Understanding split family expatriations: An exploratory study with multiple stakeholder views

Maria del Rocío Alcazar Toribio

http://hdl.handle.net/10803/687966

Data de defensa: 22-02-2023

UNIVERSITAT RAMON LLULL

DOCTORAL THESIS

Title	Understanding split family expatriations: An exploratory study with multiple stakeholder views.
Presented by	María del Rocío Alcázar Toribio
Centre	Esade Business School
Department	People Management and Organisation
Directed by	Dr. Daniela Noethen and Dr. Jaime Bonache

ABSTRACT

Recent reports suggest a growing interest in a split family arrangement in expatriations (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016; Johnson, 2015). Twenty-seven percent of married or partnered candidates for long-term expatriations choose to go unaccompanied, leaving their families behind. Split family expatriations (SFE) are becoming an attractive alternative for both families and organizations. Families' interest in SFEs is stimulated by the need to engage in long-term expatriations to reach senior positions, shifting family structures, and health and quality of life concerns in the host country. While the organization's attraction for SFEs is driven by the continuous need to staff long-term expatriations, shortages of candidates, changing global work patterns, and restrictive immigration policies.

In this thesis, we conduct an exploratory study to deeply understand this phenomenon involving multiple informants from the family and the organization. We investigate twenty-two SFE cases applying multiple-case study for theory building. In this work, we examine the characteristics of families engaging in SFEs, the features of SFEs, their management by organizations, and the motivations of families and organizations to engage or support SFEs. The study draws on the self-determination theory in work organizations (Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017) and approach avoidance motivation (Elliot, 2006) to unveil mechanisms that explain the perseverance and performance of expatriate families while in SFEs. Our analysis resulted in a set of propositions that lay the foundation for a specific theory in SFEs. We discuss how our propositions confirm, challenge, or expand extant expatriate and motivation literature. This thesis concludes by presenting managerial recommendations for policy and practice that, when implemented, mitigate not only the risks and challenges associated with SFEs but also generate beneficial outcomes for organizations and expatriate families.

Ad maiorem Dei gloriam

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I never imagined how enriching and transforming would be to complete a PhD program. This lengthy process was as much stimulating as demanding. Standing at the end of this endeavor, I would like to thank the many individuals that helped me in different ways. This would not have been possible without their guidance, support, and friendship.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisors, Dr. Daniela Noethen and Dr. Jaime Bonache, for their precious advice throughout these years. Your support and guidance have been instrumental in my preparation as an academic.

My profound appreciation to ESADE's PhD program director, Dr. Vicenta Sierra, for her intervention in providing me with adequate resources to accomplish this feat.

I am deeply indebted to all the interviewees for sharing with me some very personal information, trusting it would be used anonymously for the greater good.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the scholars who, along the way, believed in me and shared their time and expertise with me: Dr. Christiane Spitzmueller, Dr. Marta Elvira, Dr. Sara Perry, Dr. Alex Milam, Dr. Cristina Rubino, and Dr. Lars Johnson.

Special thanks to my new and life-long friends who helped me maintain a healthy balance during this intellectual marathon. Whether sharing a meal or a glass of wine, having a conversation live or over video, playing tennis, or doing tourism. Each of these interactions with you replenished me with energy that kept me going.

Last but not least, my genuine gratitude to my family for always being there for me and for being such an important part of my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DT	Domestic travel
EU	European Union
HR	Human Resources
IA	International assignment
IBT	International business travel
Latam	Latin America
MNC	Multinational company
N.Am	North America
OE	Organizational expatriation
SIE	Self-initiated expatriation
SFE	Split family expatriation
STA	Short-term assignment

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Split family expatriation (SFE) is a growing phenomenon (Johnson, 2015) where the expatriate relocates alone and works abroad long-term while the family stays behind (McNulty, 2015a). Recent industry reports claim that twenty-seven percent of married or partnered expatriates choose to go on single status, almost doubling its historical average of fifteen percent (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2010, 2016). Families and organizations are finding in SFEs a solution to engage in or support long-term expatriations when the partner and children cannot accompany the expatriate.

To date, very little is known about this phenomenon. Few academic studies have investigated this topic (e.g., Dang, 2020), and industry reports have mainly monitored the trend. With this thesis, we aim to more thoroughly understand this phenomenon by examining the characteristics of families engaging in SFEs, the features of SFEs, their management by organizations, and the motivations of

families and organizations to engage or support SFEs. This information is highly valuable for families to secure their well-being and their relationships while in SFEs, as well as for organizations to minimize the risk of expatriate failure and maximize expatriate work outcomes. As we will explain later in this thesis, extant expatriate literature is ill-equipped to explain this phenomenon.

This chapter presents introductory information in four parts. First, we describe the relevance of the topic, highlighting the growing use of SFEs, the strategic importance of long-term expatriations, and the capacity of SFEs to minimize some of the challenges organizations face in pursuing globalization (Section 1.1). Additionally, we portray how current expatriate literature may be inadequate to explain the relationships present in SFEs. Second, we outline the purpose of the thesis introducing the research questions that guided the investigation (Section 1.2). Third, we define the key concepts utilized in this thesis: family, expatriation, split family, and SFE, and explain how we use them throughout our study (Section 1.3). Last, we outline the structure of the thesis, highlighting what can be found in each chapter (Section 1.4).

1.1 Relevance of the topic

Nowadays, global mobility strategies are more varied than ever before (Collings, Scullion, & Dowling, 2009; Santa Fe Relocation, 2021). Who is going on expatriations as represented by their hierarchy in the organization, age, nationality, gender, or family status, and the types of global work like long-term and short-term expatriations, frequent international business travelers, international commuters, and rotational assignments have become more diverse (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012). New strategies in global mobility are emerging, such as hybrid forms of international assignments. Furthermore, some established strategies like short-term assignments and international business travel are attracting more interest due to changing conditions of families, work purposes, country immigration policies, and health concerns (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016;

Collings, Scullion, & Morley, 2007; McNulty & Selmer, 2017; Santa Fe Relocation, 2021).

Nevertheless, even in this changing environment, organizations' need for long-term expatriations continues to grow in numbers (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016). Candidates are attracted to long-term expatriations as they are the preferred strategy to acquire global leadership skills (Caligiuri, 2006), opening up a fast-track lane for senior positions and providing a novel cultural experience for their family. Yet, long-term international assignments generate challenges and risks to everyone involved -organizations, expatriates, and their families- that need to be managed and/or resolved to capture the benefits.

Research indicates that long-term expatriations are not only essential for organizations to fulfill their global growth objectives but also to develop global leaders, staff key roles in subsidiaries, and transfer knowledge and the corporate culture across borders (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2006; Edström & Galbraith, 1977) that other forms of global work are less effective at. Long-term expatriations are the chosen global work strategy when filling management and leadership roles in foreign subsidiaries and new business/start-up operations (Cartus, 2016) and represent the most prominent type of assignment with over half of all the assignees (Towers Watson & Worldwide ERC, 2012).

However, long-term international assignments are possibly the single most costly investment per person an organization engages in the workforce globalization (Stroh, Black, Mendenhall, & Gregersen, 2005; Tornikoski, Suutari, & Festing, 2015). Moreover, organizations assume the risk of expatriate failure in the form of a premature return due often to the lack of adjustment of the family that accompanies the expatriate (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016; Cartus, 2016; Cole & Nesbeth, 2014; Stroh et al., 2005), impacting negatively on expatriate outcomes (e.g., expatriate adjustment; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005). Lately, organizations are experiencing more significant barriers to global mobility from both the candidates and the contextual conditions. There is a talent shortage for international assignments evidenced by a reduced willingness to relocate for work and by an increased assignment refusal of their first-choice candidate due to

partner's career concerns, host quality life, and children's education (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016; Stroh et al., 2005). This could be in part because long-term assignments often restrict the partner's career in dual-career families (Harvey, 1997) and expose families to multiple adjustment challenges that can range from stressors, strains, and daily hassles (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008), impacting family equilibrium and work-life balance (Wurtz & Suutari, 2015). Furthermore, traditional destination countries like U.S.A. and U.K. are having more restrictive immigration policies. Additionally, many of the newer and/or growing destinations like China, Brazil, India, Mexico, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and the Philippines are countries with more hostile conditions (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016; KPMG, 2018). Thus, finding a way to staff long-term expatriations while reducing expatriate failure, keeping costs contained, and preventing the shrinkage of the candidate's pool may be of interest to numerous organizations.

Expatriate literature suggests that single expatriates encounter fewer challenges during an expatriation than expatriate families (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008). Research and industry reports agree that organizational support for the trailing family on long-term expatriations continues to be limited, failing to meet the needs of the family to adjust appropriately to their new environment (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016; Cartus, 2016; Cole & Nesbeth, 2014; Collings et al., 2007; McNulty, 2012; Sterle, Fontaine, De Mol, & Verhofstadt, 2018). Hence, it is unsurprising that split family expatriations have become a frequent global work option.

During the last decade, there has been an increase in split family expatriations (Johnson, 2015). Nowadays, one in four married assignees in MNCs choose to leave their partner and children at home and go on expatriation with a single status, while the historical average was one in seven. (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2010, 2016).

SFEs seem to provide an option that prevents families from turning down an international assignment while allowing the partner to continue his/her career and the children to further their education in the home country. Additionally, from the

organization's perspective, it appears that split family expatriations may be an interesting alternative as an expatriate on single status may be less expensive than an expatriate with a trailing family. Furthermore, the risk of premature return of the expatriate due to lack of adjustment of the family to the host country is eliminated as the partner and children do not relocate.

To date, the study of SFEs has attracted scant interest from scholars, given the strategic importance of long-term expatriations in the organizations' pursuit of globalization and the potential value of SFEs as an option to reduce some of the challenges encountered in this form of global work. Very few researchers in the expatriate literature have studied this phenomenon (Dang, 2020; Hutchings & McNulty, 2018; Karunarathne, 2018; McNulty, 2014, 2015a; Mutter, 2017a, 2017b; Mutter & Thorn, 2019a, 2019b) and only a few global mobility reports are tracking it (e.g., Cartus, Mercer, and Brookfield Relocation Services). Hence, many questions are still waiting to be answered to fully understand this phenomenon.

Current expatriate literature has studied mostly traditional expatriations where the organization sponsors a male adult to relocate long-term to a different country for work and who is accompanied by his stay-at-home female partner and children (Goede & Berg, 2018). While vast, this literature may only partially "capture" the dimensions of SFEs. With a few exceptions (e.g., Dang, 2020; Karunarathne, 2018), the academic studies represent the family as a unit and assume families only have two options: To accept an expatriation and all go together to the host country (i.e., a long-term expatriation with a trailing family); or to decline the assignment and everyone stays home. Families that engage in SFEs do not operate as a unit as some members stay home while others go abroad, creating a new option: an expatriate in a committed relationship with a partner and/or dependent children going abroad long-term unaccompanied. For example, the existing literature regarding motives to engage in long-term expatriations is ill-equipped to explain why families engage in SFEs as it assumes that the reasons are the same for all family members and that they act as a unit. In SFEs, some of the members may be motivated and attracted by the characteristics or situations related to the host country, while other family members may reject them and may be encouraged to stay in their home country. Additionally, extant literature has studied the support

provided by the organization when the family trailed with the expatriate, focusing on aiding the family's adjustment to the host country. But, if the family does not trail, we foresee that the support from the organization may need to be different as new challenges may arise due to the family being separated long-term, which may, in turn, impact the success of the expatriation. Thus, the explanations offered by studies on traditional expatriations may fall short when explaining SFEs.

Another stream of research that could partially explain SFEs are the studies on short-term assignments (STA). This type of global work shares with SFEs that the family stays home when the expatriate goes abroad for work. Yet, STAs are conceived as engagements that last between three to less than twelve months, and only the expatriate relocates (Shaffer et al., 2012; Starr & Currie, 2009). These two conditions influence organizations to have distinct policies for STAs than those for long-term expatriations like frequent trips to return home (every 1 to 8 weeks), temporary housing, per-diem for meals, and management done by line management with little involvement of global mobility. Applying STA policies to long-term assignments would make the latter cost prohibitive, and the longer duration of the international stay would require legal and tax expert management. Moreover, expatriates and their families may be able to manage a short-term than a long-term separation easier. The motives to accept an SFE are most likely different than those to accept an STA, the type of families that engage in SFEs may have distinct characteristics, and the support needed for positive outcomes most likely will also be different. Hence, while current academic work on STAs can provide some explanation for the dynamics occurring in SFEs, it is most likely partial. Thus, the study of SFEs could reveal valuable information for both the organizations that support them and the families that engage in them.

1.2 Purpose of the thesis

In this thesis, we conduct an exploratory investigation of long-term split family expatriations. We aim to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon's who, what, how, and why by answering five research questions. We start from a more descriptive angle by investigating *who* is engaging in SFEs. More specifically, 1) *what* are the characteristics of families that engage in SFEs? We then proceed to the questions of 2) *what* are the characteristics of SFEs? *And 3) how* do organizations manage SFEs? In a last step, we go deeper to explore explanations by examining 4) *why* do families engage in SFEs? And 5) *why* do organizations support SFEs?

This thesis responds to the calls for research that develops theory in the field of expatriate studies (Selmer & McNulty, 2017), a deeper understanding of the SFE phenomenon (McNulty, 2015a), and a broader inclusion of non-traditional family types in expatriation research (Hutchings, 2022; McNulty & Hutchings, 2016). Furthermore, this thesis amends the need for more studies investigating expatriate families with different family members as informants, featuring populations from less studied regions (e.g., Latin America), and including non-English speaking samples (Sterle et al., 2018).

This exploratory study aims to generate theory -in the form of propositions- specific for split family expatriations, the expatriate families engaging in them, the organization promoting or supporting them, and their respective motivations. A deep understanding of SFEs may reveal distinct conditions and characteristics of the phenomenon and the families that engage in them, different management strategies that organizations apply, and prediction of outcomes based on their underlying motivation.

Our work extends the current research on expatriate families, motivation, and expatriation management in the context of long-term business expatriations with a split family arrangement. The thesis presents twenty-eight theoretical propositions based in the findings. Each of them contributes to a deeper understanding of SFEs in several ways. First, we identify the distinguishing characteristics of families that

engage in SFEs. Second, we develop a typology of SFEs, revealing their distinct features. Third, we present the different HR treatments received by expatriates in SFEs. Fourth, we stress the need to include family dynamics as a critical dimension in expatriate and partner adjustment. Fifth, we reveal that the decision to expatriate in a family includes two sets of motives and expand the motives in each. Sixth, we present predictions related to the aspiration, energization, and regulation of expatriates and partners in different types of SFEs. Seventh, we present a list of motives that explain why organizations support SFEs.

Additionally, the findings of the thesis expand two motivation theories, SDT and approach avoidance motivation theory, in two ways. First, by applying the theory to a new phenomenon. Second, by contributing evidence of the co-occurrence of different aspirations, energization, and regulation and their effect on perseverance. The study of the co-occurrence of different types of energization and regulation is a novel stream of research with interesting opportunities for policy and practice.

1.3 Key concepts

Throughout this thesis, we will use four main concepts: family, expatriations, split family, and split family expatriations. Because scholars have used these terms in various ways, we will briefly state how we will use each of them in this thesis.

1.3.1 Family

Like other authors, we use the term family to include any committed partnership between two adults with or without children, or a single adult with children (Goede & Holtbrügge, 2021; Lazarova, Westman, & Shaffer, 2010). This broad concept includes *traditional families* (i.e., families that are composed of a working adult male and a stay-at-home adult female with children, all living in the same home) and *non-traditional families* (i.e., families without children, lesbian or

gay couples, single parents, blended or families with children from different parents, dual-career, divorced, and split families; McNulty, 2015). While in the past, most academic literature represented the concept of family as traditional families, nowadays, non-traditional families represent a significant and growing portion of the social fabric of society (McNulty, 2014), and the term has evolved to include this diversity as well (Rothausen, 1999).

1.3.2 Expatriation

As its Latin root suggests, expatriation (ex – out of; patriam – homeland) signifies an event where individuals live outside of their homeland. In the international business literature, expatriations are often referred to as international assignments and represent the phenomenon where an individual is living abroad temporarily for work (Bonache, Brewster, & Suutari, 2001). This thesis centers on business expatriations, including organizational expatriations (OE), also called assigned expatriations, and self-initiated expatriations (SIE), yet excludes business travelers and international students. OEs are international assignments sponsored by the organization that is, relocation, housing, and working visas are taken care of by the organization (Shaffer et al., 2012). SIEs are international assignments where expatriates and their families relocate, find accommodation, apply for working visas, and find a job independently (Doherty, Richardson, & Thorn, 2013).

1.3.3 Split family

A split family represents a family where one or more members live in a different location than the rest (McNulty, 2015a). In the context of expatriations, a split family refers to an arrangement where the expatriate lives and works in one country while the rest of his/her nuclear family lives in another.

1.3.4 Split family expatriation

The term split family expatriations has been used by other authors for international assignments where the expatriate lives and works abroad while the family stays behind for the entire duration of the expatriation (Karunarathne, 2018; McNulty, 2015a; Mutter & Thorn, 2019a). In this thesis, we will use the term SFE for the phenomenon where members of a nuclear family live in different countries for a minimum of 12 months due to work. This definition is open enough to allow us to understand the nuances of this phenomenon and differentiate between different types of SFEs and other global work arrangements.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is written in a monograph style as this is an adequate format to present a dissertation focusing on a single phenomenon. Our work is presented in six chapters, with all references and appendices at the end of the document. The first chapter introduces the statement of the problem, the purpose of the thesis, and the concepts of family, expatriation, split family, and split family expatriation. The second chapter reviews different research streams to provide the foundation for where to embed each research question. This chapter starts with a review of the academic literature on the theoretical origins of SFEs and an overview of the scant literature on SFEs. It is followed by a brief review of the research on expatriate families and motives to move abroad. It finishes with a review of selected domestic motivation research that will be used as the theoretical lens in the data analysis. The third chapter describes the methodology used, including the approach, sample, data collection, position of the researcher, and data analysis. The fourth chapter presents the results grouped by the research question they responded to. The first three research questions provide a more descriptive take on the who, what, and how of the phenomenon: 1) What are the characteristics of the families that engage in SFEs? 2) What are the characteristics of SFEs? 3) How do organizations manage SFEs? The last two research questions deeply examine why this phenomenon occurs, disclosing

4) why do families engage in SFEs and 5) why do organizations support SFEs. The fifth chapter discusses the findings' theoretical implications, presenting how our study refines, challenges, or expands current expatriation research. Additionally, this section provides a summary of 1) the conditions in SFEs that improve when compared to expatriations with trailing families, 2) the new challenges that appear in SFEs, and 3) the new predictions that we can make about SFEs. The sixth and last chapter presents limitations, future research, organizational & managerial implications, and conclusions.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Several pieces of literature provide insight into our research questions. In this chapter, we review the literature related to our thesis in five sections. First, we provide a summary of the origins of SFEs (Section 2.1), followed by the academic literature on SFEs (Section 2.2). Further, we present a brief review of the research on expatriate families (Section 2.3), the motives to move abroad (Section 2.4), and the domestic literature on motivation (Section 2.5). The domestic literature on motivation was incorporated during the data analysis when we cycled between data, emerging theory, and extant literature. We saw the need to substantiate and more deeply understand the motivation of individuals and the relationships we were finding, beyond the explanation offered in the expatriate literature. This iteration between data and literature is a critical step when following the methodology of case study for theory building (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

2.1 Origins of SFEs

Split family arrangements when working abroad have existed for a long time. Migrant workers and military professionals share some characteristics with expatriates on long-term international assignments with split family arrangements. During the 20th century, several countries received thousands, if not millions, of migrant workers, also called foreign workers or guest workers, to perform hourly agricultural, industrial, and construction work. The inviting country offered a temporary job that kept the worker away from their family for six to twelve months at a time. The most common driver for this temporary migration was the economic disparity between the home and host country and the search for work (Bartram, 1998; Moyce & Schenker, 2018). Still today, a similar type of arrangement exists during the harvest of agricultural products that benefit from cheap manual labor. The blue-collar worker receives legal authorization to work and live abroad for these jobs, but this permit does not extend to the family. Hence the worker leaves the family behind. Likewise, the nature of work in specific professions like those in the navy, army, civil maritime, and professional sailors require them to be separated from their families for one to twelve months at a time while on deployment /assignment /competition (De Burgh, White, Fear, & Iversen, 2011; Mutter, 2017b; Rodriguez & Margolin, 2015). In these professions, the deployment abroad is customarily as a team, and they live in shared compounds. Split family arrangements in long-term expatriations differ from the above phenomena in that individuals engaging in them come from any profession, typically relocate alone (not as part of a team), and the assignment duration is long-term. These conditions suggest that any organization with global goals and any individual interested in working abroad could engage in SFEs, making this phenomenon ubiquitous.

The origins of the split family arrangements on long-term expatriations began as a short-term solution when the family willing to accompany the expatriate could not do so immediately. Often, the need to complete the children's academic year prevented the family from relocating with the expatriate. Typically, the family reunited a few months later, joining the long-term expatriation as a trailing family.

Yet, recent industry reports claim that expatriate families are considering split arrangements as long-term options (Johnson, 2015).

2.2 Academic literature in SFEs

Over the last decade, few scholars have investigated this phenomenon. The first studies included SFEs as part of the non-traditional expatriations (McNulty, 2014, 2015a; McNulty & Hutchings, 2016) or as part of the contemporary global mobility (Mutter, 2017b, 2017a; Mutter & Thorn, 2019a, 2019b). The latter studies investigated the phenomenon specifically (Dang, 2020; Hutchings & McNulty, 2018; Karunarathne, 2018), creating the foundation for a deeper understanding of this singularity.

McNulty (2014) studied women who engaged in non-traditional expatriations, one of whom was in an SFE. In this qualitative study, McNulty presented a vignette of the stay-behind spouse narrating the challenges experienced in an SFE. In a different study, McNulty (2015a) investigated the lived acculturation experiences of non-traditional expatriates, one of whom was a stay-behind spouse in an SFE. In this study, McNulty, in a narrative form, unveiled the difficulties one spouse experienced when deciding not to accompany the expatriate.

In a literature review of non-traditional expatriates -one of which is split families- McNulty and Hutchings (2016) exposed the scant knowledge we had of this population, and the challenges organizations have in supporting them. The authors called for separate studies of each type of non-traditional expatriates to deeply comprehend their distinct characteristics. They theorized that every kind of non-traditional expatriates might have different mobility barriers and/or different success factors during the assignment, which may be essential to know to provide adequate support.

In her doctoral thesis, Mutter (2017a) studied the impact of contemporary global mobility of international sailors on their families who stayed behind. The sample was composed of 21 families experiencing various forms of unaccompanied

modes of global work strategies (short-term assignment, commuter, and international business travel). The international commuters could be described as being in SFEs. Three articles originated from this thesis. In the first published paper (Mutter, 2017b), the author reveals the factors influencing the decision of the partner to accompany or not the sailor. In the second paper, Mutter and Thorn (2019b) expose the impact on the career of the stay-behind partners. This article reveals that partners prioritize the sailor's career and utilize different strategies to manage their career and reduce the impact of the absent expatriate. In the third paper, Mutter and Thorn (2019a) present the demands on stay-behind partners and children and the resources they utilized to overcome the challenges. Findings suggest that partners become the primary responsible for the household and the emotional well-being of the children. Partners and children assume more household chores because of the absent parent. Additionally, this study states that extended family and friends provide the needed assistance in the absence of organizational support.

In an exploratory scoping study, Hutchings and McNulty (2018) delved into the challenges and opportunities of two couples in SFEs. In a narrative approach, the authors presented their experiences and, more specifically, whether the split family arrangement had worked for them. While the two families had opposing experiences, one of them describing it as positive while the other as negative, both families met their aim of the split family arrangement. Interestingly, the split family arrangement served as a means to satisfy different family priorities, whether career advancement, financial rewards, maintaining family commitments, or advancing children's education.

Karunarathne (2018), in her doctoral thesis, studied the experiences of expatriates and their partners and the impact on the decision to repatriate. Her thesis, composed of three studies, included a quantitative analysis of survey responses from 244 Sri Lankan expatriate-partner dyads working in Australia and the Middle East, 62% of which were on split family arrangements. Study 1 presented the impact of the stay-behind partner on the expatriate's adjustment and absenteeism. The findings of this study suggest expatriates in SFEs have lower general and work adjustment, which is associated with higher absenteeism. Study 2 examined the expatriate and partner dyadic interplay and its impact on the decision to repatriate. Results propose

that when an expatriate and partner have a similar level of marital satisfaction, the expatriate is more likely to consider repatriation. Study 3 revealed that expatriates with high levels of perceived organizational support and co-worker support are less likely to consider repatriation.

In her doctoral thesis, Dang (2020) performed a comparative analysis of the experiences of expatriate families on traditional expatriations vs. those on SFEs. Her sample included ten expatriate-partner dyads on traditional expatriations and eight on SFEs, all in organizational expatriations. In this thesis, the author investigated and compared expatriate families' motivation and concerns during the decision to expatriate, the challenges faced during the assignment, how organizations support them, and how the support for expatriate families influences expatriate adjustment and performance. Findings unveiled that the motivation, concerns, and challenges differ between expatriations with trailing families and SFEs. One of her contributions to the literature was adding three new items to the list of motives to expatriate for traditional families: children's education, family member enhancement, and entrepreneurship opportunities. Additionally, her work revealed the shallow understanding HR representatives have of the challenges families in SFEs encounter, as well as the limited organizational support offered to the stay-behind family.

To a great extent, the extant studies stress the negative consequences the geographical separation of the family members has on the expatriate in the private (e.g., psychological workplace strain, marital stress, depression) and professional domain (e.g., repatriation intentions, absenteeism) as well as on the family (attack on family integrity, absent parent figure). These adverse effects SFEs can have on families and organizations cast doubts on their viability as a long-term global mobility option. Yet, SFEs are one of those global work strategies attracting more attention from families and organizations in recent years. This growth of interest in SFEs suggests that not everything is seen as unfavorable in SFEs and that they may well be an effective strategy to satisfy family priorities and/or organizational needs.

To build the foundation of a specific theory on SFEs, further research is needed with larger samples of SFEs with a broader representation of the population

and not only a few individual cases. The nascent body of work on SFEs can benefit from an exploratory study that is dedicated to having a more complete understanding of this phenomenon, starting from the basics of who is engaging in SFEs, what are the characteristics of SFEs, and what is the motivation of families and organizations to engage in SFEs.

2.3 Research on expatriate families

From the recent literature review on expatriate families, we know that family considerations affect an organization's ability to attract, recruit, and retain candidates for/during an international assignment (Goede & Berg, 2018). Current expatriate literature suggests that perceived spouse willingness to relocate, beliefs regarding spouse mobility, family type, and the family life cycle stage can predict the expatriate's willingness to relocate abroad (Dupuis, Haines, & Saba, 2008). Specifically, Van der Velde and colleagues (2016) advocate that in dual-career families, partners are less willing to relocate abroad when they highly value their careers and are not interested in putting the expatriate's interests over their own. These authors' claims and those in industry reports (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016; Cartus, 2016) concur that maintaining a dual career is one of the main reasons families give when declining an international assignment. Moreover, several scholars agree that families with children are less willing to relocate internationally for work (Dupuis et al., 2008; Tharenou, 2008). Particularly, families with children ages 12 to 17 may want to preserve social and educational stability for their children in those critical years.

Scholars generally agree that partners and children experience more significant challenges during the international assignment than expatriates (Goede & Berg, 2018; Van Der Zee, Ali, & Haaksma, 2007; Weeks, Weeks, & Willis-Muller, 2010). Family members are often more exposed to the host country's conditions and the host country nationals. Yet, the expatriate is somewhat shielded by the continuity of working in the same organization (Andreason, 2008). This situation

faced by the family breeds the potential for lack of adjustment of the trailing partner, which is one of the main reasons for early termination of an assignment (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016).

While current expatriate literature recognizes the influence of family in each phase of the expatriation process and the family as a key stakeholder to organizations (Lämsä, Heikkinen, Smith, & Tornikoski, 2017; Takeuchi, 2010), firms are still far from fully incorporating families in the management of expatriations (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016). Organizations are starting to include some flexibility in expatriate management, updating their policies to include choices within a mandatory/flex policy framework (Santa Fe Relocation, 2021) which aims to have greater acceptance of assignments and less negotiation. Yet, as organizations grow their presence in emerging markets and high-risk countries, they need to more completely understand family issues and their motivation if they want to reduce family resistance and recruit their first-choice talent (Bader, Berg, & Holtbrügge, 2015). Some of these locations are often considered less attractive for families due to safety, quality of life, and health concerns, swaying expatriates to expect a greater duty of care from their organization (Santa Fe Relocation, 2021). Moreover, organizations are yet to fully incorporate diversity in expatriation management and tailor their support for different family types and arrangements (e.g., split families) to facilitate beneficial assignment outcomes for all stakeholders involved. Without a profound understanding of families' vital role in expatriation and addressing their concerns, success in international assignments may be compromised.

2.4 Research on motives to move abroad

Over the last three decades, the expatriation literature has studied the willingness to relocate internationally (Brett & Stroh, 1995; Tharenou, 2008; Van der Velde et al., 2016) and the motives to relocate abroad (Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann, Doherty, Mills, & Brewster, 2008; Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills, 2011;

Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Selmer & Lauring, 2010). The first stream of research investigates an intention -an anticipation of action- of a population that could engage in an expatriation when the opportunity arises. The second stream of research studies the antecedents of a behavior enacted by expatriates. While different, both bodies of work coincide in listing factors that influence the decision to expatriate, such as career and developmental interests, personal benefits, individual dispositions, family and partner considerations, financial rewards, and host country considerations.

In the following paragraphs, we present a summary of some of the most influential studies on the motivation to relocate abroad. We describe the research done in OEs as well as in SIEs (Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011; Richardson & Mallon, 2005).

Richardson & Mallon (2005) examined the motives of academics to expatriate. Their findings reveal that academics are typically in self-initiated expatriations and are motivated by five themes: adventure/travel, life change, family, career, and money. Authors claim that the first three themes are the most dominant influences while the last two are subsidiary factors.

Dickmann and colleagues (2008) generated a list of 28 motives to move abroad based on academic literature, their own qualitative study, input from subject matter experts, and experienced practitioners in the field. Their list of motives was used to survey 310 expatriates in OEs who confirmed all the factors were relevant in their decision to accept an expatriation. In their analysis, Dickmann and colleagues present the motives in five categories: Location factors, job, development & career opportunities, personal & domestic considerations, and assignment offer.

Selmer and Lauring (2010) studied the reasons to engage in self-initiated expatriations. The authors created a questionnaire using Richardson and Mallon's (2005) five categories influencing academics' decision to expatriate. Examining the survey responses of 428 academic expatriates, they found that age and gender moderate the reasons to expatriate. Specifically, their results show younger academics are driven more by adventure, career, and money than older academics.

Regarding gender, their findings suggest that men are more influenced than women by money and the opportunity to change their life.

A few years later, Doherty and colleagues (2011), after reviewing previous literature on OEs and SIEs, compiled an inventory of 38 items influencing the decision to go abroad for work. Additionally, the authors performed a PCA (principal component analysis) and identified eight latent factors: Location, career, foreign experience, host, family benefits, host-home relations, personal relationships, and push factors. When comparing the motives of both groups, OEs and SIEs, the drivers were similar, yet the importance of the drivers varied. Their results reveal that self-initiated expatriates give more importance to host country characteristics and the drive for adventure, while organizational expatriates give more importance to career motives.

In a recent study, Dickmann (2012) extends the findings of prior studies of motives to relocate abroad, adding a new category: specific location. In this study, he investigated the factors that influence the decision of expatriates in OEs and SIEs to work in London. Dickmann argued that city-specific factors such as citizens' attitudes, multiculturalism, and centrality and reputation for business are distinct from national motives such as national culture, language, and history. Additionally, he proposed a new framework of individual international mobility drivers composed of six categories of influence: career and development, organization, individual, family & partner, location, and national/regional considerations.

With a few exceptions (Dang, 2020; Mutter, 2017b), most of the literature on motives to relocate abroad studied expatriations with trailing families, leaving the motivation of families engaging in SFEs mostly unknown. While vast, the studies done with trailing families may not completely explain the motivation of families on SFEs as, for once, families on SFEs do not operate as a unit. From industry reports, we know that families choose SFEs when dual-careers families want to maintain their professions, when the host location does not meet their quality of life or when it does not offer the quality of children's education required by the family (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016).

Lately, one doctoral thesis investigated the motives of eight expatriate families to engage in long-term expatriations with split family arrangements (Dang, 2020). In her thesis, Dang explained six reasons to engage in SFE, the first three confirming what the industry surveys had revealed previously and adding three more: special needs children, caring for elderly parents, and maintaining spouse's stable social life.

In a recent article, Mutter (2017b) revealed the reasons of 21 spouses to stay behind while their partner travels or commutes internationally for work. The study grouped the reasons for spouses whose partner was a frequent international travel, a short-term assignee, or an international commuter. The influencing factors identified were: 1) the level of support available for the family, 2) the perceived impact on the children, and 3) the level of prioritization of the sailor's career over that of the spouse. While the findings are revealing, the study does not allow us to separate the motives of spouses on SFE from the rest.

Together, these two studies discussed above provide an initial understanding of what motivates a family to engage in an SFE. Yet larger samples of families in SFEs are needed as we aim to develop theory specific on SFEs. Additionally, the expatriation literature may benefit from moving beyond a list of motives and having propositions that predict outcomes. In this effort, we could leverage the motivation literature in domestic settings as they have decades of work and a plethora of theories that have the potential to be applied in international settings.

2.5 Domestic literature on motivation

The motivation literature has been concerned with understanding what drives an individual to direct, energize and sustain certain behaviors. While this body of work started with generic constructs like motivation, it has evolved to differentiate constructs like motives, aspiration, and regulation. All of these play a role in motivating the enactment of behavior, but most importantly, they are critical to

predicting the characteristics of the outcomes, such as intensity, persistence, and direction.

One of the main theories of human motivation applied successfully in the work domain is the self-determination theory (SDT; Deci et al., 2017). SDT has studied the links between motivation and outcomes for the organization or the employee. Specifically, SDT suggests that employee performance, well-being, productivity, and engagement are influenced by different types of motivations they may have at work.

Scholars have argued that not all motives are created equal, nor generate the same outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004). Motives that have an intrinsic aspiration (interest in and enjoyment of the work itself), such as meaningful relationships, personal development, or well-being and safety, are expected to have more beneficial outcomes than motives that have extrinsic aspiration (interest in obtaining results external to the work itself) such as attaining financial wealth or recognition. Recent work has identified motives that have prosocial aspirations (interest to benefit other people), such as community contribution, which have the potential to deliver beneficial outcomes when interacting with intrinsic aspirations (Grant, 2008). Family motivation, (interest to benefit one's family) has been conceptualized as a prosocial motive, and like such, scholars have found evidence that it can generate an energizing or a debilitating influence on the employee's work outcomes depending if it interacts with intrinsic (e.g., personal development) or extrinsic aspirations (e.g., financial wealth; Zhang, Liao, Li, & Colbert, 2020).

Some work in the motivation literature has focused on the energization or the direction of the behavior toward positive stimuli -approach motivation- or away from negative stimuli -avoidance motivation- (Elliot & Church, 1997). Approach motivation has the goal of achieving beneficial outcomes, whereas avoidance motivation of avoiding an adverse outcome. Furthermore, approach motivation may be experienced as compelling as it facilitates thriving, while avoidance motivation may be experienced as stressful and problematic as it focuses on surviving (Elliot, 2006, 2008).

