership. These so-called social identities function as sources of self-esteem as individuals are motivated to see themselves and their ingroup positively (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). When an individual becomes aware of social categories, the social identity becomes activated increasing the tendency to divide others into either ingroup or outgroup based on their characteristics. This categorization of self and others affects one's behaviour and attitudes, and it is argued that social categorization easily leads to ingroup favoritism at the expense of the outgroup (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Terry, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). There are several possible social categories that can serve as a base for categorization but the most salient ones in a given context work as a source of social identity (Pratt, 1998). Overall, this simplifying social-cognitive process makes the social world more straightforward to interpret and it has an uncertainty decreasing impact on individuals (Tajfel, 1978, p. 61).

In an expatriate context, it is argued that if expatriates and host country nationals identify with the same social group, such as cultural, organisational, or ethnic groups, there will be more cooperation and resources shared (Olsen & Martins, 2009). Building on this, in the context of multinational companies, cross-cultural issues may become salient, and cultural distance between home and host countries has been one of the interests of researchers studying the predictors of both expatriate adjustment and host country nationals' supporting behaviour (e.g., Black et al., 1991; Varma et al., 2006). The concept of cultural distance refers to the differences in the cultural characteristics, such as values, norms, and practices, of home and host countries. In some studies, cultural distance has been referred to with the concept of cultural novelty or value (dis)similarity, and these concepts are often used interchangeably (Black et al., 1991; Wang & Varma, 2019).

In expatriate research, cultural distance is studied by using Hofstede's cultural values framework, defining countries through six cultural dimensions (considered to be somewhat an objective measurement) or by focusing on the subjective evaluations made by either expatriates or host country nationals (Harrison et al., 2004; Hofstede, 2011; Shenkar , 2001; Selmer, 2007). According to the latter perspective, cultural

distance is one aspect through which host country nationals categorize expatriates (Shenkar, 2001). Furthermore, country of origin is often perceived as an antecedent of cultural distance and highly salient in the categorization process (Olsen & Martins, 2009; Shenkar, 2001; Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016; Varma et al., 2021).

The way in which cultural distance or cultural novelty affects the adjustment of expatriates has produced mixed results in research. Mainly, it has been suggested that the more distant two cultures are, the more difficult it is for expatriates to adjust to the new environment (Harrison et al., 2004; Olsen & Martins, 2009). For example, Bhaskar-Shrinivas and others (2005) found in their meta-analysis that cultural novelty is negatively related to all three dimensions of adjustment. On the other hand, value similarity is connected to ingroup categorization and host country nationals' willingness to support expatriates (Varma et al., 2011b), while cultural differences are connected to outgroup categorization and less support (Varma et al., 2006). However, there are also studies indicating that cultural distance might not play that pivotal role in the adjustment process after all. Selmer (2007), for instance, found no significant differences between American expatriates adjusting to culturally more similar or distant countries. Some results even indicate that occasionally cultural distance can have positive effects on adjustment (Hemmasi & Downes, 2013).

Altogether, compared to the possible influence of status in the expatriate context, host country nationals' support has been well-studied over the past decades, and the importance of this for expatriate adjustment seems beyond dispute. However, based on theory, it is also possible to outline the connections between status perceptions and supporting behaviour, which are also intertwined with the shared colonial past between the home and host countries of the expatriates. Thus, we next move into developing the hypotheses, focusing on the possible impacts of colonial history and status on host country support and the overall adjustment process, and addressing the possible mechanisms between these components.

2.4 Hypotheses Development

To review, previous theories and research on the relationship between expatriates and host country nationals emphasize that the categorization of expatriates as either ingroup or outgroup members influences their adjustment to the new environment, with outgroup-categorized expatriates typically experiencing, for example, less support from host country nationals (Reynolds, Turner & Haslam, 2000; Pichler et al., 2012.; Toh & DeNisi, 2007). However, mixed findings, such as those from studies examining the relationship between cultural distance and adjustment, suggest that additional mechanisms or factors may be at play.

Overall, cultural distance as a concept has faced criticism for its oversimplifying nature (Shenkar, 2001). Building on that, Hemmasi and Downes (2013) summarize that the relationship between cultural distance and adjustment is a complex one and that it isn't consistent across all contexts. Elaborating further on this idea, one possible explanation for the mixed results is the influence of colonial or suppressive history between the expatriate's home and host countries. The effects of colonial history on expatriate adjustment have not been studied before. There are, however, some indicators that colonial history plays a role in the context of expatriates. For instance, Carr et al. (2001) examine how historical tensions influence the expatriate selection process in Tanzania. They argue that expatriates from neighbouring Eastern African countries with colonial histories are less accepted by host country nationals than Western expatriates. Their findings show that Tanzanians indeed preferred Western expatriates over Eastern Africans, despite Westerners being culturally more different and their being former colonizers. This suggests that expatriates from non-colonial countries may be viewed more favourably also in the expatriate adjustment process.

Furthermore, according to the social identity approach, outgroup categorization does not inherently lead to outgroup discrimination or ingroup favouritism. Instead, host country nationals may be motivated to support an expatriate's adjustment if they perceive it beneficial for themselves, regardless of categorization. (Tajfel & Turner,

1979; Toh & DeNisi, 2007.) This dynamic may be explained by the perceived status of the expatriate.

The theoretical base of how status may influence adjustment is grounded in the same social identity approach as the categorization mechanism. Precisely, the mechanism is based on so-called affiliation desire proposing that host country nationals may be more willing to affiliate themselves with higher-status expatriates as it simultaneously elevates their own self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Toh & DeNisi, 2007). Thus, it is likely that the status of expatriates and how they are perceived by host country nationals influence their interactions with expatriates, which in turn affects the expatriates' overall adjustment.

The affiliation desire tendency has also been suggested to affect the host country nationals' willingness to offer support to expatriates, since the success of high-status expatriates will further enhance their social image and status. Empirical evidence also points out that expatriates with low status can face prejudice and discrimination by host country nationals leading to decreased well-being and performance. (Bonache et al., 2016; Olsen & Martins, 2009; Sunguh et al., 2019; Toh & DeNisi, 2007.)

Relating to the theory outlined above, it is likely that the suppressive history negatively affects how expatriates are viewed and precisely where they are seen to stand socially. Despite the shared history and culture, host country nationals may view expatriates from previously colonized countries as submissive and holding less status than those from countries with no such history. Holding less social status in the eyes of host country nationals may, in turn, lead to problems with adjustment. In other words, it is likely that colonial history affects the expatriate adjustment process, and this happens through status perceptions. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: The relationship between colonial history and expatriate adjustment is mediated by the perceived status of the expatriate. Specifically, higher degrees of colonial history lead to lower status perceptions, which, in turn, lead to lower levels of adjustment compared to expatriates with no colonial history.

Based on theory and specifically the affiliation desire, it is also likely that status affects adjustment precisely through supporting behaviour meaning an increased willingness to offer support to higher-status expatriates, further facilitating their adjustment. Expatriates with lower perceived status, on the other hand, wouldn't receive the same treatment leading to lower degrees of adjustment. (Olsen & Martins, 2009.)

There are several possible forms of support that potentially influence this process. In the current context of expatriates and their supervisors, however, it is likely, that because of their role, supervisors are more prone to give role information regardless of status perceptions. For instance, it is suggested that, as a more structured organizational activity, role information support could be more clearly instructed and therefore more obligated to be given. However, the situation might not be the same with social support, referring to emotional and moral support. (Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Varma et al., 2011b.) Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H2: The relationship between the perceived status of expatriate and expatriate adjustment is mediated by the willingness of host country supervisor to offer social support. Precisely, the perceived status positively affects the willingness of host country supervisor to offer social support, which in turn positively affects the adjustment.

Furthermore, studying the support provided by the host organization from the expatriates' perspective it is essential to gaining a wider understanding of the dynamics between expatriates and host country organization. While this concept evaluates the support received from the entire organization rather than solely from the immediate supervisor, perceived organizational support is vital in fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing the adaptation process of expatriates (Kawai & Strange, 2014; Kraimer et al., 2001; Shaffer et al., 1999; Sokro et al., 2021). It is also likely that the status perceptions held by the expatriate's supervisors reflect closely with the broader perceptions within the current cultural context, and supervisors as leaders often have the power to shape the prevailing attitudes, culture, and dynamics within the organization as the research in social identity approach has supported

(Hogg & Smith, 2007; Knippenberg, 2023; Steffens et al., 2014). Therefore, it is assumed that the perceived organizational support assessed by the expatriates also mediates the relationship between status and adjustment. The perceived status of expatriates likely influences the behaviour and attitudes of host country nationals, which expatriates may notice as they assess whether they are valued and supported by the host organization.

Based on the above, it is hypothesized that:

H3: The relationship between the perceived status of expatriate and expatriate adjustment is mediated by perceived organisational support. Specifically, the perceived status positively affects the perceived organisational support, which in turn positively affects the adjustment.

The theoretical framework illustrating the hypothesised relationships between the factors is presented below in figure 1.

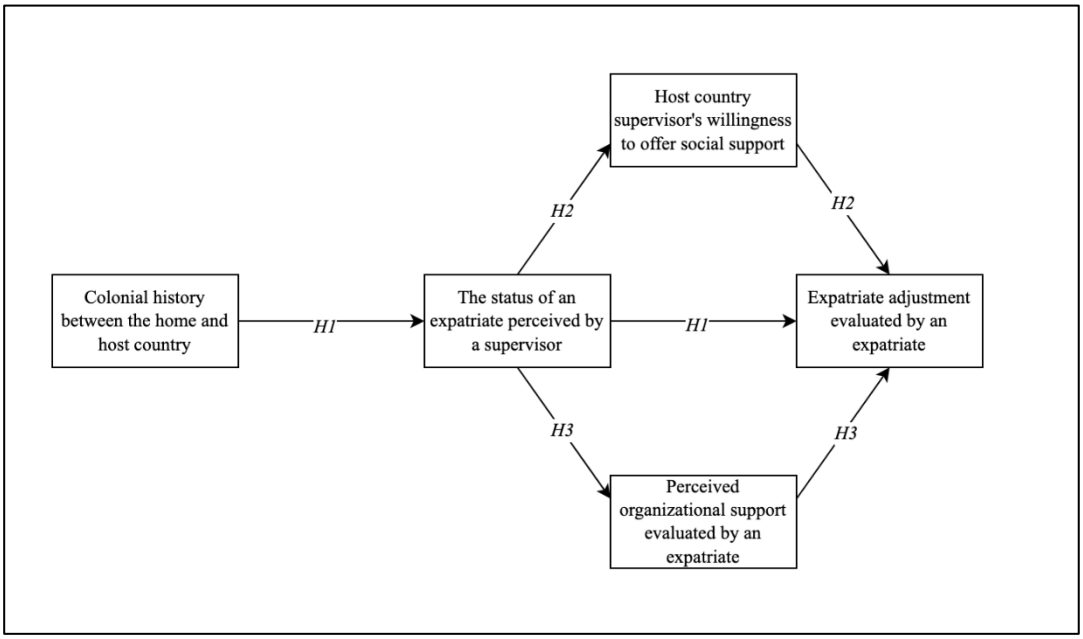

Figure 1. *Theoretical framework of the study*

3 Data and Methods

Before testing the hypotheses, a detailed overview of the methods and data used is provided. This chapter begins by introducing the research context and data collection procedures followed by a brief description of the sample. After this, the specific measurements and their coding are presented, and the methods used to analyse the data and test the hypotheses are outlined. The chapter concludes with a scale assessment and an evaluation of the applicability of the data for the chosen methods. The data is analysed by using SPSS version 29.

3.1 Data Collection and Sample

The quantitative data used in this study consist of responses from corporate expatriates and their host country supervisors (HCS) working in Russia, specifically in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. The expatriate-HCS dyads were contacted with the help of an internationally operating polling agency that conducted phone surveys to collect 250 expatriate-HCS dyads in total with a few requirements – the respondents must be representative of various industries and the expatriate-HCS relationship must have been lasted at least for two months for the relationship to deepen appropriately. The actual online survey was sent to those who agreed to take part in the study. Expatriates and supervisors answered the same anonymous questionnaire with minor differences in wording.

