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Brenton M. Wiernik, Heiko Rüger, Deniz S. Ones (Eds.)

Band 50

Managing Expatriates

Success Factors in Private and Public Domains



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Series Editors' Preface

In the last decades, the mobility demands placed on the workforce have become greater and more important. This is true in particular for expatriate employees. The high relevance of analyzing international work-related mobility behaviors becomes evident in its interplay with various spheres of life such as family, social mobility, and quality of life. The present peer reviewed volume of the Series of Population Studies edited by Brenton M. Wiernik, Heiko Rüger, and Deniz S. Ones compiles international state-of-the-art research on factors determining the success of international expatriate employment.

At the end of 2011, the Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), together with the Federal Foreign Office carried out the Mobility Skills in the German Foreign Service (GFS) study, which examines factors that promote success among diplomats in the GFS. On this occasion, the BiB hosted a scientific meeting in January 2012 with the participation of Jürgen Deller, Deniz S. Ones, and Stephan Dilchert, who belong to the team of the International Generalizability of Expatriate Success Factors (iGOES) Project, which examines German-speaking employees of multinational corporations working in 28 countries. At the meeting, it became clear that both studies pursue a common innovative approach by analyzing diverse expatriate outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction, well-being, personal relationships, and family life, in addition to expatriate adjustment. This gave rise to the idea of a jointly edited volume providing comparative analyses on public and private sector expatriates. We are now pleased to present the results of these considerations.

The seventeen contributions in this book examine expatriate employment from various angles. The compilation is divided into four coherent thematic sections bringing together contributions that study psychological individual differences, age and experience, support and preparation, and gender and family. The findings presented in this book are based on empirical analyses that draw on four large and innovative research projects that assess international employees from a wide range of populations, cultural backgrounds, and host country contexts. Thereby, the volume not only considers the cultural specificity of expatriate experiences but also studies the generalizability of relations across countries.

The publication of such a volume demands a lot from everyone involved. First of all, thanks is owed to the editors of this volume for accepting the at times demanding challenge to compile such a coherent and high quality volume. Without the dedication of the authors and the people involved in collecting the data on which the articles are based, this book wouldn't have been possible. Furthermore, four blind reviewers supported this volume with their expertise which contributed to ensuring high quality of all articles. Typesetting and formatting of this manuscript was carried out professionally by Sybille Steinmetz.

For scientists and students with an interest in international mobility, the current volume offers important insights into the determinants of expatriate success. The book is also relevant for organizations in the public and private sectors that regularly work with expatriates and are concerned with aligning their operations with evidence-based best practices. We wish all readers an informative and stimulating read.

Wiesbaden, Germany, October 2017

Norbert F. Schneider
(Director of the Federal Institute for Population Research)

Jasmin Passet-Wittig
(Managing Editor)

Editors' Preface

Expatriates have played a long and important role in global economics and culture, dating at least as far back as Marco Polo and other traders who travelled the Silk Road between Asia, Europe, and eastern Africa from before the common era until the 15th century (illustrated on the cover of this book). Today, as the world economy continues to globalize, expatriate employees sent on long-term international assignments are becoming an increasingly important part of organizations' global strategies. International assignments present a myriad of unique challenges for employees, including adapting to a new culture, changing job responsibilities, blurring of work–non-work boundaries, and logistical challenges of moving one's life and family to a new location. Over the past 80 years, a voluminous research literature in applied psychology, management, organizational behavior, and allied fields has developed, exploring the processes through which expatriates respond to these challenges and the factors that promote (or hinder) expatriate success. We are proud to present this book of multiple empirical studies employing diverse conceptual models and analytic techniques. In this book, researchers examine the impact of gender, family, age, experience, preparation, support, and psychological individual differences on expatriate adjustment, satisfaction, performance, and well-being. Using large multinational samples, psychometrically rigorous measures, and straightforward analytic approaches, the studies in this volume make important strides toward understanding the expatriate experience with implications for international human resource management and enhancing the well-being of expatriates around the globe.

Wiesbaden, Germany, October 2017

Brenton M. Wiernik, Heiko R ger, and Deniz S. Ones

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There are many groups of individuals without whom this book would not have been possible.

First and foremost thanks goes to Norbert Schneider, the director of the Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung (BIB; German Federal Institute for Population Research), who hosted an invitational workshop dedicated to expatriate management research. Jürgen Deller was instrumental in shaping the selection of participants and the content of the research presented. The idea of a book centering on the presented research arose from the discussions during that workshop. Dr. Schneider's encouragement and support brought the idea to fruition. Dr. Deller's insights helped us avoid minefields associated with this cross-national undertaking. We are grateful to both.

One of the important features of this book is that it draws on four large multi-study research efforts. Many supportive individuals were involved in each.

