Summary
The literature on job insecurity has provided knowledge about potential intervening variables in the relationship between job insecurity and various outcomes, such as gender, age, position, type of job, tenure, job dependence or alternatives on the labor market. Besides work characteristics and personality traits have been considered. This study explores the role of cultural differences between two cultures differing on the masculinity-femininity dimension, namely Germany and Sweden or Finland, as moderators in the job insecurity-job attitudes relationship. We hypothesized that in Germany as a country characterized by high masculinity (to have employed) work is more important for one’s identity than in Scandinavian countries reflecting a more feminine culture. Accordingly, we assumed that job insecurity has a stronger negative impact in Germany than in Sweden/Finland. In a multi-sample we asked employees from German and Scandinavian (Finland, Sweden) municipalities about their job insecurity perceptions as well as several job-related and health outcomes. Our findings were consistently in line with our expectations pointing at the relevance to take cultural differences in job insecurity research into account.

Job insecurity
Researchers define subjective job insecurity as the ‘overall concern about the future existence of the job’ (Rosenthal & Ruivo, 1996, p. 587). As suggested by the Effort-Reward-Imbalance-Model (Siegrist, 1996), social reciprocity lies at the core of the employment contract where obligations are performed in exchange for equitable rewards. If employees perceive an imbalance caused by high effort and low reward as reflected in higher job insecurity (non-reciprocity) they experience distress. In line with ideas from transactional stress theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), it is known that the anticipation of a stressful event—in this case, job loss—can have as detrimental outcomes as the experience of the stressor itself. Various scholars have emphasized that distress associated with anticipation of redundancy is comparable to or potentially even more distressing than the experience of unemployment itself (e.g., De Witte, 1999; Dekker & Schaars, 1995; Kovets et al., 2000). Hence, the perception of job insecurity is regarded to be a serious stressor leading to several negative outcomes in respect of both an individual’s health and their job (for theoretical & meta-analytic reviews, see Cheng & Chan, 2008; De Witte, 1999; Sverke et al., 2002).

Hypothesis 1: Job insecurity is maladaptively associated with job-related attitudes (job satisfaction, commitment, turnover intentions) and health outcomes (workability, life satisfaction, depression).

Cultural differences
Masculinity represents a preference for achievement (…) and material reward for success. Society at large is more competitive. Femininity, stands for cooperation (and caring for the weak) (Holsted, 2001)

Except for a study exploring the role of uncertainty avoidance for dealing with job insecurity (Debus et al., 2012), so far not much is known about cultural differences. It can be argued that in a masculine culture people rather ‘live in order to work’ and draw a lot of self-esteem from their tasks and their job. Hence, job insecurity should have more severe consequences.

Hypothesis 2: The hypothesized relationship of job insecurity with job-related attitudes and health outcomes is stronger for Germany than for Scandinavian countries (Finland, Sweden).

Study 1
- Online questionnaire – convenient sample
- Demographics
  - n=141 employees from Germany, n=66 from Sweden, and n=122 from Finland
  - 79.8% female, age was 41.14 years (SD=11.10)
  - Organizational tenure: Ø 8.90 years (SD=3.37)

Study 2
- Demographics
  - n=994 (52.7%) employees from German, n=400 (21.2%) from Swedish, and n=493 (26.1%) from Finnish municipalities
  - 81.4% female, age was 43.41 years (SD=10.90)
  - Organizational tenure: Ø 14.62 years (SD=10.10)
- Job classification
  - n=45 (4.6%) unskilled blue collar workers,
  - n=346 (36.9%) skilled blue collar workers,
  - n=164 (17.5%) lower level white collar workers,
  - n=254 (27.1%) intermediate white collar workers,
  - n=122 (13.0%) higher level white collar workers (middle management, executive staff),
  - n=7 (0.7%) were senior managers or directors

Discussion
H1: Job insecurity has detrimental consequences for employees’ mental health and job attitudes
In this study the well-established relationship of job insecurity with mental health and job attitudes (e.g., Cheng & Chan, 2008; De Witte, 1999; Sverke et al., 2002) could be replicated. The more job insecurity the employees reported, the lower were their job satisfaction, their affective commitment towards the organization, the higher was their intention to quit, the lower they perceived their workability as well as their life satisfaction, and the more frequently they felt depressed.

H2: Cultural differences play a role in the job insecurity-job attitudes relationship
Over and above the linear relationship of job insecurity and outcomes, the pattern of results consistently supports the idea that cultural differences should be taken into account when investigating the impact of job insecurity on various health and job outcomes. Whereas job insecurity might have less severe effects for Scandinavian (or more specific, Finnish and Swedish) employees, it seems to have much more consequences for German employees who – because of their masculine culture – evaluate work or their job as relevant for their self-esteem, and hence are more threatened if they face the risk of losing it.

Future outlook
This study only focused on job attitudes and health of employees but neglected central organizational outcomes as performance (be in either in-role behavior or OBQ), for example. Moreover, further studies should also explore if other cultural differences as uncertainty avoidance (see, Debus et al., 2012) or masculinity-femininity are able to explain country and cultural differences.

In relation to increasing cultural diversity in teams, it would be interesting to study job insecurity on team level using multinational teams.

Operationalization and results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Job measure</th>
<th>Sample item</th>
<th>H1: Study 1</th>
<th>H1: Study 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>Vroomen et al., 1997: How satisfied are you with your job as a whole?</td>
<td>-.38***</td>
<td>-.32***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>Cook &amp; Wel, 1980: I feel myself to be part of the organization.</td>
<td>-.20***</td>
<td>-.16***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Turnover intentions</td>
<td>Mauro et al., 2005: I often think about leaving my current employer.</td>
<td>-.45***</td>
<td>-.24***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Workability</td>
<td>Tuutti et al., 1998: What is your workability in relation to the demands of your job?</td>
<td>-.36***</td>
<td>-.23***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>Gove &amp; Conway, 1996: How satisfied do you currently feel about your life in general?</td>
<td>-.28***</td>
<td>-.21***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < 0.1, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01. Job insecurity was measured with the full extent scale by De Witte (2000). Two-tailed t-tests. Data from two job insecurity studies.

As predicted (H2), across both studies the interaction effect of job insecurity x culture (masculine vs. feminine) was mostly significant.