Overall, the data consists of expatriates from 39 different countries with the majority of whom come from Europe and former Soviet republics. Due to the nature of the study, the expatriates originating from Russia were excluded from the data, leaving it with expatriates from 38 different countries and 244 expatriate-HCS dyads in total. The sample represents a diverse demographic profile, including respondents of varying gender, age, education, country of origin, family status, industry, and expatriate experience. The majority of the expatriates (66%) and the supervisors (65

%) in the data are male and the majority of the dyads are the same gender (63 %). The average age of the expatriates is 34 years and the supervisors' 43 years. Most of the expatriates have a master's degree (68%) and are currently working as specialists (68%). The approximate length of the abroad assignment is 3,57 months and the self-evaluated confidence to use Russian language is on a good level (app. 3,9 on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is totally disagree and 5 is totally agree). The majority of the dyads are based in Moscow (59 %) and the dyads represent evenly a variety of industries (production 21 %, construction & real estate 20 %, commerce 20 %, finance 20 % and transport 19 %).

3.2 Measurements

Next, the measurements of this study are presented. All the variables are measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree), unless otherwise specified. The exact items of which the scales are composed are presented in more detail in chapter 3.4, focusing on scale assessment.

Colonial history

To conduct the analyses appropriately, the variable measuring the colonial history was coded. The base for the coding is the expatriate's country of origin. First, the countries presented in the data were divided into countries with at least some degree of colonial or suppressive history with either Russia or the Soviet Union (USSR) or into those with no such history. Based on this classification, 18 out of the 38 countries of expatriate origin in the data have a history of colonization or suppression by the host country and were therefore analyzed in greater detail.

After the analysis, the countries with at least some degree of colonial history with the USSR or Russia were divided into two. First, there are countries that were officially part of the USSR. Most of these countries have been under suppression from 1922, when the USSR was founded, until 1991, when the USSR collapsed. Furthermore, some of the countries, despite not officially being part of the USSR, were ideologically and politically under heavy control of it during the Cold War.

Many of these countries were also members of the Warsaw Pact or so-called satellite states.

The final categories for the variable of colonial history are represented below in table 1. The scale of colonial history ranges from 1 (no colonial history) to 3 (officially part of the USSR). Based on this classification, 141 out of 244 expatriates shared at least some degree of colonial history with Russia/USSR through their country of origin.

Table 1.

Categorization of countries based on colonial history.

1 *(No colonial history) n = 103*	2 *(Some degree of colonial history) n = 43*	3 *(High degree of colonial history) n = 98*
Austria, Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, France, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Netherlands, Norway Germany, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK and USA	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Mongolia, Poland, Finland, China, North Korea and Serbia	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

Expatriate adjustment

Expatriate adjustment is measured by focusing on the dimension of work adjustment. The scale consists of items measuring both comfort with the new task and comfort with new colleagues, and it is evaluated by the expatriates themselves. The measurement of work adjustment follows the work of Schaffer and colleagues (2006) which aligns with the seminal model of Black and colleagues (Black, 1988; Black & Stephens, 1989).

Perceived organizational status

Expatriates' status is conceptualized as perceived organizational status, and it is evaluated by the supervisors. The scale is a modification of the scale presented by Eisenberger and colleagues (2002). Based on the factor analysis conducted by Eisenberger et al. (2002), the six items with the best factor loadings (from .72 to .81) were chosen and the wording was modified to fit the expatriate context. The chosen items measured, for example, how valued an expatriate is in the organization and how much autonomy and authority they are given.

Social support

The HCN willingness to offer social support is measured by using the scale developed by Varma and colleagues (2016). The scale consists of four items. Overall, the items measure how willing supervisors are to make the expatriate's work life easier in the new environment, for instance, by measuring the willingness to listen to the expatriate's personal problems.

Perceived organizational support

The scale for measuring perceived organizational support is from the study of Eisenberger and colleagues (1997) and it is an expatriate-evaluated measure. The scale is well established in research, and it is based on the previous work of Eisenberger et al. (1990, 1986). The scale used in the study of Eisenberger et al. (1997) comprises eight items in total, but here only seven of them are included. The items measure, for instance, how much the organization is seen to care for the expatriate's well-being and opinions and how much the organization contributes to these matters.

Control variables

Based on previous expatriate research, the analyses are controlled with three different control variables.

Firstly, in previous studies expatriates' language skills have been shown to be an important indicator of adjustment. For instance, language skills have already been

noted to affect the adjustment process in the seminal model of Black and colleagues (1991). There is also empirical evidence that it affects all the dimensions of adjustment (Selmer, 2006; Shaffer et al., 1999; Takeuchi et al., 2002). Therefore, the ability to speak the same language as the HCNs has been used as a control variable in several previous studies (e.g., Mahajan & Toh, 2014; Kraimer et al., 2001). Language skill potentially is an important factor affecting the adjustment process in the context of the current study as well. In many of the countries that have been under USSR colonization, Russian is still widely used. Language skills are measured by asking the expatriates to evaluate their own confidence to communicate in Russian by using five different items focusing on confidence, for instance, in speaking, listening, and writing in Russian. The scale ranges from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

Secondly, a factor commonly used as a control variable in expatriate research is gender. Based on studies, there are gender differences in adjustment that often favor the female gender (Selmer & Leung, 2003). Furthermore, there are some indicators that, for instance, social support is provided differently based on gender (Varma et al., 2011b). Moreover, gender may affect the process through status, and it has been used as a control variable in studies focusing on status variables in expatriate research (Bader et al., 2017). In the analysis, gender is coded as 0 for male and 1 for female.

Lastly, the effect of job position is controlled. Job position or level has been shown to be connected to the expatriate adjustment process (Shaffer et al., 1999). Furthermore, Zhang and Oczkowski (2016) point out that a higher job position potentially affects the perceived status and power of expatriate and therefore it might make the adjustment process easier with fewer obstacles present. Job position in the original data is divided into four categories – top managers, line managers, specialists and others. However, there are responses from only 9 top managers, so these are combined with line managers, resulting in a total of 79 managers in the data. Furthermore, there are 165 specialists and no respondents with job position as ‘other’. The variable measuring a job position is therefore coded as 0 for specialists and 1 for managers.

3.3 Method of Analysis

The data is analysed by using correlation analysis and ANOVA for preliminary analysis, and in particular, regression analysis for testing the hypotheses. After introducing these methods, the suitability of the data in relation to the methods is evaluated.

First, the relationship between the variables is examined by using correlation analysis. Correlation analysis examines the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables without indicating causality (Pallant, 2013, p. 133). Correlation between the variables is assumed when using regression analysis since the analysis is based on correlations (Pallant, 2013, p 154). In this case, the correlations are examined between the continuous variables in the theoretical framework. Since correlations can be studied only with respect to continuous variables, the associations between the categorical variables and continuous variables are tested by using One-way ANOVA. It was used in preliminary analysis in chapter 4.1 to check whether the population mean in the continuous variables differs significantly in the categories of colonial history.

Secondly, the hypotheses are analysed by using a regression-based analysis method. Overall, with regression analysis, it is possible to build predictive models and study direct effects, meaning how the independent variable affects the dependent variable (Field, 2018, p.375). Furthermore, by using regression analysis, it is also possible to examine the mediation effects. In this case, the PROCESS macro (version 4.2) is used to test the hypotheses.

The PROCESS macro is an additional analysis model tool to use, for example, in SPSS (e.g., Hayes, 2015). The tool is based on regression analysis and the basic idea is essentially the same as with Baron and Kenny (1986), but there is no need to regress models separately, as the computer does the calculations simultaneously. Furthermore, the tool uses the so-called bootstrap method to produce confidence intervals (*CI*) to study the indirect effect. If the confidence interval (e.g., 95 % *CI*, similar to $p < .05$) doesn't contain zero, there is said to be a mediation. (Field, 2014,

p. 506; Mahajan & Toh, 2014; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Bootstrapping is a robust method that treats the sample data as a population from which it takes several samples to calculate the parameters of interest (Field, 2014, p. 265). The PROCESS tool is said to have higher power and more accuracy than Baron and Kenny's method for testing the indirect effect size by using Sobel test.

Moreover, there are several different paths of mediating effect that can be tested by using the PROCESS macro tool. Below, in figure 2, the suitable models for the hypotheses tested in this study are presented. The hypotheses 1 will be tested with the simple mediation model, and the hypotheses 2 and 3 with the parallel multiple mediation model. In parallel multiple mediator model the two mediators are put into the same model and the indirect effect per mediator is an effect in which the influence of the other mediator is controlled. This leads to different indirect effects than if the effects were studied in two simple mediator models separately. (Coutts & Hayes, 2022.)

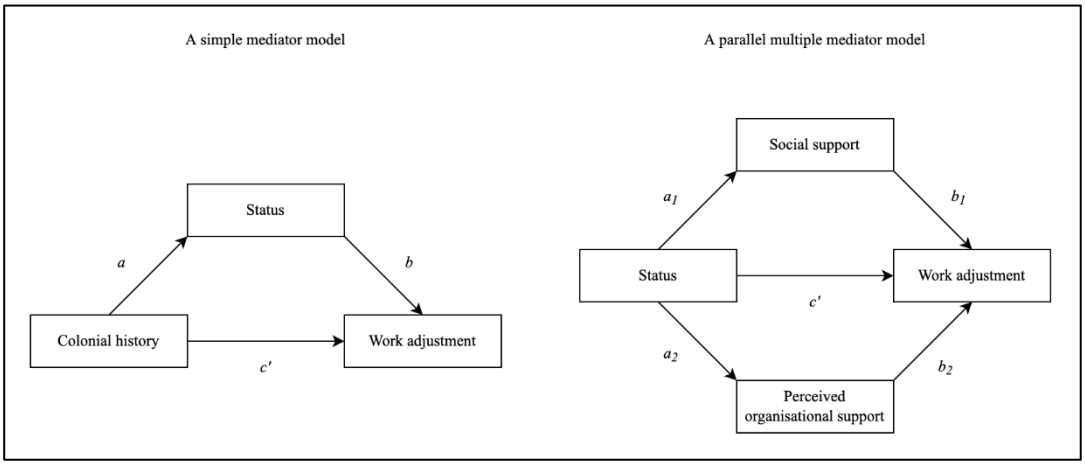

Figure 2. *Mediation models used to test the hypotheses (Edited from Coutts & Hayes, 2022)*

3.4 Scale Assessment and Applicability of the Data

Before moving on to the actual analyses testing our hypotheses, the scales under the examination are evaluated by using factor analysis and the applicability of the data for the chosen methods is checked.

Factor analysis is a commonly used method in validating scales or constructs (Pallant, 2013, p. 188). To use factor analysis, it is assumed that the sample size is large enough and there should be at least some correlation between the items for the analysis to be reliable (Pallant, 2013, p. 189-190). There isn't a clear consensus in research on how large the sample size should be, and the recommendations vary between 150 and 1000 (e.g., MacCallum et al., 1999; Pallant, 2013, p. 193; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014, p. 613). De Winter and colleagues (2009) even state that the absolute minimum size is 50. Despite the differing opinions, the sample size of this data (n= 244) is considered to be large enough. Furthermore, it is not just about the sample size, but also about the factor loadings and communalities (Field, 2014, p. 795; MacCallum et al., 1999; Pallant, 2013, p. 190; de Winter et al., 2009) which are dealt with later.

The items included in the factor analysis should correlate with coefficients greater than .3 in order for some kind of a pattern to be found in the analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014 pp. 667). Furthermore, very high correlations (r = .8) could indicate multicollinearity, that should also be avoided (Field, 2014, p. 799). To a large extend, the variables correlated with each other enough. However, one item measuring perceived organisational support correlated enough only with one other item. Nevertheless, this item was included in the factor analysis for further examination. The factorability of the data was tested by using Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling. The results of these tests are .81 (recommended value > .6) for KMO, and Bartlett's test is significant indicating good factorability of the data (e.g., Shrestha, 2021; Pallant, 2013, p. 199). Based on these evaluations the factor analysis can be run with the current data.