The iGOES team's efforts were led by Jürgen Deller, with support for funding student researcher travels provided by Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), Haniel-Stiftung, and Universitätsgesellschaft Lüneburg e.V. The equal opportunity office of Leuphana Universität Lüneburg also funded instrumental material for the iGOES research. The iGOES team also wishes to acknowledge the following students who contributed to their data collection: Claudia Bassarak, Gina Becher, Anna Beil, Veronika Bruchner, Miriam Callegari, Svenja Drossert, Elisa Foit, Niklas Frank, Lisa Fromm, Karen Geitner, Clara Hellweg, Karin Hofmann, Sophia Kammer, Stefanie Klauser, Julia Knobloch, Julia Lauenroth, Sylvia Lehmann, Stefanie Maaß, Maren-Katharina Mittrenga, Stefanie Nitsche, Esther Ostmeier, Nina Pache, Ulrike Pastoor, Katrin Petr, Miriam Pourseifi, Arne Prokandt, Martin Puppatz, Dorothee Rauber, Martin Scheunemann, Theresa Schnieders, Lasse Schulze, Katharina Schuster, Anna-Christina Schwenk, Sehri Silav, Martin Stöckl, Elke Strade, Katharina Strüber, Lars Thurow, Milan Uhe, Richard Vahlhaus, Ines Vetter, Carmen Wesch, Sunnhild Wichern, Sabine Winters, Sandra Wittlinger, and Kathrin Wolf.

Heiko Rüger, Stine Waibel, Herbert Fliege, and Maria Bellinger wish to acknowledge Norbert Schneider, Silvia Ruppenthal, Julika Hillmann, Malte Kaukal, Peter Hilker, Katharina Micheel, Thomas Skora, and Moritz Niehaus who significantly contributed to the realization of the Mobility Skills in the German Foreign Service (GFS) study.

Jack Kostal, Brenton Wiernik, and Deniz Ones wish to thank their colleagues at Korn Ferry, especially Joy Hazucha, for making data available for the global comparisons of expatriate and domestic employees described in this volume.

Hannah Foldes, Deniz Ones, Handan Sinangil, and Brenton Wiernik wish to thank the many students without whose efforts during data collection the studies of expatriate success in Turkey described in this volume could not have been possible.

We also note that all the chapters in this volume have undergone external peer review. As customary, the editors of the volumes critically reviewed the chapters they did not co-author. We also relied on contributing authors reviewing chapters they were not involved in. Each chapter was also reviewed by external reviewers. Our heartfelt thanks go to Casey Giordano, Brenda Ellis, Jeff Dahlke, and Oren Shewach for providing additional blind peer reviews of the chapters in this book. Their contributions have greatly enhanced the quality of the final work.

We hope that the productivity, well-being, and indeed lives of expatriates and the millions who depend on or benefit from their work will be enhanced by the research presented in this book.

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Advancing Expatriate Research in Public and Private Sectors

Brenton M. Wiernik, Heiko Rüger, and Deniz S. Ones

Abstract

This volume draws on four large and diverse investigations of expatriate employees to rigorously examine factors that contribute to expatriate success across cultural contexts, economic sectors, and expatriate populations. In this introduction, we present the studies contributing to these investigations, describe the research questions addressed in each thematic section of the book, and situate the studies in the broader expatriate research literature. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of rigorous research for global human resource management practice.

1 Introduction

Globalization is a complex and ongoing challenge for contemporary organizations. Foreign markets continually grow in importance as sources of business revenues. Organizations increasingly rely on employees sent on international assignments to forge international connections, set up and manage foreign establishments, fix problems, and otherwise manage their global business operations (BGRS 2016). As companies come to rely on expatriates for running their foreign investments, they are confronted with the unique challenges of managing an international workforce. Companies capable of meeting these challenges have a distinct competitive advantage and outperform those that cannot (Guthridge/Komm 2008). At the same time, global human resource management is also growing increasingly important and challenging in other sectors, including non-profit, governmental, diplomatic, and military organizations (Anderson 2001). Employees sent abroad by these organizations face similar challenges as corporate expatriates, but they also must manage organizational and situational factors that are unique to non-profit and public sector international assignments. Accordingly, this book explores critical factors that contribute to expatriate success and failure across diverse contexts.

The chapters in this volume draw on four rigorous investigations assessing international employees from a wide range of populations, cultural backgrounds, and host country contexts. In this introduction, we first describe the four large data gathering efforts contributing to this book, highlighting their unique strengths that allow them to complement and extend existing knowledge in the expatriate literature. Next, we introduce the thematic sections of the book, summarize each chapter, and connect their findings to previous expatriate meta-analyses and other research. Finally, we consider the broad conclusions we can draw from the studies in this volume and offer key questions for continuing expatriate research and practice.

2 Investigations Contributing to this Book

2.1 *International Generalizability of Expatriate Success Factors (iGOES) Project*

The iGOES project was designed as an in-depth, rigorous cross-cultural examination of the factors that promote and detract from expatriate success. It was initiated to resolve a puzzling discrepancy between expatriate management research and practice. In *practice*, organizations often rotate managers from one remote subsidiary to another, assuming that “the same attributes and behaviors that [make] a manager successful in one country will allow [them] to be effective in another” (House et al. 2001: 490). In contrast, expatriate *research* (and cross-cultural psychology in general) assumes that “cultural paradigms guide construction of meaning across many domains of social life” (Lehman et al. 2004: 695). That is, cultural differences in values, perceptions, and behaviors lead different factors to drive success and failure in each country. Relations between variables are not expected to generalize from one cultural context to the next (cf. Atwater et al. 2009; Torelli/Shavitt 2010). Thus, the iGOES project sought to resolve this research–practice gap by empirically examining whether relations of critical individual and environmental factors to expatriate success outcomes are, in fact, consistent across cultures. To this end, iGOES gathered data using the same measures from expatriates living in 28 countries across the world, covering all of the GLOBE cultural clusters (House et al. 2004). iGOES sampled only German-speaking expatriates (i.e., German, Austrian, and Swiss). This design allowed iGOES to systematically examine the generalizability of predictor–criterion relations while controlling for the confounding influence of expatriates’ home cultures (Ones et al. 2012a).¹

