



The International Journal of Human Resource Management

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjih20>

Linking career success motives and career boundaries to repatriates' turnover intentions: A case study

Gina Gaio Santos & Dora Martins

To cite this article: Gina Gaio Santos & Dora Martins (2021) Linking career success motives and career boundaries to repatriates' turnover intentions: A case study, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32:16, 3458-3501, DOI: [10.1080/09585192.2019.1629985](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1629985)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1629985>



Published online: 18 Jun 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 431



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Linking career success motives and career boundaries to repatriates' turnover intentions: A case study

Gina Gaio Santos^a and Dora Martins^b

^aSchool of Economics and Management, University of Minho, Management Department, Campus de Gualtar, Braga, Portugal; ^bCEOS.PP, Porto Accounting and Business School, Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Rua Jaime Lopes Amorim, São Mamede de Infesta, Portugal and Research Unit on Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policy (GOVCOPP), University of Aveiro, Portugal.

ABSTRACT



This study's goal is to understand repatriates' personal experiences about their career success motives in the years following an international assignment and how that may prompt turnover intentions. The case study comprises data from 8 Portuguese companies belonging to different industries. Overall, we interviewed 42 repatriates and 17 human resource organizational representatives. Building on career success literature, this study's findings show that these repatriates' main career-pull motives to stay with the organization are related to (1) Recognition and Affection, (2) Financial and Employment Security, (3) Developmental Career Opportunities, (4) and, lastly, Career Advancement. By comparison, these repatriates' career-push motives to leave pertain to (1) the Lack of Developmental Career Opportunities, (2) Financial and Employment Insecurity, and (3) Recognition and Affection Breach. Furthermore, the findings shed new light on the role played by contextual-structural career boundaries as a mitigating factor in repatriates' turnover intentions. Overall, we add a new contribution to the literature on career success and repatriation by showing that Affective career success motives (both Intra-Inter-Personal) are, on the whole, more important than Achievement career success motives in these repatriates' turnover intentions.

KEYWORDS

Career boundaries; career success; international assignment; repatriates; turnover intentions

Introduction

The bulk of research on international human resource management is focussed on expatriation and on the reasons why expatriates tend to fail on their international assignments during the stay abroad. In this regard, work and cultural adjustment issues, particularly culture shock factors

CONTACT Gina Gaio Santos  gaiogina@eeg.uminho.pt; gaiogina@gmail.com  School of Economics and Management, University of Minho, Management Department, Campus de Gualtar, Braga, 4710-057, Portugal. This article has been republished with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

(also extending to expatriate's spouses and family), are viewed as essential for the success of employees undertaking an international assignment (e.g. Araujo, Teixeira, Cruz, & Malini, 2014; Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992; Friedman, Dyke, & Murphy, 2009; Haslberger, Brewster, & Hippler, 2013; Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2003; Lauring & Selmer, 2010; Lee & Kartika, 2014; Palthe, 2004; Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012; Siljanen & Lämsä, 2009). Nevertheless, when compared to expatriation, the research on repatriation is more limited in its scope, it is still scattered and lacks a theoretical foundation (Knocke & Schuster, 2017). For instance, we know little about repatriates' career success motives or how repatriates' careers evolve after a longer period of time (Chiang, Van Esch, Birtch, & Shaffer, 2018; Knocke & Schuster, 2017). Hence, this study's goal is to understand repatriates' personal experiences regarding their career success motives in the years following an international assignment and how that may prompt turnover intentions.

Repatriation is characterized as the final phase of an international assignment, when the international assignee returns to the home country and the home organization (Chiang et al., 2018; Kraimer, Shaffer, & Bolino, 2009). One concern with repatriation processes is repatriates' turnover intentions. Turnover intention is the likelihood of an employee voluntarily quitting his/her current organization in the near future (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012). It refers to repatriates' thoughts involving voluntarily leaving the home organization (Lee & Liu, 2007). Amongst other negative organizational outcomes, turnover intention and the actual quitting incurs financial costs (e.g. recruitment and selection) and the loss of highly skilled and talented human resources that are difficult to replace (Hom et al., 2012; Lee & Liu, 2007). The high turnover of repatriates is particularly damaging for organizations, due to: (1) the loss of new knowledge and skills acquired by the repatriate during the assignment, (2) the transfer of that knowledge and skills to competitor businesses, as the repatriate often leaves the organization to work for rival companies, (3) and because dissatisfied repatriates may deter other employees in the organization into accepting an international assignment in the future (Knocke & Schuster, 2017; Kraimer et al., 2009). As such, organizations should view repatriates' retention as a serious challenge given the financial costs associated with actual turnover. Hence, understanding the motives why repatriates decide to leave (or stay with) the home organization is an important first step to help organizations develop effective retention strategies (Reiche, 2009).

Building on career success literature (Dries, Pepermans, & Carlier, 2008), this study explores how career success influences repatriates' turnover intentions. We argue that repatriates' perceptions of career success

in the years following an international assignment might influence their turnover intentions just as much as maladjustment variables. Thus, it is essential to consider repatriates' perceptions of career success because career outcomes are important milestones when making overall career assessments and career decisions over time. A career outcome corresponds to a work-related result that might be linked to objective career success (e.g. salary raises or promotions) or subjective career success (e.g. achieving work/life balance or career satisfaction) (Shen et al., 2015).

Indeed, further research is needed on the long-term effects of an international assignment for individual career success (Chiang et al., 2018; Hamori, & Koyuncu, 2011; Suutari, Brewster, Mäkelä, Dickmann, & Tornikoski, 2018). As noted by Chiang et al. (2018), repatriates may believe that the rewards for accepting an international assignment will arise later in their careers and not immediately after return. Hence, this empirical study includes a significant number of repatriates who had returned from an assignment of between two and eight or more years, as this allows us to assess the impact of an international assignment on repatriates' careers after a longer period.

Moreover, research on the influence of contextual factors on international careers is still lacking (for an exception, see Aldossari & Robertson, 2016, 2018), with most studies underlining the role of agency in international careers and its boundaryless nature (e.g. Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012; Stahl, Miller, & Tung, 2002; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). However, the context may set boundaries to individual career decision-making. For instance, in the post-assignment period, repatriates' career outcomes may depend on the economic climate of the home country and the availability of employment alternatives. This, in turn, will influence repatriates' decisions to stay with or leave the organization.

Given the above, two research questions merit further inquiry:

RQ1: Which career success outcomes function as pull-push motives to stay with or leave the organization?

RQ2: What kind of career boundaries influences repatriates' turnover intentions?

By answering the questions above, our study makes two central contributions to the literature on repatriation and careers. First, we discuss the career success motives that may influence repatriates' intentions to stay (career-pull) and the career success motives that may make them leave the organization (career-push). To the best of our knowledge, this empirical study is the first one that establishes a distinction between career-

pull and career-push motives for repatriates' turnover intentions. Drawing on the multidimensional career success model proposed by Dries et al. (2008), we make a distinction between achievement versus affect and intra-personal versus inter-personal career motives that may influence repatriates' decision to stay with or leave the organization. Additionally, we offer the organizational representatives' view (i.e. HR managers) regarding the career success motives that may drive repatriates' turnover intentions. By comparing repatriates' and HR representatives' viewpoints, we identify whether or not there is a mismatch between the two parties regarding the career motives that matter most in turnover intentions.

Second, this article contributes to the conceptualization of career boundaries in repatriation by identifying the boundaries that hinder the career mobility of a group of Portuguese repatriates (see Gunz, Peiperl, & Tzabbar, 2007; Gunz, Evans, & Jalland, 2000 on the issue of career boundaries). Baruch and Reis (2016, p. 15) already asserted that "global careers may not be necessarily boundaryless and, conversely, that boundaryless careers may be global but are not necessarily so". Several national, cultural, and even personal and family career boundaries may limit the readiness of individual career moves. In addition, this may be especially the case of those repatriates that follow a traditional-global career (Baruch & Reis, 2016), which means that they cross geographical borders but within traditionally managed multinational companies. Drawing on this, our study makes an important contribution in what regards the role played by a set of personal and contextual career boundaries on repatriates' turnover intentions upon return.

The article is structured as follows: first, we present a literature review on the different meanings attributed to career success, with an emphasis on international careers. Second, we discuss the literature on repatriates' career success and turnover intentions. Third, we briefly explore the role played by career boundaries in repatriates' turnover intentions. Next, we explain the methodology used in the empirical study and we briefly characterize the context and the study participants, followed by the presentation of our main findings. In the conclusion section, we identify the study's main contributions to theory and practice as well as its limitations and provide suggestions for future research.

Literature review

Definitions of career success

Career success relates to personal and professional achievements or work-related outcomes that an individual obtains from his/her work

experiences (Rasdi, Ismail, & Garavan, 2011). The concept was initially measured by using objective outcomes such as a salary raise or number of promotions (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz Jr., 1995). However, more recently researchers have concurred that both subjective and objective outcomes are useful in grasping career success meanings and its multiple facets (e.g. Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005; Dries et al., 2008; Heslin, 2005; Ituma, Simpson, Ovadje, Cornelius, & Mordi, 2011). Hence, subjective career success is measured along an individual's internal scale and may assume multiple meanings that are not often visible to others (Hennequin, 2007; Ituma et al., 2011). It refers to individuals' perceptual assessments and affective responses to their careers and it is often operationalized as career or job satisfaction (Ng & Feldman, 2014). Moreover, it should be noted that subjective and objective career success meanings are not mutually exclusive, and a person may describe his/her career success using both objective and subjective outcomes (Dries et al., 2008; Hennequin, 2007; Ituma et al., 2011; Shen et al., 2015).

Dries (2011) highlights that career success definitions vary according to cultural and historical contexts in a way that national values or societal ideologies influence how individuals' construct success meanings. Other authors underline that success definitions may vary according to gender (e.g. Afiouni & Karam, 2014; Dyke & Murphy, 2006; Sturges, 1999), age and life cycle (e.g. Sturges, 1999), or even social class (e.g. Hennequin, 2007). Dyke and Murphy's (2006) study with successful women and men shows that while women highlight work-life balance and relationships, men privilege material success. On the other hand, Sturges's (1999) research with female and male managers reveals that women managers and older managers are less prone to define career success in terms of hierarchical and financial progression. In this study, managers in their early career years place higher value on hierarchical advancement than managers in senior positions. Finally, the French blue-collar workers depicted in Hennequin's (2007) study perceive success to be more related to psychological aspects (e.g. career satisfaction, job autonomy and expertise, or life balance) than to material aspects (e.g. monetary rewards or hierarchical advancement). In reality, blue-collar workers do not occupy career-ladder jobs that offer the possibility of hierarchical progression. Additionally, for these workers, social career outcomes are also important to define success, that is to say being recognized for his/her work quality or working for an organization with a good reputation. Overall, these studies highlight the multiple meanings of career success and how both subjective and objective measures of career success intertwine.

In this regard, Dries et al.'s (2008, pp. 259–260) multidimensional career success model offers an integrative framework to interpret career

success meanings by combining opposite dimensions. The authors propose a two-dimensional construct: affect versus achievement and inter-personal versus intra-personal. In the first dimension, affect refers to the feelings or perceptions that individuals may have experienced during the course of their careers. The other end of the spectrum of this dimension – achievement – pertains to the actual accomplishments that characterize an individual’s career. In the second dimension, intra-personal refers to the internal criteria against which the person assesses his/her career, while inter-personal refers to the relationships with the external world that an individual engages in and how he/she evaluates his/her career success. In all the career success “regions” identified by Dries et al. (2008), the person may evaluate his/her career success as high or low. Figure 1 describes the multidimensional career success model.