Several factor analyses were conducted to find the simplest solution. First, the analyses were conducted separately for expatriate- and supervisor-measured items and after these examinations all together. The factor analysis was conducted by choosing the generalized least squares (GLS) as extraction method as it isn't so sensitive to the normal distribution assumption (Nummenmaa, 2004, p. 345). The normality of the distribution is handled later in this chapter. For the rotation, varimax was chosen to make sure the results are simple enough to interpret when the factors do not correlate with each other (e.g., Field, 2014, p. 793; Pallant, 2013, p. 192). The number of factors was forced to four since more than four factors didn't significantly improve the percentage of variance the factors could explain. Furthermore, the scree plot also indicated this, with the clear break after the fourth factor.

First, the communalities were closely examined. Communalities should be greater than .3 and this was true for all except one variable that was excluded from the analysis. Furthermore, one item measuring POS didn't load as clearly as the other items on a certain factor, and it was also excluded from the final analysis round. The results from the final factor analysis are reported in table 2. The analysis was also run by using Maximum Likelihood as extraction method and the results were very similar to GLS.

Table 2.

Summary of exploratory factor analysis for the scales of work adjustment, perceived organizational support, perceived organizational status and HCN social support. Rotated factor loadings, communalities and eigenvalues are reported. (N = 244)

	Rotated factor loadings	Communalities
Work Adjustment		
1. I feel comfortable with my specific job responsibilities.	.51	.47
2. I feel comfortable with my activities or tasks at work.	.59	.48
3. I feel comfortable with my workload.	.56	.46

	Rotated factor loadings	Communalities
4. I feel comfortable with the communication among my colleagues (e.g. co-workers, direct reports).	.58	.43
5. I feel comfortable with the collegiality among colleagues.	.49	.44
6. I feel comfortable with the teamwork among my colleagues.	.58	.54
Eigenvalue	4.93	
Perceived Organizational Support		
1. My organization cares about my opinions.	.42	.37
2. My organization really cares about my well-being.	.87	.81
3. Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.	.50	.44
4. My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.	.38	.30
5. My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favour.	.41	.41
Eigenvalue	1.56	
Perceived Organizational Status		
1. The organization holds the expatriate in high regard.	.39	.40
2. The organization gives the expatriate the chance to make important decisions.	.78	.67
3. The organization values the expatriate's contributions.	.45	.50
4. The organization gives the expatriate the authority to try new things.	.62	.56
5. The organization supports decisions made by the expatriate.	.59	.57
6. The expatriate participates in decisions that affect the entire organization.	.59	.54
Eigenvalue	2.21	

	Rotated factor loadings	Communalities
HCS Social Support		
1. I would listen to the expatriate's personal problems if approached.	.57	.44
2. I would go out of my way to do thing to make the expatriate's life easier for him/her.	.47	.43
3. It is easy for the expatriate to talk with me.	.48	.42
4. The expatriate can rely on me when things get tough at work for him/her.	.61	.46
Eigenvalue	1.41	
% of variance	38.54	

Note: Only the highest factor loadings are reported. Extraction: Generalised least squares, rotation: Varimax

Based on the analysis, the scales measuring work adjustment, perceived organizational support, perceived organizational status and HCS social support were generated by combining the items within each factor. The reliability and the internal consistency of the scales were checked by testing the Cronbach's alpha (α), that should be high enough (>.70) to indicate the reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

From the table 3 below, we can see the Cronbach's alpha and the correlations between the items within each scale. It seems that the Cronbach's alphas are all at a good level except for HCS Social Support which falls below the recommended value. It is stated to be quite common that scales with fewer than 10 items often do not reach the recommended value of Cronbach's alpha (Pallant, 2013, pp. 101). In this case, it is recommended to look at the mean inter-item correlations, that should range between .2 to .4 (Pallant, 2013, pp. 101-104; Briggs & Cheek, 1986). In the current data the mean is .31 ranging from .22 to .37 indicating good correlation between the items. Furthermore, removing items from the scale does not enhance the Cronbach's alpha and could compromise the construct validity. Based on these examinations, the

scales are considered to be consistent and reliable. The descriptives of each scale are presented more in detail in chapter 4.1.

Table 3. *Pearson's correlations and Cronbach's alphas per scale items*

Scale	Correlations (r)	α
Work Adjustment	.28** - .41**	.75
Perceived Organizational Status	.17** - .49**	.74
HCS Social Support	.22** - .37**	.64
Perceived Organizational Support	.24** - .47**	.72

Note: α = Cronbach's alpha, **p < .01

There are several assumptions that need to be met before using parametric methods such as correlation and regression analysis. Since the PROCESS macro uses regression analysis, the same assumptions hold in this study. Next, the continuous variables are examined to ensure he applicability of the data for the chosen methods.

To use correlation and regression analysis, the variables need to be measured at least at the interval level. This holds for all the variables except for the variable measuring colonial history. However, the relationship between colonial history and the continuous variables can be tested by using one-way ANOVA as mentioned.

Linear regression, and therefore, the PROCESS macro tool, as well, can be used with independent categorical variables when 'dummy-coding' them (Field, 2014, p. 508-509; Hayes & Preacher, 2014). The PROCESS macro automatically dummy codes the categorical independent variable if it is asked to do so. For clarity, the dummy coding is presented in the table 4 below. In the analysis the group 1, indicating those with no colonial history, is set as the referent against which the other two groups are compared

Table 4.

Dummy coding for the variable of colonial history.

Colonial history categories	*Dummy 1: group 2*	*Dummy 2: group 3*
1 No colonial history (reference group)	0	0
2 Some degree of colonial history	1	0
3 High degree of colonial history	0	1

The normality of the distribution of the variables is also checked. The assessment is done by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and by looking at the visualisations and descriptives of the continuous variables. Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it seems that the variables aren't normally distributed (p <.05). Skewness and kurtosis of the variables, presented in table 5 in chapter 4.1, indicate that the variables are negatively skewed and that they are peaked. However, by looking at the histograms and the normal probability plot the variables seem to be quite normally distributed yet slightly tilted to the right. Tabachnick and Fidell (2014, p. 114) argue that with large enough sample (n > 200), the skewness and kurtosis are not that pivotal which is assessed to be in this case. The histograms and normal probability plots are presented in the appendix A.

A basic assumption in correlation and regression analysis is that there is a linear relationship between the variables. Linearity of the relationship between the continuous variables is checked by examining the scatter plots. The scatter plots are reported in the appendix B. Based on the visualisations, it seems that the relationship between the variables is positive and linear, but the relationship is not particularly strong.

Next the multicollinearity of the variables is examined. Multicollinearity refers to a situation in multivariable analysis where the independent variables are strongly correlated (r >.9). Consequently, the variation is put in the model several times and it should be avoided in regression analysis. (Field, 2014, p. 401; Pallant, 2013, p. 157.) The correlations in table 5 in chapter 4.1 indicate that multicollinearity isn't an issue in the current data. Moreover, the multicollinearity of the independent variables

is tested with collinearity tolerance and the VIF-test. Collinearity tolerance results should not be less than .10 and the VIF-test should result a value less than 10 to indicate that multicollinearity isn't a problem in the data. (Pallant, 2013, p. 164.) Based on these tests, no indications of multicollinearity were detected (tolerance > .82, VIF < 1.18).

Based on the scatter plots it seems that the data has some outliers. Outliers are very high or very low scores that stand out from rest of the data (Pallant, 2013, p. 157). Also, box plots (see appendix C) indicate that outliers exist, and they might cause issues when using regression analysis by distorting the results. Therefore, outliers were checked by using both Mahalanobis and Cook's distance. These are values that are calculated during the regression analysis. Since the PROCESS macro tool doesn't calculate them automatically, the regression models were also built by using general linear regression in SPSS. If the Cook's distance gets a value greater than 1, the outliers could cause problems for the analysis. Based on the analysis the Cook's distance is below the recommended value (=0.94). Mahalanobis distance is quite high (=28.35) compared to the critical value for Mahalanobis distance with three independent variables (16.27, p <.001). This indicates that there are some outliers in the data. Upon closer examination, it appears that the outliers are valid and not errors. However, the effect of outliers on the analysis was also checked by examining the 5 % trimmed means which indicated no significant difference from the original means. Pallant (2014, p. 64) argue that in this case the existing outliers probably won't affect the analysis significantly.

Also, the residuals have to be linear and normally distributed. Based on visual examinations it seems that both of these assumptions hold in the data (see the scatterplot and normal probability plot in appendix D). Furthermore, the residuals have to hold in homoscedasticity and be independent of each other. The size of the error terms shows approximately the same variance across the levels of independent variable when examining the scatterplot which indicates homoscedacity, as assumed. Moreover, the independence of the residuals was checked by using the Durbin-Watson test that should result a value not greater than 2. The test results indicate that this assumption holds too in the current data as the Durbin-Watson test results in a

value of 1.39. Overall, the results indicate good applicability of the data also from the perspective of residuals.

4 Results

The chapter 4 consists of three parts. In the first part, the preliminary analyses are presented including both key descriptive figures of the data and correlation analysis focusing on the relationship between the main continuous variables. Furthermore, the significance of the differences in means is analysed using one-way ANOVA in the different categories of colonial history. After the preliminary analysis, the hypotheses are tested using the PROCESS macro, as described in the previous part. Finally, the effects of control variables are tested in the pursuit of the main analysis.

4.1 Preliminary Analyses

The mean (*M*), standard deviation (*SD*), skewness and kurtosis of the variables are reported in the table 5 below. Overall, work adjustment, perceived organisational status, HCS willingness to offer social support and perceived organizational support on average are at the upper end of the scale (1-5). Skewness and kurtosis of the variables are handled precisely in the previous chapter 3.4.

Table 5. *The key descriptive figures and Pearson's correlation between work adjustment, perceived organizational support, perceived organizational status and HCS social support.*

	M	*SD*	*Skew.*	*Kurt.*	*1.*	*2.*	*3.*
1. Work Adjustment	4.02	.39	-.59	1.65			
2. Perceived Organizational Status	3.92	.44	-1.06	3.54	.22***		
3. HCS Social Support	4.01	.47	-.86	2.32	.33***	.33***	
4. Perceived Organizational Support	3.84	.45	-.64	.57	.46***	.31***	.35***

*Note: *** p <.001*

Correlations between the continuous variables were studied by using Pearson's correlation analysis. As seen from the table 5 the strength of the correlation varies

between small and medium positive correlation (e.g., Pallant, 2013, p. 139). All the reported correlations are statistically significant. The strongest relationship is between perceived organizational support and work adjustment (r =.46, p <.001), and the weakest one is between perceived organizational status and work adjustment (r =.22, p<.001).

As the applicability of the data was analysed, there were some indicators that the variables are not normally distributed and therefore, the correlations were also tested by using Spearman's correlation which is similar to Pearson's but suitable for nonparametric data. Results of these additional analyses are reported in appendix E and the results were similar to Pearson's correlations although the strength of the correlations slightly weakened but remained statistically significant.

The mean values of the variables are also examined in different groups of colonial history, and these figures are reported in the table 6 below. As seen, there are only slight differences in the figures. To compare the means and to test whether the differences are statistically significant between the groups of colonial history, a one-way ANOVA is conducted. Based on this, the differences are significant only for the perceived organizational status (F (2, 241) =6.058, p <.01) yet the effect size is small (η^2= .05). The results from ANOVA are reported in appendix F in more detail.

Table 6. *Work adjustment, perceived organizational support, perceived organizational status and HCS social support on average per the degree of colonial history*

	No colonial history (n=103)	*Some degree of colonial history (n=43)*	*High degree of colonial history (n=98)*
Work Adjustment	3.97	4.01	4.05
Status	4.01	3.99	3.81
HCS social support	4.10	4.00	4.04
Perceived organisational support	3.90	3.74	3.72

To test which of the groups differ s statistically significantly from each other in terms of status, a post hoc test (Tukey HSD) was conducted, indicating that the difference

is significant only between groups of colonial history 1 and colonial history 3 (p <.01). This means that the group with no colonial history differs from the group that has been officially part of the USSR and under high suppression when it comes to the perceived organizational status: on average the group with no colonial history is seen to hold more status than the group with a high degree of colonial history.