A key strength of the iGOES project is that it examined a wide array of criterion constructs. Most expatriate research focuses exclusively on international adjustment – the degree of comfort and absence of stress expatriates feel in their host countries (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005). For decades, researchers have called for a more inclusive consideration of the expatriate criterion space (e.g., Deller 1997; Hippler et al. 2014; Mol et al. 2005b; Ones/Viswesvaran 1997; Thomas/Lazarova 2006). iGOES aimed to address these calls by measuring not only adjustment, but also job performance and job and life satisfaction. Previous research has demonstrated that while adjustment is related to performance and satisfaction, these relations are moderate at most (e.g., correlations corrected for unreliability [ρ] range .11 to .21 for non-self-rated job performance, .22 to .44 for job satisfaction; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005; Hechanova et al. 2003). Thus, by examining predictor relations with additional criteria, iGOES provides a clearer picture of the factors promoting the full scope of “expatriate success”.

Moreover, iGOES used construct valid and psychometrically rigorous methods to assess each expatriate criterion. iGOES researchers assessed multiple specific dimensions of international adjustment (Black et al. 1991) and job performance (Campbell/Wiernik 2015; Viswesvaran/Ones 2000), and measured performance using ratings from host country nationals, reducing common method bias and incorporating the most culturally-relevant perceptions and evaluations of performance behaviors (Sinangil/Ones 1997; Takeuchi 2010). Finally, whenever possible, iGOES applied cutting-edge meta-analytic methods to analyze predictor–criterion relations and accurately estimate whether observed differences in relations across countries are from statistical artefacts or true cross-cultural variability (Ones et al. 2012a). Altogether, these strengths permit iGOES to draw strong conclusions about the

¹ Additional information about the iGOES project research design and procedures are available in Albrecht et al. (2018b, Appendix A, this volume), as well as Ones et al. (2012a) and Albrecht et al. (2014).

contributions of various factors to expatriate success with key implications for organizations seeking to select, train, develop, manage, and support international employees.

2.2 *Mobility Skills in the German Foreign Service (GFS) Study*

Most expatriate research focuses on managerial employees of multinational corporations. This literature has yielded key insights into how employees adapt during international mobility and how sending organizations can best manage employees to maximize success. However, international assignments are not only practiced by profit-oriented enterprises. Non-profit organizations, such as charities and NGOs, and public sector governmental units, such as military, diplomatic service, and foreign development and aid departments, also send employees on international assignments that vary widely in terms of their duration, adaptation challenges, work responsibilities, interaction with local culture, and other characteristics (Brandt/Buck 2005; Chang 2005; Claus et al. 2015; Fisher/Hutchings 2013; Selmer/Fenner 2009a). The frequency and intensity of these non-profit and public sector international rotations are increasing at similar rates as private sector expatriation (Brandt/Buck 2005; Fenner/Selmer 2008; Selmer/Fenner 2009b). Non-profit and public sector international assignments are similar in many ways to private sector secondments, but employees sent on these assignments also have unique challenges not faced by corporate expatriates. Thus, while many findings from private sector expatriates may generalize to the public sector, there is a need also for research specifically on these unique populations of international employees. The aim of this project was thus to study factors that promote success among diplomats in the German Foreign Service (GFS).

Diplomacy has been a central motivation for international travel for thousands of years; indeed, in many ways, diplomats and ambassadors were the first “expatriates” (Albrecht et al. 2018a; Arnold 1998). Employees of the GFS work worldwide in a rotation system. Employees are deployed to a new country every three to five years. Employees cycle between domestic posts in Germany and international posts spanning all degrees of comfort, difficulty, desirability, and safety (Brandt/Buck 2005). Virtually all GFS employees in all roles and hierarchical levels are part of the rotation, and each employee faces the constant challenge of learning and adapting to new contexts and demands. In the GFS, mobility is profoundly institutionalized, professionalized, and accompanied by a “unique transnational vocational culture” (Niedner-Kalthoff 2006).

Using an online confidential survey of 35.5% percent of all GFS employees ($N = 2,598$), this project explored how employees respond to these frequent rotations throughout their careers. The GFS project thus examines a critical, but under-researched population of international employees. Given the intensity of GFS rotations, the investigators were particularly interested in impacts on employees’ health, well-being, personal relationships, and family life. Thus, like iGOES, the GFS project also extended the expatriate criterion space to include not only adjustment, but also job satisfaction, stress, mental and physical health, work–life conflict, and other outcomes. The project explored a variety of psychological, social, sociodemographic, environmental, and preparatory factors that may mitigate or exacerbate the adverse consequences of rotations.²

² For additional details on the GFS project, see Rüger et al. (2018, Appendix B, this volume), Rüger et al. (2013), and Fliege et al. (2016).