Building on the model proposed by Dries et al. (2008), we argue that repatriates’ career success meanings may also be constructed by considering these two dimensions: achievement versus affect and intra-personal versus inter-personal. For instance, the “Intra-personal Achievement” or “Intra-personal Affect” dimensions seem particularly suited to interpret the career success of those individuals embracing international careers. In fact, international or global careers are usually driven by the individuals’ wish of self-development and/or intrinsic satisfaction. For instance, Stahl, Miller, and Tung (2002) found that the German expatriate managers in their study ranked “personal challenge”, “professional development” and the “importance of the job itself” as the most relevant career drivers for accepting the assignment. On the other hand, monetary rewards were only seen as moderately important in the decision to

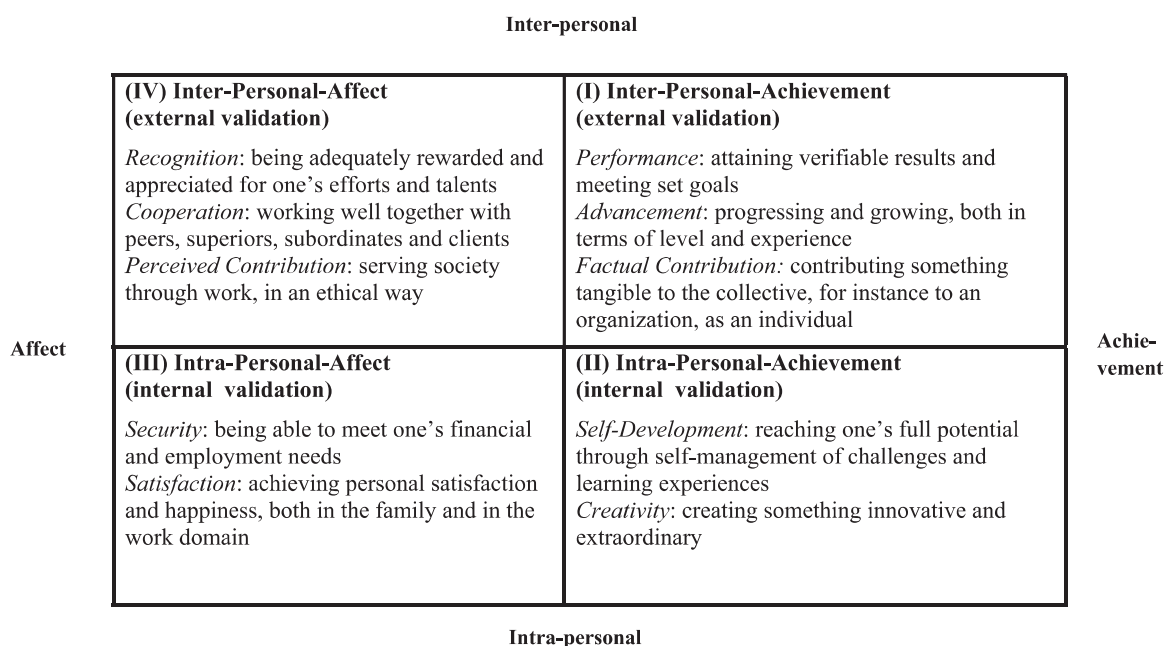


Figure 1. Multidimensional career success model (Adapted from Dries et al., 2008, p. 260).

embrace an international assignment. At the same time, only a few believed that their international experience would help them in hierarchical advancement. This means that these expatriates attributed a greater value to internal meanings of career success (Stahl et al., 2002).

Some empirical studies underline the importance given to internal career motivators by global careerists, such as family life concerns, a preference for specific work environments and organizational cultures, or a working preference for internationalism (e.g. Cappellen & Janssen, 2010; Shortland, 2016; Suutari, Tornikoski, & Mäkelä, 2012). In Suutari et al.'s study (2012), the three most valued career outcomes by global careerists comprise the meaningfulness and importance of the job, the high level of challenge and related development possibilities, and the international nature of the job. Nevertheless, in this study, the financial compensation was also a valued career outcome, and that played a decisive role in the career decision-making of these global careerists. In this same line, the study conducted with women international assignees (Shortland, 2016) in the oil and gas industry shows that those women's expatriation decisions are driven by the level of contribution that each assignment potentially makes to their career, family life, and financial potential. The latter was a less decisive motivator of assignment acceptance.

Meanwhile, a recent study carried out by Ramaswami, Carter and Dreher (2016) proves the hypothesis that there is a stronger positive association between serving as an expatriate and compensation returns for those that have served in multiple expatriate assignments when compared to those that have completed a single assignment. According to these authors, the international experience is fundamentally about human capital acquisition (e.g. knowledge and skill accumulation). Thus, multiple expatriate assignments are more beneficial for one's career success than single assignments.

Additionally, other studies display a mix of career motivators for those embracing international careers. The research undertaken by Yao, Arrowsmith, and Thorn (2016) and Cho, Hutchings, and Marchant (2013), for instance, highlight that the main motivators for expatriation and repatriation of Chinese and Korean international assignees, respectively, are linked to family motives and specific cultural values (e.g. Confucianism). In Yao et al.'s study (2016), the primary motivators for accepting an international assignment comprised the influence of Confucian values, such as social status (e.g. with remuneration as an important career driver), family obligations (e.g. filial duties towards elderly parents), and the safeguarding of harmonious relationships with key organizational representatives.

In the case of Portuguese repatriates, the motives behind the acceptance of an international assignment are even more diverse. For instance,

in Pinto, Cabral-Cardoso and Werther Jr.'s study (2012), the three main motives to accept an international assignment were challenge, career prospects, and feeling compelled by the organization. In the latter, the person was afraid that if he/she refused to accept the assignment, that he/she might be perceived not being able to meet the challenge or not being up for the job. Additionally, De Eccher and Duarte's study (2018) that includes Portuguese workers shows that a major reason for them to accept an international job offer relates to the perceived level of safety and cultural attraction of the host country (e.g. Angola and Mozambique).

In summary, the evidence above suggests the embracing of both subjective and objective meanings of career success for those adopting international careers. As Dickmann, Doherty, Mills, and Brewster (2008) conclude very often organizations underestimate the importance of career development and work/life issues in the motives that drive the international mobility of expatriates. In addition, organizational representatives often overestimate the financial motive. Thus, we need more research on the career success motives of those embracing international careers.

In this regard, Valk, Van der Velde, Van Engen, and Godbole's (2014) study is one of the few that discusses the meanings of career success for repatriate Indian women working in the field of Science and Technology. According to these authors, women repatriates valued the Intra-Personal Achievement "Self-Development" the most, as described in Dries et al. (2008).

Repatriates' career success and turnover intentions

Yan, Zhu and Hall (2002) argue that career success is the most important concern of the international assignee. From a career theory viewpoint, the repatriation phase is particularly crucial because it is when the individual assesses how the completion of an international assignment has contributed to his/her career success. Hence, understanding how the repatriates experience career success may explain their immediate or future turnover intentions. Until now, the research addressing career success and international assignments define the concept too narrowly as upward mobility and promotions, pay increases, and/or overall career satisfaction (e.g. Aldossari & Robertson, 2018; Biemann & Braakmann, 2013; Bolino, 2007; Cerdin & Pargneux, 2014; Kraimer et al., 2009). For instance, in Kraimer et al.'s (2009) study, career advancement was the single outcome used to assess repatriate retention. Likewise, in Cerdin

and Pargneux's (2014) study, international assignees' subjective career success was narrowed down to career or job satisfaction.

However, the relationship between individual career success and international experience is a complex one (Bolino, 2007), and empirical evidence shows contradictory findings regarding the benefits of an international assignment for repatriates' careers. For instance, Hamori and Koyuncu's (2011) study proves that European and American executives with international experience took longer to advance in their careers and reach top positions. This was especially the case of those executives completing more assignments or longer ones. In addition, Kraimer et al.'s (2009) study also shows that multiple assignments harmed the repatriates' career advancement, since their long absence from the headquarters affected their visibility.

Likewise, the study by Baruch, Steele and Quantrill (2002) reveals that UK repatriates suffered detrimental effects in their careers – they lost touch with old professional networks, no career plan was offered to them on return, and they felt that their international experience was not valued and was seen as worthless by many in the organization. Along these same lines, Bossard and Peterson's (2005) research with American repatriates reveals that they felt alone and under-appreciated by their supervisors and that the organization did not help them find a job position where they could use their newly acquired skills and knowledge. These repatriates underline that the assignment helped them in terms of personal growth but not in terms of career advancement within the organization. In addition, in Benson and Pattie's study (2008), repatriates were promoted at a slower pace and were paid the same salary when compared to the group of domestic employees. Similarly, Pinto et al.'s (2012) study uncovered that Portuguese repatriates who felt compelled into accepting an international assignment were more likely to get promotions at the country destination than upon return. This meant that their careers had plateaued after returning home.

In contrast, there are studies that have identified positive effects of an international experience on repatriates' career success (e.g. Biemann & Braakmann, 2013; Ramaswami et al., 2016; Suutari & Brewster, 2003; Suutari et al., 2018). Suutari and Brewster (2003), when studying Finnish repatriates, revealed that 77% of the participants concurred that their international assignment had a positive impact on their career progress. Regarding task challenge, a clear majority stated that their tasks became more challenging and that their salary level had improved after the assignment. Similarly, Biemann and Braakmann's (2013) research showed that German graduates with international experience achieved higher objective career success, measured in terms of monthly wages, than did

domestic employees. Finally, Suutari et al. (2018) found that career success did not greatly diverge between assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates. Both groups saw themselves as highly employable and were satisfied with their careers several years after the repatriation and the international experience. For example, concerning objective career success, both groups were promoted with the same regularity.

Despite the contradictory evidence, few studies address the relationship between career success motives and repatriates' turnover intentions. Kraimer et al.'s (2009) study is one of the few establishing a link between career advancement upon repatriation and repatriates' retention. Thus, a promotion following their return meant that the repatriate was less inclined to leave the organization. Another study by Pattie, White and Tansky (2010) found that the main reason for repatriates' voluntary turnover was connected to the waste of the skills that they had acquired during the international assignment.

In Stahl et al.'s (2009) research, it was the purpose of the assignment – either developmental or functional – that determined repatriates' turnover intentions. The developmental assignees perceived their future career advancement opportunities to be better with external employers. As such, they were more inclined to leave the organization than the functional assignees. In Vidal, Valle and Aragón's (2008) study, repatriates who were more satisfied with the repatriation process were less inclined to leave the organization. How the organization managed the professional career of the repatriates was one of the main factors that increased their satisfaction with the repatriation process. Other factors included transparency in repatriation practices and accurate work expectations before the repatriation.

Comparatively, the literature on career success and international assignments that also includes the organizational point of view is scarce. Aldossari and Robertson's (2016, 2018) research in the Saudi Arabian context is an exception. Their findings show that HR managers faced many constraints regarding decisions that affected repatriates' career development and promotions, which were used to measure repatriates' career success (Aldossari & Robertson, 2018). For instance, the authors (Aldossari & Robertson, 2016) emphasize the role of "wasta", a cultural characteristic that means having a strong orientation towards collectivism and a sense of loyalty to network relationships (i.e. kinship ties). This cultural specificity influenced promotion decisions upon return regardless of existent HR policies. According to Aldossari and Robertson (2018), the perceived inequities in promotion and career advancement decisions strongly contributed to repatriates' decisions to leave the organization.

Additionally, Paik, Segaud and Malinowski's (2002) research with UK and Scandinavian repatriates and HR managers' shows that repatriates define a successful repatriation differently than HR managers do. The authors underline that the repatriates accepted the assignment for career advancement, monetary rewards and adventure, whereas the organization sent the expatriate in order to transfer the home corporate culture and meet business goals in the global market.

Given the evidence above, we argue that repatriates' turnover intentions will be influenced by their perceptions of high (career-pull motives) or low (career-push motives) career success, especially when we consider their evaluations about the long-term consequences of the assignment on their careers. Additionally, turnover intentions may depend on several boundaries that hinder career mobility, which we address in the next section.

The role of career boundaries and its impact on repatriates' turnover intentions

Boundaries are conceptualized as "physical, temporal, emotional, cognitive, and/or relational limits that define entities as separate from one another" (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000, p.474), and they are a part of career-building dynamics (Gunz, 2000, 2007). Gunz et al. (2007) make a distinction between objective and subjective career boundaries. According to them, subjective boundaries are formed in the minds of career actors and they are a set of beliefs held by them about the (im)possibility of making a work role transition. They become objective social facts when enough people (with whom the career actor interacts) evaluate them as factual barriers to cross over (Gunz et al., 2007). Hence, a person may not wish to move and geographically relocate for personal and family reasons (subjective/internal); or career boundaries may be external (objective) and originate on employers' reluctance to hire because they consider the person to lack specific skills or they prefer to select a person from within the organization (Gunz et al., 2000).