4.2 Main Analyses

To investigate the main hypotheses, PROCESS mediation models are conducted. First, to test the hypotheses 1, a simple mediation model is run and analysed. After this, the hypotheses 2 and 3 are examined with the parallel multiple mediator model. Additionally, the parallel multiple mediator model is also analysed in the three categories of colonial history. Lastly, the two models testing hypotheses from 1 to 3 are incorporated together as one model. As mentioned, the reference group for the analysis with the colonial history is the category of countries with no colonial or suppressive history with Russia or the USSR.

The main findings regarding hypothesis 1 are illustrated in figure 3 and more detailed results considering the different paths of the model are reported in the table 7. Based on the results, it seems that there is no difference between colonial history 2 (b =.02, t (241) =.91, p =.*36*) and 3 (b =.08, t (241) =1.37, p <.17) in comparison to the referent when it comes to the total effect (path c) from colonial history to adjustment. However, as the influence of status is controlled, the direct path (path c') in comparison to colonial history 3 becomes significant (b =.12, t (240) =2.19, p <.*05*) but not in comparison to colonial history 2 (b =.07, t (240) =.99, p =.32). These results suggest that status plays a role in shaping the relationship between colonial history and expatriate adjustment, potentially influencing or clarifying the connection between the two.

Building on this, the hypothesis 1, with the mediation from colonial history to work adjustment through status perceptions, is partly supported and the relationship is

partly mediated. To be exact, when looking at the confidence intervals (*95 % CI*) of indirect effects, it is visible that only the indirect effect between colonial history 3 and work adjustment is statistically significant (b =.04, *95% CI* = -.09, -.01) and the indirect effect between colonial history 2 and work adjustment is not (b =-.004, *95% CI* = -.04, .03) in comparison to the referent. This means that mediation has only occurred in comparison between group 3 with a high degree of colonial history and the reference group 1 with no such history. However, even though the indirect effect with colonial history 3 is significant, it is crucial to note that the effect size of the found mediation is rather small.

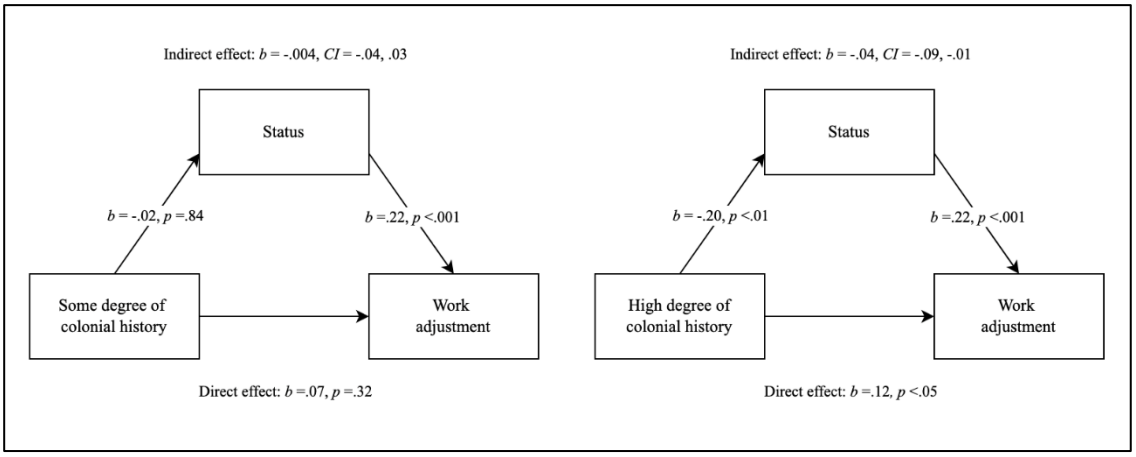

Figure 3. *First model: Simple mediator models of colonial history 2 and colonial history 3 as predictors of work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational status (status) and colonial history 1 as the reference group. The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect is a BCa bootstrapped CI based on 5000 samples.*

Furthermore, the results indicate that countries with an official colonial history with the host country (group 3) differ significantly from the group 1, with no such history when it comes to perceived status (path *a*). Precisely, the results signal that the colonial history of group 3 leads to lower perceived status in the eyes of host country supervisors (b =-.20, p <.01) compared to what exists with countries with no such burden. For the path *b*, when the influence of colonial history is controlled (*c'*), the status affects the degree of work adjustment. Precisely, the higher the status the more adjustment to the new work context the expatriates experience (b =.22, p <.001).

Table 7. *Mediation analysis: colonial history 2 (some degree) and colonial history 3 (high degree) as predictors of work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational status (status) and colonial history 1 (no colonial history) as the reference group.*

Path Coefficients				95 % Confidence Interval		Model Summary (ΔR^2)
	B	*SE (B)*	β	*Lower*	*Upper*	
c. Colonial history, 2 → Work adjustment	.02	.06	.17	-.07	.20	*F*=1.03 (.01)
c. Colonial history 3 → Work adjustment	.08	.06	.19	-.03	.18	
c'. Colonial history 2 → Work adjustment	.07	.07	.17	-.07	.20	*F*=5.81*** (.07)
c'. Colonial history 3 → Work adjustment	.12*	.05	.31	.01	.23	
b, c' Status → Work adjustment	.22***	.06	.25	.11	.33	
a. Colonial history 2 → Status	-.02	.08	-.04	-.17	.14	*F*=6.06** (.05)
a. Colonial history 3 → Status	-.20**	.06	-.46	-.32	-.08	

Note: *p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed.

Mediation Effect				95 % Confidence Interval	
	B	*SE (B)*	β	*Lower*	*Upper*
Colonial history 2 → Work adjustment	.02	.06	.17	-.07	.20
Colonial history 2 → Status → Work adjustment	-.004	.02	-.01	-.04	.03
Colonial history 3 → Work adjustment	.08	.06	.19	-.03	.18
Colonial history 3 → Status → Work adjustment	-.04	.02	-.11	-.09	-.01

The hypotheses 2 and 3 are tested simultaneously with one model, and the main results considering the hypothesised mediations are reported in figure 4 and all the other paths from the model are reported in detail in table 8.

The total effect from perceived organizational status to work adjustment is statistically significant (b =.20, t (242) =3.53, p <.01). This result suggests that as the perceived organizational status increases, expatriates experience greater work adjustment. However, as the perceived organizational support and HCS willingness to offer social support are added in the model, the direct effect decreases and becomes nonsignificant (b =.04, t (240) =.75, p =.47), indicating that perceived organizational support and HCS willingness to offer social support potentially influence this relationship.

Building on that, as seen from the figure 4, the results fully supported the hypotheses 2 and 3 as the confidence intervals of the indirect effects do not include zero, indicating statistical significance. The results indicate that the relationship between

status and work adjustment is fully mediated by HCS willingness to offer social support (b =.05, *95% CI* =.01, .10) and perceived organizational support (*b* =.10, *95% CI* =.05, .17) as the direct effect between status and work adjustment is non-significant (*b* =.04, *p* =.47) after the mediators are added to the model.

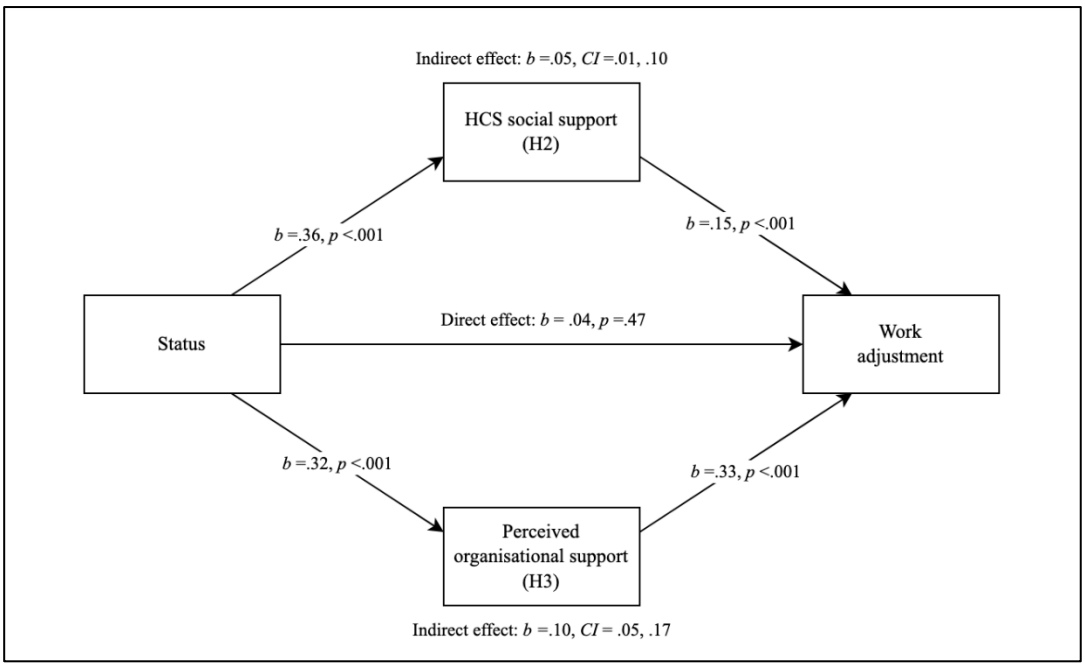

Figure 4. *Second model: The parallel multiple mediator model of perceived organizational status (status) predicting work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational support and HCS willingness to offer social support. The 95 % confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effect is a BCa bootstrapped CI based on 5000 samples.*

Based on the second model, it is evident that status also affects both host country supervisors' willingness to offer social support and expatriates' perceptions of organizational support. For the path *a*, the relationship from status to willingness to offer social support is significant (*b* =.36, *t* (242) =5.47, *p* <.001) and it is also significant from status to perceived organizational support (*b* =.32, *t* (242) =5.07, *p* <.001). The results indicate that the higher the perceived status, the more willing host country supervisors are to offer social support and the more expatriates experience support from the host organization. Furthermore, host country supervisors' willingness to offer social support increases the work adjustment experienced by

expatriates (b =.15, t (240) =2.86, p <.001) and perceived organizational support also positively affects the adjustment experienced (b =.33, t (240) =6.20, p <.001).

Table 8. *Mediation analysis: the parallel multiple mediator model of perceived organizational status (status) predicting work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational support (POS) and HCS willingness to offer social support (HCS SS).*

Path Coefficients				95 % Confidence Interval		Model Summary (ΔR^2)
	B	*SE (B)*	β	*Lower*	*Upper*	
c. Status → Work adjustment	.20**	.06	.22	.09	.30	*F*=12.49*** (.05)
c'. Status → Work adjustment	.04	.05	.04	-.07	.14	*F*=25.60*** (.24)
b, c' HCS SS → Work adjustment	.15***	.05	.18	.05	.25	
b, c' POS → work adjustment	.33***	.05	.38	.22	.43	
a. Status → HCS SS	.36***	.06	.33	.23	.48	*F*=30.01*** (.11)
a. Status → POS	.32***	.06	.31	.19	.44	*F*=25.75*** (.10)

Note: *p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed.

Mediation Effect				95 % Confidence Interval	
	B	*SE (B)*	β	*Lower*	*Upper*
Status → Work adjustment	.04	.05	.04	-.07	.14
Status → HCS SS → Work adjustment	.05	.02	.06	.01	.10
Status → POS → work adjustment	.10	.03	.12	.05	.17

Additionally, the second model was analysed in the three different groups of colonial history. First, in all the three groups, status positively and significantly affected both host country supervisors' willingness to offer social support (b ranging from .33 to .41) and perceived organisational support (b ranging from .22 to .40). The mediation effect, however, was only significant for groups of colonial history 1 and 3. To be precise, for colonial history 1 the mediation goes from status through perceived organizational support to work adjustment (b =.13, *95% CI* = .01, .27), but not through HCS willingness to offer support (b =.02, *95% CI* = -.02, .08). For the group of colonial history 3, the mediation is significant both through HCS willingness to offer social support (b =.10, *95% CI* = .03, .19) and perceived organizational support (b =.09, *95% CI* = .02, .17). More detailed results are presented in the appendix G.