Another critical aspect of motivation theory is the regulatory process individuals experience. SDT proposes that individuals can experience regulation that ranges from autonomous (acting with a sense of volition and choice) to controlled (operating with a sense of pressure; Deci & Ryan, 2000). The more autonomous motivation will arise from the interest or enjoyment of the activity itself (intrinsic regulation), the synthesis and congruence of the task's purpose with self (integrated regulation), and the personal value given to the task (identified regulation). The more controlled motivation will emerge from self-control and the desire to avoid punishment or guilt (introjected regulation); or the desire to comply with and receive rewards or punishment from others (external regulation). Understanding the regulation that individuals experience is essential as scholars propose that more autonomous motivation can predict greater persistence, performance, and well-being. Whereas more controlled motivation can be associated with short-term efforts and gains, with the potential for negative spillover effects on performance and engagement like exhaustion (Deci et al., 2017; Fernet, Gagne, & Austin, 2010).

The use of the self-determination theory and approach avoidance motivation theory in our analysis will help us reveal mechanisms that explain the performance and perseverance of expatriates and their families while in SFEs. With these insights we would be able to make a series of propositions that predict outcomes for families in SFEs.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used in our investigation and is divided into five sections. First, we explain the approach used and why it is appropriate for our research questions (Section 3.1). Second, we describe our sample, the criteria used for selection, and the characteristics of the sample collected (Section 3.2). Third, we explicate the data collection process, including the specifics of the interview guide and the survey used with different informants (Section 3.3). Fourth, we expose the position of the main researcher and how we managed to reduce bias and power imbalance during the interviewing process (Section 3.4). Last, we describe the data analysis in detail, presenting how the data collected transformed through the various coding cycles (Section 3.5).

3.1 Approach

To examine our research questions, this research applied a qualitative methodology with a multiple-case study approach for inductive theory building to generate and/or elaborate on existing theories. This approach combines grounded theory building (Glaser & Strauss, 2006) with case replication logic (Yin, 2009) and is adequate to respond to our research questions for several reasons. First, it is a study of a phenomenon that has not yet been thoroughly investigated (with only a few studies done on SFEs and with very small sample sizes), and the prevalent literature in expatriations with trailing families is inadequate or unable to respond to our research questions (Eisenhardt, 2020; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki, & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, 2011). Second, multiple-case study research reveals the unique characteristics of each case and the holistic nature of social reality. Together they provide a deep understanding of a phenomenon as it considers the context to reveal intervening factors and their relationships (Gibbert, Ruigrok, & Wicki, 2008; Tsang, 2014). Third, utilizing multiple-case research provides a replication logic where each case can confirm, contrast or extend the emerging theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Last, a more robust theory can emerge as the propositions are rooted in diverse empirical evidence that provides grounds for tighter constructs and relationships from multiple cases (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

3.2 Sample

The criteria used to select the participants were families that had engaged or were currently on a self-initiated or a company-assigned long-term expatriation where members of their core family (partner and/or dependent children) were living in different countries for at least one year. We did not fix in advance the number of cases nor the number of informants, yet we knew that our research design would need ample data to reach theoretical sampling and saturation. Based on work from other scholars (Mason, 2010), we aimed for a minimum of 30 interviews and 15

case studies. We utilized a snowball process to invite participants to our study. We initiated the process by contacting work colleagues and friends that we knew had been or were currently in a long-term expatriation to ask them if they had experienced a split family arrangement for at least a year and asked them to refer us to others that could fit this criterion. Additionally, we also contacted HR managers in our network who had experience managing expatriates to ask if they had managed SFEs.

This study relied on theoretical sampling to include variability of business expatriations (company-assigned and self-initiated) and types of families (traditional and non-traditional) representing all the conceptual categories that experience this phenomenon, which is suitable for providing better insights (Eisenhardt, 1989). Such variability allows for identifying empirical regularity (convergence or divergence of the topics reviewed) in the population under study and provides grounds for empirical generalizations (Tsang, 2014). Our study included 22 cases of SFEs experienced by 15 distinct families, as some families had experienced several SFEs. Yet, we treated each case as parallel and independent for comparison (Thomas, 2011) as it was lived at a different moment in the family life (stage of family life or number and age of children), the family type had changed (from a traditional family to divorced, to blended family, etc.), and/or the characteristics of the expatriations were different (duration, employer, role, home and host country). Of the 22 cases, 13 were traditional families, and nine were non-traditional families. Seventeen cases were organizational expatriations, while five were self-initiated expatriations. Table 1 shows an overview of the cases by family type and business expatriation.

Table 1. Cases by family and international assignment type

	IA type		**Total No.**
Family type	**OE**	**SIE**	**of cases**
Traditional	3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22	8, 9	**13**
Non-traditional	1, 6, 10, 12, 17, 19	2, 14, 18	**9**
Total cases	**17**	**5**	**22**

IA: international assignment; OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation

Additionally, by design, we were open to sampling variance of cases not only on business expatriation type and family type, but also of family characteristics, context, and SFE characteristics. The heterogeneity in these characteristics is a desirable outcome of the sampling process, allowing a more complete mapping of the primary constructs and their relationships, and making it more appropriate for generalization about the phenomenon (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Having common characteristics and others different across multiple cases allowed us to control extraneous variables (Welch & Piekkari, 2017).

The study included cases with varying nationalities of partners, stages of family life, expatriates' global work experience, and families' experience being separated due to work. In aggregate, partners and expatriates were from eleven different countries. More specifically, the sample included cases where the nationality of both partners was from Latin America (17 cases), Europe (two cases), Asia (two cases), and one case where the partners were from different regions: North America and Latin America. Additionally, the cases represented families in various stages of family life: the beginning of the partnership (four cases), raising children (seven cases), preparing children for independence (eight cases), empty nested (two cases), and near retirement (one case). Cases depicted different expatriate's work tenure at the beginning of the SFE: less than ten years (two cases), between 10 and 19 years (three cases), between 20 and 29 years (12 cases), and 30 or more years (5 cases). Cases illustrated expatriates with a range of experience with global work: having experienced only temporary global work (i.e., short-term assignments, international business travel; five cases), temporary global work and long-term international assignments (ten cases), and all types of global work including SFEs prior to the one they were providing inputs for (seven cases). Last, the cases in the study portrayed families who had experience separation due to work for varying reasons: domestic travel, temporary global work, and/or SFEs. Table 2 displays a summary of the family and expatriate characteristics of each case.

Table 2. Family's and expatriate's characteristics by case

Case No.	Partner's nationality	Family type	Family characteristics	Family life cycle	Expatriate's work tenure at beginning of SFE - years	Expatriate's experience with global work	Family's experience being separated due to work
1	Latam	Non-traditional	Dual career, female expat	Raising children	22	SIE w trailing, IBT, SFE	IBT, SFE
2	N.Am/Latam	Non-traditional	No children. Blended family.	Near retirement	51	IBT, SIE w trailing	IBT
3	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Empty nested	29	OE w trailing, IBT, SFE	IBT, SFE, DT
4	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Preparing children for independence	30	OE w trailing, IBT, SFE	IBT, SFE, DT
5	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Preparing children for independence	26	IBT, STA	IBT, DT, STA
6	Latam	Non-traditional	Blended family	Raising children	26	OE w trailing, IBT	IBT
7	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Preparing children for independence	25	OE w trailing (2), IBT	IBT, DT
8	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Preparing children for independence	23	SIE w trailing, IBT	IBT, DT
9	Asia	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Raising children	20	SIE w trailing, DT	DT
10	Latam	Non-traditional	Divorced. Dependent children	Raising children & independent children	26	SFE, STA, IBT	SFE, STA, IBT
11	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Beginning of partnership	8	OE w trailing, IBT	IBT
12	Asia	Non-traditional	Dual career, LGTB, no children	Beginning of partnership	13	IBT	IBT
13	EU	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Beginning of partnership	8	IBT	IBT, DT
14	Latam	Non-traditional	Dual career	Beginning of partnership	23	IBT	IBT
15	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Preparing children for independence	23	IBT, OE w trailing	IBT, DT
16	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Raising children	17	IBT, OE w trailing	IBT, DT
17	Latam	Non-traditional	Blended family	Empty nested	33	IBT, SFE, STA	IBT, DT, SFE, STA
18	Latam	Non-traditional	Divorced. Dependent children	Raising children & independent children	25	STA, IBT	STA, IBT
19	Latam	Non-traditional	Blended family	Preparing children for independence	34	OE w trailing, IBT, SFE	IBT, SFE
20	EU	Non-traditional	Blended family	Preparing children for independence	30	OE w trailing, IBT	IBT, DT
21	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Raising children	15	OE w trailing, IBT	IBT, DT
22	Latam	Traditional	Male expatriate, female partner, and children	Preparing children for independence	29	OE w trailing, IBT, SFE	IBT, SFE, DT

Latam: Latin America; N.Am: North America; EU: European Union; Preparing children for independence: children in last years of High School and first year of University/College; SIE w trailing: self-initiated expatriation with trailing family; IBT: international business travel; OE w trailing: organizational expatriation with trailing family; SFE: split family expatriation; STA: short-term assignment; DT: domestic travel

Regarding context and SFE characteristics, our sample varied in duration, home and host country, geographic path, organization, and industry. The sample included cases where the duration of the SFE ranged from one to 15 years: One year (seven cases), from one year and one month to four years (nine cases), from four years and one month to nine years (five cases), from nine years and one month and longer (one case). The geographic path of the SFE -the region where the family was together to the region where part of the family went during the SFE- also varied and developed in three continents. The study included paths within Latin America (Latam; seven cases), Latam to N. America (three cases), Latam to Europe (two cases), N. America to Latam (two cases), N. America to Europe (one case), N. America to Asia (one case), Europe to Latam (two cases), Europe to N. America (one case), Europe to Asia (one case), Asia to N. America (one case), and Asia to Europe (one case). The organizations that sponsored expatriations were North American multinational companies (MNC; 12 cases), Latam MNCs (three cases), and EU MNCs (European Union; two cases). The industries where the expatriates worked while on the international assignment were food and agriculture (12 cases), professional services (two cases), manufacturing (six cases), and oil and gas (one case). See Table 3 for the characteristics of each SFE. This contextual triangulation of settings, locations, organization, and even time helped us strengthen the external and construct validity of our findings (Nielsen et al., 2020).

Table 3. SFE's characteristics by case

Case No.	IA type	IA duration (years)	SFE duration (years)	SFE geographic path	Organization type	Industry	Years elapsed from the beginning of the SFE and the time of the interview	Years elapsed from the end of the SFE and the time of the interview
1	OE	2.5	2.5	Within Latam	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	12	9.5
2	SIE	17	3	Asia to North America	Small family business	Professional services	3	0
3	OE	2	1.5	Europe to North America	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	3	1.5
4	OE	3+	3+	Latam to Europe	Latin American MNC	Manufacturing	3	ongoing
5	OE	7	1	Within Latam	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	16	15
6	OE	8	8	Within Latam	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	8	0
7	OE	3	1	Latam to North America	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	5	4
8	SIE	6+	4+	North America to Latam	Small family business	Manufacturing	4	ongoing
9	SIE	17+	15	North America to Asia	Large domestic business	Professional services	17	2
10	OE	7	7	Within Latam	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	6.5	ongoing
11	OE	1	1	Within Latam	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	24	23
12	OE	5+	1.5	Asia to Europe	North American MNC	Manufacturing	3.5	2
13	OE	4	4	Europe to Asia	European MNC	Oil & Gas	13	9
14	SIE	1	1	Latam to North America	Open for opportunities		17	16
15	OE	6	5.5	North America to Latam	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	9	3.5
16	OE	4	1	Europe to Latam	Latin American MNC	Manufacturing	15	14
17	OE	5	5	Within Latam	European MNC	Manufacturing	8	3
18	SIE	1	1	Within Latam	Latin American MNC	Food & Agriculture	7.5	6.5
19	OE	1+	1+	Latam to Europe	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	0	ongoing
20	OE	5	2.5	North America to Europe	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	10	7.5
21	OE	1	1	Europe to Latam	North American MNC	Food & Agriculture	24	23
22	OE	1.5	1.5	Latam to North America	Latin American MNC	Manufacturing	3	2

OE: organizational expatriations; SIE: self-initiated expatriation; MNC: multinational company; Latam: Latin America; IA: international assignment.

A key strength of our study is to have multiple perspectives, not only for understanding the phenomenon from diverse angles but also for gaining data triangulation and reducing single source bias (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Nielsen et al., 2020). First, we wanted the family and the organization perspectives, as we were interested in what motivates families to accept an SFE and what motivates organizations to support or promote SFEs. Second, we planned to have multiple informants from each family and each organization to capture the complexity and richness of this phenomenon. Hence, we targeted to have six types of informants, three representing the perspectives of the family: expatriate, partner, and children; and three representing the organization's perspective: supervisor, direct report, and Human Resource (HR) representative. Having the partner and the children as informants, in addition to the expatriate, added a deeper level of knowledge of motives, especially when, in SFEs, the family does not act as a unit. Having supervisors, direct reports, and HR representatives as informants gave us access to perspectives from different functions, critical in organizations, as decisions can be motivated by business needs and/or HR policies.

Overall, we had 47 informants, twelve expatriates, eight partners, ten children (18 years or older and with the parent's permission), three supervisors, six direct reports, and eight HR representatives. Table 4 shows an overview of the number of interviews conducted by informant type, family, and the SFE case they informed.

Table 4. Number of interviews conducted by family, SFE case they informed, and informant type

		Informant						
Family	**Case No.**	**Expatriate**	**Partner**	**Children**	**Supervisor**	**Direct report**	**HR rep**	**Total**
1	1, 14	1	1	1	1	D	D	4
2	2	1	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	2
3	3, 15	1	1	NA	D	1	D	3
4	4, 16, 22	1	1	2	D	1	1*	6
5	5, 17	1	D	1	1	1	U	4
6	6, 19	1	1	2	D	1	1	6
7	7	1	1	1	D	1	D	4
8	8	1	1	1	NA	NA	NA	3
9	9	1	D	1	D	D	D	2
10	10, 18	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
11	11	1	D	NA	U	NA	U	1
12	12	1	D	NA	D	NA	D	1
Subtotal	19	12	8	10	3	6	3	42
13	13	1*						
14	20	1*						
15	21	1*						
General							5*	5
Total	22	15	8	10	3	6	8	47

* Three HR representatives, while being interviewed for their expertise in managing SFEs, provided information about their own case as an expatriate in SFE; NA: Not applicable in this case; D: informant declined, was unresponsive to our request for an interview or we had restricted access to contact this person; U: Unable to find the person to request an interview.

3.3 Data collection

In this thesis, we aimed for method triangulation as we collected data utilizing qualitative (semi-structured interviews, review of industry reports) and quantitative methods (surveys). Complementing qualitative with quantitative data provides better insights into understanding a phenomenon (Challiol & Mignonac, 2005). Using both methods together allows for enhanced interpretations, confirms findings for theory building, and reduces common method bias (Nielsen et al., 2020). Specifically, our interview guide included open and close-ended questions to enable a deeper grounding of theoretical insights, reduce bias, and also to capture the interpersonal and intrapersonal processes involved in the decision-making

process (Challiol & Mignonac, 2005; Eisenhardt, 1989), while our survey included a multi-factor rating to confirm importance and relevance of insights.

We utilized various data sources: a) interviews, b) surveys, c) follow-up phone calls to clarify details, d) and archival data, including industry reports and company material. Such triangulation of data sources allowed us to improve precision and completeness, and increase confidence in the emerging propositions strengthening the construct validity (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010).

The primary data source was the semi-structured interview. We developed our interview protocol after reviewing literature that had studied short-term assignments (e.g., Starr and Currie, 2009), long-term assignments (e.g., Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011; Richardson and Mallon, 2005; Richardson and McKenna, 2003), dual-career families willingness to relocate abroad (e.g., Challiol and Mignonac, 2005; Kierner, 2018; Van der Velde et al., 2016), and expatriations in hostile destinations (e.g., Dickmann and Watson, 2017; Stoermer, 2017). We also reviewed literature that studied dual-career domestic commuter families (e.g., Anderson and Spruill, 1993), families in the military sector (e.g., De Burgh et al., 2011; Rodriguez and Margolin, 2015), as well as literature on decisions at the family-work interface (e.g., Powell and Greenhaus, 2010, 2012) to inform our interview guide. Additionally, before initiating the data collection process, we presented and received approval for the interview guide and the consent forms from our institution's ethical review board. See Appendix A for a copy of the information sheet and consent form.

Our interview guide was comprised of seven sections. The first section included a greeting, an explanation of the purpose of the interview, the treatment of the data collected, and a request for consent. The second section asked about the individual and family characteristics: years in a committed relationship, children and their ages, country of citizenship, home country if different than citizenship, current job, and tenure. The third section asked the informant about characteristics of the SFE: job during the expatriation, agreed duration, host country, date when expatriation started, date when split family arrangement started and ended, what support they received from the organization, how many times a year did the family

get together while on split family arrangement. The fourth section asked the informant about the decision-making process to accept an SFE: how was the decision made, who got involved, what were the reasons to choose SFE over going altogether or declining, what prior experiences influenced the decision, knowledge about another family who had lived an SFE, what were the expectations for this arrangement. The fifth section asked the informant about his/her experience while living in a split family arrangement: benefits, disadvantages, greatest challenges, surprises, impact, and expectations. The sixth section asked the informant for an overall assessment of his/her experience with the SFE. The last section finished the interview by thanking the informant.

The interview guide was similar for all informants except that the language was adapted (your employee, your supervisor, your partner, your parent, etc.) and excluded sections that did not apply to that type of informant. The partner's guide did not include work characteristics if he/she did not work. The children's guide did not include the section about the characteristics of the expatriation. The guide for informants representing the organization (supervisor and HR representative) asked in section two instead of family characteristics, characteristics of the organization they worked in, and their experience working with expatriates and with expatriates in SFEs. The direct report's guide in section two did not include family characteristics. Instead, it included questions about how many years they worked with the expatriate, their experience reporting to expatriates, and to expatriates in SFEs. Additionally, the direct report's guide did not include sections 3 and 4, as direct reports are neither involved in the negotiation nor the decision to accept or support an SFE. See Appendix B-G for a copy of the interview guide used with the different informants.

The main researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews and surveys via video conferencing over seven months, from January to June 2020. The interview and survey were done in English or Spanish, adapting, when possible, to the native language of the informant. This made the informant more comfortable during the interview process and provided more significant insights.

The leading researcher is a native Spanish speaker and fluent in English. She has lived and worked in different countries in Latin, North America, and Europe for almost three decades. With this expertise, the principal researcher conducted the double translation of the interview script and survey in English and Spanish, ensuring semantic and construct equivalence (Chan, 2008). Out of the 47 interviews, only six had to be conducted in the second language of the informant: three were conducted in English and three in Spanish.

The survey was done verbally to expatriates and partners at the end of the interview to triangulate data. We decided to do verbal survey immediately after the interview to avoid attrition and to be available for any clarifications to prevent having to rely on quality checkups to use the response of the surveys. The survey included only three sections and took 10-20 minutes to complete. The first section described the instructions of the survey, the second section the rating of motives, and the last one the closing words. The survey aimed to identify the different reasons that influence their decision to accept an SFE and rank their level of importance. In the instructions, we asked them to rate every item we would read to them if they were a motive that influenced their decision to accept the split family arrangement during their long-term expatriation. For those motives that were present in their decision, we asked them to rate them as very important, important, somewhat important, or not important. The items were the same for expatriates and partners. Yet, some items asked for their perspective (e.g., I did not want to interrupt our children's education) while others asked for their perception of their partner (e.g., I perceived my partner had the capacity to manage the household without me). The items of motives used in the survey were developed from the same literature that informed the interview guide. See Appendix H-I for a copy of the surveys.

A total of 2,779 minutes of dialog was recorded with the informants' permission, including the semi-structured interview and the verbal survey. The interview duration ranged from 26 to 145 minutes, with an average of 59 minutes per informant. See Table 5 for a detail of minutes of the interview per type of informant.

Table 5. Minutes of interview per informant type

Informant type	No. of informants	Minutes of interview	Avg. minutes per informant
Expatriate	12	967	81
Partner	8	584	73
Children	10	383	38
Supervisor	3	135	45
Direct report	6	222	37
HR rep	3	142	47
HR general	5	346	69
Total	**47**	**2,779**	**59**

HR rep: Human Resource representative providing insights for a particular SFE case; HR general: Human resource representative providing insights for SFE cases in general

During the data collection process, we faced some challenges. From the snowball technique, we identified 13 potential expatriates that had experienced SFEs, 12 agreed to participate, and one was unresponsive after several attempts. Once the expatriate had agreed to participate, we ideally wanted to interview five other types of informants per case. However, we sometimes had restricted access, the informant declined to participate or was unresponsive (17 informants: four partners, six supervisors, two direct reports, five HR representatives), or we were unable to find the informant (one supervisor and two HR representatives). Table 4 shows which type of informant per case participated and those that declined or we were unable to find them.

Our interviews and surveys asked for recollection of events and relied on the memory of the informants. To mitigate the bias generated by retrospective sensemaking or impression management, our research design included several strategies recommended by other researchers (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Huber & Power, 1985; Leonard-Barton, 1990). First, we included informants from different hierarchical levels (supervisor-direct report, parent-child), functional areas (HR, general management), geographies (North America, Latin America, Europe, and Asia), and organizations (MNC, large domestic companies, small family businesses). It is less likely to have convergent retrospective sensemaking with such variability of informants. Second, we combined retrospective and real-time cases. The informants provided insights into ongoing SFEs and SFEs that had concluded,

providing us with opportunities for complementary and synergistic data collection. Access to retrospective data increases the sample to conduct replication logic, providing enhanced grounding on empirical evidence and thus strengthening external validity. Access to real-time data allows us to understand how events developed, enhancing internal validity (Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2011; Leonard-Barton, 1990). Our sample included four cases of families still on the SFE, nine cases of families that had finished the SFE less than five years from the time of the interview, four cases of families that had finished the SFE between five years and ten years from the time of the interview, and five cases of families that had concluded the SFE more than ten years from the time of the interview. See Table 3 for more details. Last, we compared responses of cases where families were still on the SFE versus those that had finished their SFE to reveal if there was memory bias in the recollection of events and did not find significant contradicting information. In line with other authors, we agree that expatriations are work-life shock events, disrupting and demanding resource investment from all family members involved (Ali, Van der Zee, & Sanders, 2003; Crawford, Thompson, & Ashforth, 2019; Van Der Zee et al., 2007), and a split family arrangement can heighten the experience making memories easily recalled even after many years of the event.

During the interview process, we carefully managed the power imbalance created when interviewing some informants. When interviewing children, we adjusted the language to make it more easily understood by them and built rapport by mentioning how the main researcher related to his/her parents and the experiences and/or conditions shared with them. For all informants, we gave them the power to withdraw any or all the information collected at any time before publication.

3.4 Position of the researcher

The leading researcher in this study is considered an insider as she has experienced both organizational and self-initiated expatriations and was a work

colleague, and/or friend of several expatriates and HR representatives interviewed. We were careful to reduce researcher bias by having a script of the interviews and following it strictly. To put informants at ease during the interview process, we reassured them we would anonymize the information to be published, restrict access on a need-to-know basis to the data collected, and destroy all the recordings and notes once the study is completed and published.

Having a personal or professional relationship with some informants strengthened our study in various ways. The validity of our study increased as we were allowed to interview additional members of the family (partner and children) and were introduced to the work colleagues they had during the SFE (supervisor, direct report, and HR representative), providing us with means for data triangulation. Additionally, the reliability of our study augmented as we could more easily relate, empathize, and create rapport with informants, which allowed us to extract richer information and facilitated the interpretation of data from the interview process (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

3.5 Data analysis

We entered the analysis process without an a-priori hypothesis, nonetheless with familiarity with the extant expatriate and domestic literature related to SFEs. We initiated the data analysis by transcribing all the audio recordings. The transcription was done by the primary researcher keeping the original language used during the interview. Following Eisenhardt and colleagues' strategies for inductive theory-building (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), we created a case history for each SFE that included all the data gathered for each case. Thereafter, using Nvivo 12 for Mac, we performed three rounds of coding. First, we conducted attribute coding to identify the unique characteristics of each case (e.g., family type, family life cycle, expatriate gender, expatriate work tenure, duration of the SFE, origin country, and destination country). Table 6 depicts a list of attributes per case.

Second, we conducted descriptive coding generating four broad groupings of codes: expatriate motives, partner motives, organization motives, and the SFE decision. After multiple iterations between the long list of descriptive codes of motives and related literature, we coded categories and subcategories within the major groupings. These categories and subcategories revealed more granular information about the nature of the motives, such as aspiration, temporal focus, stimuli, energization, regulation, the emergence of motive, and the nature of the action. Table 7 illustrates the categories and subcategories that emerged from the second round of coding. Last, we conducted axial coding reassembling data, keeping dominant categories, and removing the less relevant ones while defining subcategories representing dimensions or attributes of the categories (Saldaña, 2013). In this step, we compared and contrasted systematically, looking for patterns (similarities, differences, frequency, correspondence, and causation) and sharpening constructs that were constantly polished with extant literature. At the end of the coding cycles, refined concepts like aspiration, regulation, energization, perceived self-efficacy, and outcome expectations emerged. See Table 8 for a complete list of the refined concepts and their description.

With the refined concepts, we conducted four types of analysis: within-case analysis, cross-case analysis, within-informant analysis, and cross-informant analysis. Our research included different levels of analysis: as individual responses and as part of a group (case, informant type, family/organization). Together these analyses revealed the relationship between concepts allowing us to make propositions that we later compared to extant literature to refine constructs and theoretical relationships. While we just described a linear sequence of events in the data analysis process, it was not linear at all. The process required several iterations of coding, analysis, comparing with extant literature and industry reports, following up with informants, and contrasting with survey data, until final concepts and relationships emerged. This approach, while muddled, allowed us for a deep conceptual understanding grounded in empirical data.

Table 6. Attributes

1st coding Major groupings	Attributes	Description
Expatriate	Expatriate's nationality	country
	Expatriate's gender	female, male
	Expatriate's work tenure at beginning of SFE	years
	Organization type	small family business, large domestic business, MNC
	Industry	manufacturing, professional services, food & agriculture, oil & gas
	Expatriate's experience with global work	IBT, STA, OE w trailing, SIE w trailing, SFE
	Partner's nationality	country
Family	Family type	traditional, non-traditional
	Family life cycle	beginning of partnership, raising children, preparing children for independence, empty nested, near retirement
	Family's experience being separated due to work	DT, STA, IBT, SFE
	Relationship status at beginning of SFE	married, partnership, divorced
	Years together at beginning of SFE	years
	Domain origin of SFE discussion	work, life
SFE	Moment when SF arrangement was considered	before deciding to expatriate, while on IA with trailing family
	Business expatriation type	OE, SIE
	Duration of the expatriation	years
	Beginning of SFE	year
	Duration of SF arrangement	years
	Origin country	country
	Destination country	country
	Geographic path of the SFE	region to region
	Who relocated in the SFE?	expatriate, family
	Intention of SF arrangement	until family can join IA, all IA, until expatriate can join family at home/new home
	Reality of SF arrangement	until family can join IA, all IA, until expatriate can join family at home/new home
	Who does most the traveling?	expatriate, partner, both
	Frequency travel	time
	Relationship status at end of SFE	married, partnership, divorced

IBT: international business travel; STA: short-term assignment; OE w trailing: organizational expatriation with trailing family; SIE w trailing: self-initiated expatriation with trailing family; SFE: split family expatriation; DT: domestic travel.

Table 7. Categories and subcategories

2nd coding Major groupings	Categories	Subcategories
Expatriate's motives	Subject of motive	expatriate, partner, children, family, organization
Partner's motives	Domain	work, life
	Theme	family benefit, well-being & safety, personal development, financial wealth, recognition / image, meaningful relationship
	Aspiration	intrinsic, extrinsic, prosocial
	Temporal focus	past experience, current situation, immediate future, distant future,
	Stimuli	concrete, abstract
	Energization	approach, avoidance
	Target	desire host, desire home, reject host, reject home
	Regulation	external, introjected, identified, integrated, intrinsic
	Nature of action	keep, initiate, stop, improve, avoid
	Emergence of motive	ever-present, accumulated effect, time-bound
	Motivational type of values	security, tradition, conformity, benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, face
	Perceived self-efficacy	high, low
	Risk expectancy	high, low
Organization's motives	Knowledge about family	yes, no
	Knowledge about reasons to SFE	yes, no
	Expatriate organizational support	care provided by the organization to aid expatriate's well-being during IA
	Family organizational support	care provided by the organization to aid expatriate's family well-being during IA
	HR treatment	expatriate, local, local plus
	Policies and HR management	standard, flexible
	Organization's behavior	proactive, reactive
SFE decision	Origin of the SF arrangement	family priority requiring family at home, family not invited to trail, family not allowed to trail, family not able to trail
	SFE acceptance agency	chosen as family, chosen by expatriate

Table 8. Concepts

3rd coding Mayor groupings	Concepts	Description
Expatriate's motivation to relocate abroad	Energization	approach or avoidance. Direction of a behavior toward a positive stimuli or away from a negative stimuli
	Aspiration	intrinsic, extrinsic, prosocial
	Theme	well-being & safety, personal development, meaningful relationship, financial wealth, recognition / image, family benefit, organizational and community contribution
	Regulation	external, introjected, identified, integrated, intrinsic
	Perceived self-efficacy	belief in their capabilities to produce certain actions
	Risk expectancy	belief of how much threat of failure exist
Partner's motivation to not trail	Energization	approach or avoidance. Direction of a behavior toward a positive stimuli or away from a negative stimuli
	Aspiration	intrinsic, extrinsic, prosocial
	Theme	well-being & safety, personal development, meaningful relationship, financial wealth, recognition / image, family benefit, org or community contribution
	Regulation	external, introjected, identified, integrated, intrinsic
	Perceived self-efficacy	belief in their capabilities to produce certain actions
	Risk expectancy	belief of how much threat of failure exist
Family's motivation to do SFE	Energization	approach or avoidance. Direction of a behavior toward a positive stimuli or away from a negative stimuli
	Theme	dual career, family well-being, expatriate's work, children's future
	Regulation	external, introjected, identified, integrated, intrinsic
	Perceived self-efficacy	belief in their capabilities to produce certain actions
	Risk expectancy	belief of how much threat of failure exist
Organization's motivation to support an SFE	Theme	expatriate benefit, staffing & relocation benefits, work outcomes, staffing limitation
	Organization's behavior	proactive, reactive

Based on our research questions and design, we aimed for theoretical saturation, not data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018). Data saturation would have suggested stopping coding once new interviews of the same informant type were no longer generating new codes (Mason, 2010). Yet, because our research design included a sample representing different theoretical categories and multiple perspectives, we valued comprehensiveness over data saturation to reveal novel aspects of each case and a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, prioritizing the coding of all the interviews. Aiming for theoretical saturation, we conducted multiple iterations in the data analysis until emerging concepts were fully represented in the data collected.

During the data analysis, a second researcher was involved in cross-checking the analytical process and expanding insights. This researcher was of a different nationality and expertise, providing a distinct understanding of the results. Such investigator triangulation strengthens the validity and reliability of our analysis (Nielsen et al., 2020).

Chapter 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of our investigation divided into five sections, each one addressing a research question (RQ). First, we describe the characteristics of families that engage in SFEs (Section 4.1). Interestingly, it is not their demographics but two specific past experiences that set these families apart. Second, we present the characteristics of SFEs (Section 4.2) and propose that there are three distinct types of SFEs. We follow by describing how each type of SFE has distinct qualitative characteristics and movement of people. Third, we explicate how organizations manage SFEs (Section 4.3), detailing the different HR treatments used, the conditions of the expatriate packages by SFE type, the organizational support provided, and the different organizational behavior utilized to manage SFEs. Fourth, we unveil the motivation of families to engage in SFEs (Section 4.4), distinguishing the motives, themes, aspirations, energization, and regulation in them. Fifth, we present the motivation of organizations to support SFEs (Section 4.5).

While presenting findings, we distinguish between attributes or relationships present in all our sample versus those that may be distinct by type of informant, by type of SFE, business expatriation, or case.

4.1 What are the characteristics of families that engage in SFEs?

Little is known about the characteristics of families that engage in SFEs. Industry reports indicate that some families engaging in SFEs are dual-career families (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016). From academic literature, we can infer that families with small children won't be interested in SFEs as it is easy for partners and small children to trail with the expatriate to the host country. Yet, we may miss other valuable information that sets these families apart. In the following subsections, we will present our findings from the analysis of demographics and past experiences of the families that engage in SFEs.

4.1.1 Demographics

Our study finds that families engaging in SFEs can be of any type: families composed of a male and a female partner with children or without children, gay and lesbian couples, single parents, blended, dual-career, and divorced. Additionally, our study reveals that families that engage in SFEs may be at any stage in their family's life cycle, whether at the beginning of their partnership, raising children, preparing children for independence, empty nested, or near retirement. Table 9 shows the characteristics of each SFE case.

Table 9. SFE case by family type, IA type, and family life-cycle stage.

		IA type							
		OE				SIE			
Family type	Traditional	11, 13	16, 21	4, 5, 7, 15, 20, 22	3		9	8	
	Non-traditional	12	1, 6, 10	19	17	14	18		2
		BP	RC	PI	EN/NR	BP	RC	PI	EN/NR
		Family life-cycle stage				Family life-cycle stage			

OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation; BP: beginning of their partnership; RC: raising children; PI: preparing children for independence; EN: empty nested; NR: near retirement; IA: international assignment

Our examination exposes that the quality of the partnership does not determine whether a family will engage in SFEs. In our sample, we had cases with good and strong relationships between family members and cases where the relationship was strained. Families with strong relationships use this strength to manage the difficulties during the SFE. The spouse in case 3 shared: "The strength of our relationship, knowing we love and respect each other. Having certainty that your partner is not going to be fooling around. No one is 100% certain, but our relationship gives us strength to say, we can manage this [SFE]." Yet, families with strained relationships see SFEs as an opportunity to test their relationship. As the expatriate in case 12 expressed: "The relationship was not that well. It was not showing proof that it was going to last long. By moving [accepting the SFE], it would either make us stronger and force us to make a decision that would bring us closer together long-term or just break it apart. I wanted to test that."

While our sample was primarily composed of male expatriates, SFEs are not restricted to families of male expatriates. Similarly, the variety of nationalities in our sample -eleven countries representing Latin America, North America, Europe, and Asia- suggests that SFEs are not exclusive to families of a particular world region or country. Likewise, the variety of expatriates' work tenure in our sample indicates that families can engage in SFEs at any stage in their professional careers. This characteristic of expatriates in SFEs differs from the typical expatriates in traditional expatriations who are frequently tenured employees.

Overall, the demographics we collected from the expatriate families engaging in SFEs did not create boundary conditions for this phenomenon.