2.3 *Global Comparisons of Expatriate Strengths Study*

International assignments are a unique type of work environment in expatriate employees must manage not only their work responsibilities but also ongoing challenges with adapting their personal and family lives to their new location. Expatriates often find that the line between work and non-work blurs on international assignments (Albrecht et al. 2018a; Lazarova et al. 2010; Takeuchi et al. 2002). The unique challenges and features of international assignments raise the question of whether expatriates are a similarly *unique population* of employees. Do expatriates systematically differ from their domestic counterparts in their home countries? Who are the individuals who apply for and accept international assignments, and which employee characteristics influence organizations' decisions to send specific employees abroad? Similarly, do expatriates differ from host country national (HCNs) employees? Do expatriates bring a unique suite of psychological characteristics and experiences to their host countries? Answering these questions has not only theoretical implications for modeling the expatriation process, but also practical implications for international human resource management research and practice. For example, how do personality differences for employees willing to accept international assignments affect organizational recruitment procedures? Does range restriction among expatriates on personality traits and experience variables change their validity and utility for criterion prediction? What are the implications for multinational organizations choosing to hire expatriates over HCNs? Previous research comparing expatriates to domestic employees has usually focused on sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, family structure, education; van der Velde et al. 2005), job characteristics and anticipated benefits (e.g., Konopaske/Werner 2005; van der Velde et al. 2005), or outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, mental health; Bonache 2005; Truman et al. 2011), rather than psychological and human capital variables that are likely to be antecedents of expatriate success (Albrecht et al. 2018a).

This study sought to address these questions by systematically comparing expatriates to home and host country domestic employees. The study used archival data from a large multinational HRM consulting firm to examine the characteristics of 1,679 expatriates originating from 86 countries and working in 79 countries. The investigators compared expatriates to nearly 20,000 domestic employees working in their home and host countries. Expatriate and domestic employees in these samples represented a wide range of industries, functional roles, and hierarchical levels. Like the iGOES project, this study used cross-cultural psychometric meta-analysis (Ones et al. 2012a) to examine within-country expatriate–domestic mean and variance differences on various predictors. This approach allowed for accurate estimation of differences unbiased by country-level mean differences or cultural factors. This approach also allowed the degree of variation in expatriate–domestic differences (and thus the space available for possible moderators) to be empirically estimated.

2.4 *Studies of Expatriate Success in Turkey*

The final studies contributing to this volume examined two samples of professional expatriates employed in Turkey. Turkey is an intriguing context for expatriate research. It has a cultural history that straddles Western and Middle Eastern ideas and practices (House et al. 2004; M ft ler-Bac 1999). At the time that these studies were conducted, it had a rapidly developing economy. Living and working in Turkey can be a challenge for Western expatriates, perhaps even more so than in Eastern and Southern Asia and other contexts that are more common in expatriate research. As a result, Turkey is an ideal context for studying

whether conflicting cultural factors change relations between predictor and criterion variables among expatriates. The expatriates in this study were employed in a wide variety of industries and held a range of hierarchical levels. The major aim of this research was to examine the contribution of social and psychological factors to a wider range of criteria than typically considered in expatriate research (e.g., including job satisfaction and job performance). The studies particularly sought to generalize well-established findings from domestic employee research (such as the contribution of personality traits to job performance; Barrick et al. 2001) to the expatriate context using traditional and rigorous validation procedures.

Study/sample 1 examined 220 expatriates working in Turkey and 220 host country national coworkers who reported on expatriates' work behaviors. The study included qualitative investigations of expatriates' and host country nationals' experiences and perspectives on expatriate success (Sinangil/Ones 1997), as well as quantitative estimation of predictor–criterion relations. Expatriates completed measures of their international adjustment, stay intentions, and job satisfaction. Unlike most expatriate job performance research, which uses short (often self-rated) measures of “overall job performance” (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005; Mol et al. 2005b), host country nationals rated expatriates' performance on 10 specific performance dimensions. Such multifactor performance measures are more construct-valid (Viswesvaran/Ones 2000), more conducive to feedback, training, and decision-making (Campbell/Wiernik 2015), and permit investigators to examine the divergent nomological networks of different types of effective expatriate performance behaviors (Hough/Dunnette 1992; cf. Hogan/Holland 2003). Study/sample 2 of the study included 311 expatriates and was gathered several years later using the same sampling design and an even more comprehensive performance measure.

3 Sections of this Book

This book is organized around four thematic sections. Each section draws studies and findings from different sets of the investigations described above.

3.1 *Thematic Section A: Psychological Individual Differences*

The first thematic section of this book considers what psychological characteristics lead individuals to become expatriates and how these traits impact expatriate success, satisfaction, and well-being once they arrive. Compared to domestic employee research, very few studies have investigated relations of stable individual differences characteristic with expatriate success (Albrecht et al. 2018a). Basic questions about role of broad traits such as Emotional Stability, Openness, and Extraversion in driving expatriate outcomes remain unanswered. The state of this literature stands in contrast to widespread beliefs among international human resource managers about the importance of personality traits and other psychological characteristic for expatriate adjustment, performance, and persistence (Ones/Viswesvaran 1999). The chapters in this section explore a variety of psychological individual differences, including traits unique to expatriate settings and broader traits that have been studied in many employment contexts (Barrick et al. 2001).