In the last part of the main analyses, the two models testing hypotheses 1 to 3 were integrated by controlling the effect of colonial history in the second model by adding it to the model as a covariate. As can be seen in the figure 5 below, the results from

the incorporated model are almost identical to the results without colonial history being controlled – there are only minor increases in three of the regression coefficients in the model. This result indicates that the relationship between status and adjustment through supporting behaviour is somewhat independent of the effects of colonial history. More detailed results are reported in appendix H.

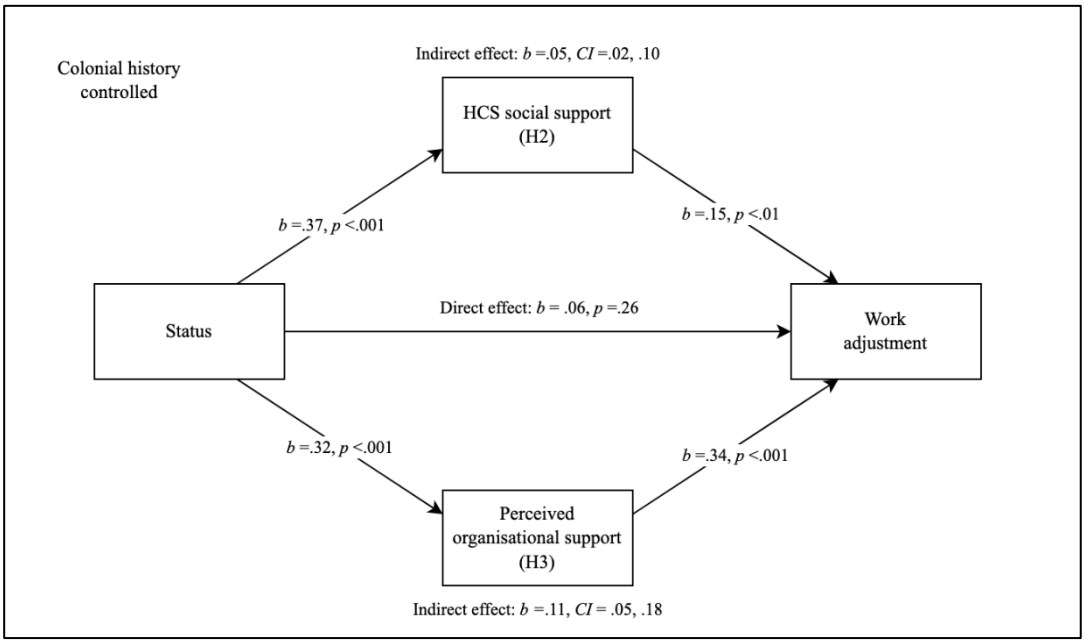

Figure 5. *Second model: Controlling the effect of colonial history in the parallel multiple mediator model of perceived organizational status (status) predicting work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational support (POS) and HCS willingness to offer social support. The 95 % confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effect is a BCa bootstrapped CI based on 5000 samples.*

4.3 Control Analysis

After the main analyses, gender, job position and expatriate's Russian language skills were added to the incorporated model as covariates. Out of the three additional control variables only Russian language skills are significantly related to other variables and the other two control variables were therefore excluded from the

analysis. Russian language skills are statistically significantly related to perceived organisational support (b =.10, p <.05) and work adjustment (b =.13, p <. 001) indicating that more skilled expatriates in Russian language experience more support from the host organisation and also adjust better to the new work environment. Nevertheless, there was no statistically significant relationship between expatriate's Russian language skills and host country supervisors' willingness to offer them social support *(*b = -.02, p =.84).

Overall, as the control variables are added to the incorporated model, there are minor positive increases in the strength of the relationship between host country supervisors' willingness to offer support and work adjustment (b =.19, p <.001 vs. b =.15, p <.01) and between perceived organisational support and work adjustment (b =.36, p <.001 vs. b =.34, p <.001). Furthermore, controlling for the additional variables in the model hardly affects the mediation effect between status and work adjustment through host country supervisors' willingness to offer support (b =.06, CI =.02, .11 vs. b =.05, CI =.02, .10) and through perceived organisational support (b =. 10, CI = .04, .17 vs. b =.10, CI =.04, .16). Including the control variables increases the model's coefficient of determination, indicating that accounting for additional factors improves the model's ability to explain the variation in the dependent variable. Results from the control analyses with Russian language skills of expatriates are reported in the appendix I.

5 Discussion

This study aimed to explore the nature of expatriate adjustment from the perspectives of colonial history, status perceptions and support in the host country organization and aimed to contribute to the research gaps around these themes. Next, the results are critically analysed and interpreted. The discussion emphasizes the novel contributions this study offers to expatriate research, reflects on the results in relation to existing research, explores potential practical implications, and addresses the study's limitations, along with suggestions for future research directions.

5.1 Contribution to Expatriate Adjustment Research

Previous studies have neglected the possible effect of historical and suppressive relationship between an expatriate's home and host countries that might shape how well the expatriate adjusts to the new environment. The finding that a significant difference exists in the adjustment of expatriates with a high degree of colonial history compared to those without, mediated by the effect of status, is particularly important. This difference suggests that there is indeed something about expatriates carrying the burden of a high degree of colonial history that distinguishes them from expatriates with no such history. This could explain the conflicting results regarding the impact of cultural distance or value similarity in expatriate adjustment research (Harrison et al., 2004; Hemmasi & Downes, 2013; Selmer, 2007; Varma et al., 2011b). However, the overall results indicate that the influence of colonial history is not that straightforward.

Precisely, the evidence indicates that expatriates with a high degree of colonial history experience slightly more adjustment (direct effect b =.12, p <.05) compared to expatriates with no such burden, but the indirect effect through status is negative (b =-.04, CI =-.09, -.01). These slightly conflicting results possibly indicate that there is something about the relations between the countries that also supports the

adjustment. For instance, based on previous research it is possible that cultural distance, and in this case, cultural similarity supports the adjustment (e.g., Varma et al., 2011b). Nevertheless, the status of expatriates with a high degree of colonial history appears to be lower compared to those without such burden, which seems to marginally hinder the adjustment. This may indicate that the status of expatriates from previously colonised countries possibly reflects the historically subordinated positioning that these people have had in comparison to their colonizers.

In comparison to previous studies, the results suggest that status may not only be affected by the current situation or the visible features of an expatriate (Bader et al., 2017; Olsen & Martins, 2009; Sunguh et al., 2019; Özçelik et al., 2019) but may also be rooted more deeply in the historical relationship between the two nations. In this regard, however, it is important to note that the model examining the impact of colonial history on adjustment through status perceptions explains only about 7% of the total variation. This suggests that other unaccounted factors not present in this study play a significant role in influencing the outcomes in the adjustment process.

Elaborating on this, even though the main hypotheses were supported, the additional analysis and the integrated model offered a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of colonial history on the adjustment process in relation to status and supporting behaviours. Overall, there were only minor changes in the relationships between status, supporting behaviours and adjustment when the effect of colonial history was controlled in the model. These results alongside the very similar results from the additional analysis examining the relations between status, support, and adjustment across the different groups of colonial history indicate that the role of colonial history in the overall process under examination appeared to be relatively minor.

It seems that even though colonial history has at least some kind of role in the adjustment process, altogether, it does not appear to have a significant impact on how status influences host country support and adjustment. This also suggests that there are likely additional factors related to status and the fact that the total variance explained by the model only increased slightly as the models were integrated aligns

with this view as well. Furthermore, the control analysis revealed that in this context Russian language skills override the direct effect of what colonial history has on adjustment. Thus, it seems that language skills at least partly explain the effect of colonial history in the adjustment process. This effect is reasonable since the common language at least lowers the threshold to create active contacts between expatriates and their host country nationals, and it makes the daily navigation easier (e.g., Takeuchi, 2005; Takeuchi et al., 2002). Overall, the effect of language skills mirrored the results from previous studies (e.g., Mahajan & Toh, 2014; Kraimer et al., 2001; Shaffer et al., 1999).

Moreover, this study shapes the idea of the overall role of status in the expatriate adjustment process. The finding that higher status is linked to higher degrees of adjustment is significant, as it reinforces the idea that how host-country supervisors perceive expatriates plays a crucial role in shaping how comfortable and at ease expatriates feel in their new work environment. This study provides deeper insights into the mechanism through which status influences expatriate adjustment, while also reinforcing previous research that highlights the importance of the support offered by the host organization (e.g., Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Toh & DeNisi, 2007).

Building on this, the findings lend support to the proposition that the way in which host country supervisors evaluate expatriates social standing affects their attitudes and, precisely, how willing the supervisors are to give support and how much actual support expatriates experience in the host organisation. In general, this indicates that expatriates are placed in unequal positions based on their status, as status influences how they are treated. This aligns with the previous literature suggesting that status may restrict the behaviour of expatriate leading to situations in which lower status expatriates do not have the same possibilities as high-status expatriates, for example, to express their needs (Gullekson & Dumaisnil, 2016). This study, however, connects the status differences to the overall adjustment of the expatriate to their new environment as lower degrees of status lead to lesser degrees of adjustment. This may be harmful not only to the individual expatriates themselves by creating feelings of uncertainty, stress and isolation, but this could also be detrimental to the

organization, as research has shown that difficulties with adjustment are associated with issues with performance and higher turnover rates in expatriate context (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Kraimer et al, 2001). Thus, without the support of the host country there is a higher risk of failing the assignment.

The study also revealed some differences in terms of the supporting behaviour as the indirect effect of status through the host country supervisors' willingness to provide social support on expatriates' adjustment experiences is smaller compared to the organisational support perceived by expatriates. This could be explained by the fact that supervisors' reported willingness to offer support to expatriates does not always translate into actual behaviour. It is, for instance, suggested that supervisors, due to the nature of their role, are obligated to support expatriates and due to this they may respond in accordance with these obligations (Toh & DeNisi, 2007; Varma et al., 2016). Moreover, perceived organizational support is assessed in relation to the entire organization, not solely in relation to the supervisor. It is likely that other supportive factors within the organization also contribute, beyond the support provided by the immediate supervisor. Based on the results it seems, however, that the status evaluations made by the supervisors affect overall the support given by the host organization and reflect the attitudes in the host country as suggested.

The indirect effect between status through supporting behaviour to adjustment remained significant in the integrated model and when the control variable was included to the analysis. However, adding language as a control variable did not influence the way in which status affects the model. The results indicate that status perceptions do affect the behaviour of host country supervisors and their willingness to offer social support to the expatriates regardless of language skills. Language skills may make it easier to adjust to the new environment, but simultaneously, expatriates can hold some characteristics affecting the status evaluation that hinders the support offered by host country. Altogether, the findings from the integrated model and control analysis suggest that certain aspects of these connections were not fully captured in this study. There may be factors out of the scope of this research

creating differences within the status evaluation that goes beyond the categories of colonial history and the language skills.

Overall, the results do mirror the theoretical mechanism that potentially exists behind the influence of status in expatriate adjustment process. According to the affiliation desire, host country nationals are more motivated to support expatriates with higher degrees of status as it potentially makes them look better as well (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Toh & DeNisi, 2007). This is indeed what seemed to happen, as there is more supporting behaviour towards expatriates with higher status. It seems that treating expatriates differently based on their evaluated status may be a way for host country nationals to create differences between the social groups. Therefore, incorporating status evaluations into the study of expatriate adjustment offers greater depth compared to relying solely on cultural distance or categorization processes (e.g., Pichler et al., 2012; Varma et al., 2006; Varma et al., 2011b). It tells more about the reasons for the certain attitudes and behaviours that are present in the interaction between expatriates and their host country nationals. Thus, integrating status considerations could enhance research on how expatriates are perceived and interacted with by host country nationals.