4.1.2 Past experiences

Interestingly, our investigation unveils that all families engaging in SFEs have two distinct past experiences: the expatriate had experience with global work, and the family had experience being separated from the expatriate due to work. The expatriates engage in SFEs only when they have prior experience with international business travel, international commute, and short-term and/or long-term expatriation. For example, the expatriate in case 5 said: "[In my career] I have traveled a lot always [domestically and internationally]. I was the one living away [from home] and sometimes for long periods of time." The families engage in SFEs only when they have some experience of being separated from the expatriate because of domestic or international business travel, an international commute, and/or a short-term assignment. For example, the child in case 4 said: "My Dad traveled a lot [for work]. I was accustomed to my Mom being at home and my Dad being absent. It was easy for me to accept it [the split arrangement] It was ok, it was practically the same." Similarly, the spouse in case 7 expressed: "When this happened to us [to be in SFE], it was not a shock. I was used to this [being separated from her husband]. We had a time when we had to live in different cities, and also [expatriate] travels a lot."

These findings suggest that expatriates and their families require some preparation to consider themselves capable of managing the difficulties of SFEs. Expatriates may not engage in SFEs as their first experience with global work nor as their first experience being separated from their family due to work.

Proposition[1] *1. Families that engage in SFEs have two distinct characteristics: the expatriate has prior experience with global work, and the family has prior experience of being separated from the expatriate due to work.*

4.2 What are the characteristics of SFEs?

To date, very little is known about the characteristics of SFEs. The few industry reports that cover SFEs have focused mainly on divulging their increase in numbers, and the few academic studies on SFEs have examined relationships present in this phenomenon. Both literatures are yet to provide the basic description of SFEs which is important in a nascent stream of research. We intend to amend this void by exploring the basic characteristics of SFEs such as the domain where the SFE decision is initiated and the moment in the expatriation when it happens.

4.2.1 Typology

We entered the exploration knowing that some families when presented with the decision to expatriate, were choosing a split arrangement. An example of this situation is case 4, where the expatriate shared: "I don't find it difficult to work from [host country], and if tomorrow I need to work from Dallas or London, or Bilbao if I see it is a good opportunity, that is where I will be. My daughters are old enough and preparing to live on their own. [younger daughter] was about to graduate from high

---

[1] Following the guidelines of multiple-case study for theory building (Eisenhardt, 1989), propositions are made when evidence converge for the cohort of SFEs in our study. A future study is needed with a different research design to test the propositions in a larger sample and, if possible, a random sample to strengthen their external validity (i.e., generalization to the population).

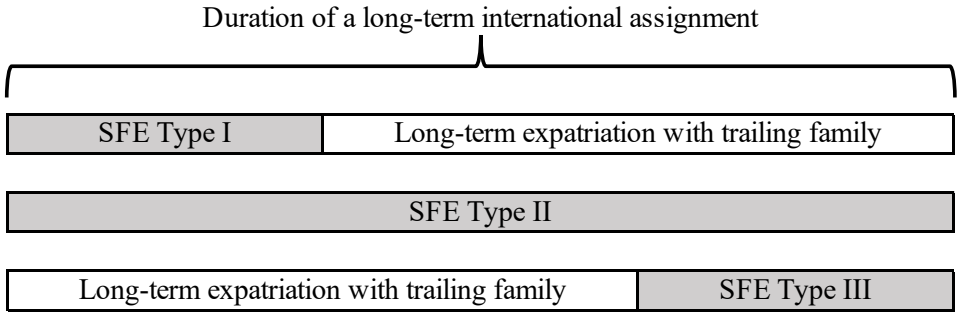
school. She could not come, she would lose her studies. [older daughter] was studying for a Law degree and could not study it outside our country. I thought it was better for them to stay. If they cannot come, no worries. I am going to live there [in the host country]."

Yet our study quickly identified that families reported their SFE experience in two other distinct situations. First, an SFE happening before the family joins the expatriation allowing the expatriate to have a head start on the international assignment when the family needs more time to be ready to relocate. An example of this type of SFE is case 5, where the expatriate expressed: "I talked to my wife [about the expatriation], and at that moment she told me that because of our child, she did not want to relocate. She would join once our daughter finished high school [1.5 years later], so I accepted the job in those conditions." Second, an SFE happening at the end of a long-term expatriation with a trailing family, to extend or complete the international assignment when the family needs to return home early. The partner in case 8 expressed: "We had decided to stay [at the host country] for two years. I never adjusted well, even though I was doing all my life there [host country]. Whenever I came home, I had all my things, my friends and family. Our son was getting ready to start High School, and he wanted to study in our hometown with some of his friends. I felt lonely [in the host country] and wanted to return home. [expatriate] needed to stay [at host country], he was building his reputation, the business, making sales. We lived from that income."

Together these insights suggest that depending on the moment during the expatriation when the SFE happens, three distinct types of SFE may exist. Figure 1 depicts a graphic representation of the types of SFEs. Using this typology, our sample includes eight cases of SFE type I, seven cases of SFE type II, and seven cases of SFE type III.

Proposition 2. Depending on the moment during the expatriation when it occurs and the intended duration, three distinct types of SFEs are likely to exist: 1) SFEs that happen at the beginning of an expatriation with the intention of the family to join the expatriate later; 2) SFEs that happen at the beginning of an expatriation with the intention to last for the entire expatriation; 3) SFEs that happen during an expatriation with trailing family with the intention to last until the expatriate can join the family when the expatriations finishes.

Figure 1. Types of SFEs



4.2.2 Characteristics of SFEs

Continuing with the description of SFEs, we present two additional characteristic that vary by SFE type 1) the domain of the discussion that originates an SFE, and 2) the intention of the duration of the split family arrangement.

The origin of the discussion to engage on an SFE can be in work or life domains. As expected, the SFE discussion in organizational expatriations originates in the work domain when the organization invites the candidate to consider an expatriation. The expatriate in case 12 shared: "My boss asked me to think about it [to relocate to headquarters] carefully and think about me in the future. We don't want to lose you, but you cannot keep being away from the company. You are missing too much. You need to make a choice." Yet, in organizational expatriations with trailing families experiencing difficulties in the host country or needing to

return home early, the discussion about doing an SFE starts in the life domain. The spouse in case 7 shared: "[expatriate] and I always talked about it. We are not going to live here [in the host country] all the time. Our future is back home. We need to find a way for our daughter to graduate from a High School in [home country] and take all the exams to be accepted at the University there."

In self-initiated expatriations, the discussion to engage on an SFE can be in either domain. An individual may want to grow his/her practice/business internationally or provide a better experience for his/her family and may find a way to do that through an SIE with a split family arrangement. The spouse on case 14 expressed: "We were looking for an option to get out of our country. But we were afraid of both of us not having a job. When [expatriate] left to [host country], I stayed and kept my job to have at least one income to cover for our family needs while he was able to find a job there." Additionally, when the family is together in an SIE, the discussion to engage in an SFE can initiate in either domain. An example is case 9, where the expatriate described: "Back home, I had a good job, I had a senior position, and I was reasonably well paid. I did not have financial problems. But in [host country], I was not finding any jobs for my qualifications or requirements. I decided to leave the kids over here [host country] for some time and return to my job [in the home country]. Table 10 shows the domain where the discussion about doing an SFE originates by SFE type.

Table 10. Domain where discussion to engage in an SFE originates by SFE and IA type

SFE type	OE	SIE
I	work	life / work
II	work	life / work
III	life	life / work

OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation

As a consequence of the moment during the assignment when the decision to SFE is made, we can distinguish three intentions for the split arrangement: 1) until the family can join the expatriation (SFE type I), 2) for the entire duration of the international assignment (SFE type II), and 3) until the expatriate can reunite with his/her family at home at the end of the international assignment (SFE type III).

Together these characteristics describe each SFE type. When families choose a split arrangement before they initiate the expatriation and plan to join the expatriate as a trailing family later, illustrate *SFE type I*. When families decide for a split arrangement before they initiate the expatriation and intend the separation to last all the international assignment, exemplify *SFE type II*. When families elect a split arrangement while they are in an expatriation as a trailing family and intend the separation to last until the expatriate can reunite with the family at home at the end of the assignment, represent *SFE type III*. Table 11 describes these characteristics by SFE type and case.

Table 11. Characteristics by SFE type and case

Case No.	SFE type	IA type	Origin of SFE discussion	Moment when the split arrangement was considered	Intention of the split arrangement
1	I	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	Until family can join IA
5	I	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	Until family can join IA
6	I	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	Until family can join IA
10	I	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	Until family can join IA
12	I	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	Until family can join IA
19	I	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	Until family can join IA
21	I	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	Until family can join IA
14	I	SIE	Life	Before deciding to expatriate	Until family can join IA
4	II	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	All IA
11	II	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	All IA
13	II	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	All IA
15	II	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	All IA
17	II	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	All IA
22	II	OE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	All IA
18	II	SIE	Work	Before deciding to expatriate	All IA
3	III	OE	Life	While on IA w trailing family	Until expatriate can join family at home
7	III	OE	Life	While on IA w trailing family	Until expatriate can join family at home
16	III	OE	Life	While on IA w trailing family	Until expatriate can join family at home
20	III	OE	Life	While on IA w trailing family	Until expatriate can join family at home
2	III	SIE	Life	While on IA w trailing family	Until expatriate can join family at home
8	III	SIE	Life	While on IA w trailing family	Until expatriate can join family at home
9	III	SIE	Work	While on IA w trailing family	Until expatriate can join family at home

IA: international assignment; OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation

4.2.3 Movements of people

The last aspect of SFEs that we explored was about the movement of people involved in the phenomenon. In traditional expatriations with trailing families, two main movements of people exist 1) the relocation of all the family to the host country and 2) the repatriation of all the family back to their home country. Contrary, in SFEs, three main movements of people exist 1) the relocation that initiates the split family arrangement done by one part of the family, 2) the frequent travel to visit family members done during the assignment, and 3) the relocation that ends the split family arrangement and reunites the family. Which family member travels during the different movements of people in an SFE vary by type of SFE.

In SFE types I and II, the expatriate relocates to the host county, and the family stays home. Moreover, in SFE type III, the family usually relocates back home, and the expatriate stays in the host country. Yet, we observed an SFE type III where the expatriate relocated back home and left the family in the host country as the family was testing if this host country could become their new home country. In general, we find that in SFEs, families either stay home or go back home, while the expatriate is relocating to or staying in the host country.

As expected, in most SFE cases, the expatriate did most of the traveling to visit the partner and children. The expatriate leverages international business trips to add an extra stop, stay a few days at home, and work remotely. As the expatriate in case 7 stated: “I frequently traveled to visit my family. I had the flexibility to work some percentage of my time remotely. My family only had to come back [host country] once to help with all the moving.”

Yet, it was interesting to find that in some families, the partner did most of the traveling, or they had a balanced arrangement. The partner in case 6 expressed: “Because I was working, I traveled on Thursday, worked remotely on Friday, stayed over the weekend, and returned home on Sunday. [expatriate] traveled every 2-3 weeks on a Wednesday and stayed till Sunday. We did that for the first year. Because of an economic crisis, I lost my job and started traveling to be one week here [home] and one week there [host country] with [expatriate].” Having the partner do most of the traveling to visit the expatriate may provide a solution to

maintain frequent contact between family members when the expatriate has a job that does not allow for remote work. Table 12 summarizes these data.

Collectively, this information provides us with the foundation to build and expand our research on SFEs.

Table 12. Movements of people by SFE type and case

Case No.	SFE type	IA type	Who relocates in the SFE?	Path	Family	Expatriate	Who does most the traveling?
1	I	OE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Expatriate
5	I	OE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Expatriate
6	I	OE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Both
10	I	OE	Expatriate	Host to New Host	Stays at home	Goes to new host	Expatriate
12	I	OE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Both
19	I	OE	Expatriate	Host to New Host	Stays at home	Goes to new host	Partner
21	I	OE	Expatriate	Host to New Host	Stays at home	Goes to new host	Expatriate
14	I	SIE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Expatriate
4	II	OE	Expatriate	Host to New Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Expatriate
11	II	OE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Expatriate
13	II	OE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Expatriate
15	II	OE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Partner
17	II	OE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Partner
22	II	OE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Expatriate
18	II	SIE	Expatriate	Home to Host	Stays at home	Goes to host	Expatriate
3	III	OE	Family	Host to Home	Goes home	Goes to host	Expatriate
7	III	OE	Family	Host to Home	Goes home	Stays at host	Expatriate
16	III	OE	Family	Host to Home	Goes home	Stays at host	Expatriate
20	III	OE	Family	Host to Home	Goes home	Stays at host	Both
2	III	SIE	Family	Host to Home	Goes home	Stays at host	Expatriate
8	III	SIE	Family	Host to Home	Goes home	Stays at host	Expatriate
9	III	SIE	Expatriate	New home to Home	Stays at new home	Goes home	Expatriate

IA: international assignment; OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation

4.3 How do organizations manage SFEs?

After investigating the characteristics of the families engaging in SFEs, the types of SFEs, and their features, we examined how organizations manage SFEs. We discovered that organizations apply different HR treatments: expatriate, local plus, and local. Organizations offering expatriate packages may modify the benefits when they learn that the family won't accompany the expatriate in the host country.

Furthermore, our findings revealed that families in SFEs experience a process of adjustment, and organizations could support the expatriate and family members to facilitate it. Last, we identified that organizations might have a reactive or proactive behavior in managing SFEs depending on factors like the number of SFEs they support and their experience managing SFEs.

4.3.1 Critical information available by the organization

We argue that for organizations to manage SFEs effectively, they need to know the existence of the expatriate family and the reasons for engaging in a split family arrangement. Results of our study suggest that sometimes organizations do not know that the expatriate has a family or the real reasons for accepting the SFE. Not knowing these details limits the organization's capacity to manage the SFEs and influence positive outcomes effectively.

Our study unveiled that some gay or lesbian expatriates may not feel comfortable sharing with the organization that they have a partner. Without this knowledge, organizations treat expatriates as single and never offer family support. This may generate negative consequences for expatriates, their families, and organizations. The expatriate in case 12 described: "I did not discuss that I was in a relationship. I think that being gay and not being an employee was not easy [expatriate was a distributor before being asked to become an employee and work at headquarters]. I didn't know if I can be open. I didn't know the culture. If you're married is different, but when you are not, if it is just a partnership, it is not easy to share."

Research on lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual (LGTB) expatriates posit that these individuals experience greater challenges in international assignments due to prejudice, discrimination, limited family entitlements, or having to hide their identity (McPhail & McNulty, 2015; McPhail, McNulty, & Hutchings, 2016). Our results align with these studies and extend the research to propose that gay expatriates may not receive organizational support for their families during the SFE when their existence is kept secret. During international hires, organizations could

showcase their inclusive policies and environment such that expatriates may grant their trust and share critical personal information with the organization.

Our investigation discovered that when families originate the split arrangement, they may keep the real reason for the decision private. The expatriate in case 3 shared: "When we realized we might have difficulty with our immigration process back home, I decided to manage this privately and did not share it with the company. What I did do at one point was to tell my supervisor that my wife preferred to spend more time at home. That she preferred a location with warmer weather. The company only learned of my real reasons [for the split arrangement] when I told them I could not stay [at the host country] any longer and I needed to return home to secure my citizenship." Organizations not aware of the real reasons for the split family arrangement may inadvertently assume greater risks with the expatriation.

We anticipate that when expatriates feel taken care of by the organization and believe it has their best interest, they may confide private information with their supervisor and/or HR representative. This proposition is in line with the literature on perceived organizational support, which postulates that employees reciprocate such assistance with increased loyalty and heightened performance (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), or as we suggest, with sharing personal information. Our study joins the work of other scholars examining the role of perceived organizational support in predicting expatriate success (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001; Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001).

> *Proposition 3. Expatriates high on perceived organizational support are likely to confide personal information with the organization's representatives.*

4.3.2 HR treatment

At the start of our study, we expected individuals in SFEs to receive a similar HR treatment than their counterpart on an expatriation with a trailing family.

Specifically, we anticipated individuals in organizational expatriations to receive expatriate treatment and those in self-initiated expatriations to receive local treatment. Yet, our study reveals two interesting nuances: first, not all individuals on OEs receive expatriate treatment, and second, individuals in SFEs may receive different treatment than expatriates with trailing families.

Our investigation uncovered that organizations that sponsor candidates to relocate to another country long-term offer them either an expatriate or a local employment package. When the organization's intention of the move is temporary, the employee is treated as an expatriate and frequently receives some support services before, during, and after the expatriation, and obtains benefits that are well above the host peer (i.e., the local employee that does a similar job) employment contract. In these cases, local HR and Global Mobility teams manage the assignment. The HR representative of case 6 expressed: "[expatriate] received a regular expatriate package, with housing allowance, a trip back home, tax support, international medical insurance, all the typical elements [of an expatriate package] according to his position." When the organization's intention of the move is to localize an employee permanently in the host country, the organization typically offers a local employment package yet might offer to pay for the relocation and a few additional benefits to get the employee settled in the host country (local plus). In these cases, the local HR team manages the employee like any other local employee. The HR representative in case 10 shared: "We offered to help with a housing allowance and a trip back home every six months. These were additions to his salary, and we were careful as he was not an expatriate but a local employee." When the organization is not involved in the relocation of the expatriate and hires him/her locally, the employee receives a local contract similar to those of any host country national. The expatriate in case 18 explained: "I had been working in [host country] for two years as a contractor for this company. They made me an offer to be responsible for the plant, which was the second largest in the country. My contract was like any other for this position. I did not receive anything additional due to my family situation or my nationality." Hence, individuals in long-term split family expatriations may receive an expatriate or a local-plus HR treatment when

sponsored by an organization or a local HR treatment when on self-initiated expatriations. Table 13 summarizes these characteristics.

> *Proposition 4. Organizational expatriates in SFEs are likely to receive HR treatment as expatriates when the international relocation is temporal and as local-plus when the relocation is permanent.*
>
> *Proposition 5. Self-initiated expatriates in SFEs are likely to receive HR treatment as local employees.*

Table 13. HR treatment by business expatriation type

IA type	HR treatment	HR team managing the expatriate	Organization's relocation intent
OE	Expatriate	Global Mobility and Local HR team	Temporal
OE	Local-plus	Local HR team	Permanent
SIE	Local	Local HR team	NA

HR: human resources; OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation; IA: international assignment; NA: not applicable.

4.3.3 Expatriate package in OEs

Organizations that offer an expatriate package typically adjust their benefits to meet the size of the family. The adjustments may be in the form of a more significant amount for housing or payment for children's education. Yet, in SFEs, even though the expatriate has a family, the expatriate relocates unaccompanied. This situation persuades some organizations to calculate the family size for expatriate benefits from the number of family members that will be living in the host country, even if that means adjusting it during the assignment. In SFE type I, the expatriate shares with the organization that their family won't be trailing initially and may agree with the organization to receive benefits as single status during this initial phase. Later, when the family is ready to relocate, the organizations adjust the benefits to the new family size. This situation was described by the HR manager in case 10: "Initially, the package included an allowance for a one-person apartment living close to the plant. When we learned that the family was ready to come, we

modified the allowance for a larger house in [a bigger city farther away from the plant] and adjusted the gas and tolls allowance." In SFE type II, the decision that the expatriate will go unaccompanied for all the duration of the assignment is made before the start of the assignment. Hence, the expatriate receives a single status package during the assignment. In SFE type III, the decision that the trailing family will return home early is communicated to the organization, and likely the organization adjusts the family size to single status. The expatriate in case 7 described this situation: "When I communicated to my supervisor our decision [to relocate family back home], it was accepted, yet it had a negative economic impact for us. When the family moved back, the company had significant savings; they saved on our children's school, housing, and many other things."

While it is common for organizations to adjust to single status during the SFE, we observed that some did not change the family size. This situation happened when organizations 1) learned about the family not trailing late in the relocation process, 2) did not receive sufficient information to believe it was going to be a long-term arrangement, 3) were unable by law to change the package, or 4) preferred to maintain the benefits of the expatriate with trailing family. For example, the expatriate in case 6 shared: "[organization] never changed my expatriate package. I lived in the apartment for six years. It was an apartment for a family of four, but my family never lived with me. [organization] never adjusted my family size." An HR representative stated: "we didn't change the package at all if the family had to return early because the original package was fixed and agreed upon, but we couldn't offer any additional benefits for the partner that would return home either. We didn't cancel any benefit because we had a contractual obligation." Overall, when the family decides on the split arrangement, the organization is at the expense of the quality and timing of the information shared by the expatriate to adjust the expatriate package. An HR representative summarized this situation: "The expatriates, once in [host country], are not obligated to let us know what their family status is. But they must tell us when it is time to renew the spouse resident permit. When we learn that an expat has their spouse back in their home country and they are not living together anymore, it is my obligation to raise it up to the business manager."

Proposition 6. Organizational expatriates in SFEs are likely to receive single-status expatriate packages when the organization learns of the split-family arrangement and can modify the contract's conditions.

4.3.4 Organizational support for families in SFEs

Scholars generally agree that a partner's lack of adjustment during an expatriation negatively impacts the expatriate's adjustment and performance (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005; Lazarova et al., 2010). We anticipate that in SFEs, the same relationship will hold. Yet, it is not possible to test this relationship with the most broadly used conceptualization of expatriate/spouse adjustment which includes three dimensions: cultural adjustment, interaction with host country nationals, and work adjustment (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991). Interestingly, these dimensions do not capture one of the most relevant aspects of adjustment for families on split arrangements: family dynamics.

Families in SFEs experience challenges activated by the long-term separation from the expatriate related to family dynamics (Dang, 2020; Mutter, 2017b; Mutter & Thorn, 2019a). Partners and children may have to modify their roles to absorb the tasks of the absent expatriate. The partner in case 1 expressed: "We used to have roles, I would take care of some things and [expatriate] others. But in this case [during the SFE], I had to take care of everything or almost everything except those that [expatriate] could do remotely. It is a challenge because you have to be Dad and Mom. [expatriate] tried to do whatever was possible during her visits, but I had to take on more roles than the ones I normally have." The partner in case 4 shared: "It was a great challenge to make decisions and have the role of Mom and Dad. It is very complicated, and even more when they are teenagers. I am the one giving permission to go to a party, but sometimes I do not know if I should, and if something goes wrong, I have to fix it and then reprimand the children. It is very difficult to carry all the responsibility."

Additionally, partners may need to dedicate more attention to reducing the impact of the absent parent on the children's education. The partner in case 7 shared: "I needed to take care of our three children. I tried to be Mom and Dad and provide order. I tried to keep [expatriate] updated on what was happening with the kids' education -They are doing this project. We have to go to this meeting- [expatriate] was aware of everything that was happening, but it was me who had to do all the education of the children."

Furthermore, partners and children may experience feelings of separation, isolation, and loneliness. For example, the daughter in case 6 expressed: "It is the most difficult time ever because my college is very demanding, and it is very hard to miss classes because of exams. Also, my Dad is traveling a lot this year because of work, and he is not always available when I can go. So, it became a lot more difficult to see each other. We see each other maybe once every 3-4 months." The partner in case 3 shared: "Loneliness was hard. It made me think about widowhood. You need to learn to live on your own. You were born alone and need to learn to live alone, don't cry, and don't impose heavy loads on the children. Find a hobby, build a business or anything, and get started." The child in case 7 expressed: "I was really sad that he [expatriate] wouldn't be there to take me to school in the morning as we were used to. Or him coming at night after work. That would be bittersweet as it would only be my Mom there. The biggest adjustment was not seeing him for a long period of time." Families in SFEs need to find mechanisms to cope with these challenges to adjust to the new family dynamics.

Research posits that the trailing partner's ability to adjust to the host country in an expatriation is facilitated by the support received from the sponsoring organization (Andreason, 2008; McNulty, 2012). In traditional OEs, most organizations provide support focused on helping the family relocate, settle, and manage life in the host country, such as cultural or language training, home finding and familiarization trip, home leave, hardship rest and relax trips, and/or funds that can be used for classes or well-being activities. Fewer organizations provide support for the spouse's work permit, career counseling, or job search, or even assistance for family social integration, such as information about expatriate forums or

introduction to other expatriates (Mercer, 2012). In SFEs, the family stays or goes back home, and new forms of organizational support are needed.

Our study revealed that organizations still need to modify their global mobility policies to meet the needs of SFEs. An HR representative stated: “The last five years, [organization] has started to be flexible with the [global mobility] policies. We are below the market and need to adjust to the family situation. We need to manage exceptions because policies do not always meet what we need to do.”

Our results showed that some organizations managing SFE type I offer job search assistance for the partner when they learn that maintaining both careers (that of the expatriate and the partner) is the reason driving the family to consider a split arrangement. The partner in case 1 expressed: “In the beginning, [organization] was trying to relocate all our family. They were helping me find a job or even offering me a job in the same company as [expatriate]. We do not like working for the same company. I have my career, and [expatriate] has hers.”

In SFE type II, the organizational support commonly received by the family is limited to airplane tickets to visit the expatriate once a year. The partner in case 4 shared this situation: “We [spouse and children] receive one trip per year paid by the company. Nothing else.”

Our study showed that partners and children in SFE type III are stripped from most benefits they had while trailing with the expatriate. Families that return home before the end of the expatriation typically keep the benefit of having one airplane ticket per year per person to visit the expatriate, but the tuition for the children’s education or the spouse allowance is taken away. The expatriate in case 7 shared: “Expatriate packages are designed with the premise that the family is accompanying. When this is broken, many of the benefits attached to the family are lost.”

We expected the organization would not offer the same support to the trailing family once they returned home. Yet we learned that organizations are frequently not taking part in helping reduce the challenges faced by families that are

generated during an SFE. This situation is surprising given the impact family issues have on the expatriate's adjustment and performance.

In SIEs, organization support for the family is null as expatriates receive local HR treatment. Most likely, the organization ignores that the partner and children are not living with the expatriate. This situation may exist because, in some countries, managers are restricted by law from asking personal- and family-related questions.

Proposition 7. Families in SFEs are challenged by family dynamics generated by the long-term separation from the expatriate.

Proposition 8. The family's lack of adjustment to the SFE is likely to impact the expatriate's performance negatively.

Proposition 9. Organizational support is likely to facilitate the adjustment of families in SFEs.

Collectively, the results of our investigation expose that families in SFEs are challenged to adjust to the new family dynamics, which may have a negative impact on the family members' well-being and their relationships. Hence, we emphasize the need to consider family dynamics when examining the adjustment of expatriate families in SFEs.

4.3.5 Organization's behavior managing SFEs

Our investigation reveals that organizations either manage SFEs proactively or reactively. Some organizations, like those in the oil and gas industry, require employees to live in remote locations, where housing for families and education for children is restricted or nonexistent. For this type of situation, organizations typically make an expatriation offer that only includes the relocation of the expatriate. The expatriate will live in housing quarters dedicated to employees, and the family is not invited to trail. An HR representative said: "[organization] has 2,000 employees and 1950 were without their families. The project was in a desert, in a remote location. We cannot sponsor families. Finding adequate housing for

families is extremely difficult." These organizations manage SFEs proactively. They may have dozens and sometimes even hundreds of employees in this type of arrangement and have experience with what challenges the expatriates and their families typically face. These organizations have policies that mitigate the difficulties of SFEs. The expatriate package typically includes 3-4 trips back home per year to visit the family, and each project may last 1-2 years. An HR representative that worked in the oil and gas industry shared: "The organization moves the expatriate from one project to another. Each assignment lasts one or two years at different locations. Sometimes even assigning the expatriate to locations closer to home. The expatriate quarters have pools and facilities for entertainment where expatriates hang out together."

Organizations with proactive behavior to manage SFEs are constantly monitoring the expatriate's well-being to prevent early termination of assignments. While this behavior requires more resources and dedication from the HR representative and the direct supervisor, organizations benefit from reducing the negative impact the expatriates may have on performance from being separated from their families. The HR representative of case 10 stated: "I knew this situation [SFE] could be a time bomb as he did not have the support of his family living with him. I tried to talk to him often, asking him how he was doing, how he felt, and how his family was. I tried to measure his emotional state. We must respect our employee's decisions [split family arrangement] and monitor how things evolve closely. My conversations with his supervisors were to monitor and anticipate potential problems. My role as HR was to ensure his supervisor was sensitized [about the situation] and close [to the expatriate] to detect red flags and prevent the bomb from exploding." The supervisor in case 10 expressed: "It is a problem when the candidate [to fill the position] is in another country and informs you that he will come without his family. [organization] does not have a protocol or anything. As an organization, we want to be inclusive in diversity. But for me, it is a potential problem because regardless of the [quality of the] family relationship this candidate may have, [this situation] will always require my attention. [a split family arrangement] is a potential for instability."

Other organizations have a reactive behavior in managing SFEs. These organizations are typically less familiar with managing SFEs as they may only happen occasionally. Organizations may be involved in supporting an SFE because the expatriate informs them their family will not trail (SFE type I or II) or their family will return home early (SFE type III). Our investigation reveals that some expatriates keep the real reason for doing an SFE hidden from the organization. Other expatriates share minimal information, and a few are open and transparent, keeping the organization informed throughout the decision-making process. Organizations react to the situation as they learn about it. During the SFE, the HR representative and the direct supervisor manage arising issues by requesting policy exceptions. The supervisor in case 1 shared: "[expatriate] told us her family could not come with her. She asked us to wait six months to see how it worked and how she could bring her family. But then it was a year, and then another year. We were in that conversation all the time. She would ask for more time. There was always a valid reason not to bring her family. Until it did not work out."

Organizations that wait until the expatriate asks for help with issues generated by the split family arrangement to react may risk the assignment's ourcome and continuity. Expatriates do not always feel comfortable asking for their organizations' support and may try to resolve their family or personal problems independently. The expatriate in case 1 shared: "The support that the company offered me was monetary. But what I needed was something different. The company needs you to meet your commitments, and they close the chapter. Everyone wants to solve their problems. The company needs a person. If you accept, they solved their problem, and now the problem is yours." Some expatriates experience depression or fall into substance abuse because of the long-term separation from their family. The expatriate in case 6 stated: "Being alone can make you consume alcohol excessively. I must have the discipline not to allow that to happen. It is very easy on a weekend when I am alone to open a bottle of wine and drink it all. It is not healthy. It is a thing. It is important. You end up finding ways to fill up voids. It is not easy." The expatriate in case 5 described: "The support from HR was fundamental in helping me find the balance between my personal and professional life when I was going through a divorce. There were really difficult moments, very traumatic. I had the

support of a friend that lived back home. I needed to talk, and it was very important for me. She told me to seek professional help. I talked to HR and explained my problem, and she recommended me a psychologist. I went for six months, and that helped me a lot. It is very important that your supervisor and HR have human qualities to provide the support to overcome the problems that arise."

Proposition 10. Organizations with occasional exposure to SFEs are likely to have reactive behavior when managing SFEs.

4.4 Why do families engage in SFEs?

To continue the study of the SFE phenomenon, we investigated why families engage in SFEs. We started by identifying the motives that drive the decision and discovered that in SFEs, two sets of motives exist: the expatriate's motives to engage in an expatriation and the family's motives not to accompany the expatriate. Our list of motives was in line with prior literature yet revealed new items. We then deepened our examination to reveal other critical constructs from the motivation literature, such as themes, aspirations, energization, and regulation, allowing us to make better predictions on outcomes. Last, we explored the motives of expatriate families to terminate the international assignment.

4.4.1 Motives

To date, the expatriation literature has studied the motives to relocate abroad (Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011). In these studies, most of the sampled population are on traditional expatriations where all the family members relocate to the host country. The family is treated as a unit, and the results are described in a list of motives that drive them to engage in the expatriation.

Our investigation revealed that the decision to expatriate includes two set of motives 1) the motives to engage in the expatriation and 2) the motives of the partner and children to accompany or not in the expatriation. Because most of the

studies were done on expatriations with trailing families, the family reasons for accompanying the expatriate were not made evident and reported together in one list of motives. However, in SFEs, these two sets of motives - motives to engage in an international assignment and motives for the partner and children not to accompany the expatriate- pull families apart, generating a split arrangement during the expatriation.

> *Proposition 11. Two distinct sets of motives in the SFE decision pull family members apart: motives to engage in an international assignment and motives for the partner and children not to accompany the expatriate.*

Motives to expatriate

The motives identified by Doherty and colleagues (2011) represented the most comprehensive list of factors important in the decision to expatriate for OEs and SIEs identified in academic literature to that date[2]. Our results are consistent with their findings, even though our sample is only of families that decided to expatriate with a split arrangement. Furthermore, our results extend the list with some new motives.

Our findings reveal a 38-item list of motives to engage in an expatriation. Interestingly, even though the decision to accept an assignment is in the work domain, the reasons are in both domains: 21 work domain motives and 17 life domain motives to expatriate. Work domain motives include professional challenge, growing work network, and career development. Life domain motives include items such as a better future for the family, seeking adventure, and experiencing a new culture and country. See table 14 for a complete list of the motives to expatriate and exemplary quotes.

---

[2] See Appendix J for the list of motives to expatriate identified by Doherty and colleagues (2011).

In line with Doherty and colleagues, our results show that the **life domain motives** to expatriate consist of 1) providing for the needs of the family, 2) offering a better future for the family, 3) seeking adventure, 4) host location's quality of life, 5) experiencing a new culture and country, 6) escaping from a country in crisis, 7) learning a new language, 8) being closer to family members and relatives, 9) taking distance from a toxic relationship, 10) having friends in the host country, and 11) seeking residency in the host country. Additionally, our work reveals six additional motives to expatriate in the life domain: 1) avoiding being repatriated to a home country they emigrated from, 2) financial stability for the family, 3) maintaining family status, 4) opportunity for the family to experience the host country and its culture, 5) avoiding financial distress, 6) testing the marital/partner relationship that was not going well.

Findings reveal that some families live in a country where they have yet to obtain citizenship. Accepting a new expatriation is a way to *avoid being sent back to a country they emigrated from*. The expatriate from case 1 shared: "We did not have citizenship to stay at [home country]. Our process still needed at least one year. HR told me that if I did not take this [new expatriation], I needed to exit the country and return to [country they emigrated from] in the next three months. Different than other expatriates or localized that want to go back to their country of origin, we did not."

Table 14. Motives to expatriate. Exemplary quotes.

No.	Item	Domain	Case No.	Exemplary quote
1	Avoid being repatriated to a home country they emigrated from	Life	1	“We did not have citizenship to stay at [home country]. Our process still needed at least one year. HR told me that if I did not take this [new expatriation], I needed to exit the country and return to [country they emigrated from] in the next three months. Different than other expatriates or localized that want to go back to their country of origin, we did not.”
2	Avoid financial distress. Job/business at home will disappear	Life	1	“Losing your job, being left without the income, staying in debt, and having to help our extended family… it is scary. I had to take this [expatriation] as my current job would disappear.”
3	Be closer to family members & relatives	Life	6	"[partner] liked the idea to have an international experience and I would be closer to my children [who were living abroad with ex-wife]."
4	Better future for the family	Life	11	"When I boarded the plane [to relocate to host country] I thought to myself, I am leaving my family behind, but they stay safe and close to family. I am leaving to build a better future for all of us."
5	Escape from country in crisis	Life	10	"I was working in [country in crisis]. I had to stand in line to buy tooth paste. I had some kidnapping threats and was assigned a driver to change all my routes. My family was worried something bad could happen to me, and was asking me to leave the country. When the opportunity presented to switch jobs, I took it."
6	Experience a new culture and country	Life	3	"We always had the interest to live in Spain or Italy. We wanted to experience living in Europe, learn about their cultures and countries."
7	Financial stability for the family	Life	18	“It was important for me to provide financial stability for my children. Being self-employed has its ups and downs. [accepting the expatriation] would allow me to have a steady income to provide for my family’s needs.”
8	Have friends at the host country - support network	Life	2	"After we sold our house, we had some friends that had a large condo and we stayed with them for a few months until [wife] left and I stayed. It was a good arrangement, I would contribute with some things for the house and would not be alone."
9	Host location's quality of life	Life	HR	"Some families actually look forward to relocate [here] because their kids might suffer from asthma, so for health reasons. Families look forward to relocate to [host country]. It is a vey safe place to raise a family, the weather is amazing specially coming from [cold country weather]."
10	Learn a new language	Life	10	"I saw the possibility to grow, to learn a new language."
11	Maintain family status	Life	9	“If I don’t take this job, I will have to compromise my financial aspect, I will have to compromise my status. These will bring a bad reflection on my family. I tried to save the financial wellbeing of my family and our status.”
12	Opportunity for the family to experience host country and culture	Life	19	“My kids and the kids of [partner] benefit from coming to visit. They enjoy [host country]. It is very different from visiting a place as a tourist than visiting staying at a house and having a routine of a home. They can have this rich experience.”
13	Provide for the needs of the family	Life	8	"I still have many financial obligations with the education for our children. [son] is starting university, [older daughter] is starting High School and [younger daughter] is starting Junior High. I have faith in this new project, I believe it has the potential to build an important income to provide for the needs of our family."