First, Kostal et al. (*Expatriate Personality: Facet-Level Comparisons with Domestic Counterparts*) consider what types of employees seek out, accept, and are chosen for international assignments. They use data from their large consulting database, the iGOES

project, and the studies of expatriates in Turkey to compare expatriate and domestic employees on general personality traits used widely in human resource management research and practice, including the Big Five traits and lower-order personality dimensions. Second, Waibel et al. (*Antecedents and Consequences of Mobility Self-Efficacy*) consider the impact of a psychological individual differences construct unique to the expatriate context. They compare the relative validity of international mobility-specific self-efficacy beliefs versus decontextualized, domain-general self-efficacy for understanding expatriate satisfaction and well-being outcomes. Third, Albrecht et al. (*Tolerance of Ambiguity: Relations with Expatriate Adjustment and Job Performance*) examine tolerance of ambiguity, a trait developed in the earliest days of personality research (Frenkel-Brunswick 1949) and widely believed to be critical for expatriate success (Caligiuri 2000); they find no evidence of criterion-related validity for this oft-cited expatriate competency. Fourth, Ones et al. (*Validity of Big Five Personality Traits for Expatriate Success: Results from Turkey*) broaden the scope of psychological individual differences considered in expatriate research by examining Big Five personality trait validities for expatriate adjustment and job performance. Fifth, Fliege and Wiernik (*Core Self-Evaluative Traits: Self-efficacy, Locus of Control, Optimism and Diplomat Success*) consider another set of constructs that have received wide attention across numerous psychological literatures. They examine how core self-evaluative traits (Judge et al. 1997) can serve as an important psychological resource supporting diplomats' adjustment, satisfaction, and well-being. Finally, Sinangil et al. (*Integrity: Generalizing Findings from Domestic to Expatriate Contexts*) examine integrity, a compound personality trait demonstrated to be one of the best predictors of performance among domestic employees (Ones et al. 1993, 2012b; Schmidt et al. 2016), but which heretofore has been unexamined among expatriates. Together, the chapters in this section provide new insights into the validity of psychological characteristics for a variety of expatriate success outcomes and offer guidance for future expatriate research and practice.

3.2 Thematic Section B: Age and Experience

The second thematic section considers the impacts of employee career stage on their experiences during international assignments, as well as how different types of professional experiences can prepare expatriates for success. Employee age and job-relevant experience are highly influential variables in expatriate management practice. Previous international experience is one of the most-often considered factors during expatriate selection (Anderson 2005; Deller 1997; Harris/Brewster 1999), and such experience is widely-assumed to be highly beneficial for future adjustment and performance (Black et al. 1991; Caligiuri et al. 2001). However, employee age is also associated with a myriad of negative stereotypes, including that older expatriates are unwilling and unable to adjust and more prone to ethnocentrism and other close-minded biases (Olsen/Martins 2009; Wu/Bodigerel-Koehler 2013). Existing empirical evidence has questioned these assumptions, however. Meta-analyses have found zero relationship between age and expatriate success and experience–success relations that were at most small (Hechanova et al. 2003; Mol et al. 2005a). However, the total sample sizes for these analyses were small, necessitating additional studies to provide stable and nuanced estimates of the role of age and experience in expatriate success. This section continues these critical examinations of age and experience-related assumptions by examining the impact of these time-related variables on new expatriate criteria, in new expatriate populations, and from new perspectives.

First, Albrecht et al. (*The Impact of Age and Experience on Expatriate Outcomes*) study the impact of age and six forms of job-relevant experience on job satisfaction and

multiple dimensions of expatriate adjustment and job performance in the iGOES samples; they observe negligible to small effects for most relations. Second, Waibel et al. (*Impacts of Age, Tenure, and Experiences on Expatriate Adjustment and Job Satisfaction*) examine similar questions among GFS diplomats. They also find mostly negligible impacts of temporal variables on outcomes, but do observe that increasing tenure can lead to dissatisfaction for high-level diplomats if their realized work experiences fail to meet their expectations. Third, Kostal et al. (*Expatriate Leadership Experience: Host Country Burden or Resource?*) consider the host country perspective by examining whether expatriate managers' leadership experience backgrounds are likely to be an opportunity or liability for HCNs. Across specific forms of experience, they find that expatriates have more experience than either HCNs or domestic managers in their home countries. This supports a resource view of expatriate employees.

3.3 Thematic Section C: Support and Preparation

The third thematic section of this book continues along the expatriation journey by exploring how organizations prepare their employees for international assignments and support them after arrival. The methods for and impacts of such expatriate preparation and support practices have been the primary focus of expatriate research (Albrecht et al. 2018a; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005; Harrison et al. 2004). Meta-analytic evidence supports the substantial role that organizational and social support play in expatriate adjustment (unreliability-corrected correlations [ρ] range .07–.22 across dimensions of support and adjustment; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005). Similarly, multiple meta-analyses have found small to large positive effects of pre-departure training programs on expatriate adjustment and performance (Deshpande et al. 1994; Deshpande/Viswesvaran 1992; Morris/Robie 2001). However, each of these meta-analyses observed substantial variability in training effectiveness across samples and called for more nuanced research into the benefits of specific types of pre-departure training. This section extends these findings by examining the benefits of preparation and support for new criteria and by considering a variety of important moderators of these effects.