In summary, this study complements the previous research on the relationship between expatriates and their host country nationals in several ways. Regarding the results, the role of status point to the direction that focusing solely on categorization or the cultural distance may give too simplified picture of the relationship between expatriate and their host country representatives and of the overall adjustment process. For example, studies indicate that categorization into an outgroup leads to lower levels of support (Sonesh & DeNisi, 2016; Olsen & Martins, 2009). However, this study suggests along with the notion from social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Toh & DeNisi, 2007 that it may not be solely about the categorization itself but also about how the outgroup is perceived in terms of its social standing. Furthermore, previous research on status has primarily focused on so-called low-status expatriates often originating from developing countries (e.g., Sunguh et al., 2019; Özçelik et al., 2019), a less popular perspective in expatriate studies. This

study, however, brought the concept into the mainstream research by emphasizing its significance in the adjustment process. Finally, the set-up of the study answers the criticism expatriate adjustment research has faced by combining data gathered from both expatriates and their host country supervisors (e.g., Kraimer et al., 2016). Examining the experiences of both parties in the relationship gives more clarity of the interaction and the possible biases can be better controlled (e.g., Michailova et al., 2023; Wang & Toh, 2023).

5.2 Practical Implications

The effective management of abroad assignments creates a challenge for international human resource managers. Studying factors affecting expatriate adjustment is important for several reasons as gaining a better understanding of the relationship between expatriates and host country nationals, as well as what motivates host country nationals to engage in social activities, can help expatriates successfully fulfil their assignments (Toh & DeNisi, 2007). On a practical level, this study emphasizes the importance of training host country supervisors and nationals on various key matters and also encourages organisations to create such policies and practices that enable equal social support to all expatriates.

As the attitudes of host country supervisors seem to create differences in the ways in which expatriates are treated by them and across the organization, this study guides organizations to train supervisors and host country nationals to reflect their own attitudes and unconscious biases that potentially affect their behaviour when interacting with expatriates. Precisely, it is essential to train managers to identify their own prejudices and stereotypical thinking and keep in mind that these are not solely related to the visible features of the expatriates, but to some extend can be intertwined, for example, with the historical relations between the two countries.

Furthermore, since the results suggest that expatriates do not receive equal social support based on their perceived status, this study emphasises the importance of clear organizational policies and practices to ensure equitable support for all expatriates.

Expatriates tend to evaluate the amount of support they receive from the host organisation, and this has an impact on the expatriate's feelings of adjustment (Shaffer et al., 1999; Sokro et al., 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to create and maintain low-threshold services, for example buddy programs, for expatriate to receive social support from the host organisation. Additionally, even though the influence of colonial history seemed to be a small one, it can be beneficial to consider the possible issues it may cause already in the expatriate selection process and in onboarding by promoting an organisational culture that fosters inclusion.

The study shows that there are some historical and status-related factors affecting the adjustment process that the expatriates themselves cannot change. In general, expatriate adjustment research often portrays expatriates as passive participants in the dynamic, particularly regarding host country nationals' willingness to provide support (Mahajan & Hassan, 2014). However, it is also important to pay attention to the ways in which expatriates themselves can affect the situation in the host organisation and the interaction with their supervisor or co-workers. As several studies before, this study also pointed out the importance of the language skills in relation to adjustment even though it does not wipe away the influence of status evaluations. Nevertheless, it seems to influence the amount of organizational support experienced, indicating that support can be facilitated through a common language.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study has limitations, as it presents only one perspective on the complex expatriate-HCN relationship and its impact on expatriate adjustment, leaving room for further research.

To begin with, the data and chosen methods do not necessarily bring out the full nature of the phenomenon, especially when it comes to the impacts of colonial history on status perceptions. In previous expatriate research, status has been studied in relation to the state of a country's development indicating that the level of

development affects the way in which the expatriates are seen by the host country nationals. This leaves questions around the way in which the countries were categorised into three different groups in this study. The categorization does not take into consideration the level of development, for instance, the economic situation, political situation, or the current relationship between the countries even though there is variation within the categories of colonial history potentially affecting the status evaluations in the host country.

Furthermore, required by the categorization of colonial history, certain methodological decisions had to be made affecting this study and the conclusions that can be made based on the results. The categorical variable required that the regression analyses had to be conducted by using a dummy coded variable of colonial history. Using categorical variables in regression analysis often leads to at least some level of complexity in interpreting the results in relation to the differences compared to the reference group and combined with somewhat small sample sizes the effect sizes often stay small, and statistical power may be harmed (e.g., Yip & Tsang, 2007). It is therefore possible that some important information about the relationships between the variables has been lost. In the future, testing and comparing similar models using larger sample sizes and more detailed, continuous data will be beneficial. Furthermore, the analyses could have been conducted using structural equation modeling, which would likely have provided a clearer and more efficient approach to testing the hypotheses within a single, integrated framework, simultaneously estimating the measurement and latent models.

Since the studies of colonial history in the context of expatriates are scarce, further research is needed to make reliable generalisations. The current context between Russia and its previously colonised countries is worth studying in relation to expatriate adjustment since not much time has passed. However, there might be some peculiarities that are only linked to this specific context, for example, when it comes to the cultural distance. Therefore, it would be important to study the influence of colonial history and status in different kinds of contexts to better understand what

kind of specificities relate to a certain context and to assess the relevance and applicability of the results more thoroughly.

The research around status in the expatriate context is also rather scarce and scattered across different perspectives without a unified framework or clear consensus on its role in expatriate experiences. This study, however, emphasizes the importance of status perceptions in the expatriate-HCN relationship and in the overall adjustment process. Therefore, it is critical to create a more focused research stream around this topic and explore its influence in more detail in relation to expatriate adjustment. Building on this, it would be crucial to further examine the factors affecting the perceived status of expatriates in the eyes of the host country nationals. Based on the results it seems that colonial history explains a rather small part of the variation and language skills override the effect. However, status evaluations can be made based on several different starting points as status evaluations are comparative in nature (Bader et al., 2017; Olsen & Martins, 2009; Toh & DeNisi, 2007). In the context of international organizations and expatriate adjustment, it is plausible that factors influencing status evaluations are tied to elements such as nationality, ethnicity, or shared historical ties between home and host countries, but it is also more than feasible that the factors are not limited to these (Olsen & Martins, 2009).

Furthermore, the study here offers only a very simplified perspective on the dynamics affecting the status evaluations in the context of multinational organisations. Future research should take the relationship and interaction between expatriates and their host country nationals more comprehensively into consideration by controlling the research frame more, for instance by paying attention to the features and origin of the host country national or supervisor evaluating the expatriate. This potentially affects the way in which expatriates are categorized into in- and outgroups and also affects the status evaluations and is one way to further study the dynamics of status evaluations. It is also beneficial to examine the influence of status in relation to other dimensions of adjustment and forms of support to understand the dynamics and possible differences more comprehensively especially

as the independence of the dimensions have been questioned (e.g., Aycan, 1997; Takeuchi et al., 2005).

Lastly, it would be essential to examine the mechanism that links status evaluations and supporting behaviour more thoroughly. Several studies have highlighted the important role of categorizing expatriates as either ingroup or outgroup members in influencing the behaviour of host country nationals (e.g., Olsen & Martins, 2009; Varma et al., 2011b; Varma et al., 2016). Due to their common ground in social identity approach, it is possible that status and categorization process are linked together, further affecting the behaviour of host country nationals and the adjustment of expatriates. For example, based on social identity theory it is suggested that people have a tendency to evaluate their own ingroup more positively (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Revealing the mechanism affecting the expatriate-HCN relationship offers important insights into the development of expatriate management and the ways in which expatriate adjustment could be supported.

5.4 Conclusions

Global companies continue to face challenges in executing successful international assignments. Over the past decades, research has sought to address these issues by focusing on the interaction between expatriates and their host country nationals, a focus to which this study also aimed to contribute.

Altogether, based on the findings, the relationship between colonial history, status, host country support, and adjustment appear to be complex. Nevertheless, this study is part of a broader continuum emphasizing the importance of social support in expatriate adjustment (e.g., Shaffer et al., 1999). For an individual expatriate, an abroad assignment can be a stressful and transformative experience, far from the comfort and presence of their own social network, in which the encouragement, validation and assistance with daily life can significantly impact how they settle into the new context and how included they feel in the new community. However, despite the recognized importance of host country support, expatriates do not always receive

it equally and this has concerned researchers. This study points out that to understand this phenomenon it is important to consider how host country nationals perceive the social standing of expatriates. Furthermore, there are also some indications that the burden of colonial history negatively affects the way in which expatriates are perceived in the host organisation, but this calls for further examination.

In conclusion, it is essential to thoroughly examine the interactions between expatriates and host country nationals, considering the various factors that influence this relationship. The consequences of the attitudes and behaviour of host country supervisors and the whole organisation should be discussed widely, and the effects of neglecting support should be made visible in the organisation in order to support the expatriates during their abroad assignment. This approach can inform the development of management practices that genuinely support effective interaction and adjustment within this complex context.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Figure A1. *Histograms of work adjustment, perceived organizational status, perceived organizational support (POS) and HCS willingness to offer social support.*

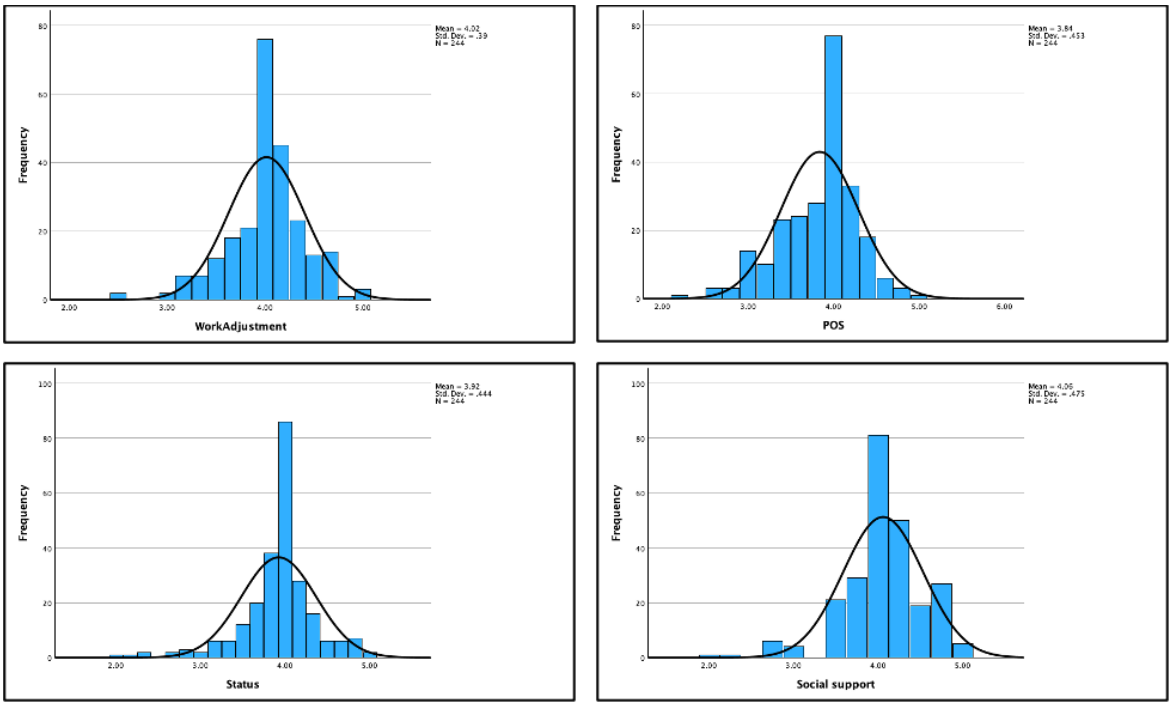
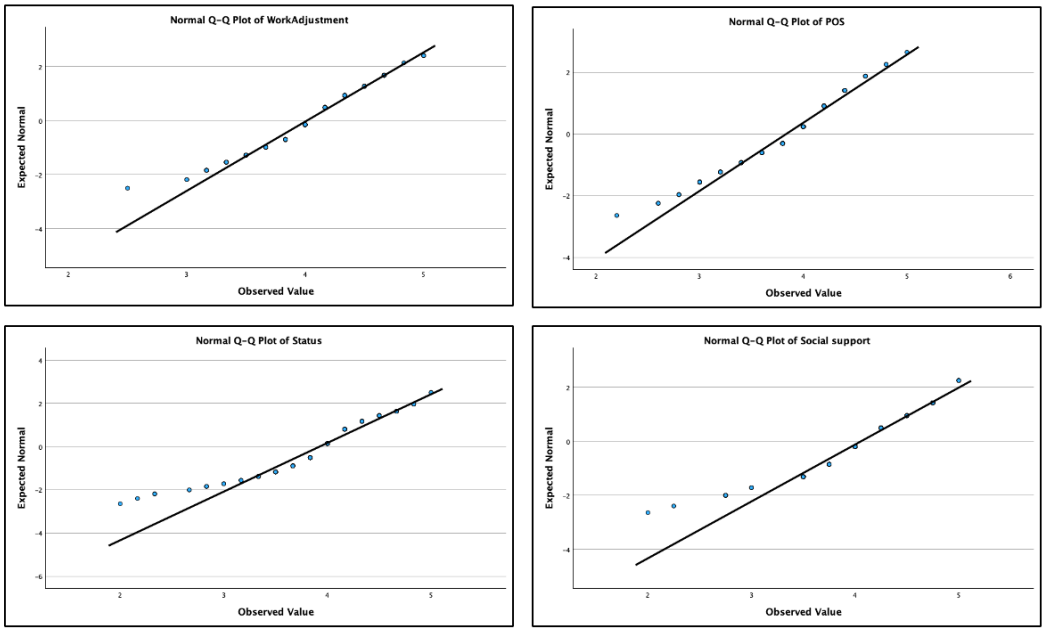