Continuation of Table 14. Motives to expatriate. Exemplary quotes.

No.	Item	Domain	Case No.	Exemplary quote
14	Seek adventure	Life	4	"[accepting the expatriation] could be a good adventure. I could make a mistake, but I hope I don't. I like the unknown."
15	Seek residency in the host country	Life	14	"When we decided to emigrate [expatriate] went first to [host country] to find a job [while the family stayed behind]. We were looking to get out of [home country] and have a better life."
16	Taking distance from a toxic relationship	Life	10	"The second relationship I had where my 4th children was born, was very toxic, extremely toxic. For me [accepting the expatriation] was an opportunity to distance from her. She had influenced negatively in my relationship with mi children and [latest partner]."
17	Test the marital/partner relationship that was not going well	Life	12	"The relationship was not going well. It was not showing proof that it was going to last long. I was feeling a bit scared. I was not getting the reaction I was hoping to get [from my partner]. So, I realized I needed to decide what was best for me and test the relationship."
18	Career development	Work	11	"I did not want to loose the opportunity to continue in this career path. I would have accepted any other country. It was more my desire to advance my career that I had visualized since young age."
19	Consolidate leadership position after finishing the assignment	Work	7	"Working in [host country] in addition to providing me with a professional growth it would give me the opportunity to return to [home country] and consolidate my leadership position."
20	Current job was not exciting anymore	Work	17	"My work did not excite me anymore. It was boring and monotonous. I needed a professional motivation. Staying at a plant just for the sake of it is not my thing. The people from [new organization] contacted me and offered me a job in [new country], and I took it."
21	Financial benefit	Work	13	"I would earn a lot of money. Yes I would have a lot of stress and my family would be far away. But I thought I could manage".
22	Finish business affairs	Work	2	"[wife] just said -I am going-, and I could not leave at that time. I had some professional commitments that had contingent fees. I do not get paid until it closes. I had a huge bill owed to me as I had been representing in a divorce for eight years. I wanted to see the case concluded and get paid."
23	Greater responsibility and impact at work	Work	6	"I was able to increase my responsibilities. It was a boost of energy because it is a complex business that requires risk management and exchange rates. The business is five times bigger and more complex [than the previous one]. It was a great opportunity for having a larger impact."
24	Grow the work network	Work	11	"The potential to meet and relate to high level people and build relationships. Build my reputation and brand so than when [career] opportunity arise, people will provide good references of me."
25	Interesting business opportunity	Work	8	"It all started with an investment of [seed money]. We have continued to invest as we see the great potential, but it also requires many sacrifices. I am in [host country] because the business is here, and this is what we have decided to do."
26	Job stability	Work	18	"I worked for small to medium size companies, then also worked as a contractor. Jobs did not last long. Joining this new company could provide me job stability as it was a big multinational."

Continuation of Table 14. Motives to expatriate. Exemplary quotes.

No.	Item	Domain	Case No.	Exemplary quote
27	Learn a new business	Work	5	"I was offered the opportunity to specialize in a new business, build it from scratch. I was given a budget of [initial investment]. I would start alone as no one in the company had experience with this business. I needed this type of challenge to feel alive."
28	Less interesting alternative jobs	Work	12	"If I did not take this [expatriation], they could have found a different position for me within the company, but I would not develop that much within the company."
29	Limited job opportunities in the home country. Avoid underemployment	Work	7	"I wanted to stay in [host country]. We were beating all performance records, safety, profits, volume. At [home location] work possibilities were very limited. Our options included to take a job in [a different city] and would have to commute again."
30	Loyalty to company. Do what is needed of me	Work	21	"The project had started, and the company needed a leader to take charge of it. The car was moving fast. I accepted to do what the company needed of me. I had been working for the company for many years. I knew the company would take care of me."
31	Professional challenge	Work	3	"They sent me [to host country] because it was loosing money, it was the 4th largest worldwide. I wanted to demonstrate to [company] that I could manage the business in Europe. I had to learn the business, make the changes needed to turn it around."
32	Professional status & recognition	Work	4	"I was not looking for a job. I do not know how they found me. They offered me the job. I was happy where I was, already managing the largest business and reporting to the owner. It was very flattering that they were interested in me and valued my experience. I would be managing a new business across Europe and Asia."
33	Recognition as an international professional	Work	11	"I liked the recognition of being an international professional. My friends and family had their eyes on me, seeing that I was working in another country. It was a personal satisfaction, not so much to boast, but I was glad people noticed."
34	Recognition for working with the market leader company	Work	10	"[Company] is recognized worldwide in the oil and fats industry. My family was telling me not to turn down the offer. It was compelling to be associated with the market leader."
35	Step to build an international career	Work	6	"I was already in a high position in [organization] at [home country]. In order to continue growing [in my career], an international opportunity was important for me."
36	Work at the headquarters	Work	12	"It was the last chance I had to move to the headquarters. They had asked me before, and now I was getting older, and later would not be as easy to make the changes required. [working at headquarters] I could have much better career opportunities."
37	Work for a supervisor they like	Work	5	"I had worked many years with [supervisor]. He told me: -this is what you like, you like challenges, you like projects like this- I liked working with [supervisor]. We had a very transparent relationship. He always gave me the freedom to work without any problems."
38	Work with experts and smart people	Work	10	"It was extremely attractive to be able to relate to a company that had very competent and expert employees."

For other families, *maintaining financial stability* was important such that they were willing to accept an expatriation to avoid periods without financial income. The expatriate in case 18 described: "It was important for me to provide financial stability for my children. Being self-employed has its ups and downs. [accepting the expatriation] would allow me to have a steady income to provide for my family's needs."

For some families, accepting an expatriation was a way to *maintain family status*, such as where and how they live and the education their children receive. The expatriate in case 9 expressed: "If I don't take this job, I will have to compromise my financial aspect, I will have to compromise my status. These will bring a bad reflection on my family. I tried to save the financial well-being of my family and our status."

Our study showed that *providing an opportunity for the family that does not expatriate to experience the host country and culture* was an important reason to expatriate. Accepting to expatriate extends the opportunity for these family members to visit the host country, even if it is just for short periods. The expatriate in case 19 shared: "My kids and the kids of [partner] benefit from coming to visit. They enjoy [host country]. It is very different from visiting a place as a tourist than visiting staying at a house and having a routine of a home. They can have this rich experience."

For several families accepting an expatriation was a means to *prevent financial distress* when they did not have enough funds to pay their financial obligations when their current job disappeared. The expatriate in case 1 described: "Losing your job, being left without the income, staying in debt, and having to help our extended family… it is scary. I had to take this [expatriation] as my current job would disappear."

For a few families accepting an expatriation allow them to *test their marital relationship.* They believe the expatriation would bring them together if the relationship were to be saved or pull them apart and finish the relationship if it could not be salvaged. The expatriate in case 12 described this situation: "The relationship was not going well. It was not showing proof that it was going to last long. I was

feeling a bit scared. I was not getting the reaction I was hoping to get [from my partner]. So, I realized I needed to decide what was best for me and test the relationship."

Like the work of Doherty and colleagues, our study shows that the **work domain motives** to expatriate consist of 1) financial benefit, 2) growing their work network, 3) step to building an international career, 4) limited job opportunities in their home country, 5) consolidating leadership position when finishing the expatriation, 6) professional challenge, 7) career development. Additionally, our work reveals fourteen new motives to expatriate in the work domain: 1) current job is not exciting anymore, 2) greater responsibilities and impact at work, 3) interesting business opportunity, 4) job stability, 5) learning a new business, 6) less interesting alternative jobs, 7) loyalty to the company, 8) professional status, 9) recognition as an international professional, 10) recognition for working with the market leader, 11) working at headquarters, 12) working for a supervisor they like, 13) working with experts and smart people, and 14) finishing business affairs.

Some families are motivated to expatriate because they *consider their current job not exciting anymore.* The expatriate in case 17 described this situation: "My work did not excite me anymore. It was boring and monotonous. I needed a professional motivation. Staying at a plant just for the sake of it is not my thing. The people from [new organization] contacted me and offered me a job in [new country], and I took it."

For other families, the possibility of *having greater responsibilities and having a more significant impact at work* drives them to engage in an international assignment. The expatriate in case 6 explained: "I was able to increase my responsibilities. It was a boost of energy because it is a complex business that requires risk management and exchange rates. The business is five times bigger and more complex [than the previous one]. It was a great opportunity for having a larger impact."

Findings revealed that several families are motivated to engage in an expatriation because they see *more exciting business opportunities in the host country* than the ones they have at home. The expatriate in case 8 shared: "It all

started with an investment of [seed money]. We have continued to invest as we see the great potential, but it also requires many sacrifices. I am in [host country] because the business is here, and this is what we have decided to do."

For some families, *job stability* was the driver to engage in an expatriation. An example of this was shared by the expatriate in case 18: "I worked for small to medium size companies, then also worked as a contractor. Jobs did not last long. Joining this new company could provide me job stability as it was a big multinational."

Other families were influenced to accept an international assignment by the possibility of *learning a new business*. The expatriate on case 5 stated: "I was offered the opportunity to specialize in a new business, build it from scratch. I was given a budget of [initial investment]. I would start alone as no one in the company had experience with this business. I needed this type of challenge to feel alive."

For several families, the motivation to relocate abroad was driven more by the fact that they saw *the alternative options as less attractive*. This was described by the expatriate in case 12: "If I did not take this [expatriation], they could have found a different position for me within the company. But I would not develop that much within the company."

Interestingly, some families felt a *strong sense of loyalty toward the organization* and were willing to accept the job the company asked of them. An example of this was shared by the expatriate in case 21: "The project had started, and the company needed a leader to take charge of it. The car was moving fast. I accepted to do what the company needed of me. I had been working for the company for many years. I knew the company would take care of me."

A few families found in *professional status* the reason to do an expatriation. The expatriate in case 4 explained this situation: "I was not looking for a job. I do not know how they found me. They offered me the job. I was happy where I was, already managing the largest business and reporting to the owner. It was very flattering that they were interested in me and valued my experience. I would be managing a new business across Europe and Asia."

For other families, the idea of being *recognized as an international professional* drove them to accept an expatriation. The expatriate in case 11 shared: "I liked the recognition of being an international professional. My friends and family had their eyes on me, seeing that I was working in another country. It was a personal satisfaction, not so much to boast, but I was glad people noticed."

Results unveiled that some families were motivated to accept an international assignment because of the *recognition of working with an organization that was a market leader*. The expatriate in case 10 stated: "[Company] is recognized worldwide in the oil and fats industry. My family was telling me not to turn down the offer. It was compelling to be associated with the market leader."

Findings showed that some families were influenced to expatriate because of the chance to *work at the headquarters*. Specific roles only exist at the central offices, and there is a belief that those working there have access to more opportunities. The expatriate in case 12 explained: "It was the last chance I had to move to the headquarters. They had asked me before, and now I was getting older, and later would not be as easy to make the changes required. [working at headquarters] I could have much better career opportunities."

For some families, the decision to expatriate was influenced by their *relationship with the person who offered them the position*. The expatriate in case 5 described: "I had worked many years with [supervisor]. He told me: -this is what you like, you like challenges, you like projects like this- I liked working with [supervisor]. We had a very transparent relationship. He always gave me the freedom to work without any problems."

For other families, the decision to expatriate was driven by the opportunity to *work with experts in the field*. An example of this situation was explained by the expatriate in case 10: "It was extremely attractive to be able to relate to a company that had very competent and expert employees."

One reason expatriates have to continue to stay in the expatriation when their families have to return home before the end of the assignment is the need to *finish their business affairs*. This condition was shared by the expatriate in case 2: "[wife] just said -I am going-, and I could not leave at that time. I had some professional

commitments that had contingent fees. I do not get paid until it closes. I had a huge bill owed to me as I had been representing in a divorce for eight years. I wanted to see the case concluded and get paid."

In general, the findings of our study being so similar to the results of the studies done with families on traditional expatriations suggest that the motives to expatriate are not conditioned by the family arrangement. The list of motives is very similar. What we anticipate is that the importance of motives changes between families.

Motives for partners and children to not accompany the expatriate

The work of Dang (2020) was the first to distinguish the motives to relocate abroad from the motives of the partner and children to accompany or not in the expatriation. Her work uncovered six motives of partners that prevent them from trailing the expatriate: 1) spouse's work, 2) disapproval of the host country, 3) children's education, 4) special needs children, 5) caring for elderly parents, and 6) maintaining a stable social life. Our results are consistent with hers and expand the list of motives to 26. Table 15 shows a complete list of motives for the partner and children not to accompany the expatriate and an exemplary quote.

Families with no agency in the decision to trail

One of our first discoveries in our analysis of the motives of the partners to stay behind was that most families were not motivated to trailing while few were not invited or not allowed to trail. The distinction was that while most families had agency in the decision to accompany or not in the expatriation, a few families did not. Identifying if the family had agency in the decision to accompany the expatriate is important because it may impact the duration of the separation of the family, whether it will be temporary or last all the assignment. Additionally, it may influence how the family responds to the separation. Overall, we identified three motives that prevent families from trailing because of a lack of agency in the decision: 1) the family is not invited to trail by the organization, 2) the family is not invited to trail by the expatriate, and 3) the family is not allowed to trail by external

Table 15. Motives for the partner not to accompany the expatriate. Exemplary quotes.

No.	Item	Domain	Case No.	Exemplary quote
1	Family not invited to trail - by organization	Life	HR	"In the Oil & Gas industry, many sites are in remote locations. It is very difficult to find adequate housing for families and, many times, impossible. That is why it is common to offer a single status package for married candidates."
2	Family not invited to trail - by expatriate	Life	4	"[expatriate] decided on his own. I was not involved when he decided to relocate to [host country]. He thought it was best that we stay, and he would relocate. At that time, our children were in the last years of High school and their first year of university."
3	Family not allowed to trail - by legal & immigration	Life	6	"My children were very little. I have join-custody with my ex-husband. We thought it would not be difficult to bring them to [host country] and start a new life there [with expatriate]. I needed permission from the judge to take the kids with me, and the judge asked that my children talk to a psychologist. They gave us an appointment in four years! We were forced to stay in [home country]."
4	Be close to extended family	Life	4	"I talk every day with my Mom. Every weekend they [grandparents] visit us. I need to be close to them, and they benefit from being close to their grandchildren."
5	Care for extended family: aging parents, grandchildren.	Life	17	"Our children were grownups, but we had small grandchildren. We knew that whatever we missed, we would miss forever. We wanted to be there for our grandchildren."
6	Children dislike the host location and lifestyle - unable to adjust	Life	4	"[younger daughter] is very rooted in hers traditions and her friends. It is not easy to get her out of her environment. Every time we have been to [host location], she disliked the city, the food, the lifestyle. She suffers a lot, se crumbles, she gets depressed."
7	Children unable to find visas/residency and get established at the host country	Life	10	"We relocated to [host country]. We wanted to start a new life there and see what possibilities opened up. It was very difficult to get papers and too slow of a process. My Dad [expatriate] had a nice house and was established. I looked for job opportunities, but because I did not have a work permit, they [the hiring organization] preferred a local employee, and I understood it. After six months, I returned home."
8	Partner's health worsened with the host country's conditions	Life	7	"In [host location], because of the altitude, I suffered from migraines. I always had them, but they worsened in [host country]. I was taking medication for low blood pressure. I was used to the sun of [home location], going to the pool, to the beach. We didn't have that in [host location]. It rained almost every day."
9	Cultivate children's friendship	Life	8	"[son] always maintained a very close relationship with his friends while we were away [at host country]. Whenever we came home, he spent most of the time with them. We wanted our children to build strong and stable friendships during their formation years. This [reason] also influenced that we returned home."
10	Desire children's education at home country	Life	20	"We had been in many years in [host country] after living in many other locations always with my family. My youngest son was going to start Junior High and my spouse and I had to make a decision of where to educate our son. We did not have residency in [host country] and did not see ourselves there in the long run. We thought it was best for our child to be educated in [home country] and build friendships and network here which would help him in his adult life."
11	Escape from a toxic relationship	Life	10	"As a couple, we did not understand each other anymore. I was not able to adapt to my partner. It had nothing to do with the country or the place. It was not working any longer. It was a thing that had been brewing. It affected me more and more until I decided not to stay there [host country] any longer."
12	Financial stability for family	Life	14	"When [expatriate] left to [host country], I stayed and kept my job to have at least one income to cover for our family needs while he was able to find a job there."

Continuation of Table 15. Motives for the partner not to accompany the expatriate. Exemplary quotes.

No.	Item	Domain	Case No.	Exemplary quote
13	Insecurity at the host country	Life	1	"Our first idea was that I would relocate with my daughter, and we will leave [husband] behind. But the insecurity is very high in [host location], and we feared for our child's safety. In the end, I relocated alone, and [husband and child] stayed in [home country]. I traveled back and forth every week."
14	Protect family values and traditions	Life	16	"Half of the parents of my children's friends (kindergarten) were divorced or separated. Our children were growing accustomed to their friends living with only one parent. During that time, gay marriage became legal, and they were all over the news. There were many homosexuals showoffs in the streets. I come from a traditional catholic family, and I did not like that environment for my small children."
15	Partner missing friendships at home	Life	8	"I would see in social media all my friends celebrating Mother's Day, holidays at the beach. I missed them and being part of all of that."
16	Partner missing home lifestyle - maid, sport club, house	Life	8	"The lifestyle we had in [home location] influenced a lot. We had help at home, [a membership at] the sports club, and the gym. Over there [at the host country], we did not have any of that. I missed it."
17	Partner tired of being at the host country	Life	2	"I was ready to leave. I had been living in [host country] for 14 years. I am unsure if it was the distance, culture, or weather. I had put my time."
18	Partner unable to adjust to the host country - weather, culture	Life	2	"It was very difficult to adjust to [host country]. I think the cultural [differences] is what affected me the most. I had friends but what really affected me was living outside my culture. [host country] is a very small place, far away, and very hot and humid."
19	Partner's lack of friendships at the host country	Life	8	"I felt lonely and would tell [expatriate] I wanted to return home. Everything is more structured there [host location]. I never integrated and did not make friendships. Maybe I needed more time. Maybe two years was not enough."
20	Partner's lack of independence at the host country	Life	7	"I felt that in [home country], I was more independent. I managed a business and drove everywhere. In [host location], I had to go out with a driver. I did not like that, as I felt I was in a glass box and had to ask permission to get out. I did not have the same freedom I have here [home country] because of the insecurity and inability to get around in such a large city [in the host country]."
21	Prevent children from staying at the host country permanently	Life	7	"[oldest daughter] had one more year to finish High School. We were afraid that if our children studied here [host location], later they would not want to return home. We knew our stay in [host location] was temporary. What if our children get into a relationship with someone from here? They would want to stay [in the host location]."
22	Secure citizenship at home	Life	3	"I loved living in [host location], but I could not stay longer than three or four months out of the year because we were in the process of obtaining citizenship in [home country]. We had been working on this process for many years but had not yet completed the requirements because of all the traveling and relocating. At one point, we prioritized the citizenship process and decided that I would go back home while [husband] stayed."
23	Stability for children	Life	22	"[expat"[expatriate] worked in [host location]. He would come every two weeks. We did not relocate. We cannot move our children every so often. It has a big impact on them. [children] would never develop roots if we do not provide stability."riate] worked in [host location]. He would come every two weeks. We did not relocate. We can not move our children every so often, it has a big impact on them. [children] would never develop roots if we do not provide stability."
24	Stay with children learning to become independent	Life	15	"When we were considering going to [host country], our children told us, -goodbye, we stay here-. It was understandable. They were in university. They were in the process of getting their citizenship. It did not make sense to ask them to come with us to [host country]. We decided that I would stay a few months home and travel to spend a few months in [host country]. I did that for five years."
25	Partner being unable to find a job at host country. Avoid being jobless	Work	14	"When [expatriate] left for [host country], I stayed and kept my job to have at least one income to cover for our family needs while he was able to find a job there."
26	Partner's interest to maintain his/her job at home	Work	12	"My partner could not join me [expatriate] because he had a very good job. We decided to try for a year or two doing trips back and forth. We both had six weeks of holidays and we thought we could manage to visit each other once a month for a week."

authorities. The restriction to trail in the expatriation imposed on partners and children was present in SFE types I and II.

Some organizations, like those in the oil and gas industry, frequently offer single-status packages to married or partnered candidates. In these situations, families are not invited to trail because of the *lack of suitable conditions in the host location for families*. An HR representative explained this situation: "In the oil and gas industry, many sites are in remote locations. It is very difficult to find adequate housing for families and, many times, impossible. That is why it is common to offer a single status package for married candidates." When the organization does not invite the family to trail, the family takes into consideration that the separation will be for the entire duration of the assignment.

For other families, the *expatriate decides on behalf of the family that it is better for the family not to trail*. This situation is exemplified by the partner in case 4: "[expatriate] decided on his own. I was not involved when he decided to relocate to [host country]. He thought it was best that we stay, and he would relocate. At that time, our children were in the last years of High school and their first year of university." In this type of situation, the separation of the family is not seen as permanent as it is a family member who influenced the split family arrangement and could be overturned if conditions change.

Other families have a *temporary restriction to trail because of a legal constraint*. The family in case 6 did not receive permission to relocate abroad from the Court as the children were in joint custody with the ex-husband. She described her situation: "My children were very little. I have join-custody with my ex-husband. We thought it would not be difficult to bring them to [host country] and start a new life there [with expatriate]. I needed permission from the judge to take the kids with me, and the judge asked that my children talk to a psychologist. They gave us an appointment in four years! We were forced to stay in [home country]." In this situation, family separation is seen as temporary, yet it could be long-term until the external authorities lift the restriction.

Further analysis revealed that families restricted to trail respond differently to the limitation. When the organization or an external authority creates the

restriction, the family unites in deciding how to respond to the limitation. When the expatriate creates the restriction without the support of the partner and/or children, the family experiences a division that strains the family relationships. The partner in case 4 explained her struggle: “I think families should be together. We have paid a high price by being separate. Our daughters miss their father, and I miss my husband. This situation [split family arrangement] has divided us as a family.”

Moreover, regardless of the limitation imposed on the partner and children to not accompany in the expatriation, families still had either interest or not to trail, which influenced their behavior during the split arrangement. This underlying motivation showed up in different ways. We observed that families interested in trailing but restricted by the organization would make an effort to visit the expatriate often if possible. Those prohibited from joining the expatriation by a legal or immigration authority but interested in trailing may visit the expatriate often and try to shorten the trailing restriction. The partner in case 6 explained how she compensated for the limitation to trail by frequently traveling to be with the expatriate: “I told my children that I would start traveling to be one week in each place [home and host locations]. That way, we could all get organized, making it easier for everybody.” Families interested in trailing but with an imposed restriction to trail by the expatriate may struggle during the split arrangement, which in some cases may end up in divorce. The partner in case 4 shared: “We have lived separate lives for the past six years. I fought a lot to stay together as a family, but I have given up. We are in the process of getting divorced.” Families that were imposed a restriction to trail in the expatriation but were not interested in trailing let the burden of travelling to visit the other part of the family to the expatriate.

Interestingly, in SFE type I, all the families with imposed restrictions to trail wanted to trail. Whereas in SFE type II the families with imposed restrictions to accompany the expatriate mostly included families with no interest in trailing. A possible explanation for these findings could be attributed to the temporality of the limitation. When families have a temporary restriction to trail and are interested in trailing, they engage on an SFE type I. This allows the expatriate to start with the international assignment as soon as possible, and the family will join when they can overcome the restriction. For families whose restriction to trail is permanent and not

interested in trailing, it is understandable that they engage in SFE for all the assignment (SFE type II). Yet we found one family interested in trailing but had a restriction to trail by the expatriate and engaged in SFE type II. This situation should be avoided as the long-term imposed restriction against the motivation of the partner and children may put too much stress on the family relationships and may produce a rupture.

> *Proposition 12. Partners and children interested in trailing in an expatriation, yet with an imposed temporary restriction to trail, are likely to engage in SFE type I.*
>
> *Proposition 13. Partners and children not interested in trailing in an expatriation, yet with a permanent restriction to trail, are likely to engage in SFE type II.*

Families with the agency to trail

For those families that had the agency to trail in the expatriation, we identified 23 motives. Eight of our reasons are consistent with Dang's, and we added fifteen new motives. As expected, all items are in the life domain except for two motives in the work domain: The partner's interest in maintaining a job at home, and the partner's inability to find a job in the host country.

Our study concurs with Dang's in revealing that some families are driven to stay at home because they disprove the host country's conditions. The elements of the country they rejected varied between families. Some families disliked the culture, while others feared the insecurity. Several families rejected the lifestyle and or the weather. Some families' disapproval of the host country's conditions resulted from having experienced them for some years as a trailing family. Whereas other families rejected the host country before they ever lived there. Results showed that the family's disapproval was so vital that it drove them not to accompany the expatriate or if they were already in an expatriation as a trailing family, it influenced them to go back home and leave the expatriate on the assignment.

Consistent with Dang's work, we identified that children's education is a reason for families to stay behind or return home from the expatriation. Our findings reveal that families are open to the host country's education for the earlier years of their children's education. But when their children are in university or preparing to enter university, and they have chosen to educate them in their home country, this became a strong enough reason to consider a split family arrangement. An example of this latter situation is the family in case 7 that trailed with the expatriate for the first two years and then returned home, leaving the expatriate on the assignment so that the eldest child could prepare for the exams and enter the university in the home country.

Like Dang, we identified that some families stay behind because of the partner's work. Interestingly, some families were motivated to *maintain dual careers*, while others were driven by the need to keep a double income. Furthermore, some families were willing to find a job in the host country, but their inability to find one drove them to keep the one they had at home.

Concurring with the work of Dang, we identified that families choose a split arrangement on an expatriation when they *prioritize the partner's social life*. This situation was exemplified by the partner in case 8, who was trailing on an expatriation and decided to engage in a split arrangement: "I would see in social media all my friends celebrating Mother's Day, holidays at the beach. I missed them and being part of all of that."

Like Dang, we identified that some families decided to stay behind or return early from an expatriation to *take care of their elderly parents*. Yet, we also noticed that some families wanted to care for and be part of their grandchildren's lives, as described by the expatriate in case 17: "Our children were grownups, but we had small grandchildren. We knew that whatever we missed, we would miss forever. We wanted to be there for our grandchildren."

Our examination revealed fifteen new motives that influenced families to consider a split family arrangement, all of them in the life domain: 1) be close to their extended family, 2) children unable to find working visas and get established in the host country, 3) children's health worsened with host country's conditions, 4)

cultivating children's friendships, 5) escaping from a toxic relationship, 6) protecting home country roots and values, 7) partner missing home lifestyle, 8) partner tired of being at the host country, 9) partner lacking friendships at the host country, 10) partner lacking independence at the host country, 11) preventing children from staying at host country permanently, 12) securing citizenship at home, 13) stability for children, 14) staying with children learning to become independent, and 15) financial stability for the family.

For some families, their extended families, like the grandparents, are significant in their family dynamics. In some cases, wanting to *be close to their extended family* influences families to stay behind. This situation was described by the partner in case 4: "I talk every day with my Mom. Every weekend they [grandparents] visit us. I need to be close to them, and they benefit from being close to their grandchildren."

Our investigation revealed that families with children who finished university are open to exploring if the host location would be a place for them to *develop their professional careers*. However, most organizations are yet to offer assistance to get work permits for spouses and children. Those family members who could not find local jobs or work authorization in the host country chose to return home. The son in case 10 explained this situation: "We relocated to [host country]. We wanted to start a new life there and see what possibilities opened up. It was very difficult to get papers and too slow of a process. My Dad [expatriate] had a nice house and was established. I looked for job opportunities, but because I did not have a work permit, they [the hiring organization] preferred a local employee, and I understood it. After six months, I returned home."

A few families, after relocating, encountered that the *conditions in the host country worsened a family member's health*. Depending on the discomfort's severity and duration, some families considered a split arrangement and returned home. The partner in case 7 described: "In [host location], because of the altitude, I suffered from migraines. I always had them, but they worsened in [host country]. I was taking medication for low blood pressure. I was used to the sun of [home location],

going to the pool, to the beach. We didn't have that in [host location]. It rained almost every day."

Some families described that when children are small, it is easier to relocate with them and change their school and friends. However, as *children* grow up, there is a point when their friendships are crucial in their formation, and *cultivating these relationships* influence the decision to have a split arrangement. The partner in case 8 described this situation: "[son] always maintained a very close relationship with his friends while we were away [at host country]. Whenever we came home, he spent most of the time with them. We wanted our children to build strong and stable friendships during their formation years. This [reason] also influenced that we returned home."

It is well documented that high-stress events like an expatriation may strain marital relationships. Our study identified that some families chose to return home and leave the expatriate in the assignment when their *relationship became toxic*. The partner in case 10 described: "As a couple, we did not understand each other anymore. I was not able to adapt to my partner. It had nothing to do with the country or the place. It was not working any longer. It was a thing that had been brewing. It affected me more and more until I decided not to stay there [host country] any longer."

Some families are worried about the insecurity of the host country. They find in the split arrangement a means to reduce the exposure that *something bad could happen to a family member*. The expatriate in case 1 shared: "Our first idea was that I would relocate with my daughter, and we will leave [husband] behind. But the insecurity is very high in [host location], and we feared for our child's safety. In the end, I relocated alone, and [husband and child] stayed in [home country]. I traveled back and forth every week."

Our study revealed that one reason that influences the split arrangement in families is the need to *protect family values and traditions*. The partner in case16 explained their situation: "Half of the parents of my children's friends (kindergarten) were divorced or separated. Our children were growing accustomed to their friends living with only one parent. During that time, gay marriage became legal, and they

were all over the news. There were many homosexuals showoffs in the streets. I come from a traditional catholic family, and I did not like that environment for my small children."

Some families trailing on expatriations *miss their home lifestyle*, which influence their decision to consider a split arrangement. The partner in case 8 described: "The lifestyle we had in [home location] influenced a lot. We had help at home, [a membership at] the sports club, and the gym. Over there [at the host country], we did not have any of that. I missed it."

Another reason cited by the families to engage in split arrangements was being *tired of living in the host country*. These families did not point to one specific reason being significant enough, but it was more an accumulation of several things endured over the years. The partner in case 2 shared: "I was ready to leave. I had been living in [host country] for 14 years. I am unsure if it was the distance, culture, or weather. I had put my time."

Several families struggle to integrate into the host country, *unable to develop friendships*. This situation puts pressure on their marital life and influences them to consider a split arrangement. The partner in case 8 stated: "I felt lonely and would tell [expatriate] I wanted to return home. Everything is more structured there [host location]. I never integrated and did not make friendships. Maybe I needed more time. Maybe two years was not enough."

Other families consider a split arrangement because they *dislike the lack of independence in the host country*. The local insecurity and the lack of familiarity with which areas of the city were safe and which were not influenced some families to use the services of a driver. The drawback was that some partners felt they were constantly watched and missed their independence. The partner in case 7 shared an example of this situation: "I felt that in [home country], I was more independent. I managed a business and drove everywhere. In [host location], I had to go out with a driver. I did not like that, as I felt I was in a glass box and had to ask permission to get out. I did not have the same freedom I have here [home country] because of the insecurity and inability to get around in such a large city [in the host country]."

Some families *feared their children* could establish deeper relationships and a strong network in the *host country* they *would want to stay in permanently*. Taking the children back home on a split arrangement before they started university was essential to avoid the potential of separating the family forever. The partner in case 7 described this situation: "[oldest daughter] had one more year to finish High School. We were afraid that if our children studied there [host location], later they would not want to return home. We knew our stay in [host location] was temporary. What if our children get into a relationship with someone from there? They would want to stay [in the host location]."

Families trailing in a new expatriation chose to return early, leaving the expatriate in the assignment to *secure the citizenship process in their new home country*. After emigrating or expatriating, families could have chosen a third country as their home country and were still in the process of receiving their citizenship. The partner in case 3 described their situation: "I loved living in [host location], but I could not stay longer than three or four months out of the year because we were in the process of obtaining citizenship in [home country]. We had been working on this process for many years but had not yet completed the requirements because of all the traveling and relocating. At one point, we prioritized the citizenship process and decided that I would go back home while [husband] stayed."

Some families get tired of accompanying the expatriate in the different assignments and choose to prioritize the *stability of their children* at the expense of having a split arrangement. The partner in case 22 explained: "[expatriate] worked in [host location]. He would come every two weeks. We did not relocate. We cannot move our children every so often. It has a big impact on them. [children] would never develop roots if we do not provide stability."

As *children are learning to become independent*, they may influence a split family arrangement. The partner in case 15 shared: "When we were considering going to [host country], our children told us, -goodbye, we stay here-. It was understandable. They were in university. They were in the process of getting their citizenship. It did not make sense to ask them to come with us to [host country]. We

decided that I would stay a few months home and travel to spend a few months in [host country]. I did that for five years."

For dual-income families on SIE, a reason to consider a split arrangement is when the expatriate goes to the host country and does not have a steady income. The partner stays behind, *providing financial stability for the family*. The partner in case 14 described this situation: "When [expatriate] left for [host country], I stayed and kept my job to have at least one income to cover for our family needs while he was able to find a job there."

In summary, the analysis of motives suggests that expatriate families engage in SFE type I when they are interested in relocating together to the host country yet cannot do that immediately. The restriction on families to trail with the expatriate at the start of the assignment can be imposed or motivated by family motives for which they have agency. The split family arrangement provides a solution where the expatriate can start the assignment while the family concludes or resolves the reasons that keep them at home. The temporary conditions that prevent the family from trailing may be specific and timebound such as waiting for children to finish High School, finding a job at the host location, or satisfying the requirements from the judge. The onus is on the family to join the expatriate at the host location as soon as possible.

Most expatriate families engaging in SFE type II are restricted to trail the expatriate. Yet, a couple of families with the agency to trail choose not to and opt for SFE for the entire duration of the assignment. Reviewing the information collected from each SFE type II we identified the following conditions: 1) the host country was a neighbor country with easy and low-cost transportation options for family members to visit each other frequently, 2) the organization included in their package frequent trips to go back home, or 3) the family had a previous experience with an SFE. These conditions suggest that expatriate families in SFE type II may feel confident that they can manage the challenges of SFEs even though they may need to remain separate for the entire assignment.