First, Albrecht et al. (*Success Among Self-Initiated Versus Assigned Expatriates*) compare expatriates from two populations assumed to differ in their degree of organizational support and investment – self-initiated versus organizationally-assigned expatriates. They find few differences between these groups and call for more nuanced consideration of expatriate subgroups and more construct-valid measures of initiative in future expatriate research. Second, Wiernik et al. (*Lingua Necessaria? Language Proficiency and Expatriate Success*) examine language proficiency, a form of preparation often regarded as a key enabling factor for expatriate success. They find that while language proficiency is beneficial for adjustment, it has a modest effect on other criteria. Third, Kostal et al. (*Expatriate Training: Intercontextual Analyses from the iGOES Project*) explore the relative effectiveness of different types of expatriate training programs and the moderating effects of training design factors on dimensions of adjustment, job performance, and satisfaction. Finally, Bellinger et al. (*Organizational and Social Support Among Foreign Service Diplomats*) consider the impacts of a variety of organizational and social support systems on diplomat adjustment, family, and well-being outcomes. They find that the benefits of support vary for diplomats with different family structures.

3.4 Thematic Section D: Gender and Family

In the final thematic section of this book, authors consider how gender and family status can affect expatriates' experience while abroad. These factors are a common concern for sending organizations. Between 70–80% of expatriates are accompanied by their spouses, partners, children, or other family members (BGRS 2012), but an increasing number of expatriates choose to leave their families in their home countries, either out of concern that an international move will be harmful to families' well-being, safety, or career prospects (BGRS 2016) or out of fear that having their families present will interfere with expatriates' ability to adjust, perform, and complete their international assignments (BGRS 2012; Haslberger/Brewster 2008). Many organizations also fear that female expatriates will be unable to adjust and succeed abroad, particularly in countries perceived as hostile to women (Baruch/Reis 2015; Caligiuri/Cascio 1998; Sinangil/Ones 2003; Vance/McNulty 2014). These preconceptions result in fewer women being chosen for international assignments compared to men (Andresen et al. 2015; BGRS 2016). This discrepancy is particularly concerning given that international experience is increasingly regarded as a critical factor for advancement into higher ranks of organizational leadership (BGRS 2016; Stahl et al. 2002; Vance 2005).

Despite the pervasiveness of organizational practical concerns about female expatriates and expatriate families, previous expatriate research has only rarely examined these factors. For example, Hechanova et al.'s (2003) meta-analysis of expatriate adjustment included only 4–5 studies of gender and 2–4 studies of family variables (cf. Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005, who meta-analyzed a somewhat larger sample of studies reporting expatriate employee–spouse adjustment relations [individual analyses included between $k = 3$ –11 studies each]). Similarly, Mol et al.'s (2005a) meta-analysis of expatriate job performance included only 5 studies of gender and no studies of family variables. Much more academic attention has been given to theoretical and conceptual discussions of gender and family issues than to empirical tests of model predictions (Albrecht et al. 2018a; cf. Lazarova et al. 2010; Takeuchi 2010). Thus, the studies in this section address critical issues about the role of gender and family in supporting and hindering expatriate success, with total sample sizes that are in some cases larger than the entire existing literatures on these questions.

First, Ones et al. (*A Family Affair: Spouse and Children's Role in Expatriate Adjustment and Job Performance*) examine the impacts of family presence, adjustment, and support on expatriate adjustment, performance and stay intentions. They find that being separated from their children has negative consequences for expatriate parents and also observe results consistent with meta-analytic findings on the importance of family adjustment and support during expatriation. Second, Mercado et al. (*Influence of Family Presence on Expatriate Adjustment and Satisfaction*) also consider the impact of family presence and separation on expatriate outcomes. They find that accompanying family members are generally beneficial for expatriates, but can in some contexts interfere with efforts to integrate host country culture. Third, Foldes et al. (*Gender Differences in Job Performance and Adjustment: Do Women Expatriates Measure Up?*) challenge stereotypes about women's inability to succeed in difficult international contexts by showing that male and female expatriates tend to adjust and perform at similar levels. Finally, Waibel and R ger (*Influence of Gender and Family Status on Expatriate Well-Being*) show that diplomat women and single parents can experience poorer well-being and discuss how organizations can best support expatriates with challenging family demands.

4 Evidence-Based Expatriate Management: Critical Questions for Research and Practice

We believe that this volume makes an important contribution to advancing basic knowledge on factors that promote success across populations of expatriates. The size and complexity of statistical models used in expatriate research continues to grow, but foundational knowledge of relations among many critical variables remains based on only a handful of studies and only a few hundred expatriates (Albrecht et al. 2018a). We hope that the studies in this volume can strengthen the foundation of empirical knowledge in expatriate management and provide direction for future research on international employees. In particular, we hope that the results presented in the current analyses can contribute to future meta-analyses cumulating studies on the impacts of gender, family, age, support, self-efficacy, personality, and other factors on expatriate success.