In recent years, several studies discuss the role played by distinct types of boundaries on individual careers, and these include: (1) structural discrimination mechanisms based on gender, ethnicity or the age of the person; (2) employers' distrust of inter-organizational mobility, which is seen as a sign that a person lacks organizational loyalty and commitment; (3) the prevalence of internal labour markets on career-building decisions and the preference of organizations to recruit from within; (3) difficulties getting into the networks that promote access to privileged information and knowledge in the labour market; (4) the individuals'

preference in following a career within organizational boundaries because not only does it offer financial security, but it also provides them with trusted professional relationships, sociability opportunities, and peer recognition; (5) the difficulty of changing careers/jobs due to heavy educational investments in a given occupational field; (6) and finally, the need to accommodate other family members' careers and/or other personal commitments (see Dany, 2003; Gubler, Arnold, & Coombs, 2014; Ituma & Simpson, 2009; King, Burke, & Pemberton, 2005; Peel & Inkson, 2004; Pringle & Mallon, 2003; Rodrigues & Guest, 2010; Rodrigues, Guest, & Budjanovcanin, 2016).

The literature on repatriation and career boundaries is relatively scarce. A few studies support the idea that the degree of boundarylessness in international careers is somehow dependent on a range of contextual factors (e.g. Cappellen & Janssens, 2010; Van der Heijden, Van Engen & Paauwe, 2009; Yao, Thorn, & Doherty, 2014). In this regard, the international employees in the studies conducted by Cappellen and Janssens (2010) and Van der Heijden et al. (2009) still valued traditional career paths within the boundaries of their employing organizations. Additionally, in Yao et al.'s (2014) study, several aspects such as family ties, collectivistic cultural norms, or even age and the life cycle, acted as important boundaries to the international career mobility of Chinese expatriates.

As underlined by Mayrhofer, Meyer, and Steyrer (2007) contextual issues are at the core of individual career-building decisions: "only through enlarging and differentiating the view by including configurations of contextual elements can an adequate picture be gained [in the study of careers]" (Mayrhofer et al., 2007, p. 225). Contextual factors such as labour market demands and organizational career systems, social ties and networking opportunities, social class, ethnicity or gender issues, are amongst the numerous contextual elements that matter when studying careers. Moreover, the individuals' work history (e.g. number of employers, patterns of upward mobility, changes in functions and industries, educational and academic background), or age and life cycle (e.g. family situation and personal factors), make up other important factors to consider (Mayrhofer et al., 2007, pp. 216–222).

Given the above, contextual factors may represent important boundaries that delimit individual opportunities for career mobility. In this study, we assert that contextual boundaries mitigate repatriates' turnover intentions. In April of 2011, Portugal requested a bailout from the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, known as the "Troika", to avoid State bankruptcy. Between 2011 and 2013, the Portuguese government was

under the strict supervision of the “Troika” and was the recipient of substantial international financial assistance. Simultaneously, the State implemented a set of reforms that resulted in severe welfare retrenchment in the following years (Zartaloudis, 2014). These reforms reduced salaries for all public sector employees in 2012 and 2013 by freezing promotions and by suspending the 13th and 14th monthly salary payments for workers who earned more than €1,100 a month. Besides, the size of public employment was reduced by limiting personnel admissions. In addition, the general Portuguese workforce tackled with restrictions of pension rights, successive increases in taxes, and the permanent loss or thinning of a number of welfare benefits (Di Mascio, & Natalini, 2015; Zartaloudis, 2014).

At the same time, the private sector was confronted with a substantial job destruction due to three main reasons: severe credit constraints, wage rigidity, and labour market segmentation with an increasingly larger portion of temporary contracts in total employment (Carneiro, Portugal, & Varejão, 2014). The unemployment rate declined from 15.5% in 2012 to 11.1% in 2016 for the total labour force (International Labour Office [ILO], 2018). However, some distinctions between age brackets and education levels in unemployment rates persist. The data presented by the ILO (2018) show that the unemployment among the less-educated group of the population has dropped significantly since the peak of the crisis in 2013, while the unemployment rate of those with mid-level education and higher education credentials is still substantial. This indicates that the first benefitted more from the economic recovery than the latter. It also highlights the difficulty of the Portuguese economy in creating mid-skill and high-skill jobs. In addition, while the unemployment rates for the youth are high, the bulk of unemployment is located in older age groups. Therefore, the ILO report (2018) for the Portuguese labour market concludes that “unemployment is not just an issue specific to young job seekers or school-to-work transition but affects the whole labour force” (p. 33).

Given the context, we expect Portuguese repatriates to face mobility constraints upon return due to reasons such as few employment alternatives and/or a high unemployment rate. This may act as a powerful deterrent in repatriates’ turnover intentions. Above all, it is important to consider context as an important element in repatriates’ career decision-making, and to acknowledge that not every international career is by definition without boundaries (Baruch, & Reis, 2016). In some contexts, more than others, careers are still highly bounded by several constraints.

Our study sheds a new light on repatriates’ career boundaries in the specific context of Portugal. The next section starts by addressing the empirical study context.

Methodology

The context

The Portuguese economy depends mostly on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which, in the last few years, have made an effort to internationalize their operations due to national market stagnation and an adverse economy (Carneiro et al., 2014; Carvalho & Machado, 2016). According to the Portuguese Business Association (AEP, 2013), the expatriation of employees in Portuguese organizations (including SMEs) is steadily growing each year. Likewise, a recent survey (RIEP, 2015) on the degree of internationalization of Portuguese companies reveals that they are currently operating in 81 countries around the world, but there is a distinct concentration in Europe, with 81 companies. This survey also shows that the construction sector is one of the most internationalized industries (RIEP, 2015) (see Table 1 for information on Portuguese Corporate Internalization).

However, according to the Portuguese Business Association (AEP, 2013), one central constraint faced by Portuguese organizations looking to internationalize is the lack of employees with a profile for internationalization. Additionally, this study (AEP, 2013) shows that Portuguese organizations are ill prepared for many aspects of the expatriation cycle. Hence, specific training on cultural adjustment was lacking, and the majority of the organizations did not devise any formal communication plan with the expatriate. Instead, they held limited information about the home organization while on assignment.

Given the rapid pace of internationalization of Portuguese companies and the difficulties in finding employees with a profile for internationalization, we need more information on repatriation processes and the reasons behind the undertaking of successful assignments. This will provide Portuguese organizations with information on how to devise better

Table 1. Portuguese corporate internationalization and number of companies in each country.

| Country destination | Number of Portuguese companies |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Angola | 35 |
| Spain | 29 |
| Brazil | 27 |
| Mozambique | 25 |
| United Kingdom | 17 |
| United States | 15 |
| France | 14 |
| Germany | 12 |
| Cape Verde | 11 |
| Poland | 9 |
| Colombia | 9 |
| Mexico | 9 |

Source: Adapted from RIEP (2015).

repatriation plans and attract more employees into accepting an international assignment.

Research design and participants' description

We employ an extensive case study with a sample comprised of Portuguese repatriates belonging to eight different organizations and the HR managers in those organizations. With the exception of one organization, whose headquarters were located in Germany, all of the repatriates worked for Portuguese-owned organizations, and all of them were Portuguese expatriates who had been repatriated to the Portuguese headquarters after completing the assignment. The reason for including a German-owned organization is that there are few Portuguese organizations with extensive repatriation experience. Additionally, this specific organization is a major employer in its industry sector, and established in Portugal for many decades now. Hence, we looked for organizations with considerable internationalization experience.

In an extensive case study, the focus is not on a single case *per se* but on the phenomena under research, hence we used several cases for comparative purposes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The data collected are not intended to build generalizable accounts on the phenomena under research, but to develop an evidence base to facilitate further theorizing in the research field. Therefore, we collected a similar amount of empirical data in the 8 cases as a guarantee for replication and knowledge generation (Eisenhardt, 1989).

We used two main case selection criteria: (1) the organizations had to have a minimum of 5 years of experience in repatriation processes and had to have operated in diverse industry sectors, and (2) a worker had to be a corporate repatriate with substantial time upon repatriation. We looked to include in our sample repatriates with a minimum of 24 months upon return. However, the final sample also included repatriates who had completed at least a minimum of 6 months upon return (see Table 2 for a detailed description of the sample). We looked for organizations with experience in repatriation management since we wanted to see whether there were any specific HR policies or practices devised for international employees. In addition, we searched for organizations working in distinct industries because we wanted to see whether there were differences or commonalities among them.

Given length of time that had passed since the assignment for a large group of interviewees, we devised some procedures in order to minimize retrospective bias. First, when conducting the interviews, we

Table 2. Sample demographics.

| Case units (n = 8) | Repatriates (n = 42) | HR representatives (n = 17) | Total number of employees | Total number of expatriates | Total number of repatriates |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Company sector | | | | | |
| Automobile Commerce and Distribution | 5 (2 left) | 2 | 960 | 66 | 40 |
| Food Retail and Distribution | 4 (1 left) | 2 | 35 000 | 90 | 6 |
| Construction Company | 5 (2 left) | 2 | 1 800 | 258 | 10 |
| Energy, Logistics and Transportation Services | 4 | 2 | 4 500 | 160 | 8 |
| Industrial Packaging, Metallurgy Sector | 4 | 2 | 932 | 10 | 6 |
| Professional and Business Association | 4 (1 left) | 2 | 295 | 6 | 5 |
| Software and IT Solutions, Healthcare | 4 | 2 | 598 | 23 | 8 |
| Electronic Components and Household Appliances | 12 | 3 | 2 772 | 44 | 24 |
| Headquarters Location of Company | | | | | |
| Portugal | 7 | | | | |
| Germany | 1 | | | | |

| Number of participants (n = 59) | Repatriates (n = 42) | HR representatives (n = 17) | Repatriates assignment | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|----|
| Position in the company | | | Host-country | |
| Junior and Technical | 20 | 5 | Germany | 11 |
| Middle Manager | 17 | 11 | Angola | 10 |
| Senior Manager (CEO) | 4 | 1 | Brazil | 10 |
| Unemployed | 1 | – | China | 4 |
| | | | Poland | 3 |
| Gender | | | Argentina | 1 |
| Male | 35 | 11 | Malasia | 1 |
| Female | 7 | 6 | Netherlands | 1 |
| | | | France | 1 |
| Level of qualifications | | | Time upon return in home-country | |
| Secondary School | 6 | 1 | 1 year or less | 12 |
| Graduate degree | 31 | 15 | 2-4 years | 13 |
| Master degree | 1 | 1 | 5-7 years | 7 |
| MBA | 4 | – | 8 or more years | 8 |
| Tenure | | | Re-expatriates | 2 |
| 1-5 years | 7 | 5 | Length of stay in host-country | |
| 6-10 years | 6 | 4 | < 1 year | 2 |
| 11-15 years | 9 | 5 | 1-4 years | 35 |
| 16-20 years | 12 | 1 | 5 years or more | 5 |
| 21 years plus | 8 | 2 | | |
| Age | | | Number of prior assignments | |
| Under 30 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 40 |
| 30-39 | 15 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| 40-49 | 13 | 6 | 2-4 | 1 |
| 50 plus | 9 | 1 | | |
| Marital Status | | | Family accompanied | |
| Married | 28 | 13 | Yes | 19 |
| Single | 10 | 4 | No | 23 |
| Divorced | 4 | – | Children | |
| | | | Yes | 25 |
| | | | No | 17 |

were cautious not to lead the interviewee in his/her responses. Hence, whenever the interviewee asked about an opinion on a given topic, we sought to give as little information about it as possible as a way to exclude giving any implicit request for corroboration on the subject. This procedure enhances case study rigor, as noted by Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010). Second, we also employed methodological triangulation “within-method” (Flick, 2004) by combining interview questions that invited the narrative of concrete situations with more general questions about the same topic. Third, one of the researchers visited each case study unit often during the fieldwork and was familiarized with the organizational culture.

Additionally, we interviewed 6 individuals who had left their organizations at the time of the interview, because we expected them to add valuable information on the reasons why they left. Of these individuals, two had already embarked on other international work projects, so they might be considered re-expatriates (one of them was living and working in the previous host country). We selected those individuals purposely because they were known for leaving the organization shortly after return.