In SFE type III, the family trails the expatriate, and at one point in time, the family returns home, leaving the expatriate in the host country. Findings suggest that

expatriates that stay in the host country after their family returns home are either attracted to extend their stay in the host country or are not ready to return home. Yet most partners and children have motives to reject the host country and reasons that influence them to return home. A deeper analysis showed that partners and children might be avoiding a situation that happened in the host country that they dislike, reject, or are not willing to continue to experience. The onus is on the expatriate to finish the international assignment as soon as possible to join the rest of the family back home.

> *Proposition 14. Partners that do not accompany the expatriate in the international assignment are likely to be driven by motives or by an imposed restriction.*
>
> *Proposition 15. The restriction on partners not to accompany the expatriate in the international assignment is likely to be imposed by the organization, the expatriate, or a third-party authority such as legal or immigration.*

4.4.2 Themes

As part of the iteration between data, emerging theory, and extant literature, we reviewed the domestic literature on motivation. We noticed that scholars, instead of referring to a long list of motives, discuss the underlying themes and aspirations (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Grant, 2008; Sheldon et al., 2004). To deepen our investigation, we went back to the data and codified the theme and aspiration of every motive.

Theme refers to the content of the motive or goal. In the domestic literature, it is common to find the following themes: meaningful relationships, personal growth, societal contribution, financial success, popularity and fame, and attractive image. Using these themes as a starting point, we codified the themes in both sets of motives from our study.

The motives to expatriate fit seven themes: Financial wealth, recognition and attractive image, personal development, meaningful relationships, well-being and

safety, family benefit, and organizational and community contribution. In the *financial wealth* theme, we included interesting business opportunities, finishing business affairs, avoiding financial distress, and financial benefit. The *recognition and attractive image* theme comprised of professional status, recognition for working with a market leader company, and recognition as an international professional. Motives in the *personal development* theme contained experiencing a new culture and country, learning a new language, seeking adventure, learning a new business, working at headquarters, career development, professional challenge, limited job opportunities in the home country, less interesting alternative jobs, the current job was not exciting anymore, step to building an international career, and consolidating a leadership position. The *meaningful relationship* theme included growing their work network, working with experts and smart people, working for a supervisor they like, taking distance from a toxic relationship, testing the marital/partner relationship, being closer to family members and relatives, and having friends in the host country. The motives in the *well-being and safety* theme contained the host country's quality of life, job stability, and escaping from a country in crisis. The motives in the *family benefit* theme included providing for the needs of the family, financial stability for the family, maintaining family status, seeking residency in the host country, providing a better future for the family, providing an opportunity for the family to experience the host country, and avoiding being repatriated to a home country they emigrated from. The motives in the *organizational and community contribution* theme included loyalty to the company and greater responsibility and impact at work. Table 16 shows the motivation to expatriate by theme.

The motives for partners and children not to accompany the expatriate fit seven themes: Personal development, meaningful relationships, well-being and safety, family benefit, children benefit, extended family benefit, and imposed restriction. From the list of motives, we distinguished the family benefits as those related to the core family made of the partner and children, from those that only the children would benefit, and those that the extended family, like the grandparents, would benefit. In the *personal development* theme we included maintaining a career and being unable to find a job in the host country. The *meaningful relationships*

theme comprised of the partner missing friendships at home, escaping from toxic relationships, the partner's lack of friendships in the host country, being close to extended family, and preventing children from staying in the host country permanently. The *well-being and safety* theme contained the partner missing the home lifestyle, the partner's lack of independence in the host country, the partner being tired of being in the host country, the partner unable to adjust to the host country, and the partner's health worsened with host country conditions. The *family benefit* theme included securing citizenship at home, insecurity in the host country, and protecting family values and traditions. The *children benefit* theme contained stability for children, cultivating the children's friendships, desiring the children's education to be in the home country, staying with the children learning to become independent, children disliking host location and lifestyle, and children being unable to find working visas at the host country. The *extended family benefit* theme comprised of caring for extended family. The *imposed restriction* theme included family not being allowed to trail by external authorities, family not invited to trail by the organization, and family not invited to trail by the expatriate. Table 17 shows the motivation for partners and children not to accompany the expatriate by theme.

The motivational themes to expatriate, when compared to those to not accompany the expatriate, show several commonalities and differences. Both lists of motives present personal development, meaningful relationships, well-being and safety, and family benefit themes. Yet, the motivation to expatriate includes financial wealth, recognition and attractive image, and organizational and community contribution themes that are not present in the motivation not to accompany the expatriate. Similarly, the reasons not to accompany the expatriate include children benefit, extended family benefit, and imposed restriction that are not present in the motivation to expatriate. We speculate that the difference in themes between the two groups of motives was because of the composition of our sample being mostly single-career families and that expatriates may associate with the traditional role of providers while partners of caretakers.

Table 16. Motivation to engage in an expatriation

Item	Domain	Theme	Aspiration	Energization	Target
Be closer to family members & relatives	Life	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Have friends in the host country - support network	Life	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Test the marital/partner relationship that was not going well	Life	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject home
Taking distance from a toxic relationship	Life	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject home
Grow their work network	Work	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Work with experts and smart people	Work	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Work for a supervisor they like	Work	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Experience a new culture and country	Life	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Learn a new language	Life	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Seek adventure	Life	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Learn a new business	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Work at the headquarters	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Career development	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Professional challenge	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Limited job opportunities in the home country. Avoid underemployment	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject home
Less interesting alternative jobs	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject home
Current job was not exciting anymore	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject home
Step to build an international career	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Consolidate leadership position after finishing the assignment	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Job stability	Work	Well-being & Safety	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Host location's quality of life	Life	Well-being & Safety	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Escape from country in crisis	Life	Well-being & Safety	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject home

Continuation of Table 16. Motivation to engage in an expatriation

Item	Domain	Theme	Aspiration	Energization	Target
Professional status & recognition	Work	Recognition & image	Extrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Recognition for working with the market leader company	Work	Recognition & image	Extrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Recognition as an international professional	Work	Recognition & image	Extrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Interesting business opportunity	Work	Financial wealth	Extrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Avoid financial distress. Job/business at home will disappear	Life	Financial wealth	Extrinsic	Avoidance	Reject home
Finish business affairs	Work	Financial wealth	Extrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Financial benefit	Work	Financial wealth	Extrinsic	Approach	Desire host
Greater responsibility and impact at work	Work	Organizational & community contribution	Prosocial	Approach	Desire host
Loyalty to the company. Do what is needed of me	Work	Organizational & community contribution	Prosocial	Approach	Desire host
Provide for the needs of the family	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire host
Financial stability for the family	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire host
Maintain family status	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire host
Seek residency in the host country	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire host
Better future for the family	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire host
Opportunity for the family to experience the host country and culture	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire host
Avoid being repatriated to a home country they emigrated from	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Avoidance	Reject prior home

Table 17. Motivation for the partner and children not to accompany the expatriate

Item	Domain	Theme	Aspiration	Energization	Target
Family not allowed to trail - by legal & immigration	Life	Imposed restriction			
Family not invited to trail - by expatriate	Life	Imposed restriction			
Family not invited to trail - by organization	Life	Imposed restriction			
Be close to extended family	Life	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire home
Partner missing friendships at home	Life	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire home
Escape from a toxic relationship	Life	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject host
Partner's lack of friendships at the host country	Life	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject host
Prevent children from staying at the host country permanently	Life	Meaningful relationships	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject host
Partner's interest to maintain his/her job at home	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire home
Partner being unable to find a job at host country. Avoid being jobless	Work	Personal development	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject host
Partner missing home lifestyle - maid, sport club, house	Life	Well-being & Safety	Intrinsic	Approach	Desire home
Partner tired of being at the host country	Life	Well-being & Safety	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject host
Partner unable to adjust to the host country -weather, culture	Life	Well-being & Safety	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject host
Partner's lack of independence at the host country	Life	Well-being & Safety	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject host
Partner's health worsened with the host country's conditions	Life	Well-being & Safety	Intrinsic	Avoidance	Reject host
Cultivate children's friendship	Life	Children benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire home
Desire children's education at home country	Life	Children benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire home
Stability for children	Life	Children benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire home
Stay with children learning to become independent	Life	Children benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire home
Children dislike the host location and lifestyle - unable to adjust	Life	Children benefit	Prosocial	Avoidance	Reject host
Children unable to find visas/residency and get established at the host country	Life	Children benefit	Prosocial	Avoidance	Reject host
Care for extended family: aging parents, grandchildren.	Life	Extended family benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire home
Secure citizenship at home	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire home
Insecurity at the host country	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Avoidance	Reject host
Financial stability for family	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Approach	Desire home
Protect family values and traditions	Life	Family benefit	Prosocial	Avoidance	Reject host

4.4.3 Aspirations

The domestic motivation literature refers to three types of aspirations: Intrinsic, extrinsic, and prosocial (Grant, 2008; Sheldon et al., 2004). Identifying the aspiration of a motive allows one to make a better prediction of outcomes. In general, scholars agree that intrinsic aspirations are associated with more beneficial results than extrinsic aspirations and that prosocial aspirations are associated with beneficial outcomes when interacting with intrinsic aspirations. Yet, when prosocial aspirations interact with extrinsic aspirations, they are associated with adverse outcomes.

To advance our understanding of the motivation to engage in SFEs, from this point forward, we will refer to the expatriate's motivation and the partner's motivation instead of referring to motives to engage in a behavior. Aspirations are associated with a person, not with an event. Hence, from now on, when we discuss the expatriate's motivation in this thesis, we refer to the expatriate's motivation to engage in an expatriation. Additionally, when we discuss the partner's motivation, we refer to the partner's and children's motivation not to accompany the expatriate in the assignment. As mentioned earlier, our sample includes 22 cases. We have motivation information for 22 cases from expatriates and 14 cases from partners.

Our analysis shows that expatriates are driven by intrinsic, extrinsic, and prosocial motives when deciding to engage in an expatriation. The intrinsic motives are personal development, meaningful relationships, and well-being and safety. The extrinsic motives are financial wealth, recognition and attractive image. The prosocial motives are family benefit, and organization and community contribution. Table 16 shows the aspiration of the expatriate's motivation.

We observed that, different than expatriates, partners are compelled by intrinsic and prosocial motives when they have agency in their decision [3] to accompany in the expatriation. The lack of extrinsic motivation at the partner level may be due to the characteristics of our sample. In a larger sample with more dual-career families, extrinsic motives like financial wealth and recognition and attractive image may be present. The intrinsic motives that influence the partner to not trail with the expatriate are the same as those of the expatriate: personal development, meaningful relationships, and well-being and safety. Yet, the prosocial motives that motivate partners are children benefit, family benefit, and extended family benefit and do not include organization or community contribution. As expected, all the motives are in the life domain unless the partner has a career and may consequently have some work domain motives. Table 17 summarizes the partner's motivation.

Further investigation of expatriates' and partners' aspirations reveals noteworthy findings. All expatriates in OEs were motivated by intrinsic aspirations. Whereas all expatriates in SIEs were motivated by prosocial aspirations. We observed that in OEs, the expatriate always has a job that generates intrinsic motivation. While in SIEs, a job, a practice, or a business does not always exist as a reason to engage in an SFE. Yet, what is always present in SIEs is the motivation that an SFE is beneficial for the family.

In contrast, all partners that engaged in SFEs were driven by prosocial aspirations. This happened regardless of the type of business expatriation, OE or SIE. See Table 18 for a summary of expatriate's and partner's aspirations per case.

[3] The motives in the imposed restriction theme will not receive the same analysis as the rest of the themes. It is only in the motives where the individual had agency that we can identify the underlying aspiration, movement, and energization.

Table 18. Expatriate's and partner's aspiration by SFE case

Case No.	IA type	SFE type	Expatriate's aspirations	Partner's aspirations	Imposed restriction on partner	IA duration (yrs)	SFE duration (yrs)
1	OE	I	Intrinsic, Prosocial, Extrinsic	Intrinsic, Prosocial		2.5	2.5
5	OE	I	Intrinsic, Prosocial, Extrinsic	D		7	1
6	OE	I	Intrinsic, Prosocial	NA	by judge - wanted to trail	8	8
10	OE	I	Intrinsic, Prosocial, Extrinsic	Intrinsic, Prosocial		7	7
12	OE	I	Intrinsic, Extrinsic	D		5+	5+
19	OE	I	Intrinsic	NA	by judge - wanted to trail	1+	1+
21	OE	I	Intrinsic, Prosocial	NA	by immigration - wanted to trail	1	1
4	OE	II	Intrinsic, Extrinsic	NA	by expatriate - wanted to trail	3+	3+
11	OE	II	Intrinsic, Prosocial, Extrinsic	NA	by organization - not interested in trailing	1	1
13	OE	II	Intrinsic, Prosocial, Extrinsic	NA	by organization - not interested in trailing	4	4
15	OE	II	Intrinsic	Prosocial		6	6
17	OE	II	Intrinsic	D		5	5
22	OE	II	Intrinsic	NA	by organization - not interested in trailing	1.5	1.5
3	OE	III	Intrinsic	Prosocial		2	1.5
7	OE	III	Intrinsic, Extrinsic	Intrinsic, Prosocial		3	1
16	OE	III	Intrinsic, Prosocial	Prosocial		4	1
20	OE	III	Intrinsic	D		5	2.5
14	SIE	I	Prosocial	Prosocial		1	1
18	SIE	II	Intrinsic, Prosocial, Extrinsic	NA	by expatriate - not interested in trailing	1	1
2	SIE	III	Intrinsic, Prosocial, Extrinsic	Intrinsic, Prosocial		17	3
8	SIE	III	Intrinsic, Prosocial, Extrinsic	Intrinsic, Prosocial		6+	4+
9	SIE	III	Intrinsic, Prosocial, Extrinsic	D		17+	15

OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation; IA: international assignment; NA: Not applicable as it was an imposed restriction; D: informant declined, was unresponsive to our request to interview or we had restricted access to contact the partner.

Proposition 16. Organizational expatriates are likely motivated by intrinsic aspirations in their decision to expatriate.

Proposition 17. Self-initiated expatriates are likely motivated by prosocial aspirations in their decision to expatriate.

Proposition 18. Partners considering a split family arrangement for an expatriation are likely motivated by prosocial aspirations.

Reviewing the different aspirations of expatriates and partners against the duration of the expatriation revealed interesting findings. When the expatriate was motivated by prosocial motives only, the expatriation lasted one year. When the expatriate was driven by intrinsic motives only, the assignment lasted 3.4 years. When the expatriate was influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motives, the assignment lasted 4.3 years. When the expatriate was motivated by intrinsic, prosocial, and extrinsic motives, the assignment lasted 6.9 years.

These results confirm prior research that suggests that intrinsic motives are expected to have more beneficial outcomes, such as perseverance in behavior or task, than extrinsic or prosocial motivators alone. Additionally, when prosocial motives are associated with intrinsic motives, they deliver beneficial outcomes. (Grant, 2008; Zhang et al., 2020). What was interesting in our results was to see that the association of extrinsic motives to intrinsic or to intrinsic and prosocial motives created a stronger perseverance. That was shown when comparing the duration of the expatriation in those cases where the expatriate only had intrinsic motives vs. intrinsic and extrinsic ones. Or when we compared cases where the expatriates were motivated by intrinsic and prosocial motives vs. those inspired by intrinsic, prosocial, and extrinsic ones. A possible explanation for this finding might be that extrinsic motives may have a synergistic association with intrinsic motives and when concurring, they create stronger outcomes.

Proposition 19. Expatriates influenced by prosocial and/or extrinsic motives, in addition to intrinsic motives, are likely to persevere longer in the expatriation than those driven by intrinsic motives only.

In a similar analysis, we examined the aspiration of the partners and the duration of the SFE, revealing exciting results. When the partner was motivated by prosocial motives only, the SFE lasted on average 2.4 years. When the partner had been restricted to trail, the SFE on average lasted 2.6 years. When the partner was influenced by intrinsic and prosocial motives, the SFE on average lasted 3.5 years. These results are consistent with the analysis of expatriate aspirations and are compatible with prior research on the impact of different aspirations on perseverance. Interestingly, when partners were influenced by prosocial motives only or had an imposed restriction to not accompany in the expatriation, the SFE lasted very similarly. Yet when the partner had intrinsic reasons in addition to prosocial motives, the SFE lasted an extra year.

> *Proposition 20. Partners influenced by prosocial and intrinsic motives are likely to persevere longer in the SFE than those driven by prosocial only.*

4.4.4 Energization

Our analysis unveiled that the energization could be different even when a motive is categorized in a particular theme. We found evidence that some motives with the same theme approached a positive stimulus while others avoided a negative one. For example, a partner was motivated to return home and leave the expatriate in the assignment citing that she missed her lifestyle back home. In contrast, another partner was driven because she disliked the conditions in the host country. In these examples, well-being motives influenced both situations, yet the energization was different. An example of a partner that missed the comfortable position at home is case 8: “The lifestyle we had in [home location] influenced a lot. We had help at home, [a membership at] the sports club, and the gym. Over there [at the host country], we did not have any of that. I missed it.” In a different example, a partner did not want to continue trailing the expatriate because she disliked the host country’s lifestyle and conditions. The spouse in case 7 stated: “In [host location], because of the altitude, I suffered from migraines. I always had them, but they

worsened in [host country]. I was taking medication for low blood pressure. I was used to the sun of [home location], going to the pool, to the beach. We didn't have that in [host location]. It rained almost every day." In this situation, even though the motive is also of well-being, the energization was to avoid the condition in the host country. These findings drove us to review the motivation literature, where we found the approach avoidance motivation (Elliot & Church, 1997).

After familiarizing ourselves with these new constructs we went back to our data and coded the motivation of expatriates and partners in each case either as having approach or avoidance energization.

One of the first findings in this analysis was that while we detected examples of approach and avoidance motivation in both expatriates and partners, the target of the energization was different: home or host. We observed that the direction of the behavior of the expatriates' motives was approach: desiring host; and avoidance: rejecting home. In contrast, the partners' energization was approach: desiring home; and avoidance: rejecting host. Table 19 summarizes this distinction. This peculiarity is important as the type of energization (approach or avoidance) is associated with different levels of intensity and persistence of the motive as well as with outcomes such as how long the SFE may be sustained (Elliot, 2006, 2008).

Table 19. Energization and target of the motive

	Energization	
Subject	**Approach**	**Avoidance**
Expatriate	Desires host	Rejects home
Partner	Desires home	Rejects host

From research we know that approach motivation is experienced as attractive and it is associated with thriving and persistence. Whereas avoidance motivation is experienced as problematic and it is associated with surviving, short-term gains, and not sustained long-term (Sheldon et al., 2004; Sommet, Elliot, & Sheldon, 2021). Consequently, we anticipated that individuals influenced by approach motives may manage the challenges better than those driven by avoidance motives.

Our analysis revealed an interesting finding. Ten cases included approach only energization for expatriates, twelve cases were driven by co-occurring

approach and avoidance motives, while none had avoidance only motives. These results suggest that approach motives are required to mobilize an expatriate to relocate abroad. The presence of avoidance motives is not enough to motivate an expatriate to go on an expatriation on a single status. Table 20 summarizes the expatriate's and partner's energization by SFE case.

Proposition 21. Expatriates are likely driven by approach motives in their decision to expatriate.

During our analysis, we observed that the most frequent motivation was when expatriates were influenced by co-occurring approach and avoidance motives. This situation may be more complex to manage and potentially drive different outcomes. For example, when an expatriate is attracted by the challenge of the new international role and is also trying to avoid being jobless as their job would disappear back home, his commitment to the expatriation may be stronger than if only motivated by the new opportunity. This co-occurrence of approach and avoidance motives may drive the expatriate to stay longer in the expatriation and overcome its challenges because he may fear not finding a job quickly back home.

Our sample provided evidence that supported this proposal. In the twelve cases where expatriates were driven by co-occurring approach and avoidance energization, the duration of the expatriation lasted 4.8 years compared to 4.4 years when the energization was approach only. While further research may be needed, the results are promising.

Proposition 22. Expatriates with co-occurring approach and avoidance motives are likely to persevere longer in the expatriation than those driven by approach only.

Table 20. Expatriate's and partner's energization by SFE case

Case No.	IA type	SFE type	Expatriate's energization	Partner's energization	Imposed restriction on partner	IA duration (yrs)	SFE duration (yrs)
1	OE	I	Approach and avoidance	Approach and avoidance		2.5	2.5
5	OE	I	Approach and avoidance	D		7	1
6	OE	I	Approach and avoidance	NA	by judge - wanted to trail	8	8
10	OE	I	Approach and avoidance	Approach and avoidance		7	7
12	OE	I	Approach and avoidance	D		5+	5+
19	OE	I	Approach and avoidance	NA	by judge - wanted to trail	1+	1+
21	OE	I	Approach only	NA	by immigration - wanted to trail	1	1
4	OE	II	Approach only	NA	by expatriate - wanted to trail	3+	3+
11	OE	II	Approach only	NA	by organization - not interested in trailing	1	1
13	OE	II	Approach only	NA	by organization - not interested in trailing	4	4
15	OE	II	Approach only	Approach and avoidance		6	6
17	OE	II	Approach and avoidance	D		5	5
22	OE	II	Approach only	NA	by organization - not interested in trailing	1.5	1.5
3	OE	III	Approach only	Approach and avoidance		2	1.5
7	OE	III	Approach and avoidance	Approach and avoidance		3	1
16	OE	III	Approach only	Avoidance only		4	1
20	OE	III	Approach only	D		5	2.5
14	SIE	I	Approach and avoidance	Approach only		1	1
18	SIE	II	Approach and avoidance	NA	by expatriate - not interested in trailing	1	1
2	SIE	III	Approach only	Approach and avoidance		17	3
8	SIE	III	Approach and avoidance	Approach and avoidance		6+	4+
9	SIE	III	Approach and avoidance	D		17+	15

OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation; IA: international assignment; NA: Not applicable as it was an imposed restriction; D: informant declined, was unresponsive to our request to interview or we had restricted access to contact the partner.

We conducted a similar analysis of the energization of partners to engage in split family arrangements. Most partners (seven cases) were driven by co-occurring approach and avoidance motives, while only one case was motivated by approach only, and one case was influenced by avoidance only. In eight cases, the partner was restricted to trail, which we won't categorize as approach or avoidance energization.

We anticipated that, like expatriates, a co-occurring approach and avoidance energization would have stronger perseverance than when only driven by approach or avoidance. For example, when a partner is motivated to stay home to ensure the continuity of their children's education in critical years and at the same time dislikes the insecurity and lifestyle of the host country, her commitment to stay home is likely to be stronger than if only motivated by their desire to protect their children's education. The co-occurrence of approach and avoidance motives may influence the partner to be more committed to her decision and overcome the difficulties of being separated from the expatriate with greater ease.

In our sample, the partner driven by approach only energization engaged in an SFE that lasted one year. Similarly, the partner influenced by avoidance only energization lasted one year in the split arrangement. In contrast, the partners energized by co-occurring approach and avoidance motives lasted on average 3.6 years. With such a small sample with approach only and avoidance only energization, and the rest being co-occurring approach and avoidance energization, we need more evidence to confirm that one energization is associated with more beneficial outcomes than the other. Yet, the results are indicative of what we expected.

> *Proposition 23. Partners with co-occurring approach and avoidance motives are likely to persevere longer in the SFE than those driven by approach only.*

A first-level analysis per SFE type showed no significant differences in expatriates' aspirations or energization. All SFE types were driven by intrinsic, extrinsic, and prosocial aspirations. All SFE types had approach only, and co-occurring approach and avoidance motives.

Yet, when we performed a comparative analysis of the motive's themes, they differed per SFE type. Personal development, an intrinsic aspiration, was the motive's theme most often cited by expatriates in all SFE types and energizations. After personal development, the following *approach* motive most often cited by expatriates in all three SFE types were financial wealth and family benefit. In SFE type I, meaningful relationships motives were also a vital approach influence, but not for any other SFE type. After personal development, meaningful relationship was the most cited *avoidance* motive in SFE type I, followed by family benefit. Whereas expatriates in SFE type II did not mention any other avoidance motive, and in SFE type III, one mentioned financial wealth. Table 21 shows a summary of aspirations, and energization by expatriates and partners.

Table 21. Theme, aspiration, and energization by SFE type

		Intrinsic			**Prosocial**				**Extrinsic**		**Energization**			
SFE type	**Subject**	Pers. dev.	Mean. relat.	Well. & safety	Fam. benefit	Child. benefit	Ext. fam. benefit	Org. contrib.	Finan. wealth	Recog. / Image	App only	App - Avoid	Avoid only	**No. of SFE cases**
I	Expatriates	6/6	3/3	1/1	4/2	-	-	2/0	4/1	1/0	1	7	-	8
I	Partners	1/1	0/1	2/1	2/1	1/1	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	3
II	Expatriates	7/2	1/0	-	3/0	-	-	-	3/0	2/0	5	2	-	7
II	Partners	-	-	-	0/1	1/0	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
III	Expatriates	6/3	1/0	-	3/0	-	-	1/0	4/1	-	4	3	-	7
III	Partners	-	3/3	2/3	3/2	2/2	1/0	-	-	-	-	4	1	5

Pers. dev.: personal development; Mean. relat.: meaningful relationships; Well. & safety: well-being and safety; Fam. benefit: family benefit; Child. benefit: children benefit; Ext. fam. benefit: extended family benefit; Org. contrib.; organizational contribution; Finan. wealth: financial wealth; Recog. / Image: recognition / image; App only: approach only; App-Avoid: approach-Avoidance; Avoid. only: avoidance only. The numbers inside the table represent the number of cases where the motive was present. Where there is a X/Y values, X represents the number of cases with approach energization and Y with avoidance energization.

Interestingly, expatriates' analysis showed that in SFE type I, the co-occurring approach and avoidance energization was present in all but one case. The presence of approach and avoidance motivation in the professional development theme may explain why these expatriates choose to start their expatriation early. They are not only intrinsically motivated to relocate because of an interesting personal development motive but also intrinsically driven to avoid a personal development situation at home.

In contrast, expatriates in SFE type II and III were mostly energized by approach only motives. The personal development motives were so motivating that they were willing to engage in an SFE for all the assignment, or they were enjoying the assignment so much that they were willing to stay until completion, even without their family.

While we had a smaller sample of the partner's aspiration and energization, we conducted the same analysis, unveiling noteworthy findings. Partners' prosocial aspirations were present in all SFE types. At the theme level, family benefit and children benefit existed in all SFE types. Yet, meaningful relationships and well-being and safety were present in SFE type I and III. Personal development motives were present in SFE type I only. Extended family benefit existed in SFE type III only.

Regarding partners' energization, the co-occurring approach and avoidance were the most often cited and were present across all SFE types. This mixed energization provided them with solid reasons to undergo the split arrangement. Additionally, in SFE type I, partners with approach only were willing to stay home while the expatriate relocated. For these partners having intrinsic and prosocial motives that required them to stay behind was enough reason to consider the split arrangement. Whereas in SFE type III, partners with avoidance only were motivated to return home, leaving the expatriate on assignment. For those trailing families, having a situation they wanted to avoid gave them enough reason to consider a split arrangement.

4.4.5 Regulation

During the investigation, we observed that some expatriates were interested to expatriate because they enjoyed the challenge that an international assignment brought or it was essential for their career development. Research proposes that while approach motives drive these cases, they differ in their regulatory processes. Regulations can range from autonomous to controlled: intrinsic, integrated, identified, introjected, and external (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For example, the

expatriate in case 4 was motivated to engage in the international assignment because doing international jobs is what he does best, and it is fully assimilated into his self-image (integrated regulation). The expatriate in case 6 was motivated to do the expatriation because it was critical for his career (identified regulation). The expatriate in case 8 felt it was what was expected of him given the circumstances (introjected regulation). Distinguishing the regulation underlying the motives is important as it will aid us in better forecasting outcomes. More autonomous motives (those with intrinsic, integrated, and identified regulation) are associated with more beneficial outcomes such as perseverance, performance, and well-being. In contrast, more controlled motives (those with introjected or external regulation) are related to short-term gains and exhaustion (Deci et al., 2017).

As expected, the regulation process was also present in the avoidance motives of expatriates. For example, the expatriate in case 17 was motivated to engage in an expatriation because he disliked his current job and was trying to avoid staying in that situation any longer (intrinsic regulation). While the expatriate in case 1 felt she was forced to accept the expatriation to avoid financial distress and a potential repatriation to the country they had previously emigrated from due to insecurity (external regulation). Table 22 provides examples of the expatriates' motivation by regulation (autonomous vs. controlled) and energization (approach vs. avoidance).

Similarly, we also explored the distinct regulation process in the partner's motivation not to accompany the expatriate during the international assignment. For example, the partner in case 8 returned home early as she missed her lifestyle in her hometown (intrinsic regulation). In contrast, the partner in case 3 returned home prematurely to secure the citizenship they valued as a family (identified regulation).

Correspondingly, the partners' motivation was also present in the avoidance motives. For example, the partner in case 2 was tired of living in the host country, a place she disliked as it was too different, too far away, too small, and too hot (intrinsic regulation). Whereas the partner in case 16 rejected the exposure to behaviors prevalent in the host society contrary to her values (introjected

regulation). Table 23 provides examples of the partners' motivation by regulation (autonomous vs. controlled) and energization (approach vs. avoidance).

Overall, our sample included nine cases where expatriates were driven by autonomous regulation only, and thirteen cases with motives that included co-occurring autonomous and controlled regulation. Interestingly, no cases had expatriates driven by controlled only regulation. These findings suggest that expatriates are driven by autonomous regulation in their decision to expatriate, as all cases include this regulation. Additionally, results suggest that more than controlled regulation is needed to make an expatriate decide to engage in an expatriation.

Proposition 24. Expatriates are likely driven by autonomous motives in their decision to expatriate.

Interestingly, the most frequent regulation in expatriates was co-occurring autonomous and controlled. For example, expatriates may be motivated to expatriate because working abroad allows them to be recognized as global leaders, something they value (autonomous regulation). Yet, they may also be driven to expatriate, knowing that the job opportunities with global responsibilities in their home country are scarce (controlled regulation).

The analysis revealed that expatriates driven by co-occurring autonomous and controlled regulation stayed longer in the expatriation than those influenced by autonomous only motives. The average duration of the international assignment for expatriates with autonomous regulation was 3.2 years. In contrast, the average duration of the assignment for expatriates with co-occurring autonomous and controlled regulation was 6.0 years. Table 24 summarizes expatriates' and partners' regulation by SFE case.

Proposition 25. Expatriates with co-occurring autonomous and controlled motives are likely to persevere longer in the expatriation than those driven by autonomous only.

We conducted a similar analysis of the regulation of partners in SFEs. Our sample included four cases where partners had autonomous regulation only, four cases where partners were driven by co-occurring autonomous and controlled

regulation, and one case where the partner was driven by controlled only. Additionally, our sample included four cases where partners were restricted to trail and not interested in trailing, and four cases where partners were restricted to trail yet were interested in trailing.

We anticipate that, like expatriates, a co-occurring autonomous and controlled energization would generate longer perseverance in partners in SFEs than when only driven by autonomous or controlled regulation. An example of this situation is when a partner decides not to trail with the expatriate because he/she wants to continue his/her career, something he/she values (autonomous regulation). Yet if, in addition, that same partner has tried finding a job in the host country and has been unable to find an adequate job (external regulation), this combined condition is likely to be associated with a longer duration of the SFE.

The average duration of SFE of partners with controlled only regulation was 1 year, with autonomous only regulation was 2.3 years, and with co-occurring autonomous and controlled regulation was 4.3 years. These findings align with those found with expatriates, where co-occurring autonomous and controlled regulation are associated with stronger perseverance than those with autonomous only. Table 24 summarizes expatriates' and partners' regulation by SFE case.

> *Proposition 26. Partners with co-occurring autonomous and controlled motives are likely to persevere longer in the SFE than those driven by autonomous only.*

4.4.6 Assignment termination

Our investigation of the family motivation concluded with examining the assignment termination. Findings reveal that none of the cases in our sample early terminated the assignment due to family issues generated by the forced distancing of the family members. This happened independently of the family's agency to trail the expatriate. Our findings suggest that the family's lack of adjustment is not a sufficient condition to terminate the expatriation prematurely for those families in a split arrangement.

Table 22. Expatriate's regulation and energization. Exemplary quotes.

	Regulation	Description	Approach		Avoidance	
Autonomous	**Intrinsic**	For its own sake	I enjoy it	Case 5: "I yearned a new professional challenge. I was missing something to feel alive. I love challenges and that is why I accept to come to [host country] and start from zero."	I dislike it	Case 17: "My work did not excite me anymore. It was boring and humdrum. I needed a professional motivation. Staying at a plant just for the sake of it is not my thing. The people from [new organization] contacted me and offered me a job in [new country], and I took it."
	Integrated	Fully assimilated to the self	I want to. It defines me.	Case 4: "Doing international jobs is something inherent to me. Is part of me. I have been many years out [of home country]. I was either traveling to US, EU or Latin America. I don't find it difficult to work from [host country] and if tomorrow I need to work from Dallas or London, or Bilbao, if I see it is a good opportunity, that is where I will be."	Is not who I am.	
	Identified	Personally important	I value it	Case 6: "I was already in a high position in [organization] at [home country]. In order to continue growing [in my career], an international opportunity was important for me."	Is contrary to what I value	Case 12: "If I did not take this [expatriation], they could have found a different position for me within the company, but I would not develop that much within the company."
Controlled	**Introjected**	Response to internal pressure	Is expected of me	Case 8: "I am not here on holidays. They [my family] know what is my work routine, where do I work. I am at [host country] because the business is here. That is what we have decided to do. We have invested a lot of our wealth in this business, this our only economic bet. I need to make it work, we pay all our bills from here".	I will feel guilty, bad or ashamed if I do it	Case 9: "In [host country] I was not finding an adequate job. Emotionally, I did not want to go back [home country and leave family behind], but rationally I had to. I had to take care of them [my family], I had to feed them. So I took a responsible decision. My family should not face any hardship."
	External	Response to an external demand	I am rewarded to do it	Case 2: "[wife] just said I am going, ad I could not leave at that time. I had some professional commitments, that had contingent fees. I do not get paid until it closes. I had a huge bill that was owed to me as I had been representing in a divorce for 8 years. I wanted to see the case concluded and get paid."	I am restricted from doing it	Case 1. "Losing your job, being left without the income, staying in debt, and having to help our extended family… it is scary. I had to take this [expatriation] as my current job would disappear."

The self-determination continuum applied to approach and avoidance motives. Adapted from Ryan and Deci (2000)

Table 23. Partner's regulation and energization. Exemplary quotes.