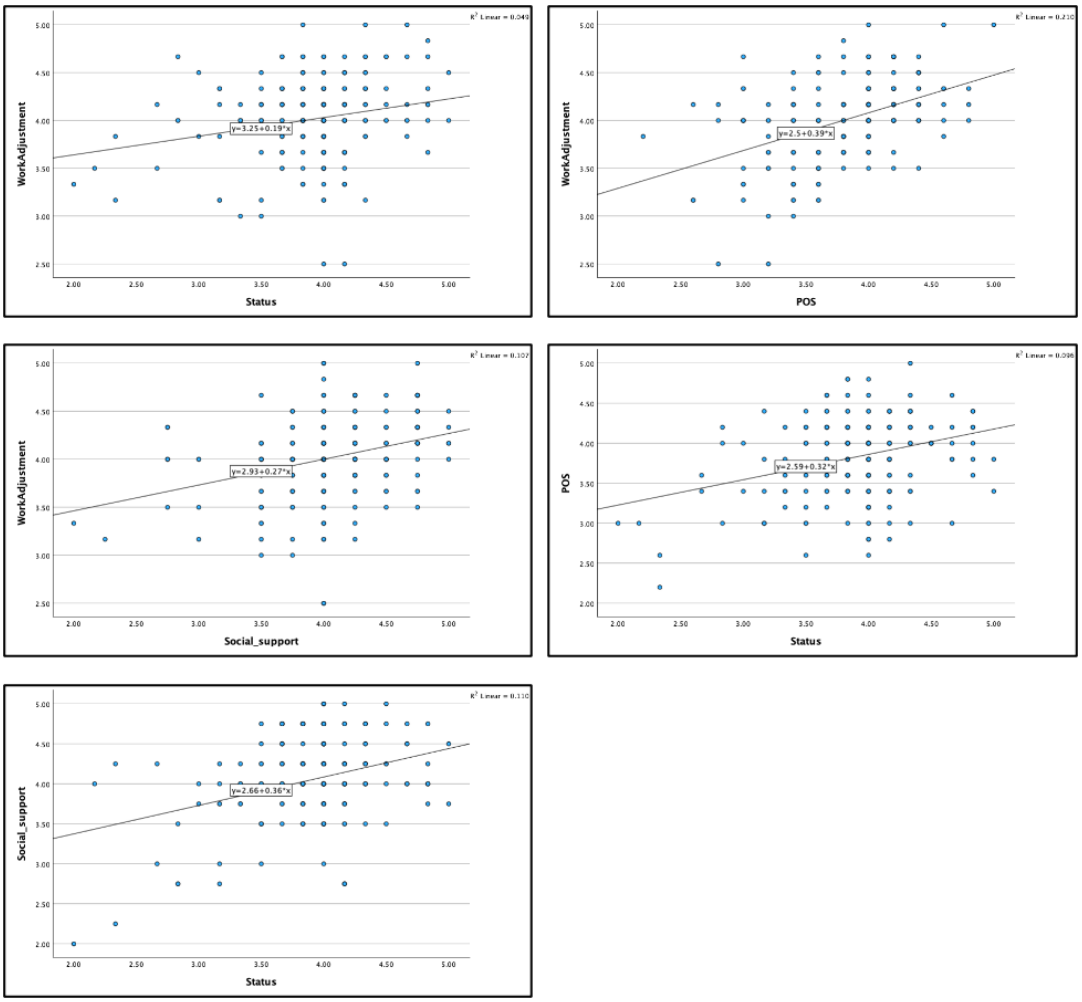
Figure A2. *Normal q-q plots of work adjustment, perceived organizational status, perceived organizational support (POS) and HCS willingness to offer social support.*



Overall, based on histograms and normal q-q plots the variables are assessed to be distributed normally enough to continue with regression-based methods.

Appendix B.

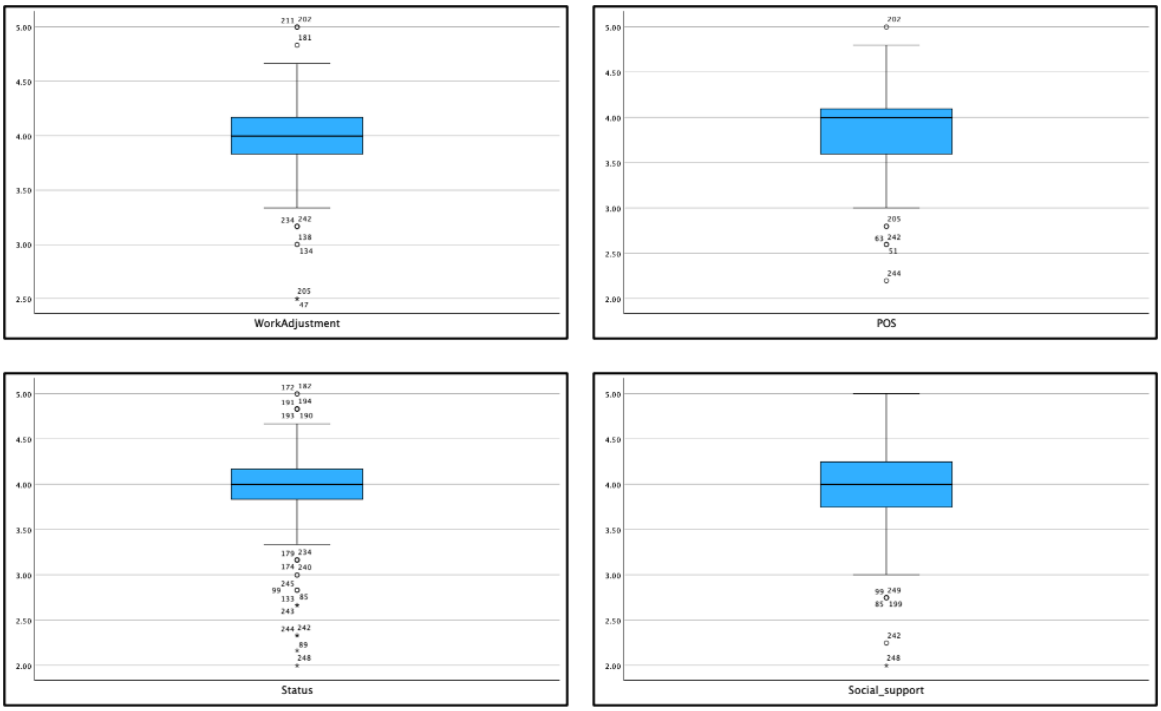
Figure B1. *The scatter plots showing the relationship between work adjustment, perceived organizational status, perceived organizational support and HCS willingness to offer social support.*



The relations between variables are seen to hold the assumption of linearity and regression-based methods are seen suitable for the data.

Appendix C.

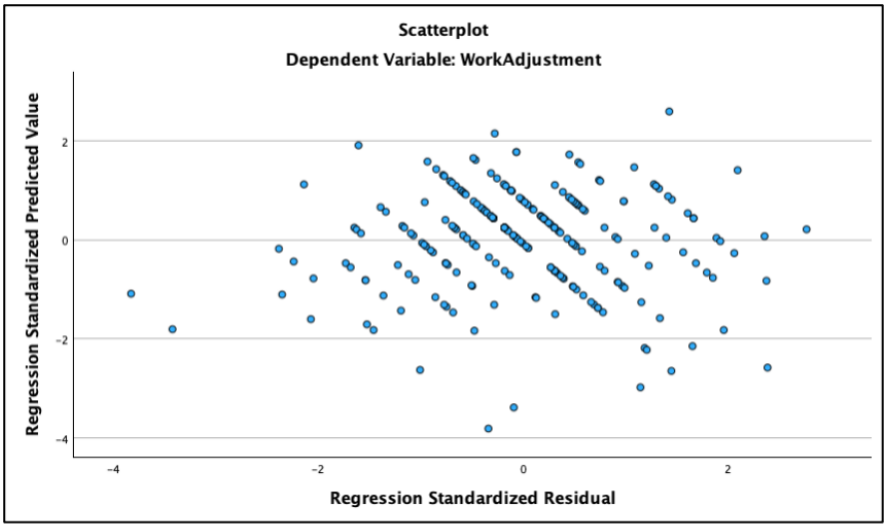
Figure C1. *Box plots of work adjustment, perceived organizational status, perceived organizational support and HCS willingness to offer social support.*

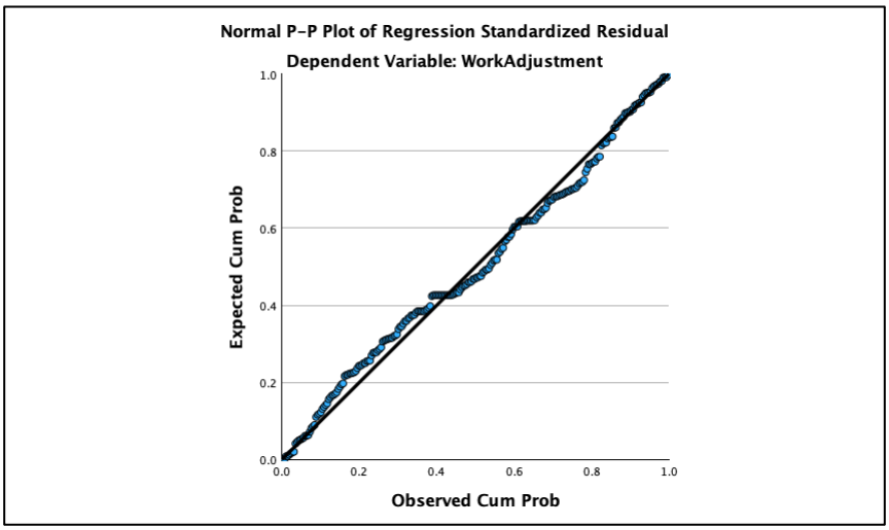


There seem to be some outliers visible in the data. Nevertheless, these are checked and assessed not to be errors and kept in the analysis.

Appendix D.