Furthermore, we also hope that the findings of these studies can inform organizations seeking to apply evidence-based practice in their systems for expatriate selection, development, support, and management. As future expatriate research also seeks to enhance organizational international HRM practices, investigations that provide rigorous estimation and validation of basic variable relationships with multi-source data, psychometrically strong measures, and large diverse samples will be critical. Below, we highlight two additional key challenges for future expatriate research.

4.1 *Generalizability Versus Specificity*

All expatriate research is unified by the challenges of employees crossing national borders and contending with changing cultural contexts, organizational environments, and work responsibilities. However, a key conceit of much expatriate research is that expatriate success factors are unique and specific to each cultural context (Atwater et al. 2009; Lehman et al. 2004; Takeuchi et al. 2005; Torelli/Shavitt 2010). However, despite the purported emphasis of expatriate research on understanding cultural specificity, studies have neglected to empirically examine whether relations among expatriate-relevant variables are consistent or vary across cultures and geographic regions (Ones et al. 2012a). Culture-specific factors are most often considered only in the introduction and discussion sections of reports and not measured or tested explicitly. Among studies that sample from multiple cultural contexts and make comparisons, nearly all studies are limited to two or three distinct cultures (Franke/Richey 2010). By systematically comparing relations across cultures, examining multiple populations of expatriates, and comparing expatriate research to domestic employee findings, the studies in this book shed valuable light on the degree to which expatriate success factors vary across contexts and the factors which may (and may not) explain this variation.

The studies in this book found that many relations are highly consistent across cultures (e.g., tolerance of ambiguity, Albrecht et al. 2018d, Chapter 4; language proficiency, Wiernik et al. 2018, Chapter 12). Where studies did find variability (e.g., relations of expatriate age with job performance), the pattern of variation was often unrelated to factors commonly thought to be critical moderators (e.g., age–performance relations were unrelated to cultural attitudes toward the elderly and aging, Albrecht et al. 2018c, Chapter 8). The general findings of consistency in variable relations across cultures supports global HRM practices that emphasize the same factors for expatriates assigned to diverse locations (Brandt/Buck 2005; House et al. 2004). As expatriate research progresses, and as organizations seek data to inform evidence-based expatriate management practice, studies must continue to

systematically compare expatriate success-relevant variables across many cultural contexts. Large scale, multinational collaborations, such as iGOES and similar studies (e.g., GLOBE, House et al. 2004; CISMS, Spector et al. 2002) are the ideal research designs for rigorously examining generalizability and specificity across cultures. Critically, comparisons of findings across cultural contexts (whether in intercultural primary studies or as part of literature reviews) must separate true cross-cultural variation from variation due to sampling error, measurement error, range variation, and other statistical artefacts (ideally using psychometric meta-analysis; Ones et al. 2012a).

Studies in this book also reveal that the critical moderators of expatriate success factors may not be culture, but other national, situational, personal, and environmental characteristics. For example, Waibel et al. (2018b, Chapter 3) found that the impacts of mobility self-efficacy on locational adjustment varied across levels of post difficulty – self-efficacy was less effective for promoting adjustment in locations that lacked basic comforts and were dangerous or hostile. Though post difficulty may be related to culture, this effect more likely stems from broader environmental factors, such as harsher stressors. Even more removed from culture, Waibel et al. (2018a, Chapter 9) found that the importance of job design factors varied across diplomat ages and hierarchical levels. Addressing these factors requires not tailoring of expatriate management to a specific culture, but application of HRM and organizational development programs that have been commonplace for domestic establishments for decades. As expatriate research continues, searches for moderators and boundary conditions across contexts should focus not only on cultural factors, but also on specific environmental and situational constraints on behavior, adaptation, and success. Sending organizations must consider not only the culture of host countries, but also whether the organizations' broader human resource management and support systems are conducive to expatriate success.

4.2 *Connecting Private Sector and Public Sector Expatriate Research and Practice References*

There are some key differences between private sector expatriates and diplomats and other public sector international employees. Whereas corporate expatriates typically complete only one or two international assignments during their careers, diplomats face the prospect of continuous international rotations, requiring them to repeatedly adjust to new cultures and contexts. Public sector expatriates also tend to reflect a more diverse range of occupations, hierarchical levels, and job characteristics than private sector expatriates, and the role of public sector expatriates as part of organizations' overall strategic goals often differs greatly from that of corporate expatriates. However, despite these differences, public and private sector international employees are also similar in many ways and require similar forms of psychological, social, and organizational support resources to be successful. Public and private sector expatriate research and practice can meaningfully inform each other.

The 50-year-old Peace Corps studies notwithstanding (Church 1982; Mischel 1965; Smith 1966; Textor 1966), research on private sector expatriates is more developed than the literature on non-profit and public sector international employees. Many findings on corporate expatriation, such as factors that support adjustment, the predictive validity of socio-demographic and psychological characteristics, and methods for assessing cultural characteristics, individual variables, and success outcomes, can be directly applied to inform HRM practices for diplomats, international aid providers, and other public sector expatriates. Public sector expatriate researchers should also replicate studies on private sector

expatriates to examine whether and how relations between various antecedents and expatriate success vary across sectors.