	Regulation	Description	Approach		Avoidance	
Autonomous	**Intrinsic**	For its own sake	I enjoy it	Case 8: "I love [home town]. I have great friendships, my kids were born here, great schools. This is my home. I have a social life here. I could not find this in [host country]."	I dislike it	Case 2: "For me it was very difficult to adjust to a place like [host country]. It was very far away from [home country]. It is a very small place with a very different culture than mine."
	Integrated	Fully assimilated to the self	I want to. It defines me.	Case 7: "We wanted our children to study university in [home country]. Our future is in [home country]. We needed to find a way for [daughter] to graduate from High School in [home country] and take all the exams for university there. [expatriate] felt he needed to complete three years of assignment, so we decided I would go back home with the kids."	Is not who I am.	
	Identified	Personally important	I value it	Case 3: "We were in the process of applying for citizenship in [home country]. That was our goal, to become citizens to assure our stability here, mine and [expatriate]. The migration process with the new government was becoming more difficult. We had all our things here [home country], our children, our future, our retirement. I had the time and I stayed [home country] and was unable to go out of the country for the remaining of the process".	Is contrary to what I value	Case 16: "Half of the parents of my children's friends (kindergarten) were divorced or separated. Our children were growing accustomed to their friends living with only one parent. During that time, gay marriage became legal, and they were all over the news. There were many homosexuals showoffs in the streets. I come from a traditional catholic family, and I did not like that environment for my small children."
Controlled	**Introjected**	Response to internal pressure	Is expected of me	Case 14: "When [expatriate] left to [host country], I stayed and kept my job to have at least one income to cover for our family needs while he was able to find a job there."	I will feel guilty, bad or ashamed if I do it	Case 1: "I have career aspirations same as [expatriate]. We never want that one career be diminished because of the other. [host country] did not offer many job opportunities at my level. If it were a different country with more opportunities, but in [host country], I was unable to find an adequate job."
	External	Response to an external demand	I am rewarded to do it		I am restricted from doing it	Case 6: "My children were very little. I have join-custody with my ex-husband. We thought it would not be difficult to bring them to [host country] and start a new life there [with expatriate]. I needed permission from the judge to take the kids with me, and the judge asked that my children talk to a psychologist. They gave us an appointment in four years! We were forced to stay in [home country]."

The self-determination continuum applied to approach and avoidance motives. Adapted from Ryan and Deci (2000)

Table 24. Expatriate's and partner's regulation by SFE case

Case No.	IA type	SFE type	Expatriate's regulation	Partner's regulation	Imposed restriction on partner	IA duration (yrs)	SFE duration (yrs)
1	OE	I	Autonomous & controlled	Autonomous & controlled		2.5	2.5
5	OE	I	Autonomous & controlled	D		7	1
6	OE	I	Autonomous & controlled		by judge - wanted to trail	8	8
10	OE	I	Autonomous & controlled	Autonomous & controlled		7	7
12	OE	I	Autonomous & controlled	D		5+	5+
19	OE	I	Autonomous		by judge - wanted to trail	1+	1+
21	OE	I	Autonomous		by immigration - wanted to trail	1	1
4	OE	II	Autonomous & controlled		by expatriate - wanted to trail	3+	3+
11	OE	II	Autonomous & controlled		by organization - not interested in trailing	1	1
13	OE	II	Autonomous		by organization - not interested in trailing	4	4
15	OE	II	Autonomous	Autonomous & controlled		6	6
17	OE	II	Autonomous	D		5	5
22	OE	II	Autonomous		by organization - not interested in trailing	1.5	1.5
3	OE	III	Autonomous	Autonomous & controlled		2	1.5
7	OE	III	Autonomous & controlled	Autonomous		3	1
16	OE	III	Autonomous	Autonomous		4	1
20	OE	III	Autonomous	D		5	2.5
14	SIE	I	Autonomous & controlled	Controlled		1	1
18	SIE	II	Autonomous & controlled		by expatriate - not interested in trailing	1	1
2	SIE	III	Autonomous & controlled	Autonomous		17	3
8	SIE	III	Autonomous & controlled	Autonomous		6+	4+
9	SIE	III	Autonomous & controlled	D		17+	15

OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation; IA: international assignment; D: informant declined, was unresponsive to our request to interview or we had restricted access to contact the partner.

Yet, the family's lack of adjustment to the challenges encountered while in the SFE may sometimes generate a permanent break in the marital relationship. In our sample, four families divorced or permanently separated while in the SFE. Our results coincide with those of McNulty (2015b), which underscore that the high-stress levels common in expatriate life might result in polarizing behaviors in expatriate families that sometimes end in divorce.

While our study is not in the capacity to isolate the leading cause of divorce in SFEs, it is evident that the long-term separation of family members may have stressed the marital relationship. We call for the duty of care of organizations toward families in SFEs. As noted earlier, families that receive the proper organizational support are likely to endure the difficulties of the separation created by the SFE with greater ease and potentially prevent a permanent split in the family.

Of the 17 OEs with split family arrangements included in our sample, seven expatriations were terminated by the expatriate stating the following motives: 1) offered a new job which they found more attractive, 2) current assignment was not interesting or challenging enough any longer, 3) securing citizenship process back home, and 4) was granted citizenship at home and did not need to keep the job with the sponsoring organization any longer. It is essential to mention that four of these assignments lasted between 1 and 2.5 years, while the other three lasted between five and seven years. This distinction suggests that only four cases could be considered early terminations. Table 25 shows who originated the termination of the expatriation, the motives, the duration of the expatriation, and the family status at the beginning and end of the split arrangement by SFE case.

Findings in our study revealed that some expatriates terminate the international assignment when they are *offered a new job that they find more attractive*. The expatriate in case 15 described: "In [host location], I worked seven years. I led a reorganization and transformation process. Every assignment has been different, but this one had the biggest impact. With those results, I was asked to go to [new host location] because it was losing money and was the fourth largest asset base worldwide. It was a big challenge requiring a restructuring and a total business transformation."

Table 25. Origin and motive of expatriation termination by SFE case

Case No.	SFE type	IA type	IA duration (years)	SFE duration (years)	Status at beginning of SFE	Status at end of SFE	Origin of the IA termination	IA termination motive
1	I	OE	2.5	2.5	Married	Married	Expatriate	Granted citizenship at home, did not need to keep job with sponsoring organization
5	I	OE	7	1	Married	Divorced & Remarried	Expatriate	Current assignment was not interesting or challenging enough any longer
6	I	OE	8	8	Married	Divorced & Remarried	Organization	Organization offered a new job for the expatriate
10	I	OE	7	7	Divorced	Remarried	Expatriate	Current assignment was not interesting or challenging enough any longer
12	I	OE	5+	5+	Together	Separated	Ongoing	Ongoing
19	I	OE	1+	1+	Married	Married	Ongoing	Ongoing
21	I	OE	1	1	Married	Married	Expatriate	Third-party organization offered a new job to the expatriate which was more attractive
4	II	OE	3+	3+	Married	Filed for divorced	Ongoing	Ongoing
11	II	OE	1	1	Married	Married	Organization	End of the assignment
13	II	OE	4	4	Married	Married	Organization	End of the assignment
15	II	OE	6	6	Married	Married	Organization	Organization offered a new job for the expatriate
17	II	OE	5	5	Married	Married	Expatriate	Current assignment was not interesting or challenging enough any longer
22	II	OE	1.5	1.5	Married	Married	Expatriate	Third-party organization offered a new job to the expatriate which was more attractive
3	III	OE	2	1.5	Married	Married	Expatriate	Wanted to secure citizenship at home country
7	III	OE	3	1	Married	Married	Organization	Did not support SFE. Find a replacement.
16	III	OE	4	1	Married	Married	Organization	End of the assignment
20	III	OE	5	2.5	Married	Married	Organization	End of the assignment
14	I	SIE	1	1	Married	Married	Expatriate	Unable to find a job. Relocated together to a new country
18	II	SIE	1	1	Divorced	Divorced	Expatriate	Offered a new job in a different country
2	III	SIE	17	3	Married	Married	Expatriate	Retirement
8	III	SIE	6+	4+	Married	Married	Ongoing	Ongoing
9	III	SIE	17+	15	Married	Married	Expatriate	Retirement

OE: organizational expatriation; SIE: self-initiated expatriation; IA: international assignment.

For other expatriates, the reason to terminate their assignment is they are *not finding their assignments interesting or challenging enough any longer.* Expatriates may pursue other work opportunities; some initiate new expatriations while others engage in local business opportunities. The expatriate in case 5 explained: "My work did not excite me anymore. It was boring and monotonous. I needed a professional motivation. Staying at a plant just for the sake of it is not my thing. The people from [new organization] contacted me and offered me a job in [new country], and I took it."

Expatriates terminate their assignments, citing they *needed to secure the citizenship process* in their new home country. These families prioritize having long-term stability in their new home country over keeping a job. The expatriate in case 3 described: "There was a high risk to lose my residency [at home country] by staying in [host location] and applying from there. I told my supervisor I could not stay beyond twelve more months. This was a family priority, and I needed to go back. If there was an opportunity for me at [home country] great. But there was none. It was not a priority for the company."

Other expatriates decide to terminate their expatriation after they receive *citizenship in their new home country.* Families that stay behind sometimes have a visa associated with the sponsoring organization. Yet, once the family receives citizenship, the expatriate no longer needs to work abroad or be associated with the organization, and may *return to find a local job opportunity.* The expatriate in case 1 shared: "I never told HR that I was going to do this [expatriation] until I get my papers [citizenship]. So, once we got them, I told my supervisor I would return home. He asked me to wait until they found my replacement. I did and stayed two more months."

The five SIEs with split family arrangement in our sample, stated the following reasons to terminate their experience abroad: 1) retirement, 2) expatriate unable to find a job and family decided to relocate to another country, and 3) expatriate accepted a new job in a different country.

Our investigation revealed that self-initiated expatriates decide to return home at the end of their careers to retire in a different country. The expatriate in case

9 shared: “When I got to the retirement age, I told them [the organization] -thank you very much. I am leaving. I have to join my family.”

For other expatriates in SIEs, the reason to terminate their assignment is the inability to find a job in the host country. As noted earlier, some families make the decision to relocate abroad and the expatriate goes before the rest of the family to find a job. If after a period of time, the expatriate does not secure a job in the host country they may decide for other alternatives as a family. The partner in case 14 described this situation: “[expatriate] went to [host country]. He looked for a job, but was not finding one. Debts kept growing as we were with only one income. In the meantime, I got a job offer in [new country], and as a family, we decided to accept it and reunited there.”

Expatriates in SIEs may terminate their assignment when they find a new job in a different country more interesting. Being without a family, the expatriate can relocate to a new country more easily, as the family is not affected by the change of jobs and countries. The expatriate in case 18 expressed this situation: “I was in [host country] where I had established a professional service firm. I was contracted for a project in oil and shortenings. After a year, I was approached by [organization]. For me, it was very important to work for a multinational company as it could open career opportunities for other parts of the world. Relocating to [ne country] did not make a difference [for my family] as they were already used to the this new way of relating to each other [using phone and video].”

Together these findings suggest that expatriates are likely to terminate their assignment when the main motives that drove them to accept are not there anymore or a new opportunity is considered as a better option. This unveiled an interesting insight: expatriate families in SFE constantly evaluate their decision to continue or terminate the SFE.

> *Proposition 27. Family issues driven by the long-term separation of family members while in SFE are not sufficient reasons to terminate the expatriation.*
>
> *Proposition 28. Expatriate families in SFE frequently re-evaluate their decision to continue in the SFE.*

The other ten OEs with split arrangements in our sample were still ongoing at the time of the interview (three cases) or were terminated by the organization (seven cases) either at the end of the assignment or earlier if the organization had other plans for the expatriate. The following section will explain the motivation of organizations to support SFEs and the reasons for terminating them.

4.5 Why do organizations support SFEs?

To deepen our investigation of the SFE phenomenon, we studied the organizational motives and their underlying themes to support SFEs. In our examination, we also identified the reasons for organizations to terminate expatriations. Understanding the organization's motivation is essential because even if the expatriate family is willing to engage in an SFE, the organization also needs to support a split arrangement for this phenomenon to occur.

4.5.1 Motives

To our knowledge, the expatriation literature has not yet investigated the motives of organizations to engage in or support SFEs. Regardless of who originates the split arrangement, the organization or the family, our study found a set of reasons influencing the organizational decision. Our study unveiled that eleven motives drive organizations to terminate international assignments. Table 26 shows this list of motives.

Some organizations support SFEs because they focus on *selecting the best candidate regardless of their family situation*. Some organizations concentrated their selection efforts on identifying the best candidate and supporting whatever family situation the expatriate may request. The HR representative on case 10 explained: "Our main objective was to staff the position with the best talent. If this is the person that has the right competencies that will help us be successful, we need to bring him. We can then find a way to minimize the risk and help the candidate be well." Some

organizations might feel that the family situation should not affect the selection process. The supervisor in case 5 described: “He [the expatriate] was offered a position that he was well qualified to take. He chose to take it without undue pressure. Personal family choices are none of my business. If I offer someone a job and then find out that he is interested in the job but is not bringing his family, I cannot imagine myself going back and saying, -wow, that changes, it is a condition that you bring your family- I did not suggest anything except to be very accommodating in travel, etc.”

Other organizations support SFE expecting the expatriate on single status to *relocate faster to the host country*. Organizations may expect the processing of visas, finding accommodation, and flying out to the host country to be faster if it is only one person than all the family. The HR representative in case 4 shared: “When an expatriate relocates with his family, it always takes longer. If the expatriate comes alone, his relocation to the [host] country is much faster. Getting visas for an entire family takes longer than for only the candidate. Even finding housing, it all takes less time if it is only for one person.”

Some organizations support SFEs because of *faster expatriate adjustment.* The HR representative in case 4 explained: “The expatriate has more time to adapt to the job. He is not worried about what is happening to his family as they are in a familiar place surrounded by family and friends. The learning curve to the position is reduced significantly if they come as single [status] versus with [trailing] family.”

While organizations quickly acknowledged this was not the main driver, they did recognize that an expatriate without a trailing family is *less expensive.* An HR representative described: “Businesses may be very tempted to [support] this option [SFE] because of the speed to get the candidate but above all because of the lower cost.” The HR representative from case 4 explained: “Expatriating a family versus only the expatriate has distinct costs. Paying for an international school may cost 40,000 euros a year. An expatriation with family may be 20 to 30 percent more expensive than an expatriate on single status.”

Organizations support SFEs to staff expatriations in situations of *limited candidate pool*. Organizations are experiencing a shrinking pool of candidates for

long-term expatriations. An HR representative stated: “We have seen many individuals decline expatriations. They prioritize their family needs. We have many people that say -no, I am not mobile, don’t ask me this because I am not going to accept-.” Organizations may struggle to find candidates with the right qualifications, and when they do, they concede to support SFE if that is what the expatriate requests. The HR representative in case 10 explained: “The search to staff this position was very long and difficult. We only found the candidate in [third country]. We did not like to lose him because his technical experience was essential to us. We offered to relocate him with his family, yet he chose to come alone first and then decide what to do with my family.”

Some organizations engage in SFEs because they *cannot offer adequate conditions for family members,* such as housing and children’s education in remote locations. The oil and gas industry has projects located in remote areas that may be hundreds of miles away from the nearest city. While these organizations can set up living quarters for employees, families with children may not have adequate education options. An HR representative said: “In the oil and gas industry, many sites are in remote locations. It is very difficult to find adequate housing for families and, many times, impossible. That is why it is common to offer a single status package for married candidates. If you are sent to the north of Saudi Arabia, the closest city may be 80 kilometers away.”

Organizations support SFEs temporarily, expecting their assistance may *resolve the family concerns to join the expatriation*. Yet, these expectations not always turned out real. This situation was shared by the supervisor in case 1: “We expected that the family would join once the partner could find a job here [in the host country]. We paid for a headhunter and at one point even made him an offer to work with the company. It did not work out for them, the family never came [to live in the host country].”

Our analysis unveiled that organizations favor SFEs, as they *expect great results from the best candidate* regardless of their family situation. The supervisor from case 1 described: “This person had a talent, had something to offer. It did not matter if she was alone or with her family. I expected great results from her.” Or like

the HR representative stated when an expatriate trailing with family announced that his/her family will return home: “We will continue to support anybody that is still valuable [to the organization] or meet their expectations of performance. Why would we want to penalize somebody based on their family situation?”

Some organizations supported this arrangement as a temporary solution to *protect from a negative impact on work outcomes*. Supporting a temporary SFE allowed the company to minimize operational risks securing the completion of the assignment or at least a smooth transition to substitute the expatriate. The expatriate in case 7 shared his situation: “Six months after my family returned, I was told that in six months they would need to find something else for me, or make a decision because they were not going to have a managing director that was partially detached from the operation or with his family living in a different country.”

Furthermore, organizations were influenced to support SFEs because they believed the assignment was a *good career opportunity for the expatriate and* were willing to help them in the split arrangement. The supervisor in case 1 shared: “I wanted this to be a good experience for her, a great [career] opportunity. I was open to evaluating whatever worked for her and her family. I focused on her stability and well-being. She was a proven talent, with experience and a great track record inside [organization].”

Organizations supported SFEs when expatriates request it, trusting they know *what meets their family’s needs*. Families are changing the way they make decisions and their priorities. An HR representative explained: “Today, families play a big role in the decision to expatriate, and a trailing family is not assumed. Families may prioritize more work-life balance and less loyalty to the organization. Families want to build their careers together, decide how to meet their personal and professional purpose, and bring these to the negotiating table.” Another HR representative shared: “We already invest many resources in finding the best candidates. We would make an effort to accommodate their needs and be patient.” An HR representative made clear that most times, the expatriates request the split arrangement, and the organization supports them: “We have never pushed a candidate to do anything that they would feel uncomfortable doing. Typically, they

[expatriate and family] make the decision and ask us how we can support them to make it work."

Table 26. Organizational motives to support SFEs by theme

Motive	Theme
Good career opportunity for expatriate	Expat benefit
Meet the needs of expatriate family	Expat benefit
Faster relocation to host country	Staffing & Relocation benefits
Best candidate regardless of family situation	Staffing & Relocation benefits
Lower costs	Staffing & Relocation benefits
Faster expatriate adjustment	Staffing & Relocation benefits
Unable to offer adequate host conditions to family members	Staffing limitations
Help resolve the family concerns to join the expatriation	Staffing limitations
Limited candidate pool	Staffing limitations
Expect great results from best candidate	Work outcomes
Protect from negative impact on work outcomes	Work outcomes

4.5.2 Themes

Further analysis revealed that the organizational motives to support or engage in SFEs could be grouped into four themes: 1) staffing and relocation benefit, 2) staffing limitation, 3) work outcomes, and 4) expatriate benefit.

The *staffing and relocation benefit* theme includes faster relocation to the host country, hiring the best candidate regardless of family situation, lower costs, and faster expatriate adjustment. The *staffing limitation* theme includes being unable to offer adequate host conditions to family members, a limited candidate pool, and help resolve the family concerns to join the expatriation. Motives in the *work outcomes* theme include expecting great results from the best candidate and protecting from negative impact on work outcomes. Reasons in the *expatriate benefit* theme include good career opportunity for the expatriate and meeting the needs of the expatriate family.

4.5.3 Assignment termination

As mentioned earlier, in seven cases, the organization decided when the expatriation ended. Our study identified three motives that drove the organization to

terminate the assignment. These motives are 1) the assignment had concluded, 2) the organization offered a new job to the expatriate, and 3) the organization decided not to support the SFE any longer and found a replacement for the expatriate.

In four cases, the organization terminated the assignment once the agreed term had been completed. These expatriations lasted on average 3.5 years, of which the families were separated 2.1 years. Two cases were in SFE type II and two more in SFE type III.

In two cases, the organization offered a new assignment to the expatriate, which was accepted. These expatriations lasted on average seven years, with all the years in split family arrangement. Interestingly, one case was in SFE type I and the other in SFE type II. This finding unveiled that the condition that prevented the family from trailing the expatriate, while initially considered temporary, lasted all of the expatriation.

While it was not common, our sample included one case in which the organization terminated the split family arrangement prematurely. This case was an SFE type III, where the expatriation lasted three years, of which the last one was as a split family. Our analysis revealed that the decision not to support the split family arrangement beyond a year was motivated by the supervisor's perception that the job required the physical presence of the expatriate at the office all the time. The organization would not support remote work anymore. This situation was shared by a direct report in case 7: "The speed of decision-making was much faster when he was here [host location] than when he was remote. We could see him in the hallway, and in two minutes, we decide. It was more difficult to try to find him via Skype. In this business, things change really fast and we have to make decisions quickly. His supervisor did not like him working remotely because of the business's complexity. He believed that not being all the time here was impacting the business."

Together, the different results provide a more complete understanding of long-term expatriations with split family arrangements. In the next chapter, we will elaborate on how our findings confirm, expand, or challenge extant expatriate research.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings of our study in four sections. First, we examine our results in relation to the extant expatriate and motivation literature and describe our contribution to it (Section 5.1). Our findings, in some instances, confirmed, challenged, or extended current theories. Second, we summarize the conditions that improve in SFEs over expatriations with trailing families (Section 5.2). Our observations describe benefits for the expatriate, the partner, and the organization. Third, we recapitulate the new challenges that appear in SFEs and their implications for the organization and the expatriate families (Section 5.3). Last, we make some predictions about the conditions that favor the continued use and the establishment of SFE as a viable and sustainable global work strategy (Section 5.4).

5.1 What are our contributions to research?

We investigated long-term split family expatriations to deeply understand the characteristics of the expatriate families that engage in one, the characteristics of the phenomenon, the motivation of the stakeholders involved, and the management of SFEs by the hiring organization. By investigating SFEs from these different angles, we advance the knowledge of this type of global work, which has received scant attention to date. Drawing from self-determination theory in work organizations (Deci et al., 2017) and approach avoidance motivation (Elliot, 2006), this thesis postulates a set of propositions emanating from the analysis of 22 SFE cases (see Appendix L the complete list of propositions). In the following paragraphs, we will expand on how our findings refine, challenge, or expand current expatriate and motivation research.

Characteristics of families engaging in SFEs

This investigation began by studying the characteristics of families that engage in SFE. Our work contributes to the expatriation literature by providing evidence of the distinguishing qualities of expatriate families that engage in SFEs. The analysis revealed that these expatriate families shared two characteristics: 1) the expatriate had previous global work experience, and 2) the family had prior experience being separated from the expatriate due to work. Findings suggest that this combined experience provides the expatriate families enough familiarity with the conditions they may experience during an SFE, which influences them to consider SFEs as a viable long-term option for their family. This is in line with motivation research that proposes that the frequency of past behaviors affects desires, intentions, and behaviors and that the recency of past behaviors impacts new behaviors (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001).

Examining the demographics of the expatriate families in SFEs revealed that any family type and at any stage of the family cycle may engage in SFEs. These results challenge the assumptions that dual-career families are the ones primarily engaging in SFEs. Of the 22 cases in our sample, only three were dual-career families. Interestingly, these three families were in SFE type I and not SFE type II;

that is, the partners were interested in trailing, yet they needed to resolve some issues before trailing, which were only sometimes about finding a job in the host location. A possible explanation for this finding may be what Challiol and Mignonac (2005) revealed: Sometimes, dual-career families compromise a solution and put one of the careers on hold when deciding to expatriate and relocate together.

Moreover, our investigation exposed that families with children also engage in SFEs. Yet, prior studies claimed that families with children are less willing to expatriate to avoid disruption to their children's education and relationships (Dupuis et al., 2008; Tharenou, 2008). A possible interpretation of this contradictory evidence is that engaging in a split arrangement gives expatriate families with children an option to preserve social and educational stability for their children and for the expatriate to commit to an international assignment. This is good news for organizations that may see families with this priority choosing SFE instead of declining.

Characteristics of SFEs

Our examination of the SFE features contributes to the expatriation literature with a typology of SFEs and their distinct characteristics. SFE type I is considered before the start of the expatriation as a strategy that allows the expatriate to have a head start on the assignment with the intention of the family to join later. SFE type II is also considered before the start of the expatriation but as an arrangement to last for all the assignment. SFE type III is contemplated during an expatriation with a trailing family to extend or complete the assignment when the family returns home prematurely. These findings have important implications for expatriate management as the organizational support needed for each SFE type may differ. The organizational and managerial implications section will elaborate more on this topic.

Furthermore, our work suggests that SFEs may be more prevalent than what industry reports show, as they may only be tracking SFE type II. SFE type I and III may not be part of the statistics of SFEs because they are managed as traditional expatriations since families express their intention to trail (SFE type I) or were trailing the expatriate before deciding to return home leaving the expatriate on the assignment (SFE type III).

Management of SFEs

From examining how organizations manage SFEs, three main contributions to the expatriate literature emerged: 1) the different HR treatment received by expatriates in SFEs, 2) family dynamics as a critical dimension in expatriates and partners adjustment in SFEs, and 3) the organizational support offered to expatriate families in SFEs.

We studied how organizations manage SFEs and discovered that they apply three different HR treatments. Organizational expatriates in SFEs receive expatriate packages when the international relocation is temporal and a local-plus package when it is permanent. Self-initiated expatriates in SFEs receive local employment treatment. That organizational expatriates typically receive expatriate HR treatment and self-initiated expatriates local treatment is consistent with the existing expatriate research (Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld, & Dickmann, 2014; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). Interestingly, our findings indicate that organizations hiring internationally, depending on whether they are staffing for a temporary need or a permanent local position, predict if the expatriate receives an expatriate package or a local-plus contract. Expatriate candidates will benefit from knowing this information during the hiring process to negotiate accordingly and reduce frustrations during the assignment when those receiving a local plus package compare themselves to those receiving an expatriate package. This finding extends the understanding of compensation strategies for international assignments studied by prior scholars (Bonache, 2006; Bonache & Zarraga-Oberty, 2017; Tornikoski et al., 2015) by adding the particular case of SFEs.

Our study reveals that expatriate families in SFEs, like families on traditional expatriations, experience adjustment due to the changes and challenges of the new situation. It may have been easy to assume that because families in SFEs are not living in the host country, they may not experience adjustment. Yet these families face difficulties due to the expatriation and the long-term separation of family members, which require adjustment. We concur with other scholars (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008; Hippler, Haslberger, & Brewster, 2017) in arguing that all expatriate family members will undergo adjustment, which is not different in SFEs.

We join other academics in stressing the need to include the changing family dynamics when examining the adjustment of expatriates and partners in expatriations (Lazarova et al., 2010; Shaffer et al., 2016). Lazarova and colleagues (2010) posit that expatriate families need to adjust not only to the new conditions at work and the host country but also to the changing family dynamics. Their model of the work-family interface on international assignments expanded the criterion space of adjustment in expatriations to include the concepts of expatriates' and partners' family role adjustment. The authors proposed the interplay between them and the effect on expatriate engagement and performance. While their model focused on the particularities of traditional expatriations, the findings in our study suggest that their propositions can be expanded to SFEs. Like other scholars (Dimitrova, 2018; Goede & Berg, 2018), we emphasize the need for further research on family concerns and interface in international assignments.

Our investigation reinforces the claim made by Shaffer and colleagues (2016) that different types of global professionals differ in the degree and kind of adjustment. The authors developed and tested a work- and family-role adjustment scale for global professionals, which included task and relationship dimensions. Their results indicated that self-initiated expatriates differ from organizational expatriates in the strength that demands and resources impact role adjustment. We speculate that a split arrangement is likely to change the degree of these relationships, particularly in the family-role adjustment due to the long-term separation of family members. The significance of family dynamics to expatriate and family outcomes begs for further research to expand the understanding of these relationships in SFEs. We join other scholars in the call for more research on expatriate adjustment that varies in context (Hippler et al., 2017) and family arrangement to understand its complexity better.

In line with prior studies in SFEs (Dang, 2020; Mutter & Thorn, 2019a), our investigation unveils that family members in SFEs that do not adjust to the new family dynamics are likely to suffer emotional distress due to task overload, loneliness and or isolation which may impact expatriate performance either as a spill-over or a cross-over effect. Similarly, our results confirm prior research indicating that some families in expatriations may end up divorcing (McNulty,

2015b). Like in traditional expatriations, we propose that organizational support may facilitate the adjustment of families in SFEs. Yet, for SFEs, the support may need to be tailored to aid the adjustment to the new family dynamics and to reduce the strain and stress of the long-term separation of family members. We will provide organizational support recommendations in the managerial implications section.

Our investigation of the different managerial policies and practices that support expatriate families in SFEs extends the work of Dang (2020) and amends the knowledge void of the organizational support received by non-traditional expatriates (Hutchings, 2022). Our work reveals that organizations sometimes provide job search assistance to the partner in an effort to reunite the family. Additionally, some families in our sample received airline tickets for the family to visit the expatriate. Nonetheless, we concur with Dang in sustaining that the organizational support received by the stay-behind family is scarce and is yet to provide the much-needed assistance to preserve family member relationships and well-being.

Motivation of families to engage in SFEs

Until now, most expatriation research has identified a list of motives that influence expatriate families to accept an international assignment and relocate all together to the host country. The groupings of motives vary somewhat between studies (Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011; Richardson & Mallon, 2005). Our work contributes to the expatriation motivation research in four ways. First, revealing that the expatriation decision of families includes two sets of motives: 1) motives to expatriate, and 2) motives of the partner and children to trail or not. Second, proposing that the list of motives to relocate abroad may be the same for families engaging in traditional expatriations and SFEs. Third, expanding the understanding of the motivation of partners and children to not accompany in the expatriation. Fourth, expanding the motivation analysis from a list of motives to a study that includes the motive's theme, the underlying aspiration, the energization, and the regulation. Fifth, postulating predictions on the aspirations, energization, and regulation of expatriates and partners in the different types of SFEs and on the

effect of different aspirations, energization, and regulation of expatriates and partners on the duration of the expatriation or the split arrangement, respectively.

An initial discovery in the investigation was that the decision to expatriate for families includes two sets of motives, those of the expatriate to relocate abroad and those of the partner and children to accompany or not in the expatriation. These sets of reasons, when aligned and favoring the expatriation, are likely to motivate the family to relocate together on a traditional expatriation. Yet, when the partner and children favor staying at home, and the expatriate esteems engaging in the international assignment, families are likely to consider an SFE. Further research is needed to understand the expatriate decision-making process fully. Yet this finding expands the current understanding of the decision to relocate abroad and explains why the decision may be more than the dichotomous accept and go together vs. decline.

Our study concurs with the work done by other scholars in the expatriate literature (Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011) identifying the list of motives that drive the decision to relocate abroad. Our list of motives includes items identified before by other scholars. Yet, we expanded the list with six new reasons in the life domain, such as avoiding being repatriated to a home country they emigrated from, maintaining family status, and avoiding financial distress. Moreover, our work added 14 new motives in the work domain, such as current job not exciting anymore, interesting business opportunity, less interesting alternative jobs, working for a supervisor they like, and finishing business affairs.

Dang's work (2020) was the first to distinguish the motives to expatriate of families in traditional expatriations from those in SFEs. She identified three motives to expatriate in families with split arrangements. See Appendix K for a complete list of the motives identified by Dang. Our work confirms Dang's findings and expanded the list of motives to expatriate in families choosing a split arrangement to 38 items (See Table 16).

Our results provide evidence to challenge Dang's claim that the reasons to relocate abroad between families in traditional expatriations and families in SFEs may differ. The similarity between our list of motives done exclusively on families

in SFEs to those of Doherty and colleagues (Doherty et al., 2011) done with families on traditional expatriations suggests that the motives to expatriate may be the same regardless of family arrangement. We speculate that, similar to when comparing the motives of doing an OE versus an SIE (Doherty et al., 2011), what differs between traditional expatriations versus SFEs are not the motives, but the importance given to one motive over another.

Our results concur with those of Doherty and colleagues (Doherty et al., 2011), which propose that the most influential motive of organizational expatriates is the professional challenge. Findings coincide even with different family arrangements, supporting that the reasons to expatriate are independent of the family arrangement.

Yet our findings differ from studies done with self-initiated expatriates with trailing families in their proposition that sense of adventure is the dominant driver to relocate abroad (Doherty et al., 2011; Richardson & Mallon, 2005) or career-related considerations (Despotovic, Hutchings, & McPhail, 2022). Our findings suggest that the most prevalent motive for self-initiated expatriates in split family arrangements is their desire to provide a better future for their families. Together these results indicate that when the family trails, the sense of adventure can be enough motive to embark in an international assignment. However, when the family separates, and the expatriate relocates alone, the primary reason is the family's betterment.

Our work expands that of Dang's, regarding the motives of partners and children to not trail the expatriate. We propose that families not always have agency in the decision to accompany the expatriate and that the restriction to trail can be imposed not only by the sponsoring organization but also by the expatriate or a third-party authority such as a judge or an immigration agent. Moreover, we add 20 new items to the list for a total of 26. The list of reasons includes items such as stability for children, caring for extended family, and insecurity in the host country. Understanding the motives informs which type of organizational support is the most beneficial for these families to reduce the stress and strain generated by the SFE. Recommendations are elaborated in the organization and managerial implications section.

To our knowledge, this is the first study to investigate the aspirations, energization, and regulation of expatriate families engaging in SFEs. Aspiration, energization, and regulation study different aspects of motivation. Aspirations refers to the interest on desired outcomes from doing a task and can be intrinsic (enjoyment of the task itself), extrinsic (obtaining results external to the work itself), or prosocial (benefiting other people). Energization indicates the direction of the behavior and can be approach (toward a positive stimuli) or avoidance (away from a negative stimuli). Regulation denotes the regulatory process through which the outcomes are pursued and can range from autonomous (intrinsic, integrated, and identified) to controlled (introjected and external). In simple terms we can say that aspirations reveal the content of motives (what), regulation the process (why), and energization the behavior (how).

In this thesis we utilized the SDT and the approach avoidance motivation theory to interpret the findings. Applying the SDT to our results revealed that the motives of expatriates and partners had different aspirations and regulatory processes. Applying the approach avoidance motivation theory to our findings uncovered that the motives of expatriates and partners had different energization. Further analysis revealed the effect of different aspirations, regulatory processes, and energization on perseverance in the expatriation or the split family arrangement.

Our work expands SDT and approach avoidance motivation theory in couple of ways. First, using these two motivation theories to explain the SFE phenomenon enlarges the scope of applicability of the theories. Our findings were in line with prior research when the motives were of only one type (i.e., approach only or avoidance only; intrinsic only or prosocial only; autonomous only or controlled only). More details will be provided in the following paragraphs. Second, our results provided new evidence to the new stream of research investigating the co-occurrence of different types of motives (co-occurring approach and avoidance motives; co-occurring autonomous and controlled motives) and their effect on perseverance. In the following paragraphs we will expand on the interesting results found.

The examination of the aspiration of expatriates and partners confirmed prior research that intrinsic motives are associated with stronger perseverance in a task or behavior than prosocial motives (Sheldon et al., 2004) and that when prosocial motives are associated with intrinsic reasons they create a synergistic association generating a stronger perseverance (Grant, 2008; Zhang et al., 2020). Furthermore, our study found initial evidence of a synergistic association of extrinsic motives to intrinsic ones such that when together, they create stronger perseverance than when alone. This expands prior research that found that extrinsic rewards that are granted independent of task behavior, such as the salary of an employee, do not necessarily weaken their intrinsic motivation nor are necessarily antagonistic (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). These findings have important implications as organizations can influence the expatriate's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through the assignment's design, the financial package, and the recognition they offer the expatriate. Additionally, organizations may be able to influence the intrinsic motives of partners by providing support that can increase their well-being. Further research will be needed to understand the impact of interactions of different aspirations fully, but these initial findings are encouraging.

While theoretically, we support the proposition that approach only motives are associated with optimal functioning (Elliot, 2006), our sample could not compare outcomes associated with approach only to avoidance only energization. Yet, our findings suggest that co-occurring approach and avoidance energization are likely to produce more beneficial outcomes for individuals than approach only or avoidance only. More specifically, our study reveals that expatriates influenced by co-occurring avoidance and approach motives lasted longer in the expatriation than those energized by approach only motives. Our study joins the work of other researchers that have investigated the effects in behaviors of co-occurring approach and avoidance motivation (Nikitin & Freund, 2008, 2010). Our results expand the body of work on this topic by providing evidence of the co-occurring approach and avoidance motivation in the decision to expatriate and its positive effect on perseverance.