Figure D1. *Scatterplot and normal probability plot of the regression standardized residuals work adjustment as a dependent variable and perceived organizational status, perceived organizational support and HCS willingness to offer social support as independent variables.*





Residuals are assessed also to hold the assumption of normal distribution and linearity.

Appendix E.

Table E1. *Spearman's correlations between work adjustment, perceived organizational support, perceived organizational status and HCS social support (n=244)*

	1.	2.	3.
1. Work Adjustment			
2. Perceived organizational support	.452***		
3. Perceived organizational status	.137*	.178**	
4. HCS social support	.325***	.348***	.167**

Note: *** p <.001, **p <.01, *p <. 05

The correlations between the main variables were also checked by using Spearman's correlation due to some issues with the normal distribution. The results are similar to Pearson's correlation.

Appendix F.

Table F1. *Means, Standard Deviations and One-Way Analyses of Variances in work adjustment, perceived organizational support, perceived organizational status and HCS social support*

Measures	Colonial History 1		Colonial History 2		Colonial History 3		F (1, 241)	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Work Adjustment	3.97	.43	4.04	.36	4.05	.35	1.03	.01
Perceived Organizational Support	3.90	.40	3.74	.48	3.81	.49	1.95	.02
Perceived Organizational Status	4.01	.42	3.99	.38	3.81	.47	6.06**	.05
HCS Social Support	4.10	.48	4.00	.48	4.04	.47	.72	.01

**p <.01

The mean values of the variables are also examined in different groups of colonial history. Based on the analysis the differences were significant only in relation to perceived organisational status.

Appendix 7.

Figure G1. *Second model per category of colonial history: The parallel multiple mediator model of perceived organizational status (status) predicting work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational support (POS) and HCS willingness to offer social support. The 95 % confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effect is a BCa bootstrapped CI based on 5000 samples.*

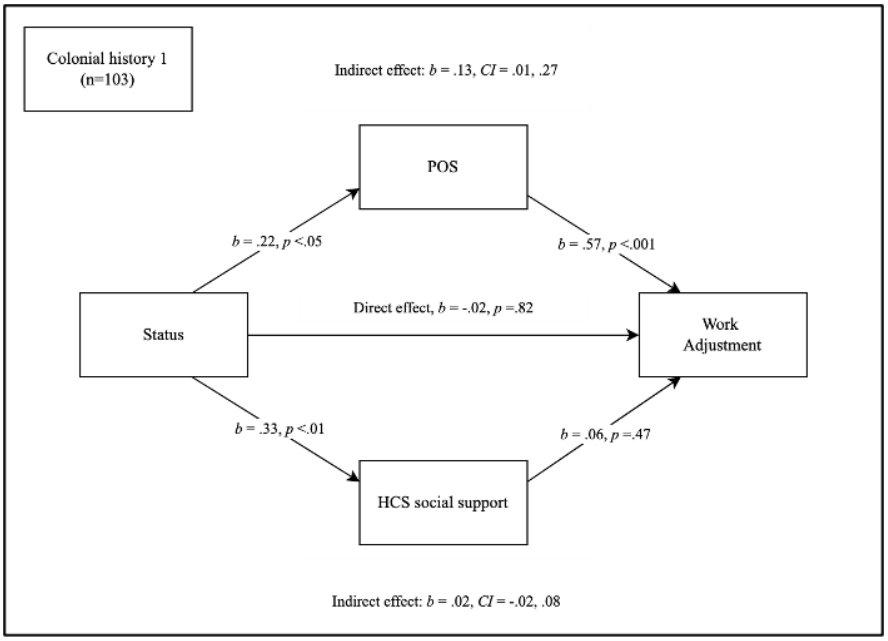


Figure G2. *Second model in category of colonial history 2: The parallel multiple mediator model of perceived organizational status (status) predicting work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational support (POS) and HCS willingness to offer social support. The 95 % confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effect is a BCa bootstrapped CI based on 5000 samples.*

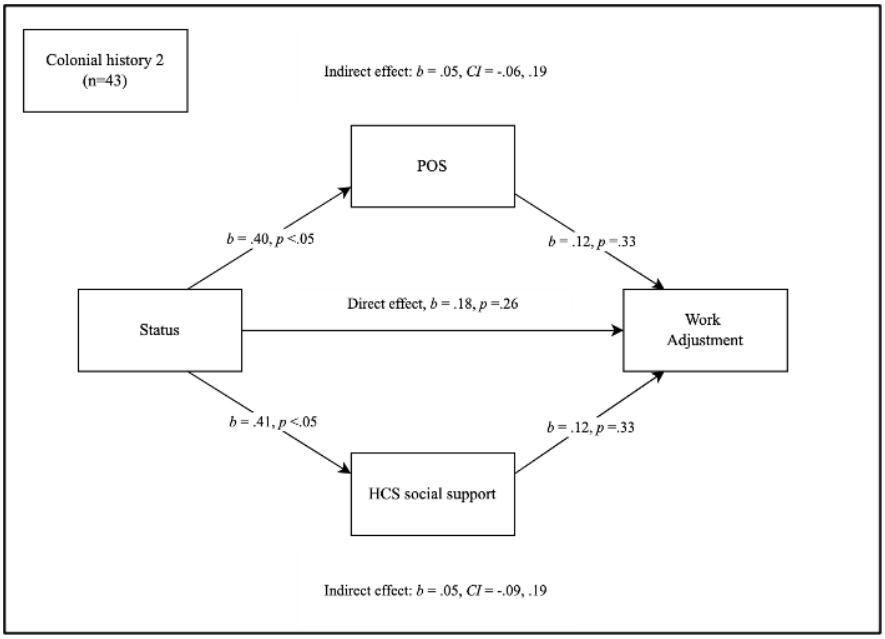
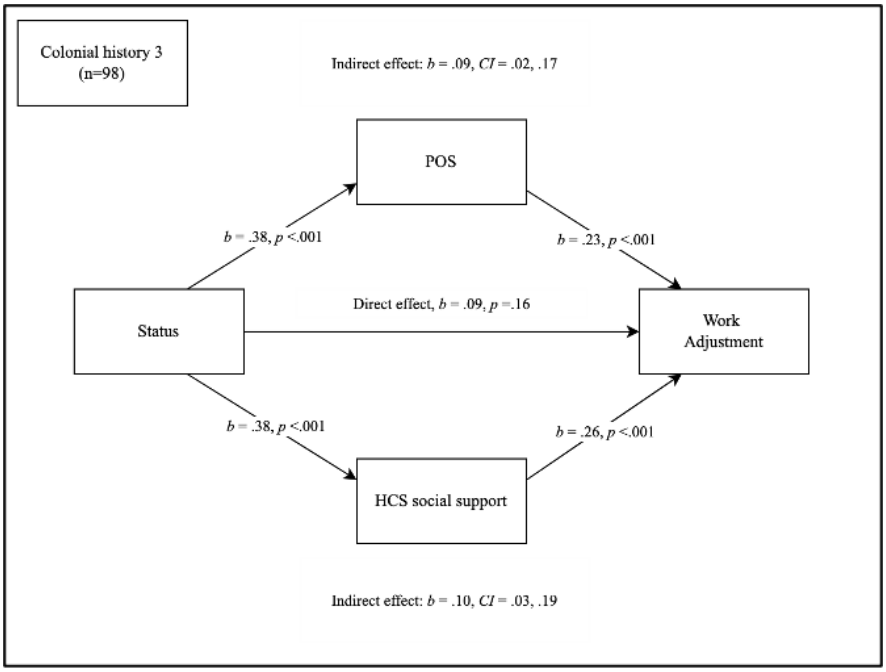


Figure G3. *Second model in category of colonial history 1: The parallel multiple mediator model of perceived organizational status (status) predicting work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational support (POS) and HCS willingness to offer social support. The 95 % confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effect is a BCa bootstrapped CI based on 5000 samples.*



The second model was analyzed in the different groups of colonial history.

Table H1.

Integrated model: the parallel multiple mediator model of perceived organizational status (status) predicting work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational support (POS) and HCS willingness to offer social support (HCS SS) controlled by colonial history.

Path Coefficients				95 % Confidence Interval		Model Summary (ΔR^2)
	B	*SE (B)*	β	*Lower*	*Upper*	
c. Status → Work Adjustment	.22***	.06	.25	.11	.33	*F*=5.82*** (.08)
c. Colonial history 2 → Work adjustment	.07	.07	.07	-.07	.20	
c. Colonial history 3 → Work adjustment	.12*	.05	.15	.01	.23	
c'. Status → Work adjustment	.06	.05	.07	-.05	.16	*F*=17.65*** (.27)
b, c' HCC SS → Work adjustment	.15	.05	.18	.05	.25	
b, c' POS → Work adjustment	.34***	.05	.39	.24	.44	
b, c' Colonial history 2 → Work adjustment	.13*	.06	.13	.01	.25	
b, c' Colonial history 3 → Work adjustment	.12*	.05	.15	.03	.22	
a. Status → HCS SS	.37***	.27	.34	.24	.50	*F*=10.62*** (.12)
a. Colonial history 2 → HCS SS	-.09	.08	-.07	-.11	.15	
a. Colonial history 3 → HCS SS	.02	.06	.02	-.11	.15	
a. Status → POS	.32***	.06	.31	.20	.45	*F*=9.91*** (.11)
a. Colonial history 2 → POS	-.15	.08	-.12	-.30	.01	
a. Colonial history 3 → POS	-.02	.06	-.02	-.14	.10	

Note: *p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed.

Mediation Effect				95 % Confidence Interval	
	B	*SE (B)*	β	*Lower*	*Upper*
Status → Work adjustment	.06	.05	.07	-.05	.16
Status → HCS SS → Work adjustment	.05	.02	.06	.02	.10
Status → POS → Work adjustment	.11	.03	.12	.05	.18

Table I1.

Integrated model: *the parallel multiple mediator model of perceived organizational status (status) predicting work adjustment, mediated by perceived organizational support (POS) and HCS willingness to offer social support (HCS SS) controlled by colonial history and Russian language skills.*

Path Coefficients				95 % Confidence Interval		Model Summary (ΔR^2)
	B	*SE (B)*	β	*Lower*	*Upper*	
c. Status → Work adjustment	.21***	.05	.24	.11	.32	*F*=9.04***(.13)
c. Colonial history 2 → Work adjustment	.02	.07	.02	-.12	.15	
c. Colonial history 3 → Work adjustment	-.06	.07	-.08	-.19	.07	
c. Russian language skill → Work adjustment	.15***	.04	.33	.08	.23	
c'. Status → Work adjustment	.06	.05	.07	-.04	.16	*F*=17.97*** (.31)
b, c' SS → work adjustment	.16**	.05	.19	.06	.25	
b, c' POS → Work adjustment	.31***	.05	.36	.20	.41	
b, c' Colonial history 2 → Work adjustment	.09	.06	.08	-.03	.21	
b, c' Colonial history 3 → Work adjustment	-.02	.03	-.02	.05	.19	
b, c' Russian language skill → Work adjustment	.12***	.03	.26	.05	.19	
a. Status → HCS SS	.36***	.07	.34	.23	.50	*F*=7.94*** (.12)
a. Colonial history 2 → HCS SS	-.09	.08	-.07	-.25	.07	
a. Colonial history 3 → HCS SS	.02	.08	.03	-.14	-19	
a. Russian language skill → HCS SS	-.01	.04	-.01	-.09	.08	
a. Status → POS	.32***	.06	.31	.19	.44	*F*=9.23*** (.13)
a. Colonial history 2 → POS	-.18*	.08	-.15	-.34	-.03	
a. Colonial history 3 → POS	-.14	.08	-.16	-.30	.01	
a. Russian language skill → POS	.11*	.04	.04	.02	.19	

Note: *p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed.

Mediation Effect				95 % Confidence Interval	
	B	*SE (B)*	β	*Lower*	*Upper*
Status → Work adjustment	.06	.05	.07	-.04	.16
Status → HCS SS → Work adjustment	.05	.02	.06	.02	.10
Status → POS → Work adjustment	.10	.03	.11	.04	.16