Public sector research and practice can also inform private sector expatriate management practice. There is an emerging population of “rotation” managers in private sector multinational organizations (House et al. 2004). These high-mobility managers face very similar challenges for repeated relocation and adaptation as do foreign service diplomats. The methods that foreign services use to select, train, and support diplomats may be applied in the private sector to help these managers meet the challenges of highly-mobile international careers. For example, the German Foreign Service has implemented a range of support interventions including not only cross-cultural training, but also on-site psychosocial counseling, transition planning, coordinated peer support networks, logistical support, and programs to help diplomat spouses and families adjust and find employment (Bellinger et al. 2018, Chapter 14, this volume). Private sector multinational organizations should consider implementing similar programs into their international HRM practice. However, like many private sector HRM practices, public sector expatriate support programs are rarely subjected to empirical validation of their efficacy (cf. Campbell et al. 2018; Cohen 2007; Mendenhall et al. 2004; Ones et al. 2017; Perez et al. 2017; Rynes et al. 2007). The GFS study reported in this volume is among the first critical evaluations of human resource management practices in a foreign service department. Future expatriate research and practice should draw on the institutional knowledge accumulated in foreign services and other government departments, while using rigorous methods to determine which practices are actually effective and which practices might be fruitfully applied to business expatriates.

More generally, the support practices of foreign services around the world demonstrate strong values for investing in employees and having concern for their satisfaction, well-being, and personal and career development. Though management research often focuses on trends toward weakening psychological contracts between employers and employees (Sullivan/Baruch 2009) and on the increasing responsibility individuals must take for their own career development (Hall 2004; Wiernik/Kostal 2017), talent management, succession planning, and employee career development and management remain critical issues for organizations (cf. Wiernik/Wille 2018). As international assignments become an increasingly important part of organizational leadership development programs (BGRS 2016; Cartus 2016), understanding how these assignments can be made developmental, rather than harmful, is critical. Again, foreign services’ and other non-profit and public sector organizations’ expertise on investing in international employees can inform private sector organizations seeking to do the same, but the efficacy of such recommendations must be empirically validated.

Finally, knowledge from public sector expatriate research and practice can also inform research and practice on the diverse populations of expatriate employees. Nearly all private sector expatriate research has focused on managerial- or executive-level employees. Studies of the international relocation process for non-managerial (e.g., engineers, researchers, education and health care professionals) and non-professional (e.g., secretarial staff, skilled tradespeople, agricultural workers, unskilled laborers) employees are sorely needed (cf. Goldin/Reinert 2007; OECD 2006, 2008). Diplomatic, governmental, military, and non-profit organizations have grappled with managing mobility among diverse populations for decades; insights from these organizations’ experiences should inform expatriate research for these groups.

International mobility continues to grow in its importance and global impact. Strong empirical investigations and communication between researchers and practitioners across sectors will enable multinational organizations of all types to meet these challenges.

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Expatriate Personality: Facet-level Comparisons with Domestic Counterparts

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Abstract

We compared personality trait distributions for expatriates to those of domestic managers and general populations using cross-cultural meta-analysis and three personality inventories. We found that expatriate–domestic manager differences are negligible to moderate in magnitude. Differences varied across lower-order facets within the Big Five domains. Results differed somewhat across personality inventories. Results suggest that expatriates are higher on Experiences-related facets of Openness and Compassion-related facets of Agreeableness, but may be lower on Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability. Our findings indicate that there is likely great opportunity for organizations to enhance expatriate success by incorporating personality traits into expatriate selection procedures.

1 Introduction

Managing expatriates is a challenge for both domestic organizations sending employees on international assignments and the host-country organizations receiving them. Domestic organizations face difficulties providing sufficient support and adapting their management practices to meet expatriates' individual needs. Host organizations are often unprepared to interact with expatriates whose individual characteristics and cultural backgrounds differ from their own employees. A key step in addressing both challenges is understanding the unique ways in which expatriates differ from domestic nationals in their home- and host-countries.

Understanding the personal characteristics expatriates tend to possess can aid both home and host organizations in understanding the unique management challenges and opportunities these employees can present. A variety of personality traits have been linked to different components of expatriate success. For example, among the Big Five traits, Openness has been linked with acceptance of international assignments and with cultural adjustment (Albrecht et al. 2018c; Ones/Viswesvaran 1997), Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability have been linked with cultural and work adjustment and avoiding burnout (Deller/Albrecht 2006a, 2006b; Hechanova et al. 2003), and Extraversion and Agreeableness have been linked with interactional adjustment (Deller/Albrecht 2006a). If expatriates tend to be deficient in any of these trait domains, then the criteria associated with these domains (e.g., work adjustment for Conscientiousness) represent key areas for organizations to focus on to promote expatriate success. Moreover, deficiencies in these trait domains would suggest avenues for improved selection practices to increase the likelihood of successful expatriation.

Relatively little research has examined the characteristic personality differences between expatriates and domestic employees. Albrecht et al. (2008) compared the iGOES samples (a large sample of German expatriates, see below) to the population normative sample for the German version of the NEO PI-R. They found that expatriates were much