Our results also suggest that individuals with co-occurring autonomous and controlled regulation are likely to be associated with more beneficial outcomes than

individuals with autonomous only or controlled only. More specifically, we found evidence that expatriates lasted longer in an expatriation when they were driven by co-occurring autonomous and controlled regulations, than when only influenced by autonomous regulation. Similarly, partners lasted longer in the SFE when driven by co-occurring autonomous and controlled regulations, than when only motivated by autonomous regulation. Our results are in line with the nascent research done in the work context that found the highest performance associated with a motivational profile that included high levels of co-occurring controlled and autonomous motivation versus a motivational profile that was high on autonomous and low on controlled motivation (Moran, Diefendorff, Kim, & Liu, 2012). Together, these results propose that the presence of controlled motivation in an autonomous motivated employee does not negatively impact their performance at work but actually enhances it.

When analyzing the motives for termination of the expatriation, we observed that different than in traditional expatriations, in SFEs, the termination of the assignment is not caused by the family's lack of adjustment. We discovered, that expatriates continued their assignment even after divorcing or permanently separating from their partner during the SFE. Additionally, even families who were restricted to trail, whether temporary or permanent, did not create sufficient adverse cross-over effects in the expatriate enough to generate a premature termination of the assignment. These findings may be explained by the model of the work-family interface on international assignments (Lazarova et al., 2010), which proposes that expatriates have two distinct behaviors, family role engagement and work role engagement, each with a direct effect on family role performance and work role performance respectively. The crossover effects of family adjustment to expatriate adjustment and the spillover effects from the life to the work domain within expatriate adjustment are present in SFEs, yet they had different impact than in traditional expatriations. These findings have significant implications for organizations as our results suggest that 1) SFEs may be a solution to prevent a premature termination of traditional expatriations for struggling expatriate families, and 2) SFEs may be a viable long-term option. Furthermore, expatriate families in SFEs may safeguard their well-being and relationships with the proper

organizational support. These findings are revealing as prior studies have associated adverse work outcomes with SFEs, such as absenteeism and willingness to repatriate (Karunarathne, 2018; Mutter & Thorn, 2019b).

Motivation of organizations to support SFEs

In the analysis of the data, we observed that some organizations originate the SFE, while in many cases, it was the expatriate family who chose this arrangement and the organization had to decide to support it or not. Our investigation contributes to the expatriation literature by providing the first list of motives that explain why organizations support SFEs. These motives can be grouped into four themes: expatriate benefit, staffing and relocation benefits, staffing limitations, and work outcomes. These findings are important as without the willingness of organizations to support SFEs, those families that have chosen a split family arrangement as their way to engage in the expatriation may otherwise decline the offer or terminate the assignment prematurely.

5.2 What conditions improve over an expatriation with a trailing family?

When families opt to engage on an SFE instead of trailing with the expatriate, they may prioritize other family values over staying together. Probably, families find in SFEs a way to prevent an expatriation from interfering with their chosen lifestyle (Collings et al., 2007). In SFE type I, families may favor the children's education. In SFE type II, families may favor the expatriate's career. In SFE type III, families may favor family members' well-being or the children's education. By choosing a split arrangement in expatriations, families extend time at home and avoid delaying, compromising, or sacrificing these family priorities.

Expatriates engaging in SFE type I benefit from not having to delay the start of the expatriation or not having to decline the assignment that interests them. For expatriates in SFE type II, engaging in a split family arrangement may be the only

way to do the assignment. Expatriates in SFE type III have the opportunity to finish the assignment, have a better repatriation process, and/or have the possibility for a better job opportunity once repatriated. Because the origin of the SFE decision in SFE type III is in the life domain, organizations are usually not ready to repatriate the expatriate. Extending the expatriate's stay till the end of the assignment increases the chances of a smooth repatriation.

Organizations that accept to support an SFE type I may benefit from a speedier relocation. Getting a visa and finding accommodations for one person is likely to require less time than when done for the entire family. Additionally, supporting SFEs allows organizations to get their first-choice candidate who might otherwise have declined. HR representatives conclude their staffing process faster as they do not have to continue the search with the 2nd or 3rd option candidate. If the expatriate chooses to go single status, organizations may benefit from a lower cost of housing, in addition to not having to support the family with education, insurance, and host-country support as the family does not relocate. Organizations that support SFE type II get similar benefits to those of SFE type I, yet for all the duration of the assignment. When organizations support SFE type III, they secure the completion of the assignment and have a smoother transition.

A significant finding of our study is that none of the 22 SFE cases examined had a premature termination of the expatriation due to the family not adjusting to the challenges of being on a split arrangement. Yes, in some instances, the marital relationship broke or relationships were damaged, so families need to be aware of the potential consequences. Yet, the expatriate managed to overcome divorce and, in some cases, remarried while continuing the international assignment. This is a significant difference from an expatriation with a trailing family where lack of adjustment of the family to the host country is a significant driver of an early termination of the assignment.

In general, expatriates on single status described they often work long hours or even work over the weekend as they do not have their families with them. They may have a greater dedication to their work to fill their loneliness. Yet organizations did not attribute the long work days of expatriates in SFEs to being without their

families. Organizations claim that working long hours is typical of any expatriate or a dedicated employee with strong work ethics. This claim is supported by research indicating that expatriates with trailing families work long hours (Shortland & Cummins, 2007). Hence, more investigation will be needed to understand if living on a single status has an independent effect over working long hours than being on an expatriation.

5.3 What new challenges appear in SFEs?

We already discussed the family dynamics challenges and the emotional distress that families and expatriates may experience during SFEs because of the long-term separation. In addition, families may also have communication challenges to overcome. Family members may live in a different time zone than the one of the expatriate, requiring some adjustment of when to contact each other. Additionally, expatriate families may need to learn how to communicate deeply when using technology to interact with each other (i.e., using text, voice, or video conferencing).

Having a lower cost in managing SFEs versus an expatriation with a trailing family may entice organizations to support SFEs. Yet, dealing with an SFE may be complex. Organizations may 1) need to request exceptions to the expatriate policies to meet the needs of an SFE, 2) be more familiar with the issues expatriates and their families may encounter and how to best support them, 3) pay close attention to the tax and legal implications as expatriates in SFEs may often work remotely from home to be with their families, and 4) negotiate with expatriates what will be the organization's duty of care when family members decide to come for a season to be with the expatriate. Shall visiting family members be covered by international insurance? Does the housing size need to be adjusted? Does the goods and services part of the expatriate package need to be modified? These and probably many more topics might need to be resolved each time.

5.4 What new predictions can we make?

SFEs will inevitably present daily hassles and challenges to all family members. We anticipate that the quality of the relationship between family members will moderate the outcomes of SFEs. Families with strong relationships between members may better endure the difficulties of a long-term split family arrangement. Married or partnered couples with strained relationships may end up permanently separated or divorced.

We speculate that contemporary labor practices may attract some families to consider SFEs. In the past, working with one company for all your career was valuable and encouraged. Nowadays, labor relationships are considered more transactional and do not guarantee long-term or lifetime employment. With greater job insecurity, more families could consider SFEs as an alternative to traditional expatriations, to maintain a safety net back home. Expatriates may go alone for the first one or two years to assess the conditions of the assignment, including their job and the host country, and determine the convenience of bringing their family long-term.

We foresee that hostile locations may deter some families from trailing with the expatriate and opt for an SFE instead. Organizations are expanding their presence into countries that are less attractive to families because of their social or political instability. Organizations may be better equipped to support expatriates in hostile locations than to support their entire families. Employees are easier to keep safe as they spend most of their time at the organization's facilities and at their place to rest and sleep. In contrast, partners and children may be more exposed to the hostile environment because of their daily activities, such as attending school and after-school activities, socializing, and housekeeping.

Having recently experienced a pandemic and its consequences, we predict families may choose an SFE over trailing with the expatriate if they anticipate an international health threat. During the pandemic, many hospitals collapsed, and travel was restricted or shut down. Many expatriate families were trapped in the host country longer than they would have liked. In an international health outbreak,

expatriate families may feel that staying or going back home may be a solution to minimize exposure to the threat, be in a familiar medical context, and have a more extensive supporting network while keeping financial stability.

With more extensive offerings of low-cost long-distance transportation (e.g., fast trains and airplanes) and the ubiquitous free technology for one-to-one and one-to-many communications, we anticipate families considering an SFE as a manageable option when trailing with the expatriate is not possible. Nowadays, all families have experienced how technology has made possible to stay in close contact with someone traveling or living in a different location. Additionally, families may have experienced how the "world has become smaller" because of the ease of traveling fast and cheaply to a distant location. This context may give family members a perceived competence to manage long-distance relationships long-term.

Chapter 6: Limitations, future research, managerial implications, and conclusion

This final chapter elaborates on the study's results and is divided into three sections. First, we acknowledge the limitations of our study (Section 6.1). Second, we introduce future research ideas that build on our current work and can further advance the understanding of this phenomenon (Section 6.2). Third, we elucidate the organizational and managerial implications (Section 6.3), providing a short questionnaire to evaluate organizational readiness to support SFEs. Following, we suggest specific managerial actions that leverage the findings of our study to promote beneficial outcomes for expatriate families and the organization. Last, we provide a few words to bring closure to the thesis (Section 6.4).

6.1 Limitations

Despite all the efforts made in the research design and the analysis of the cases to ensure validity and reliability, this study has several limitations. One of the first limitations acknowledged when using multiple-case studies is the inability to generalize to the population. This methodology uses replication logic adequate for analytical generalizations, that is, from empirical observations to theory (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Yet further research may be needed to test the propositions derived from our study -in a large and random sample of families with experience in SFEs- and use quantitative methods to make statistical generalizations to a population.

Using multiple-case study for theory building is adequate to examine a phenomenon in depth, or one that has been hardly investigated (Eisenhardt, 1989; Welch & Piekkari, 2017). While this methodology allowed us to identify the motivation of the different stakeholders involved (expatriates, partners, and organizations), it is not suitable to analyze the variance in motivation due to individual differences, job tenure, family life cycle stages, or past experiences. For example, we can anticipate that personality traits may partly explain why some individuals are more prone to be influenced by avoidance than by approach motives and, consequently, are likely to experience different outcomes. Larger samples and the use of quantitative methods may be more appropriate to further the investigation of this phenomenon.

The interviews were made over the phone or via video conferencing, not face-to-face. This limitation was a function of our research design, as we aimed for variability in the case characteristics, including home and host country. This condition allowed our sample to be dispersed across the globe, and due to budgetary restrictions, we were only able to interview them via phone or video conferencing. Future research may want to limit the sample variability to expatriates and families living in a few countries and have not only face-to-face interviews, but also be able to collect field observations.

Our sample was composed of 21 cases of male expatriates and only one female expatriate. While the long-term expatriate population is predominantly male, it is well-known that motivation differs between genders (Meece, Glienke, & Burg, 2006). Future research may want to collect a larger sample of female expatriates to fully understand their motivation and recommend policies and practices suitable to the management of SFEs of female expatriates.

Our interviews and surveys asked for recollections of events. While our research design included several strategies to mitigate the bias from retrospective sensemaking and impression management, such as triangulation of information and variability in geographies and organizations in the cases (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Huber & Power, 1985; Leonard-Barton, 1990) future research could select cases where the beginning and end of the SFE is more recent.

6.2 Future Research

Our study revealed motives for the expatriate to engage in an international assignment and motives for the partner and children not to accompany the expatriation. Yet, the investigation did not focus on identifying which motives or combinations of reasons were sufficient for a family to engage in a split family arrangement. Neither did our research concentrate on revealing the necessary motives. Both ideas could be explored in future studies using qualitative comparative analysis.

During our examination, we got a glimpse into the decision-making process to expatriate. Without a doubt, the motives to expatriate and the motives of the partner and children to accompany or not the expatriate play an essential role in the decision. Yet, these two sets of motives may only be part of the expatriation decision-making process.

In general, expatriate studies converge in that willingness to expatriate is a strong predictor that an individual will engage in an international assignment when given the opportunity (Brett & Stroh, 1995; Weisheit, 2018) and concur in the

motives that drive expatriates to relocate abroad (Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011). However, the study of the intention and behavior to expatriate have developed as independent streams of research. Only some studies have tried integrating them to unveil the expatriation decision-making process. Tharenou (2008) found evidence that actively searching for an international job meditated the relationship between willingness to expatriate and the actual expatriation. While this is a good start, there is value in further investigating the expatriation decision-making process.

The decision to expatriate is a complex process involving two domains and multiple stakeholders. When an individual considers accepting an international assignment, he/she may be influenced by motives in life (e.g., travel and adventure, life change, foreign experience) and/or work domain (e.g., career progression, work skills development). Additionally, the decision to expatriate will most likely require interest and support not only from the expatriate but also from his/her partner, children, and the sponsoring organization.

The decision to expatriate can become even more complex in dual-career families as both members are committed to their professional careers. It is not uncommon for dual-career families to decline an international assignment as one of the partners might need to suspend their career while abroad (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016; Harvey & Buckley, 1998). Yet, some families are willing to temporarily prioritize family goals such as having an international experience for the family over the career of one of the partners (Kierner, 2018; Mäkelä, Känsälä, & Suutari, 2011). While other families agree to temporarily live separately to pursue both careers even when one might go abroad (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2016; Challiol & Mignonac, 2005).

We theorize that the expatriation decision process may involve two-level decisions. First, decisions at the individual level (expatriate and partner), and then as a family. We speculate that the motives at the individual level provide input for the decision at the family level. Furthermore, during our investigation, we were careful to separate the reasons to expatriate from other items that also influence the decision to relocate abroad, such as perceived self-efficacy and outcome expectations. More

research is needed to fully identify and explicate these new constructs, their relationships, and the role they play in the decision-making process to expatriate.

6.3 Organizational and Managerial Implications

It may be unavoidable to see more families opting for SFEs and organizations supporting them. Organizations will have a better chance of having positive outcomes from SFEs if they are prepared to manage them. Assessing the organization's readiness to manage SFEs requires evaluating the people, practices, and policies involved. In general, before the decision to support an SFE is made, the organization may want to know how competent and ready they are to manage SFEs. Table 27 shows a list of questions that may help organizations assess their readiness to support SFEs.

Table 27. List of questions to assess organization's readiness to support SFEs

1. Who needs to be involved in the decision to support an SFE?
2. What is the supervisor's and the HR representative's experience in managing and supporting SFEs?
3. How adequate are the employee and expatriate policies to support the needs in SFEs?
4. What support will the organization provide the expatriate and the family during the assignment to maintain family integrity and wellbeing?
5. What support will the organization provide for family crisis and emergencies?
6. What are the external compliance implications (e.g., tax and legal) if the organization chooses to support SFEs?
7. How is supporting SFEs consistent with prior decision in the organization?
8. How will the risks and issues involved in supporting SFEs be managed (reactively or proactively)? Who will be involved?

As a result of preparing to manage SFEs, we predict organizations will develop policies to be applied to SFEs. Adequate policies may need to address not only the expatriate's challenges but also those of the partner and/or children. Providing support to each family member may enhance persistence, performance, and productivity during the SFE.

When organizations understand deeply the motives of the expatriate and partner for engaging in an SFE, they can use the information to reduce the risk of a premature termination of the assignment and facilitate beneficial work outcomes. Different strategies can be applied in the negotiation phase and during the assignment. Paying attention to the aspiration, energization, and regulation of the expatriates and their partners, organizations may predict how sustainable the SFE and the entire assignment will be.

During the negotiation phase, organizations could strengthen the motives favorable for work outcomes and minimize those that may be detrimental. For example, organizations may design the international assignment rich in opportunities for personal development and meaningful relationships, both of which generate intrinsic motivation to accept the expatriation. Furthermore, organizations may adjust the offer letter to include elements that may mitigate, shorten, or even eliminate the reasons restricting the family from trailing with the expatriate. For example, when an immigration requirement originates the family's restriction to trail, organizations may provide support to expedite the process and reunite the family as soon as possible. When the organization imposes the family's restriction to trail, but the family is interested in trailing, the organization may provide airline tickets for the family to reunite with the expatriate and have an opportunity to experience the host country, even if only for short periods. When the organization does not invite the family to trail and learns that the family is not interested in trailing, the partners may welcome organizational support that aids them in managing the household to alleviate the extra burden of having to do it alone.

It is essential to highlight that the decision to engage in an SFE is an ongoing assessment. Expatriate families frequently revisit if their motives to engage in an SFE are still present, and when they change, they are ready to consider their options. Hence, it is crucial for organizations to provide more autonomous environments during the assignment so that expatriates continuously identify with the role, enjoy it, and/or find it important, strengthening their intrinsic motivation. While the assignment remains interesting, the expatriate will find reasons to continue the SFE. When the assignment becomes stale or the expatriate feels stuck, expatriate families may not find enough reasons to remain separated. Additionally, organizations may

proactively provide support for the expatriate and the family to cope with the long-term separation and the new family dynamics, such as coaching, counseling, frequent trips for family members to visit the expatriate, and/or family allowance. Last, organizations may benefit from monitoring the prevalence of the motives that created the need to engage in an SFE to prevent a premature termination of the assignment and aid in bringing the family together as a trailing family in the expatriation.

As discussed earlier, each SFE type has distinct motivations from expatriates and partners. With this information, organizations can design the management of the assignment to improve work outcomes. In SFE type I, expatriates are motivated mainly by personal development, financial wealth, and family benefit. Hence, organizations can focus on designing an attractive role and financial package for the expatriate, and supporting the family to frequently visit the host location until they can relocate to the host country. Additionally, organizations could focus on helping reduce or eliminate the partners' avoidance motives, such as offering help with legal work or support to find a job for family members in the host country. The focus should be on facilitating the work to expedite family relocation to join the expatriate as soon as possible, as they are interested in trailing.

In SFE type II, because the family will not join the assignment, either because they have an imposed restriction or because they are not interested in trailing, organizations shall focus on providing support to mitigate the challenges of being separated and maintain the assignment attractive for the expatriate. Supporting activities such as allowing for remote work, having an autonomous work environment, funding frequent travel of family members to visit each other, funding coaching or counseling of family members, and or funding home assistance for both the expatriate and the partner may help sustain the long-term separation of the family members, prevent emotional distress, and maintain healthy family relationships.

In SFE type III, organizations usually learn about the SFE intention once the trailing family has decided to return home. As mentioned earlier, families in SFE type III have motives they want to avoid from the host location, and many also have

reasons that make them desire to return home. In these cases, organizations shall learn about the situations the family members are trying to avoid from the host country and make an effort to alleviate or eliminate them to make it attractive for family members to visit the expatriate frequently. Organizations will benefit from using strategies similar to SFE type II to extend the stay of the expatriate enough to find a replacement or have a smooth transition to repatriate him/her. The focus shall be placed on making it attractive for families to return to the host country, even if it is only temporarily, and to extend the stay of the expatriate to complete the assignment.

Knowing that none of the expatriate families on the 22 SFEs terminated the assignment prematurely due to family concerns has significant implications for organizations. First, organizations do not need to consider the next best candidate for the expatriation only because the family of their best candidate cannot trail. Second, organizations may not need to force an early termination of the assignment when they learn that the family will return home, leaving the expatriate in the assignment. Third, organizations shall focus on keeping the expatriate motivated with the assignment, as when the termination of the expatriation is originated by the expatriate, the motives are usually in the work domain. As noted earlier, organizations can maintain the expatriate motivated in the expatriation by creating an autonomous work environment and keeping the assignment challenging professionally for the expatriate.

While studying the regulation of expatriates, we observed that expatriates could not be forced into accepting an expatriation. In all cases, the expatriates were driven by autonomous motives. This has important implications for organizations that offer an international assignment when the current job is going to disappear. In these cases, the organization needs to make the assignment interesting for the expatriate because an expatriate with controlled only motivation is more likely to decline the expatriation. Whereas an expatriate with co-occurring autonomous and controlled motivation is likely to accept the expatriation and endure even longer than those motivated by autonomous only motives.

Our work revealed that expatriates energized by co-occurring approach and avoidance motives and those regulated by co-occurring autonomous and controlled reasons are likely to persevere longer in the expatriation. This insight could prepare organizations during the conversations with the expatriate to discover the energization and regulation of the expatriate. Knowing the energization and regulation not only aids organizations in making predictions about the duration of the assignment but also what to include in the expatriate package and how to manage the SFE.

As more leaders and HR representatives are presented with the decision to support or not an SFE, our list of motives may give them a perspective of why other organizations chose to support SFEs. Organizations could use this information to assess which reasons apply to their cases and use them to design the expatriate package and the management of the SFE.

It is also vital for organizations to be aware that intentions do not always become a reality, this is particularly important for SFE type I. Families that ask to be supported on a split arrangement at the beginning of the assignment have the intention to join the expatriation later. Yet our data indicates that most families in SFE type I never joined the expatriation. This insight is relevant for organizations as the management of SFE may differ for SFE type I from SFE type II. Organizations must maintain a frequent dialog with the expatriate in SFE to monitor the changes of motives and circumstances in the expatriate and his or her family. This intelligence may inform the adjustment of the organizational support during the SFE to generate more beneficial outcomes for the organization and the expatriate family.

As organizations use the in-depth knowledge of this study to design the support strategies for SFEs, we hope to see a reversal of the recurrent perception that organizational support for expatriate families is mostly inadequate (Lazarova, McNulty, & Semeniuk, 2015).

6.4 Conclusion

It is our desire that the propositions made in this study provide the foundation for the much-needed theory in the motivation and management of expatriates in SFEs. We hope our managerial recommendations offer organizations and expatriate families some evidence-based proposals to maximize the beneficial outcomes associated with engaging or supporting SFEs, safeguard family relationships, and reduce the risk of expatriate failure. We see exciting opportunities for further research in SFEs and hope our research will attract interest from other scholars to continue the investigation of this phenomenon.

REFERENCES

Ali, A., Van der Zee, K. I., & Sanders, G. 2003. Determinants of intercultural adjustment among expatriate spouses. ***International Journal of Intercultural Relations***, 27(5): 563–580.

Anderson, E. A., & Spruill, J. W. 1993. The dual-career commuter family: A lifestyle on the move. ***Marriage and Family Review***, 19(1–2): 131–147.

Andreason, A. W. 2008. Expatriate adjustment of spouses and expatriate managers: An integrative research review. ***The International Journal of Management***, 25(2): 382–396.

Andresen, M., Bergdolt, F., Margenfeld, J., & Dickmann, M. 2014. Addressing international mobility confusion - developing definitions and differentiations for self-initiated and assigned expatriates as well as migrants. ***International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 25(16): 2295–2318.

Bader, B., Berg, N., & Holtbrügge, D. 2015. Expatriate performance in terrorism-endangered countries: The role of family and organizational support. ***International Business Review***, 24(5): 849–860.

Bartram, D. V. 1998. Foreign workers in Israel: History and theory. ***International Migration Review***, 32(2): 303–325.

Bhaskar-Shrinivas, P., Harrison, D. A., Shaffer, M. A., & Luk, D. M. 2005. Input-Based and time-based models of international adjustment: Meta-analytic evidence and theoretical extensions. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 48(2): 257–281.

Bingham, C., & Eisenhardt, K. M. 2011. Rational heuristics: The "simple rules" that strategists learn from process experience. ***Strategic Management Journal***, (32): 1437–1464.

Black, J. S., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. 1991. Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: An integration of multiple theoretical perspectives. ***Academy of Management Review***, 16(2): 291–317.

Bonache, J. 2006. The compensation of expatriates: A review and a future research agenda. In G. K. Stahl & I. Bjorkman (Eds.), ***Handbook of Research in International Human Resource Management***: 158–175. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Bonache, J., Brewster, C., & Suutari, V. 2001. Expatriation: A developing research agenda. ***Thunderbird International Business Review***, 43(1): 3–20.

Bonache, J., & Zarraga-Oberty, C. 2017. The traditional approach to compensating global mobility: Criticism and alternatives. ***The International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 28(1): 149–169.

Brett, J. M., & Stroh, L. K. 1995. Willingness to relocate internationally. ***Human Resource Management***, 34(3): 405–424.

Brookfield Global Relocation Services. 2010. ***Global relocation trends 2010 survey report***. Woodridge, IL.

Brookfield Global Relocation Services. 2016. ***2016 Global mobility trends survey***. Woodridge, IL.

Caligiuri, P. 2006. Developing global leaders. ***Human Resource Management Review***, 16(2): 219–228.

Caligiuri, P., & Bonache, J. 2016. Evolving and enduring challenges in global mobility. ***Journal of World Business***, 51(1): 127–141.

Caligiuri, P., & Tarique, I. 2006. International assignee selection and cross-cultural training and development. In G. Stahl & I. Bjorkman (Eds.), ***Handbook of Research in International Human Resource Management***: 302–322. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Cartus. 2016. ***Global mobility policy and practices 2016 survey report***. Wilmington, NC.

Cerasoli, C. P., Nicklin, J. M., & Ford, M. T. 2014. Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentives jointly predict performance: A 40-year meta-analysis. ***Psychological Bulletin***, 140(4): 980–1008.

Challiol, H., & Mignonac, K. 2005. Relocation decision-making and couple relationships: A quantitative and qualitative study of dual-earner couples. ***Journal of Organizational Behavior***, 26(3): 247–274.

Chan, D. 2008. Methodological issues in international human resource management research. In M. Harris (Ed.), ***Handbook of Research in International Human Resource Management***: 53–76. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cole, N., & Nesbeth, K. 2014. Why do international assignments fail? Expatriate families speak. ***International Studies of Management and Organization***, 44(3): 66–79.

Collings, D. G., Scullion, H., & Dowling, P. J. 2009. Global staffing : a review and thematic research agenda. ***The International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 20(6): 1253–1272.

Collings, D. G., Scullion, H., & Morley, M. J. 2007. Changing patterns of global staffing in the multinational enterprise: Challenges to the conventional expatriate assignment and emerging alternatives. ***Journal of World Business***, 42(2): 198–213.

Corbin Dwyer, S., & Buckle, J. L. 2009. The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. ***International Journal of Qualitative Methods***, 8(1): 54–63.

Crawford, W. S., Thompson, M. J., & Ashforth, B. E. 2019. Work-life events theory: Making sense of shock events in dual-earner couples. ***Academy of Management Review***, 44(1): 194–212.

Dang, T. Q. 2020. ***How does family matter? Investigating the experiences of expatriates and their families in international assignments***. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Technology Sidney. UTS Business School. Sidney, Australia.

De Burgh, H. T., White, C. J., Fear, N. T., & Iversen, A. C. 2011. The impact of deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan on partners and wives of military personnel. ***International Review of Psychiatry***, 23(2): 192–200.

Deci, E. L., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. M. 1999. A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. ***Psychological Bulletin***, 125(6): 627–668.

Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. 2017. Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science. ***Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior***, 4(1): 19–43.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. 2000. The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. ***Psychological Inquiry***, 11(4): 227–268.

Despotovic, W. V., Hutchings, K., & McPhail, R. 2022. Business, pleasure or both?: motivations and changing motivation of self-initiated expatriates. ***Journal of Management & Organization***, 1–26.

Dickmann, M. 2012. Why do they come to London?: Exploring the motivations of expatriates to work in the British capital. ***Journal of Management Development***, 31(8): 783–800.

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. ***International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 19(4): 731–751.

Dickmann, M., & Watson, A. H. 2017. "I might be shot at!" exploring the drivers to work in hostile environments using an intelligent careers perspective. ***Journal of Global Mobility***, 5(4): 348–373.

Dimitrova, M. 2018. Expatriation and the work-family interface. In K. Shockley, S. Winny, & R. Johnson (Eds.), ***The Cambridge Handbook of the Global Work-Family Interface***: 479–493. Cambridge University Press.

Doherty, N., Dickmann, M., & Mills, T. 2011. Exploring the motives of company-backed and self-initiated expatriates. ***International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 22(3): 595–611.

Doherty, N., Richardson, J., & Thorn, K. 2013. Self-initiated expatriation and self-initiated expatriates: Clarification of the research stream. ***Career Development International***, 18(1): 97–112.

Dupuis, M. J., Haines, V. Y., & Saba, T. 2008. Gender, family ties, and international mobility: Cultural distance matters. ***International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 19(2): 274–295.

Edström, A., & Galbraith, J. R. 1977. Transfer of managers as a coordination and control strategy in multinational organizations. ***Administrative Science Quarterly***, 22: 248–263.

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. 1986. Perceived organizational support. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 71(3): 500–507.

Eisenhardt, K. 1989. Building theories from case study research. ***Academy of Managemenl Review***, 14(4): 532–550.

Eisenhardt, K. 2020. Theorizing from cases: A commentary. In L. Eden, B. B. Nielsen, & A. Verbeke (Eds.), ***Research Methods in International Business***: 221–227. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. 2007. Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 50(1): 25–32.

Elliot, A. J. 2006. The hierarchical model of approach-avoidance motivation. ***Motivation and Emotion***, 30(2): 111–116.

Elliot, A. J. 2008. Approach and avoidance motivation. In A. Elliot (Ed.), ***Handbook of Approach and Avoidance Motivation***: 3–14. New York: Psychology Press.

Elliot, A. J., & Church, M. A. 1997. A Hierarchical Model of Approach and Avoidance Achievement Motivation. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 72(1): 218–232.

Fernet, C., Gagne, M. arylen., & Austin, S. 2010. When does quality of relationships with coworkers predict burnout over time? The moderating role of work motivation. ***Journal of Organizational Behavior***, 31: 1163–1180.

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.

Gibbert, M., Ruigrok, W., & Wicki, B. 2008. Research notes and commentaries. What passes as a rigorous case study? ***Strategic Management Journal***, (29): 1465–1474.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. 2006. ***The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research***. New Brunswick, USA: Aldine Transaction.

Goede, J., & Berg, N. 2018. The family in the center of international assignments: a systematic review and future research agenda. ***Management Review Quarterly***, 68(1): 77–102.

Goede, J., & Holtbrügge, D. 2021. Methodological issues in family expatriation studies and future directions. ***International Studies of Management & Organization***, 51(2): 95–115.

Grant, A. M. 2008. Does Intrinsic Motivation Fuel the Prosocial Fire? Motivational Synergy in Predicting Persistence, Performance, and Productivity. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 93(1): 48–58.

Harvey, M. 1997. Dual-career expatriates: Expectations, adjustment and satisfaction with international relocation. ***Journal of Internation Business Studies***, 28(3): 627–658.

Harvey, M. G., & Buckley, M. R. 1998. The process for developing an international program for dual-career couples. ***Human Resource Management Review***, 8(1): 99–123.

Haslberger, A., & Brewster, C. 2008. The expatriate family: An international perspective. ***Journal of Managerial Psychology***, 23(3): 324–346.

Hippler, T., Haslberger, A., & Brewster, C. 2017. Expatriate adjustment. In Y. McNulty & J. Selmer (Eds.), ***Research Handbook of Expatriates***: 83–105. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Huber, G., & Power, D. 1985. Retrospective reports of strategic-level managers: Guidelines for increasing their accuracy. ***Strategic Management Journal***, 6(2): 171–180.

Hutchings, K. 2022. Why we need to know more about diversity among the globally mobile: a systematic literature review of non-traditional expatriate research and future research agenda for minority expatriates. ***Journal of Global Mobility***, 10(1): 127–161.

Hutchings, K., & McNulty, Y. 2018. Split family expatriation: Perspectives from expatriates and their career spouses. In Y. McNulty (Ed.), ***Research Handbook of Global Families: Implications for International Business.*** Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Johnson, L. 2015. ***World mobility perspectives: 2015 global mobility trends***. Crown World Mobility.

Karunarathne, R. 2018. ***Staying close while living apart: The impact of expatriate and partner interplay on expatriate´s success***. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Georg-August-Universitat Gottingen, Gottingen, Germany.

Kierner, A. 2018. Expatriated dual-career partners: hope and disillusionment. ***Journal of Global Mobility***, 6(3–4): 244–257.

KPMG. 2018. ***Global Assignment Policies and Practices***. http://www.kpmg.com/Global/en/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/Documents/global-assignment-policies-practices-survey-v6.pdf.

Kraimer, M. L., & Wayne, S. J. 2004. An examination of perceived organizational support as a multidimensional construct in the context of an expatriate assignment. ***Journal of Management***, 30(2): 209–237.

Kraimer, M. L., Wayne, S., & Jaworski, R. 2001. Sources of support and expatriate performance: The mediating role of expatriate adjustment. ***Personnel Psychology***, (54): 71–99.

Lämsä, A. M., Heikkinen, S., Smith, M., & Tornikoski, C. 2017. The expatriate's family as a stakeholder of the firm: a responsibility viewpoint. ***International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 28(20): 2916–2935.

Lazarova, M., McNulty, Y., & Semeniuk, M. 2015. Expatriate family narratives on international mobility: Key characteristics of the successful moveable family. In L. Makela & V. Suutari (Eds.), ***Work and Family Interface in the International Career Context***: 29–52. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Lazarova, M., Westman, M., & Shaffer, M. 2010. Elucidating the positive side of the work-family interface on international assignments: A model of expatriate work and family performance. ***Academy of Managemenl Review***, 35(1): 93–117.

Leonard-Barton, D. 1990. A dual methodology for case studies: Synergistic use of a longitudinal single site with replicated multiple sites. ***Organization Science***, 1(3): 248–266.

Mäkelä, L., Känsälä, M., & Suutari, V. 2011. The roles of expatriates' spouses among dual career couples. ***Cross Cultural Management***, 18(2): 185–197.

Mason, M. 2010. Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. ***Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung***, 11(3).

McNulty, Y. 2012. 'Being dumped in to sink or swim': an empirical study of organizational support for the trailing spouse. ***Human Resource Development International***, 15(4): 417–434.

McNulty, Y. 2014. Women as female breadwinners in non-traditional expatriate families: Status-reversal marriages, single parents, split families, and lesbian partnerships. In K. Hutchings & M. Lazarova (Eds.), ***Research Handbook on Women in International Management***: 332–366. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

McNulty, Y. 2015a. Acculturating non-traditional expatriates: A case study of single parent, overseas adoption, split family, and lesbian assignees. ***International Journal of Intercultural Relations***, 49: 278–293.

McNulty, Y. 2015b. Till stress do us part: the causes and consequences of expatriate divorce. ***Journal of Global Mobility***, 3(2): 106–136.

McNulty, Y., & Hutchings, K. 2016. Looking for global talent in all the right places: A critical literature review of non-traditional expatriates. ***The International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 27(7): 699–728.

McNulty, Y., & Selmer, J. 2017. Introduction: Overview of early expatriate studies - 1952 to 1979. In Y. McNulty & Selmer (Eds.), ***Research Handbook of Expatriates***: 3–20. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

McPhail, R., & McNulty, Y. 2015. "Oh, the places you won't go as an LGBT expat!" A study of HRM's duty of care to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender expatriates in dangerous locations. ***European Journal of International Management***, 9(6): 737–765.

McPhail, R., McNulty, Y., & Hutchings, K. 2016. Lesbian and gay expatriation: opportunities, barriers and challenges for global mobility. ***International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 27(3): 382–406.

Meece, J. L., Glienke, B. B., & Burg, S. 2006. Gender and motivation. ***Journal of School Psychology***, 44(5): 351–373.

Mercer. 2012. ***Worldwide survey of international assignment policies and practices***. New York.

Miles, M., Huberman, M., & Saldaña, J. 2014. ***Qualitative data analysis. A methods sourcebook*** (3rd Editio). Thousand Oaks, USA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Moran, C. M., Diefendorff, J. M., Kim, T. Y., & Liu, Z. Q. 2012. A profile approach to self-determination theory motivations at work. ***Journal of Vocational Behavior***, 81(3): 354–363.