One of the researchers used her network of personal and professional acquaintances in the corporate field to gain access to the organizations. Once access was granted, the HR organizational representatives identified the repatriates who had returned from assignments undertaken within the organization and noted their contact information. This may have introduced a bias in the sampling. Very often, organizations act as “gatekeepers of research” (Eriksson, & Kovalainen, 2008), and they may wish to oversee the research goals and the data collection. In our case, this was the only way to assure access to the repatriates. Thus, a compromise between the researchers and each organization was sought in order to conduct the empirical study.

We also used a snowball sampling technique by asking the interviewees for additional contacts. The research involved semi-structured interviews with 42 repatriates and 17 HR managers, totalling 59 interviews conducted over a 2-year period. We employed two interview guides from the literature on career success and repatriates’ turnover intentions, one containing interview questions specifically addressed to the repatriates and the other to the HR representatives (see a sample of the interview guide in [Appendix 1](#)). In each company, we interviewed from 4 to 12 repatriates and 2 to 3 HR representatives. In advance, we informed the research participants that the data provided would be confidential, and that all names and other references that could identify them would be anonymized. We also guaranteed that

they could withdraw from the study at any point in time, and that any information provided by them would not be used. Additionally, one researcher signed an informed consent form with each organization representative.

The average length of each interview was 1 h (ranging from a minimum of 45 min to a maximum of 2 h), and they were conducted face-to-face by one of the researchers at a location according to the interviewees' preference. We recorded and fully transcribed all the interviews, except for two cases. In one case, the interviewee did not allow the recording, while in the other case we conducted the interview via e-mail because the person was abroad. In the situation where the recording was declined, the researcher took extensive interview notes during and immediately after the interview to ensure that the information was unbiased by memory time lag. All the interviews were gathered, transcribed and analysed in Portuguese. However, to guarantee data reliability, the interview excerpts used to exemplify the theme categories were translated into English by a native English speaker and then back-translated into Portuguese by the research team, a procedure followed elsewhere (e.g. Pinto et al., 2012).

The repatriates' mean age was 42 years, whereas in the case of the HR representatives, the mean age was 39 years. Regarding the gender distribution, males were the majority of the repatriates: 83.3% ($n = 35$). Only a small number of women had undertaken an international assignment in the organizations included in this study. In some cases, this was related to the organization belief that the host country destination was more adversarial to women than men (e.g. Angola). In addition, in some cases, the organization industry sector was predominantly male (e.g. Construction company). The HR representatives also mentioned family issues as a reason for more women not embarking on an international experience. This may be indicative of the preference of Portuguese organizations for male expatriates and it is in line with the gender demographics of other studies conducted in Portugal (e.g. Pinto et al., 2012). For a detailed summary of the sample characteristics, refer to Table 2.

Data analysis

The data analysis followed a cross-case synthesis analytical technique (Buchanan, 2013) by comparing the empirical data from each case unit across a coding framework. The two researchers conducted the coding separately in order to ensure independent coding and make critical comparisons of the coding template (King, 2013). In an initial phase, we created a

preliminary template (King, 2013) with a set of theme categories (*a priori*) inspired by the existent literature on career success and repatriates' turnover intentions. Afterwards, we repeatedly read all the interview transcripts, which resulted in the generation of other themes (*a posteriori*). We then added those themes to the initial template. Subsequently, the two researchers sorted and clustered all the data using the coding template and that included main themes and related sub-themes or categories (Gibbs, 2007; King, 2013). During this second phase, any differences between the two researchers, when coding the interview data, were discussed until consensus was reached. Because of this procedure, the initial template was often revised and modified (as some theme categories were merged into others) in order to achieve a higher-order classification. This analytical procedure was intended to strengthen the "clarity of the code definitions and how well and consistently the researchers code the text" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 99) and to ensure coding inter-rater reliability. We assesses inter-rater agreement by calculating Cohen's coefficient (Cohen, 1960). We reached an agreement coefficient between the two raters of 86.6%, a value considered excellent.

Refer to Tables 3 and 4 for a detailed description of the theme categories with interview quotes. The names of the organizations participating in the case study and of the interviewees are kept anonymous. Each interviewee may have mentioned more than one theme.

Findings

The intention to stay: Repatriates' and organizational representatives' views on career success-pull motives

The recognition and affection motive

The career success motive in repatriates' decision to stay that was most representative was the Recognition and Affection career-pull motive. Interestingly, the HR representatives did not mention this career motive. Thus, the repatriates spoke about feeling grateful to the company for always having treating them fairly, as illustrated below:

"On return, I felt grateful towards the company, so I did not look for a [job] alternative. (...) Angola is a country that offers good business prospects in the future, and right now, I am the one still overseeing some of the branches over there ... But it is the affection that I have for this company and for the company owners that made me stay [upon return]. They have always treated me with fairness" (Automobile Commerce, male repatriate, 54 years old).

Other interviewees talked about how the company appreciated and valued their services as an important pull motive for staying, as the following quote demonstrates:

Table 3. Characterization of career-pull motives to stay.

| Career success meanings (Dries et al., 2008) | Theme categories and times mentioned | Theme description | Illustrative quotes |
|--|--|--|--|
| Inter-personal-affect | 1. Recognition and Affection <i>Repatriates</i> =20 | Feeling grateful and cared for by the company; Feeling appreciated and valued by others in the company; Feeling attached to the organizational culture and its values | "Most times, is not the monetary issue that matters the most, but it is the 'pat on the back' and the feeling of appreciation. And that is worth more than money, for me, personally. And this has happened over the years, and it was more obvious after the expatriation, so this is one of the things that motivates me to stay" (Software and IT Solutions, repatriate). "The expatriation experience had a huge impact on my decision to stay. (...) After the international experience, I surrendered completely to the company values and culture. (...) So, I do not think about leaving ... " (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, repatriate)." |
| Intra-personal-affect | 2. Financial and Employment Security <i>Repatriates</i> =19 <i>HR Representatives</i> = 12 | Securing good monetary rewards and other material benefits; Having job security and financial stability that allows for a good life outside work | "... the pay is an influential reason, and it makes it enjoyable for me to remain working here [upon return]" (Software and IT Solutions, repatriate). "The person is entitled to a job position in the company on return (...) and that she won't be hampered in terms of job seniority or in terms of pay grade" (Professional and Business Association, HR representative). |
| Intra-personal-achievement | 3. Developmental Career Opportunities <i>Repatriates</i> =14 <i>HR Representatives</i> = 5 | Doing challenging new work; Having increased responsibilities by being assigned to a new work project; Feeling one is continuously learning by using the knowledge and skills acquired during the assignment | "They gave me a new work challenge, a new project [upon return] (...) I have moved around between distinct work projects, different areas. I am technical director right now, and I was asked to create a new department" (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, repatriate). |

(continued)

Table 3. Continued.

| Career success meanings (Dries et al., 2008) | Theme categories and times mentioned | Theme description | Illustrative quotes |
|--|--|--|--|
| Inter-personal-achievement | 4. Career Advancement <i>Repatriates = 7</i> <i>HR Representatives = 6</i> | Being awarded with upward promotions and progressing in the organizational hierarchy; Being formally praised by the company for making a contribution or having a good performance | <p>“Usually, we look for a new function or a new challenge ... we offer a new career opportunity where we feel that we are taking advantage of the repatriate’s new knowledge” (Software and IT Solutions, HR representative).</p> <p>“The position offered to me on return represented a career progression; it was a promotion ...” (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, repatriate).</p> <p>“The repatriates feel that the work that they did during the two years in the assignment is recognized, that it allowed them to move to a higher position in the organization” (Energy, Transports and Logistics, HR Representative).</p> |

“I felt [on return] that they tried to reward me by giving me more responsibilities and general recognition for the work done during the assignment. Some small gestures of appreciation, for me, were a symbol that the company recognized my work and were interested in my repatriation. (...) And those gestures made me feel comfortable and were a sign that the company welcomed the return. And when I feel comfortable, I do not have the need to always be looking for a [job] alternative.” (Energy, Logistics and Transportation Services, male repatriate, 48 years old).

A few repatriates also talked about the importance of feeling attached and connected to the company culture and values as an important career-pull motive for staying, as stated by one repatriate:

“I have a very affective relationship with the company. (...) Because I identify myself with the company management principles, with the leadership’s style and so on..., I feel closely connected to its culture and values (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, male repatriate, 44 years old).

The financial and employment security motive

Overall, both the repatriates and the organizational representatives stated that Financial and Employment Security was the most important career-pull motive for staying with the organization. Both parties talked about

Table 4. Characterization of career-push motives to leave.

| Career success meanings (Dries et al., 2008) | Theme categories and times mentioned | Theme description | Illustrative quotes |
|--|--|--|---|
| Intra-personal-achievement | 1. Lack of Developmental Career Opportunities <i>Repatriates</i> = 15 <i>HR Representatives</i> = 10 | Having the feeling of not being able to professionally grow or learn; Feeling that the knowledge and skills acquired in the assignment were wasted; Lack of new work projects or greater responsibilities and feeling stagnant in one's career | "[Upon return], they kept me stuck for a long time, sort of holding a stick with a carrot in front of me, but never giving me the opportunity in the functional area where I wanted to grow ..." (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, repatriate). "The company does not have the means ... to assure career development to all the repatriates. (...) I think that can weigh in the decision to leave the company, the person knowing that she is coming back to a job that she already knows and that is not that big of a deal ..." (Professional and Business Association, HR representative). |
| Intra-personal-affect | 2. Financial and Employment Insecurity <i>Repatriates</i> = 12 <i>HR Representatives</i> = 8 | Losing money and other job perks; Having a pay downgrade; Feeling job insecurity | "[Upon return], for a period of about a year, a year and a half, there was a lot of uncertainty regarding my reintegration in the company, so I considered leaving because I felt insecure ..." (Energy, Logistics and Transportation Services, repatriate). "And they [the repatriates] find that there is a huge difference in terms of salary. When they return, their compensation package is downgraded and that is a huge shock for some!" (Construction, HR representative). |
| Inter-personal-affect | 3. Recognition and Affection Breach <i>Repatriates</i> = 11 <i>HR Representatives</i> = 2 | Feeling unappreciated by others in the company; Feeling that one is no longer a trusted member by corporate leadership | "When I was on the assignment, they gave me a first-class company car, yet, when I came back home, they gave me a car that was always crashing, it was everyone's car ... So, I |

(continued)

Table 4. Continued.

| Career success meanings (Dries et al., 2008) | Theme categories and times mentioned | Theme description | Illustrative quotes |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| | | | felt there was kind of a disdain for me. I felt that I was not being valued or even recognized ..." (Construction, repatriate who left). "[talking about a repatriate who had left] The lack of communication and the personal distancing of that particular person with the new administration was highly influential in his decision to leave [upon return]" (Professional and Business Association, HR representative). |

the importance of having a good compensation package and a secure job position within the employing organization upon return as a reason for staying, as illustrated below:

"I am grateful to the company for letting me have this international experience. They have always assured me that I would have a secure job position on return, and I've been working here for 22 years now. (...) And the international experience gave me a competitive advantage in comparison to other colleagues that have never lived or worked abroad... And the company rewarded me with a good compensation package on return, which I appreciated..." (Food Retail and Distribution, male repatriate, 41 years old).

Additionally, the issue of compensation had a greater weight in some industries than in others, with the repatriates in the areas of Electronics and Household Appliances apparently being in greater demand in the job market when compared to other industries, such as Construction. This meant that HR managers were more careful when devising the rewards package:

"The financial issue is a priority for us, our employees are extremely coveted, and the repatriates even more because they acquired a unique know-how that is highly valued in the job market... thus, we have to be careful, so when they return, we try to place them in high-profile positions that offer an attractive compensation package" (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, HR representative, male, 49 years old).

The developmental career opportunities motive

A third important career-pull motive in repatriates' decision to stay was Developmental Career Opportunities. Hence, repatriates emphasized, on

the one hand, the opportunity to work in new projects and take on increased responsibilities and, on the other hand, the opportunity to use their new knowledge and know-how in these work projects, as reported by the following interviewee:

“I am responsible for running three general hospitals... they are the principal hospitals in the country, and I was the chosen person for upgrading all the software. (...) I faced huge challenges abroad, I managed to computerize hospitals in Brazil that no one believed could be done, and I can now put that know-how to use, which gives me a lot of satisfaction” (Software and IT Solutions, male repatriate, 42 years old).

According to some HR representatives, providing a talented workforce with new work challenges was vital for retention purposes: “... *until now, we’ve managed to offer new work challenges to our repatriates and we’ve been able to profit from the experience and the know-how that they’ve acquired in the assignment. And this is essential if we wish to retain the most talented repatriates...*” (Industrial Packaging, male, 36 years old).

The career advancement motive

A fourth career-pull motive was Advancement, more precisely, upward promotions upon return. The achievement of career advancement seemed to be a more relevant career success motive for those repatriates belonging to the companies in the Automobile Commerce, Food Retail and Distribution, and Electronic Components and Household Appliances industries:

“I’ve worked in this company since always, and when I returned from the international assignment, the company board rewarded me with a new job position, a new function, and a career progression. (...) For these reasons, I never felt the need to search for other functions at other companies” (Food Retail and Distribution, male repatriate, 46 years old).

The HR representatives also acknowledged the importance of meeting repatriates’ expectations about career advancement and promotion opportunities. Nevertheless, they underlined the difficulty they presently faced in guaranteeing a prominent position on return for all of them. Thus, some HR managers in this study considered the initial establishment of realistic career expectations prior to the international assignment and the assurance of at least a job position on return to be important for repatriates’ retention:

“What is most appreciated by the expatriates is that we clarify to them very early on what they can expect on return in terms of their future employment contracts... He is fully aware that the package [a job position on return and a good salary] that was

agreed upon at the onset is what he gets on return, what was mutually agreed upon is kept” (Industrial Packaging HR representative, male, 52 years old).

The intention to leave: Repatriates’ and organizational representatives’ views on career success-push motives

The lack of developmental career opportunities motive

The Lack of Developmental Career Opportunities was the central career-push motive that made the repatriates feel that they had low success in their careers. Hence, the repatriates felt that the company had wasted the skills they had acquired with the international experience, which made them want to leave:

“The competencies that I acquired in the international assignment were not rewarded. In a way, my skills were wasted. They weren’t utilized at all, because I switched functions on return. So, the knowledge that I’ve acquired does not serve for much! (...) If I see an attractive offer, I am not 27 years old anymore... it is a matter of evaluating the soundness of that offer, but it is quite possible [to quit] (Energy, Logistics and Transportation Services, male repatriate, 38 years).

At the same time, some of them felt they had stalled in their careers, and they admitted that they would leave the company if they envisioned a suitable job alternative, as illustrated below:

“When I went on the assignment, the only thing that we agreed upon was that I would have a job waiting for me, but we did not agree on what type of job it would be. And when I returned, they asked me if I would be interested in a specific function, doing this and that. And I accepted, but it took a year until I started doing that specific job. (...) And I like what I do, but if you ask me if I long for a more rewarding and interesting career opportunity, I won’t say no!” (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, male repatriate, 38 years old)

At the Automobile Commerce and Distribution company, the 2 repatriates who had quit also underlined the lack of career development opportunities as the main push motive for leaving. These repatriates felt that by failing to plan their career development upon return, the message coming across was that they were unwelcomed. In one case, the person accepted a new job offer immediately after the end of the corporate assignment and re-expatriated to the host country:

“It happened to some of us [expatriates]. We don’t want to return because we feel that is kind of a huge favour what they do for us, finding something for us to do back home (...) There is no career planning for the expatriates returning home... So, at the end of my contract, I left...” (Automobile Commerce and Distribution, female repatriate who left, 38 years old).

The HR representatives also emphasized the lack of career and development opportunities as the main push motive for repatriates’ feeling

unsuccessful and wanting to leave the company. In the case of the Automobile Commerce and Distribution company, both HR representatives recognized that the lack of a compatible job position upon return was the main motive for quitting:

“But very often we have repatriation situations where... well, they do not happen at the right time, and in those cases, it’s very difficult for us to place the repatriate in a job position compatible with the one that the person held in the assignment. So, sooner or later, people ponder leaving because they feel stalled in their careers...” (HR representative, 28 years old).

The financial and employment insecurity motive

A second theme in the interviews was Financial and Employment Insecurity behind repatriates’ leaving intentions. While a few repatriates mentioned feeling job insecure as a career-push motive to look for other job alternatives, others referred to the issue of loss of compensation as the main career outcome leading to turnover: “*The salary that they offered me on return was highly dissatisfying. I think that the company did not give me the recognition and the respect that I deserved, and I even felt that the money they offered was an insult*” (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, male repatriate, 34 years old).

In the cases of the Food Retail and Distribution and the Construction companies, the repatriates quit shortly upon returning home. These repatriates refused to accept the new job position offered to them, which they saw as an unacceptable career demotion that meant the loss of compensation and other benefits, as described below:

“The decision to leave began taking shape still in Brazil because I started planning my return, and I asked: ‘well, when I return to Portugal, where will I be placed? And what are the new [contract] premises and job position?’ And right there, I started to see a problem because they immediately eliminated a career level, which meant that I would lose money. It was not only the salary but also a career demotion, which meant that I would lose the annual performance premium, stock options, and so on... And I said: ‘but that was not what I was told at the beginning!’ (...) And then the company tried to drag the situation for a while. They said no to all my requests. We negotiated for a while, but we did not reach a compromise” (Food Retail and Distribution, male repatriate, 47 years old, unemployed at the time of the interview).

The HR managers in the Automobile Commerce and Distribution and the Construction companies particularly emphasized the salary downgrade as a career motive leading to repatriate turnover. Other companies’ HR representatives also mentioned this motive: “... *the repatriates that leave are going to earn much more. I have had the opportunity to check that in the exit interviews...*” (Professional and Business Association HR representative).

Additionally, the HR managers noted that most repatriates occupied a high-profile position while in the international assignment, which made it difficult upon return to place them in a job position that paid equally well or that was considered a high-status position. The following testimony is indicative of this reasoning:

“I think that [the repatriates who leave the company] feel that their extraordinary efforts in the assignment are not rewarded. They faced adversarial work conditions to defend the company’s reputation and name, and then when they return, they have certain expectations career-wise; of a career promotion and a good salary, and the expectations that were nurtured are not always met when they return, and this is why people leave...” (Automobile Commerce and Distribution, HR, male, 28 years old).

The recognition and affection breach motive

A third career–push motive that accounted for repatriates’ intentions to leave was the feelings of breach in terms of Recognition and Affection. In this case, some of the repatriates referred to a breach of trust in leadership as the main reason for leaving, whereas others also pinpointed feeling devalued and unappreciated by others in the company. Upon return, some repatriates are faced with the reality that the company leadership changed, and that the new leadership no longer views them as trusted corporate members. Repatriates belonging to the Energy, Logistics and Transportation Services, the Professional and Business Association, and the Construction companies mentioned this career motive. The following testimony is revealing:

“[Upon returning], the change in the company administration influenced a lot, a lot, my decision to quit! I was a trustworthy person of the prior administration. (...) They put me aside [on return], and that was it for me! But I understand it perfectly! The leadership changed, and they wanted to appoint persons they trust to occupy the prominent positions in the company. And I feel bad because I think that the new administration should have valued and trusted me. I did a good job, sometimes with great personal sacrifices! [The company made him liable for poor performance results that he considered outside of his accountability, and he described himself as a scapegoat.] (Construction company, male repatriate who left, 38 years old).

By comparison, only in the case of the Professional and Business Association did the HR representatives refer to repatriates’ disagreements and poor relationship with company leaders as a push motive for leaving the company. The HR representatives explained that the company did not have a well-structured repatriation plan and that often the promises that were made by the corporate leadership to the expatriates could not be met on return. This often led to a breach of trust in the leadership. This was especially the case as far promotions and career advancement issues were concerned.

The role played by career boundaries in turnover intentions

In this study, repatriates' turnover intentions depend on a set of career boundaries that hinder their career mobility. The findings show that career boundaries function as barriers that mitigate repatriates' intentions to leave intentions. Those boundaries concern: (1) personal boundaries, (2) family boundaries, (3) the economic downturn, and (4) perceptions of age-related discriminatory behaviours by employers.

Personal boundaries

The personal boundaries mentioned by some of the repatriates were two-fold. First, linked with their individual history, some repatriates spoke about their own work/career history and their formal education (Mayrhofer et al., 2007). They highlighted the fact of working for many years for the same company, and how that mattered in terms of an increased sense of security. In addition, they felt that the absence of employment rotation was detrimental to career mobility since they lacked the knowledge and the diverse job experiences:

“The feeling of security is a key point: security and knowing the business well. I already know this company well and the business. Those are two fundamental aspects. Besides, I do not have many other job experiences to show for in the job market... “(Energy, Transports and Logistics, male repatriate, 38 years old, job seniority: 11 years)

“In my case, I have worked in this company for 18 years in various areas; it is a company where I was able to grow professionally..., (...) Also, I am offered job security, and I know reasonably well all the corners of the house. But I think it would be difficult for me to change to another business sector because I do not have the knowledge on how other industries operate...” (Food Retail and Distribution, male repatriate, 52 years old)

In one case, the interviewee talked about how being alone and fearing for her economic security had made her decide not to leave, despite her demotion on return:

“When I returned, I was demoted. I don't earn as much as I did in the assignment, but I don't have all that responsibility on my shoulders... This situation did not deter me from staying... because I am all alone and I am afraid to look elsewhere. Despite all that happened I still feel secure here ... and they still pay me every month” (Professional and Business Association, female repatriate, 45 years old).

Moreover, a few repatriates also mentioned not having a college degree and the appropriate academic qualifications for the job market. They saw this as a handicap and a reason to remain with the organization where they had been able to prove their worth:

“(...) I have another major handicap ... I do not have a college degree to show for! I started to work at a young age here, and everything that I’ve managed to accomplish professionally, I’ve done it through great effort and on my own and not thanks to any college degree” (Software and IT Solutions, male repatriate, 42 years old, ninth grade).

“(...) If I leave now to work for another company, they will probably offer me an administrative post. That is because I only have a secondary school degree. But this company gave me the opportunity to work as a construction technician, and I want to keep working as a [construction] technician and have the possibility to take a course. If I was to leave for another company, they’d probably say: ‘construction technician?! But you do not have the know-how!’ (Construction company, male repatriate, 24 years old, twelfth grade)

Second, some repatriates seemed unwilling to relocate because of community ties and the geographical proximity to their hometown:

“[upon return] I had two or three job offers that I refused ... , from multinational companies. It was to work abroad, which I turned down. I want to live in Portugal. (...) I do not know if the word is ‘settled down’ ... , I live just around the corner, nearby, and I have worked for 35 years in this company. So, I know everyone in the community, I am familiar with the smells, the factories...” (Industrial Packaging, male repatriate, 55 years old)

“(...) I am close to home, hence it never crossed my mind to leave the company ... , and the company knows about my familial situation; I married recently. My closest family and friends live here; this is my hometown. I have always shown my preference for working close to home...” (Household Appliances, male repatriate, 46 years old)

Family career boundaries

The family career boundaries pinpointed by the repatriates were two sided: on the one hand, the repatriates mentioned economic reasons, and, on the other hand, they described the need to reconcile dual-career demands in the couple. On the one case, the repatriate’s need to financially provide for his family made him fearful of accepting a job offer that entailed a major change in job routines and certain risks, as the following quote shows:

“If I knew at the time [before the repatriation] how my repatriation would be handled by the company, if I could have anticipated my troubled reintegration, maybe I would have stayed abroad. (...) I have three young children, so I have hesitated [to accept the job offer after returning] due to the uncertainty of the situation. It’s a completely new function in a completely different organization, and you think twice when you have a family to support, and I decided not to follow through...” (Energy, Logistics and Transportation Services, male repatriate, 38 years old).

In another case, the repatriate refused a more attractive job offer upon returning because there was a need to reconcile his career with that of his wife’s:

“But I have received several job offers [upon return]. I had a solid offer about 4 months ago, and I even spoke with my director and with the administration. I told them exactly what they offered me (...) But the job was in Lisbon. And my personal situation ..., my wife already commutes to work every day [more than 100 km], and she would have to relocate and find a new job ..., and I ended up staying, but I felt tempted to accept” (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, male repatriate, 31 years old).

The economic downturn

The most important structural constraint pinpointed by the repatriates was the difficult economic situation that Portugal has endured for the last few years, with slow economic growth accompanied by high unemployment rates. Hence, the repatriates perceived the lack of matching job alternatives as a strong motive not to quit their current jobs, despite feeling disillusioned with their career development:

“I returned to a lower position than the one I had before going on the assignment, and it was inferior to the one I had over there [in the host organization] (...) The company reintegrated me in a job position that I dislike, in the commercial area... (...) I am not considering the possibility of leaving right now despite all the negative points, because of the bad economic conjuncture and the high unemployment rates that we now have. So, that is not an option [to leave]. But there are times when I regret the decision of coming back” (Software and IT Solutions, female repatriate, 37 years old).

“I am aware of the harsh economic reality of the country. And the job offer has to be very, very interesting to deserve my attention. I take risks, but they have to be calculated risks. If the job offered is an interesting function, but if they do not guarantee the job continuity, I would never consider accepting it ... (...) I like challenges, but I do not like to take unnecessary risks” (Electronic Components and Household Appliances, male, 36 years old).

In addition, the HR representatives’ also pinpointed the lack of matching job alternatives and the weak economy as major reasons for repatriates’ decision not to leave:

“It’s obvious that the current economic climate is beneficial to the decision of people not leaving the company, at least in our business sector, where people do not envision other job alternatives... nowadays, people are less willing to risk, they are less prone to change jobs. (...) And those [employees] with international experience know that our competitors might not reward them with the same job perks or pay grade... (Energy, Logistics and Transportation Services, HR representative, female, 44 years old).

“(...) The labour market is not very favourable at the present time (...) and it is not offering that many opportunities [to make a job change] (...) and despite some small recovery, the economy is still adverse ... (Construction company, HR representative, female, 28 years old)

Age discrimination

The perception of age discrimination was a second important structural constraint. Hence, age was paramount for some interviewees when pondering employment alternatives. For instance, one repatriate talked about how the job market discriminates against older workers and how he feels it is increasingly difficult to compete with a highly educated generation of young workers willing to work for much less money:

“I have answered some job ads, and I did it fairly recently, but I must confess, I do not meet the requirements of those ads. They are asking for very young applicants, or, on the other hand, they ask for applicants with 10 or 15 years of experience in senior management positions. In addition, the competition is fierce; there are many job contenders like me out there. And I cannot say that I have 10 or 15 years of experience in senior management, nor am I 35 years old anymore; and I cannot be subjected to a salary level like the one being offered nowadays to a younger workforce and that holds a higher education degree... Nowadays, there is the problem of a highly qualified cheap labour force...” (Professional and Business Association, male repatriate, 53 years old).

Additionally, the perception of age discrimination was more common among the repatriates that also held extensive job seniority, as the following quote indicates:

“I am well regarded in this company; I have a legacy in here. I am knowledgeable of many work projects, and so I have good career prospects. (...) Besides, soon I will be turning 55 years old. And outside of here, as much experience as I have, I probably will not have many job opportunities. Hence, one thing leads to the other [not to leave the company]. I cannot deny it...” (Automobile Commerce and Distribution, male repatriate, 54 years old, job seniority: 16 years)

Likewise, some HR managers agreed with the repatriates' view concerning the issue of age as a possible deterrent factor when seeking job alternatives:

“We are talking about people that... given their prior career history, and their older age, are not as adventurous as a younger person might be. We are talking of people who have a more settled lifestyle, who do not want to risk the certain for the uncertain, and that know that the job market is not hiring. They know that the company has its virtues and its faults; nevertheless, it still assures them with certain tranquillity and a salary. And I believe that is why they stay even if they are not satisfied career-wise... (Professional and Business Association, HR representative, male, 47 years old).

Conclusions

The main goal of this study was to understand repatriates' personal opinions about their career success motives in the years following an international assignment and how that may prompt turnover intentions. The

findings show that how repatriates perceive career success upon return is a weighting reason in their turnover intentions. Additionally, the findings also shed a light on the role played by career boundaries on repatriates' career mobility.

Implications for theory and study contributions

Our study is the first one relating Dries et al.'s (2008) multidimensional career success model to repatriates' career success–pull–push motives and their turnover intentions. We add a new contribution to the literature on career success and repatriation by showing that Affect career success motives (both Intra–Inter–Personal) are, on the whole, more important than Achievement career success motives in these repatriates' decisions to stay with or leave the organization.

First, our findings reveal that in terms of career success–pull motives to stay with the organization, repatriates' decisions are highly influenced by the “Inter-Personal-Affect” career success dimension of Recognition and Affection. Secondly, the repatriates highlight the “Intra-Personal-Affect” dimension of Financial and Employment Security. These career success motives match Dries et al.'s (2008) career success model.

Interestingly, the HR representatives did not mention the Recognition and Affection career–pull motive as a reason for repatriates' to stay with the organization. One explanation for this finding may relate to how both parties perceive the unwritten terms of the employment relationship and that may not be coincident. The studies that address the issue of repatriates' psychological contract (PC) may be useful in interpreting these findings (e.g. Aldossari & Robertson, 2018; Chi & Chen, 2007; Pate & Scullion, 2009). The PC refers “to an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party” (Rousseau, 1989, p.123). In Pate and Scullion's study (2009), while the HR representatives held a more transactional understanding of the PC terms, the repatriates still expected full recognition for undertaking the assignment and a secure job position upon return. Hence, they held a more relational understanding of employment terms and conditions than the HR managers. The same may be happening in the current study. This explains why feeling cared for by the organization, and feeling appreciated and valued by others, or having financial and job security, is so important for these repatriates' perceptions of career success. The way the repatriates perceive the terms and conditions of the employment relationship revolves around relational/affective career motives and this is not the case of the HR representatives. Some distinctions between industries should be outlined here

– , with the repatriates in the Construction, Food Retail and Distribution, and Professional and Business Association companies exhibiting a more relational understanding of the employment relationship.

Second, and as to Achievement career success meanings (Dries et al., 2008), this study shows that the “Inter-Personal-Achievement” dimension Advancement is the least important motive in these repatriates’ retention. Furthermore, the “Intra-Personal-Achievement” dimension of Self-Development, that is, doing challenging work and career developmental tasks, is a more significant career success–pull motive in repatriates’ decisions to stay. This finding is somehow unexpected since previous research on repatriation and career success highlights career advancement (e.g. upward promotions) as highly important for repatriates’ organizational retention (e.g. Kraimer et al., 2009; Suutari & Brewster, 2003; Suutari et al., 2018). One explanation for this finding may relate to the adversarial economic conditions faced by Portuguese companies at the time of the interviews. The Portuguese prolonged economic recession that culminated with an international financial assistance programme (Zartaloudis, 2014) has had a profound impact on labour market demands and on national companies’ economic survival. Thus, these repatriates are more worried about continuing with their current jobs. Hence, they may look at career advancement and self-development as secondary career success–pull motives in an adverse employment context.

Third, the low perception of success in terms of Self-Development through one’s work and the feeling that one’s knowledge and skills are wasted is the most important career–push motive (“Intra-Personal-Achievement”) to leave the organization. This finding concurs with other studies that also pinpoint the lack of challenging learning opportunities, or the waste of the knowledge and skills acquired during the assignment, as a major career motive for leaving (e.g. Bossard & Peterson, 2005; Pattie et al., 2010). Also, particularly important for repatriates’ perceptions of low career success are the feelings of Financial and Employment Insecurity (“Intra-Personal-Affect”), and the Recognition and Affection Breach (“Inter-Personal-Affect”). The recognition and affection breach is particularly felt regarding corporate leaderships, sometimes due to changes in leaderships during the assignment. This recognition breach often led to unmet promises in terms of career advancement. The repatriates in the Professional and Business Association and the Construction companies especially underlined the company’s lack of appreciation as a career–push motive.

The study described by Aldossari and Robertson (2018) found that the majority of the repatriates and 70% of the HR managers in Saudi Arabian

companies highlighted that promotions on return depended upon ‘who you knew’ inside the company. The HR managers interviewed underscored the absence of a structured promotion policy as a major reason for repatriates’ PC breach. In the current study, the decisions about promotions and career advancement also seem to be determined on a subjective basis, at least in some companies –, and with no predefined promotion criteria, similarly to Aldossari and Robertson findings (2018). This might have had negative consequences in terms of repatriates’ turnover intentions.

As previously underlined, affective career outcomes are particularly important for those repatriates holding a relational view of the employment relationship terms and conditions. In Pate and Scullion’s (2009) study, the lack of appreciation for the repatriates that had completed the assignment was a major motive of career frustration. In the current study, a more relational view of the employment relationship held by the repatriates, in comparison to the HR representatives, may explain why the former perceive the Recognition and Affection Breach as an important career-push motive.

Fourth, this study highlights the importance of career boundaries as a mitigating factor in repatriates’ turnover intentions. Two important structural boundaries mentioned by some of the repatriates and that constrained their career mobility were the lack of suitable job alternatives in the labour market, and the perceptions of age discrimination by potential employers. Our findings substantiate Chiang et al.’s (2018) assertion that older repatriates may perceive their career advancement as less promising as they age. This makes them more cautious about searching for career alternatives elsewhere, thus weakening their leave intentions.

Additionally, on the personal side, the repatriates’ work history and their formal education delimit their intentions to leave (Mayrhofer et al., 2007). Contrary to Stahl et al.’s (2002) research, where the majority of expatriates were confident that the demand for their international expertise and skills was high, making it easy for them to leave the organization for a better job alternative, we do not see this trend happening in our research. Once more, a possible explanation for this finding may relate to the unfavourable economic situation that has characterized Portugal for the last few years (Carneiro et al., 2014; Zartaloudis, 2014). This may have deterred these repatriates from quitting, as they envisioned few or unsuitable job alternatives in the national labour market. Hence, external labour market conditions delimit individual career opportunities (Mayrhofer et al., 2007).

Along with this, Portuguese repatriates seem to share the national cultural feature of high-risk avoidance (Hofstede, 2001) with a preference for work environments that provide job security. A significant number of them seemed to have a preference for a traditional career

characterized by low physical career mobility, and a preference for working and advancing within the boundaries of a single organization. This explains why some repatriates seem afraid to risk a career move without a safety net, and why Financial and Employment Security stands out as an important career-pull motive. Besides, some repatriates possessed low educational credentials, which strengthened their perceptions of reduced opportunities for career mobility and changes in employers or industries.

Finally, family boundaries also delimit these repatriates' intentions to leave. According to Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions, Portugal presents a moderate individualist orientation. This means that in the Portuguese context, kinship and community ties still carry weight. Hence, the findings in our study concur with Yao et al.'s (2014) findings in what relates the role played by family ties and responsibilities as a boundary in career mobility. In Yao et al.'s (2014) research, the Chinese expatriates felt pressured by social and family responsibilities to settle down in their careers and return to China. As well, in the current study, some of the repatriates also feel compelled to settle down in their careers due to family responsibilities.

In Gubler et al.'s study (2014), boundaryless careers were constrained by the individuals' rejection of career opportunities that entailed an unwanted geographic move. In the Portuguese context, family and community networks of assistance play an important role in what regards the care of young children, or even in the provision of household assistance with several resources (e.g. kinship help with meals and other housekeeping chores) (Portugal, 2004). These are major resources that only family and community ties are able to supply, and one central motive for repatriates' unwillingness to relocate geographically and live far away from their communities of origin.

In sum, this study adds further evidence to the discussion about the nature and character of career boundaries. The perception of age discrimination, of the lack of suitable employment alternatives, and of family and personal boundaries weakened these repatriates' willingness of actual physical career mobility. Thus, even in the case of international careers, which are believed to be the archetype of a boundaryless career (Stahl et al., 2002), structural-contextual boundaries still carry weight.

Implications for practice

The practical implications arising from our study are straightforward. First, the HR managers seem to be aware of the relevance of ensuring career development plans and promotion opportunities for repatriates'

retention. Thus, our findings reiterate the importance of organizations improving their career development policies and practices for repatriate retention and improved feelings of career success. Given that the Lack of Developmental Career Opportunities is a central motive in repatriates' experiences of low career success, HR managers should carefully assess which functions or job positions might contribute to the effective use of the new knowledge and skills acquired by the repatriate. Moreover, the relevance of well-devised career development plans for repatriates' retention is well documented in the literature (e.g. Aldossari & Robertson, 2018; Bolino, 2007). Hence, the companies should pay more attention to the design of rewards packages that tie individual performance goals to corporate strategy (Shen et al., 2015) as a way to determine pay and promotion and post-repatriation developmental opportunities.

Second, companies should engage in strategic planning as regards their need for an international workforce in the short and long term, and the HR function should be better prepared and aligned with overall corporate strategy regarding present and future human capital forecast needs. Repatriation management should not be contingent on finding the 'right time' to return, which seems to be a common practice in some of these companies, as described by their HR representatives. Hence, as proposed by Stahl et al. (2002, p. 224), it is essential that a company gain "a better appreciation of who is leaving and who is staying because it will provide the basis for designing career development programs and repatriation practices". Hence, HR managers should provide individuals with accurate career expectations before and after the repatriation phase (Kulkarni, Lengnick-Hall, & Valk, 2010; Vidal et al., 2008). Additionally, as found in Kulkarni et al.'s (2010) research, the repatriation process would benefit from having a HR department whose practices are tailored or structured according to repatriates' needs, such as offering guidance regarding family support and reintegration, or by simply asking how the employee is doing upon return and what is missing.

Third, our findings call attention to the issue of breach of trust in corporate leadership due to unfulfilled promises of career advancement upon return. Hence, companies should consider keeping past career promises to their repatriates despite leadership changes. For instance, they should implement well-defined and explicit HR policies and practices regarding career development and promotion criteria, and that do not rely on casuistic decisions made by corporate leaderships on an informal basis. In this regard, the use of connectivity mechanisms (Bolino, 2007), such as regular visits to the home organization during the assignment, is essential as a way for expatriates to keep up-to-date with major changes and influential events that occur at the home

organization –, as it is a change in corporate leadership and career progression criteria.

Study limitations and future research

Our study's contributions need to be considered in light of the study's limitations. First, although we ensured theoretical saturation (Gibbs, 2007) of the data gathered from the various interviews conducted with the repatriates and the organizational representatives, the study would have benefited from more information from repatriates who had already left their companies. Unfortunately, we were not able to collect more than six cases because the companies did not provide access to data on the repatriates who left the company. In many cases, the company's HR representatives refused to give information or claimed they did not know the whereabouts of the repatriates after leaving. This made it impossible to interview a larger number of individuals.

Second, the organizational representatives chose the interviewees in each case unit. This might have led to social desirable answers and cause biased sampling. Nevertheless, we guaranteed information confidentiality and the anonymity of all participants, which we believe helped to overcome any fears regarding the sharing of sensitive information. However, future studies should try to contact repatriates not appointed by the company representatives. Hence, researchers should consider the use of social media platforms such as LinkedIn to recruit study participants.

Future research should look into the career boundaries that pose important limitations to the career mobility of international workers in more detail. Existing research shows that international workers are better equipped to embrace a boundaryless career because of their augmented career capital (Doherty & Dickmann, 2009), such as expanded professional networks (e.g. social capital). Our study suggests that contextual-structural boundaries might undermine the power of career capital resources or at least how repatriates perceive their worth. Future research could also compare whether or not assigned and self-initiated expatriates perceive career boundaries differently, as well as how to overcome them.

Finally, the literature that addresses the relationship between repatriation and career outcomes is under-researched and lacks theoretical development (Ramaswami et al., 2016). Other approaches that go beyond the organizational rewards level and human capital variables may be useful in explaining repatriation outcomes (Ramaswami et al., 2016). When we consider the wider context, it may be helpful to look deeper into community and relational ties as fundamental aspects in repatriates' career decision-making. Furthermore, we need more longitudinal research

designs that allow the comparison of repatriates' satisfaction with their career outcomes at different points in time.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the participants of this research for their time and availability and for sharing their valuable experiences. They are also very grateful to the anonymous reviewers and the Editor for the suggestions and recommendations in the improvement of this manuscript.

References

- AEP (Associação Empresarial de Portugal. (2013). *Nómadas globais: Impactos multiculturais na internacionalização*. Retrieved from http://ipme.aeportugal.pt/Repositorio/i2PME_Multiculturalidade_web.pdf
- Afiouni, F., & Karam, C. M. (2014). Structure, agency, and notions of career success: A process-oriented, subjectively malleable and localized approach. *Career Development International*, 19(5), 548–571. doi:10.1108/CDI-01-2013-0007
- Aldossari, M., & Robertson, M. (2016). The role of 'wasta' in repatriates' perceptions of a breach to the psychological contract: A Saudi Arabian case study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(16), 1854–1873. doi:10.1080/09585192.2015.1088561
- Aldossari, M., & Robertson, M. (2018). Repatriation and the psychological contract: A Saudi Arabian comparative study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 29, 1458–1512.
- Araujo, B. F. B., Teixeira, M. L. M., Cruz, P. B., & Malini, E. (2014). Understanding the adaptation of organisational and self-initiated expatriates in the context of Brazilian culture. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25, 2489–2509. doi:10.1080/09585192.2012.743470
- Arthur, M. B., Khapova, S. N., & Wilderom, C. M. (2005). Career success in a boundaryless career world. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(2), 177–202. doi:10.1002/job.290
- Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(3), 472–491. doi:10.2307/259305
- Baruch, Y., & Reis, C. (2016). How global are boundaryless careers and how boundaryless are global careers? Challenges and a theoretical perspective. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 58(1), 13–27. doi:10.1002/tie.21712
- Baruch, Y., Steele, D. J., & Quantrill, G. A. (2002). Management of expatriation and repatriation for novice global player. *International Journal of Manpower*, 23(7), 659–671. doi:10.1108/01437720210450824
- Benson, G. S., & Pattie, M. (2008). Is expatriation good for my career? The impact of expatriate assignments on perceived and actual career outcomes. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19(9), 1636–1653. doi:10.1080/09585190802295058
- Biemann, T., & Braakmann, N. (2013). The impact of international experience on objective and subjective career success in early careers. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(18), 3438–3456. doi:10.1080/09585192.2013.775176

- Black, J. S., Gregersen, H. B., & Mendenhall, M. E. (1992). Toward a theoretical framework of repatriation adjustment. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 23(4), 737–760. doi:[10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490286](https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490286)
- Bolino, M. C. (2007). Expatriate assignments and intra-organizational career success: Implications for individuals and organizations. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38(5), 819–835. doi:[10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400290](https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400290)
- Bossard, A. B., & Peterson, R. B. (2005). The repatriate experience as seen by American expatriates. *Journal of World Business*, 40(1), 9–28. doi:[10.1016/j.jwb.2004.10.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2004.10.002)
- Buchanan, D. A. (2013). Case studies in organizational research. In G. Symon, & C. Cassel (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research: Core methods and current challenges* (pp. 351–370, 2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Cappellen, T., & Janssens, M. (2010). The career reality of global managers: An examination of career triggers. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(11), 1884–1910. doi:[10.1080/09585192.2010.505090](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2010.505090)
- Carneiro, A., Portugal, P., & Varejão, J. (2014). Catastrophic job destruction during the Portuguese economic crisis. *Journal of Macroeconomics*, 39, 444–457. doi:[10.1016/j.jmacro.2013.09.018](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmacro.2013.09.018)
- Carvalho, C., & Machado, C. F. (2016). About the expatriation process in SMEs: A Portuguese look at the HRM role. In C. Machado & J. P. Davim (Eds.), *Organizational management: Policies and practices in a global market* (pp. 229–249). London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Cerdin, J.-L., & Pargneux, M. L. (2014). The impact of expatriates' career characteristics on career and job satisfaction, and intention to leave: An objective and subjective fit approach. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(14), 2033–2049. doi:[10.1080/09585192.2013.870291](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.870291)
- Chi, S.-C. S., & Chen, S. -C. (2007). Perceived psychological contract fulfillment and job attitudes among repatriates: An empirical study in Taiwan. *International Journal of Manpower*, 28, 474–488. doi:[10.1108/01437720710820008](https://doi.org/10.1108/01437720710820008)
- Chiang, F. T., van Esch, E., Birtch, T. A., & Shaffer, M. A. (2018). Repatriation: What do we know and where do we go from here. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 29(1), 188–226. doi:[10.1080/09585192.2017.1380065](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1380065)
- Cho, T., Hutchings, K., & Marchant, T. (2013). Key factors influencing Korean expatriates' and spouses' perceptions of expatriation and repatriation. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(5), 1051–1075. doi:[10.1080/09585192.2012.725079](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2012.725079)
- Cohen, J. (1960). A coefficient of agreement for nominal scales. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 20(1), 37–46. doi:[10.1177/001316446002000104](https://doi.org/10.1177/001316446002000104)
- Dany, F. (2003). 'Free actors' and organizations: Critical remarks about the new career literature based on French insights. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(5), 821–838. doi:[10.1080/0958519032000080820](https://doi.org/10.1080/0958519032000080820)
- De Eccher, U., & Duarte, H. (2018). How images about emerging economies influence the willingness to accept expatriate assignments. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 29(4), 637–663. doi:[10.1080/09585192.2016.1172653](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2016.1172653)
- Di Mascio, F., & Natalini, A. (2015). Fiscal retrenchment in Southern Europe: Changing patterns of public management in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. *Public Management Review*, 17(1), 129–148. doi:[10.1080/14719037.2013.790275](https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2013.790275)
- Dickmann, M., Doherty, N., Mills, T., & Brewster, C. (2008). Why do they go? Individual and corporate perspectives on the factors influencing the decision to accept

- an international assignment. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19(4), 731–751. doi:[10.1080/09585190801953749](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190801953749)
- Doherty, N., & Dickmann, M. (2009). Exposing the symbolic capital of international assignments. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(2), 301–320. doi:[10.1080/09585190802670664](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190802670664)
- Dries, N. (2011). The meaning of career success: Avoiding reification through a closer inspection of historical, cultural, and ideological contexts. *Career Development International*, 16(4), 364–384. doi:[10.1108/13620431111158788](https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431111158788)
- Dries, N., Pepermans, R., & Carlier, O. (2008). Career success: Constructing a multidimensional model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 73(2), 254–267. doi:[10.1016/j.jvb.2008.05.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2008.05.005)
- Dyke, L. S., & Murphy, S. A. (2006). How we define success: A qualitative study of what matters most to women and men. *Sex Roles*, 55(5/6), 357–371. doi:[10.1007/s11199-006-9091-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-9091-2)
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532–550. doi:[10.5465/amr.1989.4308385](https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4308385)
- Eriksson, P., & Kovalainen, A. (2008). *Qualitative methods in business research*. London: Sage.
- Flick, U. (2004). Triangulation in qualitative research. In U. Flick, K. Ernst Von, & S. Ines (Eds.), *A companion to qualitative research* (pp. 178–182). London: Sage Publications.
- Friedman, P.-A., Dyke, L. S., & Murphy, S. A. (2009). Expatriate adjustment from the inside out: An autoethnographic account. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(2), 252–268. doi:[10.1080/09585190802670524](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190802670524)
- Gibbert, M., & Ruigrok, W. (2010). The “what” and “how” of case study rigor: Three strategies based on published work. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(4), 710–737. doi:[10.1177/1094428109351319](https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428109351319)
- Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analyzing qualitative data*. London: Sage.
- Gubler, M., Arnold, J., & Coombs, C. (2014). Organizational boundaries and beyond: A new look at the components of a boundaryless career orientation. *Career Development International*, 19(6), 641–667. doi:[10.1108/CDI-11-2013-0143](https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-11-2013-0143)
- Gunz, H., Evans, M., & Jalland, M. (2000). Career boundaries in a ‘boundaryless’ world. In M. Peiperl, M. Arthur, R. Goffee, & T. Morris (Eds.), *Career frontiers: New conceptions of working lives* (pp. 24–53). Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gunz, H., Peiperl, M., & Tzabbar, D. (2007). Boundaries in the study of career. In H. Gunz, & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook of career studies* (pp. 471–494). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hamori, M., & Koyuncu, B. (2011). Career advancement in large organizations in Europe and the United States. Do international assignments add value?. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22(4), 843–862. doi:[10.1080/09585192.2011.555128](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.555128)
- Haslberger, A., Brewster, C., & Hippler, T. (2013). The dimensions of expatriate adjustment. *Human Resource Management*, 52(3), 333–351. doi:[10.1002/hrm.21531](https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21531)
- Hechanova, R., Beehr, T. A., & Christiansen, N. D. (2003). Antecedents and consequences of employees’ adjustment to overseas assignment: A meta-analytic review. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 52(2), 213–236. doi:[10.1111/1464-0597.00132](https://doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00132)
- Hennequin, E. (2007). What “career success” means to blue-collar workers. *Career Development International*, 12(6), 565–581. doi:[10.1108/13620430710822029](https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430710822029)

- Heslin, P. (2005). Conceptualizing and evaluating career success. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(2), 113–136. doi:10.1002/job.270
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hom, P. W., Mitchell, T. R., Lee, T. W., & Griffeth, R. W. (2012). Reviewing employee turnover: Focusing on proximal withdrawal states and an expanded criterion. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(5), 831–858. doi:10.1037/a0027983
- ILO (International Labour Office) (2018). *Decent work in Portugal: 2008-2018. From crisis to recovery*. Retrieved from: https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_646871/lang-en/index.htm
- Ituma, A., & Simpson, R. (2009). The 'boundaryless' career and career boundaries: Applying an institutionalist perspective to ICT workers in the context of Nigeria. *Human Relations*, 62(5), 727–761. doi:10.1177/0018726709103456
- Ituma, A., Simpson, R., Ovadje, F., Cornelius, N., & Mordi, C. (2011). Four 'domains' of career success: How managers in Nigeria evaluate career outcomes. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22(17), 3638–3660. doi:10.1080/09585192.2011.560870
- Judge, T. A., Cable, D. M., Boudreau, J. W., & Bretz, R. D. (1995). An empirical investigation of the predictors of executive career success. *Personnel Psychology*, 48(3), 485–519. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.1995.tb01767.x
- King, N. (2013). Doing template analysis. In G. Symon, & C. Cassel (Eds.) *Qualitative organizational research: Core methods and current challenges*, (2nd ed., pp. 426–450). London: Sage.
- King, Z., Burke, S., & Pemberton, J. (2005). The 'bounded' career: An empirical study of human capital, career mobility and employment outcomes in a mediated labour market. *Human Relations*, 58(8), 981–1007. doi:10.1177/0018726705058500
- Knocke, J., & Schuster, T. (2017). Repatriation of international assignees. Where are we and where do we go from here? A systematic literature review. *Journal of Global Mobility: The Home of Expatriate Management Research*, 5(3), 275–303. doi:10.1108/JGM-01-2017-0001
- Kraimer, M. L., Shaffer, M. A., & Bolino, M. C. (2009). The influence of expatriate and repatriate experiences on career advancement and repatriate retention. *Human Resource Management*, 48(1), 27–47. doi:10.1002/hrm.20265
- Kulkarni, M., Lengnick-Hall, M. L., & Valk, R. (2010). Employee perceptions of repatriation in an emerging economy: The Indian experience. *Human Resource Management*, 49(3), 531–548. doi:10.1002/hrm.20352
- Lauring, J., & Selmer, J. (2010). The supportive expatriate spouse: An ethnographic study of spouse involvement in expatriate careers. *International Business Review*, 19(1), 59–69. doi:10.1016/j.ibusrev.2009.09.006
- Lee, H. W., & Liu, C. H. (2007). An examination of factors affecting repatriates' turnover intentions. *International Journal of Manpower*, 28(2), 122–134.
- Lee, L.-Y., & Kartika, N. (2014). The influence of individual, family, and social capital factors on expatriate adjustment and performance: The moderating effect of psychology contract and organizational support. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 41(11), 5483–5494. doi:10.1016/j.eswa.2014.02.030
- Mayrhofer, W., Meyer, M., & Steyrer, J. (2007). Contextual issues in the study of careers. In H. Gunz, & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook of career studies* (pp. 215–240). London: Sage.

- Ng, T. W., & Feldman, D. C. (2014). Subjective career success: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 85(2), 169–179. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2014.06.001
- Paik, Y., Segaud, B., & Malinowski, C. (2002). How to improve repatriation management. Are motivations and expectations congruent between the company and expatriates?. *International Journal of Manpower*, 23(7), 635–648. doi:10.1108/01437720210450815
- Palthe, J. (2004). The relative importance of antecedents to cross-cultural adjustment: Implications for managing a global workforce. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 28(1), 37–59. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2003.12.004
- Pattie, M., White, M. M., & Tansky, J. (2010). The homecoming: A review of support practices for repatriates. *Career Development International*, 15(4), 359–377. doi:10.1108/13620431011066240
- Pate, J., & Scullion, H. (2009). The changing nature of the traditional expatriate psychological contract. *Employee Relations*, 32(1), 56–73. doi:10.1108/01425451011002761
- Peel, S., & Inkson, K. (2004). Contracting and careers: Choosing between self and organizational employment. *Career Development International*, 9(6), 542–558. doi:10.1108/13620430410559142
- Pinto, L. H., Cabral-Cardoso, C., & Werther, W. B. (2012). Compelled to go abroad? Motives and outcomes of international assignments. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23(11), 2295–2314. doi:10.1080/09585192.2011.610951
- Portugal, S. (2004). *Quanto vale o capital social? O papel das redes informais na provisão de recursos. [How much is worth social capital? The role of informal networks in resources provision]. Paper presented at VIII Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais: A Questão Social no Novo Milénio*. Portugal: University of Coimbra.
- Pringle, J. K., & Mallon, M. (2003). Challenges for the boundaryless career odyssey. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(5), 839–853. doi:10.1080/0958519032000080839
- Ramaswami, A., Carter, N. M., & Dreher, G. F. (2016). Expatriation and career success: A human capital perspective. *Human Relations*, 69(10), 1959–1987. doi:10.1177/0018726716630390
- Rasdi, R. M., Ismail, M., & Garavan, T. N. (2011). Predicting Malaysian managers' objective and subjective career success. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22, 3528–3549. doi:10.1080/09585192.2011.560878
- Reiche, B. S. (2009). To quit or not to quit: Organizational determinants of voluntary turnover in MNC subsidiaries in Singapore. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(6), 1362–1380. doi:10.1080/09585190902909871
- Rodrigues, R. A., & Guest, D. (2010). Have careers become boundaryless?. *Human Relations*, 63(8), 1157–1175. doi:10.1177/0018726709354344
- Rodrigues, R. A., Guest, D., & Budjanovcanin, A. (2016). Bounded or boundaryless? An empirical investigation of career boundaries and boundary crossing. *Work, Employment and Society*, 30, 1–18.
- RIEP (Ranking on the Degree of Internationalization of Portuguese Companies. (2015). *Ranking internacionalização das empresas Portuguesas: Panorama atual*. INDEG – IUL ISCTE Executive Education Parceiro - Fundação Dom Cabral Apoio – AICEP. Retrieved from <http://portal.i9magazine.pt/ranking-internacionalizacao-das-empresas-portuguesas-panorama-atual/>
- Rosenbusch, K., & Cseh, M. (2012). The cross-cultural adjustment process of expatriate families in a multinational organization: A family system theory perspective. *Human Resource Development International*, 15(1), 61–77. doi:10.1080/13678868.2011.646895

- Rousseau, D. M. (1989). Psychological and implied contracts in organizations. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 2(2), 121–139. doi:10.1007/BF01384942
- Shaffer, M. A., Kraimer, M. L., Chen, Y.-P., & Bolino, M. C. (2012). Choices, challenges, and career consequences of global work experiences: A review and future agenda. *Journal of Management*, 38(4), 1282–1327. doi:10.1177/0149206312441834
- Shen, Y., Demel, B., Unite, J., Briscoe, J. P., Hall, D. T., Chudzikowski, K., ... Zikic, J. (2015). Career success across 11 countries: Implications for international human resource management. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 26(13), 1753–1778. doi:10.1080/09585192.2014.962562
- Shortland, S. (2016). The purpose of expatriation: Why women undertake international assignments. *Human Resource Management*, 55(4), 655–678. doi:10.1002/hrm.21686
- Siljanen, T., & Lämsä, A.-M. (2009). The changing nature of expatriation: Exploring cross-cultural adaptation through narrativity. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(7), 1468–1486. doi:10.1080/09585190902983298
- Stahl, G. K., Chua, C. H., Caligiuri, P., Cerdin, J.-L., & Taniguchi, M. (2009). Predictors of turnover intentions in learning-driven and demand-driven international assignments: The role of repatriation concerns, satisfaction with the company support, and perceived career advancement opportunities. *Human Resource Management*, 48(1), 89–109. doi:10.1002/hrm.20268
- Stahl, G. K., Miller, E. L., & Tung, R. L. (2002). Toward the boundaryless career: A closer look at the expatriate career concept and the perceived implications on an international assignment. *Journal of World Business*, 37(3), 216–227. doi:10.1016/S1090-9516(02)00080-9
- Sturges, J. (1999). What it means to succeed: Personal conceptions of career success held by male and female managers at different ages. *British Journal of Management*, 10(3), 239–252. doi:10.1111/1467-8551.00130
- Sullivan, S. E., & Baruch, Y. (2009). Advances in career theory and research: A critical review and agenda for future exploration. *Journal of Management*, 35(6), 1542–1571. doi:10.1177/0149206309350082
- Suutari, V., & Brewster, C. (2003). Repatriation: Empirical evidence from a longitudinal study of careers and expectations among Finnish expatriates. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(7), 1132–1151. doi:10.1080/0958519032000114200
- Suutari, V., Brewster, C., Mäkelä, L., Dickmann, M., & Tornikoski, C. (2018). The effect of international work experience on the career success of expatriates: A comparison of assigned and self-initiated expatriates. *Human Resource Management*, 57(1), 37–54. doi:10.1002/hrm.21827
- Suutari, V., Tornikoski, C., & Mäkelä, L. (2012). Career decision making of global careerists. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16, 3455–3478. doi:10.1080/09585192.2011.639026
- Valk, R., Van der Velde, M., Van Engen, M., & Godbole, R. (2014). International career motives, repatriation and career success of Indian women in Science & Technology. *Journal of Global Mobility: The Home of Expatriate Management Research*, 2, 203–233. doi:10.1108/JGM-07-2013-0047
- Van der Heijden, J. A. V., Van Engen, M. L., & Paauwe, J. (2009). Expatriate career support: Predicting expatriate turnover and performance. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(4), 831–845. doi:10.1080/09585190902770745

- Vidal, M. E. S., Valle, R. S., & Aragón, M. I. B. (2008). International workers' satisfaction with the repatriation process. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19, 1683–1702.
- Yan, A., Zhu, G., & Hall, D. T. (2002). International assignments for career building: A model of agency relationships and psychological contracts. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(3), 373–391. doi:10.2307/4134385
- Yao, C., Arrowsmith, J., & Thorn, K. (2016). Exploring motivations in Chinese corporate expatriation through the lens of Confucianism. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 54(3), 312–331. doi:10.1111/1744-7941.12097
- Yao, C., Thorn, K., & Doherty, N. (2014). Boundarylessness as a dynamic construct: The case of Chinese early career expatriates. *Career Development International*, 19(6), 683–699. doi:10.1108/CDI-11-2013-0142
- Zartaloudis, S. (2014). The impact of the fiscal crisis on Greek and Portuguese welfare states: Retrenchment before the catch-up?. *Social Policy and Administration*, 48(4), 430–449. doi:10.1111/spol.12069

Appendix 1: Sample interview questions

Repatriate questions:

1. How would you describe the impact of the international assignment in your career?
2. In what aspects do you feel that you have succeeded in your career upon return? Why? Can you give me an example?
3. And in what aspects do you feel that you have failed in your career or have been unsuccessful career-wise upon return? Why? Can you give me an example?
4. Have your perceptions of career success influenced your decision to stay in the organization? Why? What about your perceptions of career failure? Have they influenced your intention to leave the organization? Why?
5. Are there any other aspects or reasons that might influence your turnover intentions? Can you elaborate on them?

HR organizational representative's questions:

1. Taking into consideration your organization policies in repatriation issues, how would you describe the impact of an international assignment on the repatriates' career?
2. Given your experience as an HR manager, what do you think repatriates value most in terms of career success upon returning from an international assignment?
3. What career success outcomes would you see as the most important in repatriates' decision to stay in the organization? Oppositely, what career-related reasons may influence repatriates' decision to leave?
4. In your experience, are there any other aspects or reasons that might have a say in repatriates' turnover intentions? Can you give examples that happened in your organization recently?