Moyce, S. C., & Schenker, M. 2018. Migrant Workers and Their Occupational Health and Safety. ***Annual Review of Public Health***, 39: 351–365.

Mutter, J. 2017a. ***The impact of contemporary global mobility on the family who stays behind***. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Mutter, J. 2017b. The global mobility decisions of professional sailors' spouses. ***Journal of Global Mobility***, 5(2): 203–219.

Mutter, J., & Thorn, K. 2019a. The stay-behind family: living with contemporary global mobility. ***The International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 0(0): 1–25.

Mutter, J., & Thorn, K. 2019b. Global mobility and the career of the stay-at-home partner. ***Journal of Global Mobility***, 7(1): 88–102.

Nielsen, B. B., Welch, C., Chidlow, A., Miller, S. R., Aguzzoli, R., et al. 2020. Fifty years of methodological trends in JIBS: Why future IB research needs more triangulation. ***Journal of International Business Studies***, 51(9): 1478–1499.

Nikitin, J., & Freund, A. M. 2008. The role of social approach and avoidance motives for subjective well-being and the successful transition to adulthood. ***Applied Psychology: An International Review***, (57): 90–111.

Nikitin, J., & Freund, A. M. 2010. When wanting and fearing go together: The effect of co-occurring social approach and avoidance motivation on behavior, affect, and cognition. ***European Journal of Social Psychology***, (40): 783–804.

Perugini, M., & Bagozzi, R. P. 2001. The role of desires and anticipated emotions in goal-directed behaviours: Broadening and deepening the theory of planned behaviour. ***British Journal of Social Psychology***, 40(1): 79–98.

Powell, G. N., & Greenhaus, J. H. 2010. Sex, gender, and decisions at the family → work interface. ***Journal of Management***, 36(4): 1011–1039.

Powell, G. N., & Greenhaus, J. H. 2012. When family considerations influence work decisions: Decision-making processes. ***Journal of Vocational Behavior***, 81(3): 322–329.

Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. 2002. Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 87(4): 698–714.

Richardson, J., & Mallon, M. 2005. Career interrupted? The case of the self-directed expatriate. ***Journal of World Business***, 40(4): 409–420.

Richardson, J., & McKenna, S. 2003. International experience and academic careers: What do academics have to say? ***Personnel Review***, 32(6): 774–795.

Rodriguez, A. J., & Margolin, G. 2015. Military service absences and family members' mental health: A timeline followback assessment. ***Journal of Family Psychology***, 29(4): 642–648.

Rothausen, T. J. 1999. "Family" in organizational research: A review and comparison of definitions and measures. ***Journal of Organizational Behavior***, 20(6): 817–836.

Saldaña, J. 2013. ***The coding manual for qualitative researchers*** (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Santa Fe Relocation. 2021. ***Global Mobility Survey 2020/2021***.

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., et al. 2018. Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. ***Quality and Quantity***, 52(4): 1893–1907.

Selmer, J., & Lauring, J. 2010. Self-initiated academic expatriates: Inherent demographics and reasons to expatriate. ***European Management Review***, 7(3): 169–179.

Selmer, J., & McNulty, Y. 2017. Publishing research on expatriates: advice for PhD candidates and early career researchers. In Y. McNulty & J. Selmer (Eds.), ***Research Handbook of Expatriates***: 490–528. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Shaffer, M. A., Harrison, D. A., Gilley, K. M., & Luk, D. M. 2001. Struggling for balance amid turbulence on international assignments: Work-family conflict, support and commitment. ***Journal of Management***, (27): 99–121.

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.

Shaffer, M. A., Sebastian Reiche, B., Dimitrova, M., Lazarova, M., Chen, S., et al. 2016. Work- and family-role adjustment of different types of global

professionals: Scale development and validation. ***Journal of International Business Studies***, 47(2): 113–139.

Sheldon, K. M., Ryan, R. M., Deci, E. L., & Kasser, T. 2004. The Independent Effects of Goal Contents and Motives on Well-Being: It's Both What You Pursue and Why You Pursue It. ***Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin***, 30(4): 475–486.

Shortland, S., & Cummins, S. 2007. Work-life balance: Expatriates reflect the international dimension. ***Global Business and Organizational Excellence***, 26(6): 28–42.

Sommet, N., Elliot, A. J., & Sheldon, K. M. 2021. Achievement goal complexes: Integrating the "what" and the "why" of achievement motivation. In O. P. John & R. Robins (Eds.), ***Handbook of Personality. Theory and Research*** (4th ed.): 104–121. New York: The Guilford Press.

Starr, T. L., & Currie, G. 2009. "Out of sight but still in the picture": Short-term international assignments and the influential role of family. ***International Journal of Human Resource Management***, 20(6): 1421–1438.

Sterle, M. F., Fontaine, J. R. J., De Mol, J., & Verhofstadt, L. L. 2018. Expatriate family adjustment: An overview of empirical evidence on challenges and resources. ***Frontiers in Psychology***, 9: 1–13.

Stoermer, S., Davies, S., Bahrisch, O., & Portniagin, F. 2017. For sensation's sake: Differences in female and male expatriates' relocation willingness to dangerous countries based on sensation seeking. ***Journal of Global Mobility: The Home of Expatriate Management Research***, 5(4): 374–390.

Stroh, L., Black, J. S., Mendenhall, M. E., & Gregersen, H. 2005. ***International assignments: An integration of strategy, research, and practice***. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Suutari, V., & Brewster, C. 2000. Making their own way: International experience through self-initiated foreign assignments. ***Journal of World Business***, 35(4): 417–436.

Takeuchi, R. 2010. A critical review of expatriate adjustment research through a multiple stakeholder view: Progress, emerging trends, and prospects. ***Journal of Management***, 36(4): 1040–1064.

Tharenou, P. 2008. Disruptive decisions to leave home: Gender and family differences in expatriation choices. ***Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes***, 105(2): 183–200.

Thomas, G. 2011. A typology for the case study in social science following a review of definition, discourse, and structure. ***Qualitative Inquiry***, 17(6): 511–521.

Tornikoski, C., Suutari, V., & Festing, M. 2015. Compensation package of international assignees. In D. Collings, G. Wood, & P. Caligiuri (Eds.), ***The Routledge companion to international human resource management***: 289–307. New York: Routledge.

Towers Watson, & Worldwide ERC. 2012. ***A global talent mobility study. Regional differences in policy and practice***.

Tsang, E. W. K. 2014. Generalizing from research findings: The merits of case studies. ***International Journal of Management Reviews***, 16(4): 369–383.

Van der Velde, M., Jansen, P., Bal, M., & Van Erp, K. 2016. Dual-earner couples´willingness to relocate abroad: The reciprocal influence of both partners´career role salience and partner role salience. ***European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology***, 26(2): 195–207.

Van Der Zee, K. I., Ali, A. J., & Haaksma, I. 2007. Determinants of effective coping with cultural transition among expatriate children and adolescents. ***Anxiety, Stress and Coping***, 20(1): 25–45.

Weeks, K., Weeks, M., & Willis-Muller, K. 2010. The adjustment of expatriate teenagers. ***Personnel Review***, 39(1): 24–43.

Weisheit, J. 2018. Should I stay or should I go? A systematic literature review about the conceptualization and measurement of international relocation mobility readiness. ***Journal of Global Mobility***, 6(2): 129–157.

Welch, C., & Piekkari, R. 2017. How should we (not) judge the 'quality' of qualitative research? A re-assessment of current evaluative criteria in International Business. ***Journal of World Business***, 52(5): 714–725.

Welch, C., Piekkari, R., Plakoyiannaki, E., & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, E. 2011. Theorising from case studies: Towards a pluralist future for international business research. ***Journal of International Business Studies***, 42(5): 740–762.

Wurtz, O., & Suutari, V. 2015. Work-life balance and coping of international assignees. In D. G. Collings, G. Wood, & P. Caligiuri (Eds.), ***The Routledge Companion to International Human Resource Management***: 363–377. New York: Routledge.

Yin, R. K. 2009. Case Study Research. Design and Methods. ***Applied Social Research Methods Seiries*** (4th ed.), vol. 5. London: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Zhang, X. A., Liao, H., Li, N., & Colbert, A. E. 2020. Playing IT safe for my family: Exploring the dual effects of family motivation on employee productivity and creativity. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 63(6): 1923–1950.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Information sheet and consent form – English version

Before you decide to take part in this study it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. A member of the team can be contacted if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

The purpose of this study is to have a deep understanding of the phenomenon of long-term business expatriations with split family arrangements that is, when due to work, one of the partners in a family lives in a different country than the rest of the family for a year or more.

Specifically, we want to identify what are the characteristics of the families engaging in this type of arrangement, what are the reasons to engage in this type of arrangement, and what was the decision-making process and the experiences lived. The aim is to reveal patterns that can help families and organization's decision makers be better informed when facing this event.

The study is being conducted by Rocio Alcazar, Dr. Jaime Bonache and Dr. Daniela Noethen professors at Universitat Ramon Llull, ESADE Business School. Interviews are conducted through video conferencing. This project has received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of ESADE (CUHSR Approval number 025/2019).

You are being selected to participate in the study because you are:

- Married or in a committed relationship and your family (partner and children) is living in a different country than that where you work and live temporarily. You visit your family as often as you can. The duration of the separation has been for at least one year.
- You are the partner, partner or children of the expatriate identified above.

- You are the direct supervisor or the HR professional helping the expatriate identified above.
- You are a direct report of the expatriate identified above.

You must be 18 years or older to participate of this study. There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life. Participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw from it at any time without any loss or penalty. If you are interested, we can provide you with highlights of the findings once the study is completed. Please provide us with your email.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be interviewed regarding your experiences with long-term expatriations when the expatriate relocated unaccompanied by his/her family, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, and provide written materials that might assist in the study. Interviews will last approximately 60 minutes of your time. Audio recording will be used for interviews. Recordings will be identified only by a code and will not be used or made available for any purposes other than the research project. These recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study.

All information collected will be anonymized. Only generic data will used e.g., male, married, working in a medium size manufacturing company, without any means of identifying the individuals involved. Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by ensuring all data is kept secure, and only the primary investigator and the research team will have access to this data. This means that nobody else will have access to your data at any point during or after the study.

Anonymized results will be presented at conferences and written up in journals. Results are normally presented in terms of groups of individuals. If any individual data are presented, the data will be totally anonymous.

If you have additional questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact the primary investigator, Rocio Alcazar, via email at rocio.alcazar@esade.edu If you have questions about your rights and welfare as a volunteer in the research study, please contact the Research Ethics Committee of ESADE at research@esade.edu

By proceeding, you are agreeing to take part in this research study.

- I confirm that I have read and understand all the information above.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and had them answered.
- I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure I cannot be identified.
- I agree that data gathered in this study may be stored anonymously and securely and may be used for future research.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

PARTICIPANTS NAME AND SIGNATURE DATE

Appendix B. Expatriate interview guide – English version

(S1) Good morning (afternoon). My name is Rocio Alcazar, I am a doctoral student and a research assistant at ESADE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. Thank you for being willing to share your experience and taking part in this interview. Today's interview is part of a research study to understand the phenomenon when in a family one of the partners works temporarily in a different country from that which the rest of the direct family lives (partner, children). Your participation in this study is helping have a better understanding of this phenomenon, such that families and organizations can make more informed decisions and be better prepared to make of this a valuable experience. Today's interview will last approximately 60 minutes. I will proceed to read the information sheet and consent form that describes how we will use the information you will share with me today and what are your options. If you have any questions, please ask. I will be more than happy to answer them. Once you agree, please state your verbal consent. I can provide you a copy of the information sheet for your records.

(Provide info sheet and consent form. Get their verbal consent.)

Our aim is to interview different stakeholders involved from the family and the organization to have multiple perspectives. Today's interview is made up of open questions for you to share as much detail as you want and closed questions where a few words will be enough.

Let's get started. Do I have your permission to start recording our interview?

(S2) First, I will ask you some questions about your family's characteristics and about yourself.

- How long have you been living with your current partner?
- How many children do you have? What are their ages?
- What does your partner do for a living?
- What country and city are your partner and children currently living? How long have they lived in this location?
- What does this country represent for your family?

- How do you describe yourself as a professional?
- Where are you from?

(S3) Now let me switch to work.

- How many years have you been working?
- What does work mean to you at this stage in your life?
- What is the job you are currently performing?
- What is the agreed duration for this expatriation?
- What is the host country/location of this expatriation?
- How many months are you into your expatriation?
- How many times per year are you meeting with your members of your direct family?
- What support are you receiving from your organization to make this arrangement work?
- What other international work have you done? (ask for international business travel, commuter, short-term assignment, long-term assignment)

(S4) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding your decision to accept this expatriation.

- What was the process of considering this expatriation? (Who initiated the idea, who got involved, how the decision was made)
- How did you realize you had the option to relocate without your family?
- What were the reasons you chose this arrangement instead of relocating with all your family or declining the expatriation?
- Which previous personal or family experiences influenced your decision? How did they influence your decision?
- Did you know of another family that lived or was living a long-term expatriation and the expatriate relocated without his/her family? How did this knowledge influence your decision?
- What were your expectations of this arrangement?

(S5) Now allow me to ask you some questions regarding your experience while you lived separate from your family

- What benefits are you experiencing from doing a long-term expatriation without having your family with you (personal, relationship w loved ones, at work)?
- What disadvantages are you experiencing from this arrangement?
- What have been the greatest challenges about this arrangement? And how are you dealing with them?
- What have been the easiest things about this arrangement?
- What has surprised you the most about this arrangement?
- How has this arrangement impacted your relationship w your partner? Your relationship w your children? at work?
- How did your expectations compare to reality?
- What experiences personal or professional prepared you for managing your life without your family regularly?

(S6) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding your overall assessment of this experience

- After being XX months in this assignment and still having XX month to finish, what is your overall assessment of your experience in this arrangement?
- Knowing what you know now about what it means and what it takes to do a long-term expatriation without being accompanied by your family, if you could go back to the time when you were making the decision about accepting or not the international assignment. Would you make the same decision?
- What would you change or do differently?

(S7) Thank you very much for your candidness and for sharing your experience. This concludes today's interview. As the study progress, I will keep you informed and will invite you to provide additional feedback. As discussed earlier, we would like to include the perspective of your partner, your supervisor, and your HR manager. We will adapt and reduce the questions to capture their unique view. May we initiate the contact? Can you please let them know that in the following days I will be contacting them to ask for their participation and schedule the interview? Thank you.

Appendix C. Partner interview guide – English version

(S1) Good morning (afternoon). My name is Rocio Alcazar and I am a doctoral student and a research assistant at ESADE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. Thank you for being willing to share your experience and taking part in this interview. Today's interview is part of a research study to understand the phenomenon when in a family one of the partners works temporarily in a different country from that which the rest of the direct family lives (partner, children). Your participation in this study is helping have a better understanding of this phenomenon, such that families and organizations can make more informed decisions and be better prepared to make of this a valuable experience. Today's interview will last approximately 60 minutes. I will proceed to read the information sheet and consent form that describes how we will use the information you will share with me today and what are your options. If you have any questions, please ask. I will be more than happy to answer them. Once you agree, please state your verbal consent. I can provide you a copy of the information sheet for your records.

(Provide info sheet and consent form. Get their verbal consent.)

Our aim is to interview different stakeholders involved from the family and the organization to have multiple perspectives. Today's interview is made up of open questions for you to share as much detail as you want and closed questions where a few words will be enough.

Let's get started. Do I have your permission to start recording our interview?

(S2) First, I will ask you some questions about your family's characteristics and about yourself.

- How long have you been living with your current partner?
- How many children do you have? What is the grade of education for each child?
- What location are you currently living? Your children? How long have you lived in this location?
- What does this country represent for you and your family?
- Where are you from?
- What do you do for a living?

(S3) If the partner works, ask: Now let me switch to work and the expatriation

- What does work mean to you at this stage in your life?
- How many years have you been working?
- What is the job you are currently performing?
- What is the agreed duration for this expatriation?
- What is the host country/location of this expatriation?
- How many months are you into your expatriation?
- Regarding the living arrangements, how often do you and your partner get to visit each other? How many days are you together vs separate?
- What support are you and your children receiving from your partner's organization to make this arrangement work?

(S4) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding the decision to accept this arrangement.

- What was the process of considering this arrangement? (who initiated the idea, who got involved, how the decision was made)
- How did you realize you and your children had the option to stay behind and not relocate with your partner?
- What were the reasons you supported the decision to choose this arrangement instead of relocating all together or declining the expatriation?
- Which previous personal or family experiences influenced your decision? How did they influence your decision?
- Did you know of another family that lived or was living a long-term expatriation and the expatriate relocated without his/her family? How did this knowledge influence your decision?
- What were your expectations of this arrangement?

(S5) Now I want to ask you some questions regarding your experience while your partner is on assignment. This is the core of the study, so please provide as much detail as you want.

- What benefits are you experiencing from having stayed behind and not relocating with your partner (personal, relationship w loved ones, at work)?

- What disadvantages are you experiencing from this arrangement?
- What have been the greatest challenges about this arrangement?
- What have been the easiest things about this arrangement?
- What has surprised you the most about this arrangement?
- How has this arrangement impacted your relationship w your partner? Your relationship w your children? at work?
- How did your expectations compare to reality?
- What experiences personal or professional prepared you for managing your life without your partner regularly?

(S6) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding your overall assessment of this experience

- After being XX months in this arrangement and still having XX month to go, what is your overall assessment of your experience in this arrangement?
- Knowing what you know now about what it means and what it takes to stay behind when your partner is doing a long-term expatriation, if you could go back in time to the moment of the decision to go all together, to stay behind or to decline the expatriation: Would you make the same decision as the one you did?
- What would you change or do differently?

(S7) Thank you very much for your candidness and for sharing your experience. This concludes today's interview. As the study progress, I will keep you informed and will invite you to provide additional feedback. Thank you.

Appendix D. Children interview guide – English version

(S1) Hello. My name is Rocio Alcazar, I am a doctoral student and a research assistant at ESADE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. Thank you for being willing to share your experience and taking part in this interview. Today's interview is part of a research study to understand when a parent accepts a job in a different country and the family does not relocate. Your participation in this study is helping have a better understanding of this phenomenon, such that families and organizations can make more informed decisions and be better prepared to make of this a valuable experience. Today's interview will last approximately 30 minutes. Please read this information sheet and consent form that describes how we will use the information you will share with me today and what are your options. If you have any questions, please ask. I will be more than happy to answer them. Once you agree, please state your verbal consent. I can provide you a copy of the information sheet for your records.

(Provide info sheet and consent form. Get their verbal consent.)

Our aim is to interview different stakeholders involved from the family and the organization to have multiple perspectives. Today's interview is made up of open questions for you to share as much detail as you want and closed questions where a few words will be enough.

Let's get started. Do I have your permission to start recording our interview?

(S2) First, I will ask you some questions about your family's characteristics and about yourself.

- How old are you? How old were you when your father/mother started working in X country?
- What grade are you in school?
- What does this country represent for you and your family?
- Where are you from?
- How often are you seeing your father/mother?

(S3) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding the decision made to accept this job.

- How did you learn your Dad/Mom was going to be working in a different country?
- How were you involved in the decision?
- What was your reaction to this decision?
- Which previous personal or family experiences influenced your reaction? How did they influence your reaction?
- Did you know of another family that lived or is living a similar situation? How did this knowledge influence your reaction?
- What were your expectations of this arrangement?

(S4) Now I want to ask you some questions regarding your experience while your Dad/Mom is working in X country and you are in Y country.

- What benefits are you experiencing from not relocating to Y country (personal, relationship w loved ones, at school)?
- What disadvantages are you experiencing from this arrangement (personal, relationship w loved ones, at School)?
- What have been the greatest challenges about this arrangement (personal, relationship w loved ones, at school)? And how are you dealing with them?
- What have been the easiest things about this arrangement (personal, relationship w loved ones, at school)?
- What has surprised you the most about this arrangement (personal, relationship w loved ones, at school)?
- How has this arrangement impacted your relationship w your parents/siblings? at school?
- How did your expectations compare to reality?
- What experiences prepared you for managing your life without your Dad/Mom regularly?

(S5) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding your overall assessment of this experience

- After being XX months in this arrangement and still having XX month to go, what is your overall assessment of your experience in this arrangement?
- Knowing what you know now about what it means and what it takes to not having your Dad/Mom regularly, if you could go back in time to the moment of the decision would you support the decision that your Dad/Mom will work in a different country than the one you live?
- What would you change or do differently?

(S6) Thank you very much for your candidness and for sharing your experience. This concludes today's interview. As the study progress, I will keep you informed and will invite you to provide additional feedback. Thank you.

Appendix E. Supervisor interview guide – English version

(S1) Good morning (afternoon). My name is Rocio Alcazar, I am a doctoral student and a research assistant at ESADE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. Thank you for being willing to share your experience and taking part in this interview. XX introduced us. It is my understanding that you are his/her direct supervisor. Today's interview is part of a research study to understand long-term expatriations when the expatriate relocates without his/her family. Your participation in this study is helping have a better understanding this phenomenon, such that families and organizations can make more informed decisions and be better prepared to make of this a valuable experience. Today's interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Please read this information sheet and consent form that describes how we will use the information you will share with me today and what are your options. If you have any questions, please ask. I will be more than happy to answer them. Once you agree, please state your verbal consent. I can provide you a copy of the information sheet for your records.

(Provide info sheet and consent form. Get their verbal consent.)

Our aim is to interview different stakeholders involved from the family and the organization to have multiple perspectives. Today's interview is made up of open questions for you to share as much detail as you want and closed questions where a few words will be enough.

Let's get started. Do I have your permission to start recording our interview?

(S2) First, I will ask you some questions about your role in the organization.

- What is your role in the organization?
- How many years have you worked?
- How does X (name of the expat) fit in your organization?
- Have you supervised other expats? How many?

Your organization has long-term expatriations, that is employees that relocate temporarily to a different country for work with a duration of at least one year. Recent industry reports describe that some married/partnered expatriates are

choosing to go on long-term expatriations without their family for the entire duration of the assignment. Currently [name of expatriate] is in one of them.

- How many expatriates to your knowledge are in this type of arrangement (long-term expatriations where expatriate is w/o their family) in your organization?

(S3) Now let me ask you some questions about the expatriation of [name of expat]

- What is the agreed duration of this expatriation?
- What type of benefits does the expatriate package includes to support the expatriate in this particular arrangement?
- What type of benefits does the expatriate package includes to support the family that stayed behind?

(S4) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding the design and the negotiation of split family expatriation

- What was the process of designing and negotiating this expatriation? (who initiated the idea, who got involved, who decides what package is offered, how the decision was made)
- How did the option to relocate without the family come up?
- What were the reasons the organization chose to support this arrangement instead of relocating the entire family, or choosing the next best candidate for the expatriation?
- Which previous experiences influenced the decision of the organization? How did they influence the decision?
- Did you personally know of another family that lived or was living a long-term expatriation and the expatriate relocated without his/her family? How did this knowledge influence your decision?
- What were the expectations you as the supervisor of [name of expat] had of this arrangement?

(S5) Now I want to ask you some questions regarding your experience while [name of expat] was with the split family arrangement

- What benefits is the organization experiencing from this arrangement (at the expatriate level, team, org level)?

- What disadvantages is the organization experiencing from this arrangement?
- What have been the greatest challenges about this arrangement? How is the organization dealing with them?
- What have been the easiest things about this arrangement?
- What has surprised you the most about this arrangement?
- How did your expectations compare to reality?
- What prior experiences prepared you for managing this type of expatriation arrangement?

(S6) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding your overall assessment of this experience

- After [name of expat] being XX months in this assignment and still having XX month to finish, what is the overall assessment of the organization's experience in this arrangement?
- Knowing what you know now about what it means and what it takes to support a long-term expatriate who did not relocate with his/her family if you could go back to the time when the organization was making the decision about staffing this expatriation. Would you make the same decision of staffing it with an expatriate that will leave his/her family behind?
- What would you change or do differently?

(S7) Thank you very much for your candidness and for sharing your experience. This concludes today's interview. As the study progress, I will keep you informed and will invite you to provide additional feedback. Thank you.

Appendix F. HR representative interview guide – English version

(S1) Good morning (afternoon). My name is Rocio Alcazar, I am a doctoral student and a research assistant at ESADE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. Thank you for being willing to share your experience and taking part in this interview. It is my understanding that you work in HR and are familiar with [name of expat] expatriation. Today's interview is part of a research study to understand long-term business expatriations when the expatriate relocates without his/her family. Your participation in this study is helping have a better understanding of what it means and how do key stakeholders experience this phenomenon, such that families and organizations can make more informed decisions and be better prepared to make of this a valuable experience. Today's interview will last 60 minutes. Please read this information sheet and consent form that describes how we will use the information you will share with me today and what are your options. If you have any questions, please ask. I will be more than happy to answer them. Once you agree, please state your verbal consent. I can provide you a copy of the information sheet for your records.

(Provide info sheet and consent form. Get their verbal consent.)

Our aim is to interview different stakeholders involved from the family and the organization to have multiple perspectives. Today's interview is made up of open questions for you to share as much detail as you want and closed questions where a few words will be enough.

Let's get started. Do I have your permission to start recording our interview?

(S2) First, I will ask you some questions about the organization.

- What is your role in the organization?
- How many years have you worked in your professional life?
- How many expatriates have you managed?
- What is the main activity of the organization?
- How many employees does this organization have worldwide?

- How many long-term expatriates (employees that have temporarily relocated to a different country for work with a duration of at least one year) does this organization currently have worldwide?
- What percentage of this number are married or have a partner?

This means that your organization has approximately XX expatriates that are married or have a partner and are currently on long-term expatriations. Recent industry reports describe that some married/partnered expatriates are choosing to go on long-term expatriations without their family for the entire duration of the assignment.

- How many expatriates to your knowledge are in this type of arrangement (long-term expatriations where expatriate is w/o their family) in your organization?

(S3) Now let me ask you some questions about the expatriation of [name of expat]

- What is the agreed duration and location of this expatriation?
- What type of benefits does the expatriate package include to support the expatriate in this particular arrangement?
- What type of benefits does the expatriate package include to support the partner and children that did not relocate?

(S4) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding the design and the negotiation of this split family expatriation.

- What was the process of designing and negotiating this expatriation? (who initiated the idea, who got involved, who decides what package is offered, how the decision was made)
- How did the option to relocate the expatriate without the immediate family come up?
- What were the reasons the organization chose to support this arrangement instead of relocating the entire family, or choosing the next best candidate for the expatriation?
- Which previous experiences influenced the decision of the organization? How did they influence the decision?

- Did you personally know of another family that lived or was living a long-term expatriation and the expatriate relocated without his/her family? How did this knowledge influence the decision?
- What were the expectations you as HR representative had of this arrangement?

(S5) Now I want to ask you some questions regarding the experience the organization is having while [name of expat] was with the split family arrangement

- What benefits is the organization experiencing from this arrangement (at the expatriate level, team, org level)?
- What disadvantages is the organization experiencing from this arrangement?
- What have been the greatest challenges about this arrangement? How is the organization dealing with them?
- What have been the easiest things about this arrangement?
- What has surprised you the most about this arrangement?
- How did your expectations compare to reality?
- What prior experiences prepared you for managing this type of expatriation arrangement?

(S6) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding your overall assessment of this experience

- After [name of expat] being XX months in this assignment and still having XX month to finish, what is the overall assessment of the organization's experience in this arrangement?
- Knowing what you know now about what it means and what it takes to support a long-term expatriate who did not relocate with his/her family if you could go back to the time when the organization was making the decision about staffing this expatriation. Would you make the same decision of staffing it with an expatriate that will leave his/her family behind?
- What would you change or do differently?

(S7) Thank you very much for your candidness and for sharing your experience. This concludes today's interview. As the study progress, I will keep you informed and will invite you to provide additional feedback. Thank you.

Appendix G. Direct report interview guide – English version

(S1) Good morning (afternoon). My name is Rocio Alcazar, I am a doctoral student and a research assistant at ESADE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. Thank you for being willing to share your experience and taking part in this interview. XX introduced us. It is my understanding that XX is your direct supervisor. Today's interview is part of a research study to understand long-term business expatriations when the expatriate relocates without his/her family. Your participation in this study is helping have a better understanding of this phenomenon, such that families and organizations can make more informed decisions and be better prepared to make of this a valuable experience. Today's interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Please read this information sheet and consent form that describes how we will use the information you will share with me today and what are your options. If you have any questions, please ask. I will be more than happy to answer them. Once you agree, please state your verbal consent. I can provide you a copy of the information sheet for your records.

(Provide info sheet and consent form. Get their verbal consent.)

Our aim is to interview different stakeholders involved from the family and the organization to have multiple perspectives. Today's interview is made up of open questions for you to share as much detail as you want and closed questions where a few words will be enough.

Let's get started. Do I have your permission to start recording our interview?

(S2) First, I will ask you some questions about your role in the organization.

- What is your role in the organization?
- How many years have you worked?
- What is your relationship with X (name of the expatriate)
- How many years was X your supervisor?
- Have you had other supervisors that were expatriates during the time you worked for them? How many? For how long?

- Have you had other supervisors that were expatriates with split family arrangement while you were working for them?
- Did you personally know of another family that live or was living a long-term expatriation and the expatriate relocated without his/her family? How did this knowledge influence your relationship with your supervisor?
- What were your expectations of how this arrangement could impact your relationship with your supervisor?

(S3) Now I want to ask you some questions regarding the experience the organization is having while [name of expat] was with the split family arrangement

- What benefits is the organization experiencing from this arrangement (at the expatriate level, team, org level)?
- What disadvantages is the organization experiencing from this arrangement?
- What have been the greatest challenges about this arrangement? How is the organization dealing with them?
- What have been the easiest things about this arrangement?
- What has surprised you the most about this arrangement?
- How did your expectations compare to reality?
- What prior experiences prepared you for managing this type of expatriation arrangement?

(S4) Now, let me ask you some questions regarding your overall assessment of this experience

- What is your overall assessment of the split family arrangement?
- Knowing what you know now about what it means and what it takes to support a long-term expatriate who did not relocate with his/her family, would you support split family expatriations?
- What would you change or do differently?

(S5) Thank you very much for your candidness and for sharing your experience. This concludes today's interview. As the study progress, I will keep you informed and will invite you to provide additional feedback. Thanks.

Appendix H. Expatriate survey – English version

The aim of this survey is to identify all the different motives that influenced you to choose an arrangement where your partner and children would live separated from you for long periods of time due to work. Please put yourself at the time when you were making the decision.

For each of the following, please rate Very Important (VI), Important (I), Somewhat Important (SI), Not important (NI) if this motive WAS PRESENT in your decision or Not Applicable (NA) if this motive was NOT PRESENT while making your decision.

My motivation to do a split family arrangement was that…

- I did not want to change or interrupt our children's education
- I did not want to interrupt any of the careers in our dual-career household.
- I did not want to change or was not available in host country the special education/ special care for our children.
- We cared for our elder parent(s) and did not want to make changes.
- I perceived the host country was unsafe for my partner and/or children
- I perceived the host country had a lower quality of life compared to our current one
- I perceived the host country lacked family support
- I wanted to maintain the relationships with our extended family living in our home country
- I wanted to maintain relationships with our friends in our home country
- I wanted to preserve the living conditions of our home country offered for my partner and children (housing and neighborhood)
- The family income of the expatriation was significantly more attractive financially than other options available
- Expenses in the family were high or growing and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity of the higher income
- I perceived the organizational support during the expatriation was going to be appropriate to help us have a successful experience.

- I perceived our family could manage the difficulties of this arrangement and have an overall beneficial experience
- I perceived there were favorable conditions to maintain an adequate long-distance relationship with my partner and children
- I perceived I was capable of managing being alone and have a successful assignment
- I perceived my partner had the capacity to manage the household without me
- I perceived our family would have the necessary support network at home to help them cope with the difficulties.
- I perceived our marital/partner relationship could manage a long-distance relationship
- I preferred domestic jobs, but perceived restricted domestic career opportunities
- I preferred international opportunities over domestic jobs
- I worried that if I declined the offer, negative consequences could happen
- I perceived the job was aligned with my professional interests
- I perceived the job was aligned with my personal interest
- I perceived the arrangement was aligned with my personality
- I perceived the arrangement was aligned with the stage of my career
- I perceived the arrangement was aligned with the stage of my family life cycle
- I perceived that our prior international assignment experience(s) where all the family relocated had been difficult for the family
- I perceived that our prior international experience(s) generated interesting career opportunities and growth
- I perceived that we had managed well the prior experiences where our family had to be separated.

Thank you very much for your candidness and for sharing your experience. This concludes today's survey. As the study progress, I will keep you informed and will invite you to provide additional feedback. Thank you.

Appendix I. Partner survey – English version

The aim of this survey is to identify all the different motives that influenced you to choose an arrangement where your partner and children would live separated from you for long periods of time due to work. Please put yourself at the time when you were making the decision.

For each of the following, please rate Very Important (VI), Important (I), Somewhat Important (SI), Not important (NI) if this motive WAS PRESENT in your decision or Not Applicable (NA) if this motive was NOT PRESENT while making your decision.

My motivation to do a split family arrangement was that…

- I did not want to change or interrupt our children's education
- I did not want to interrupt any of the careers in our dual-career household.
- I did not want to change or was not available in host country the special education/ special care for our children.
- We cared for our elder parent(s) and did not want to make changes.
- I perceived the host country was unsafe for me and/or the children
- I perceived the host country had a lower quality of life compared to our home country
- I perceived the host country lacked family support
- I wanted to maintain the relationships with extended family living in home country
- I wanted to maintain relationships with friends in our home country
- I wanted to preserve the living conditions our home country offered to me and the children (housing and neighborhood)
- The family income while an expatriate was significantly more attractive financially than other options available
- Expenses in the family were high or growing and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity of the higher income
- I perceived the organizational support was going to be appropriate to help us have a successful experience.

- I perceived our family could manage the difficulties of this arrangement and have an overall beneficial experience.
- I perceived there were favorable conditions to maintain an adequate long-distance relationship with my partner.
- I perceived my partner was capable of managing being alone and have a successful assignment.
- I perceived I had the capacity to manage the household without my partner
- I perceived our family would have the necessary support network to help us cope with the difficulties
- I perceived our marital/partner relationship could manage a long-distance relationship.
- My partner preferred domestic jobs, but perceived restricted domestic career opportunities.
- My partner preferred international opportunities over domestic jobs.
- I was worried that if my partner declined the offer, negative consequences could happen.
- I perceived the job was aligned with my partner's professional interests
- I perceived the job was aligned with my partner's personal interest
- I perceived the arrangement was aligned with my personality
- I perceived the arrangement was aligned with the stage of my career
- I perceived the arrangement was aligned with the stage of our family life cycle
- I perceived that our prior international assignment experience(s) where all the family relocated had been difficult for the family
- I perceived that our prior international experience(s) generated interesting career opportunities and growth
- I perceived that we had managed well the prior experiences where our family had to be separated.

Thank you very much for your candidness and for sharing your experience. This concludes today's survey. As the study progress, I will keep you informed and will invite you to provide additional feedback. Thank you.

Appendix J. Motives to expatriate on OEs and SIEs.

Doherty, Dickmann, and Mills (2011)

	Items
1	Ability to support your family better abroad
2	Balance between work and social life
3	Better opportunities for your family
4	Close ties to your country of origin with host country
5	Confidence in your ability to work/live abroad
6	Desire for adventure
7	Desire to live in host city/location
8	Desire to live in host country
9	Expected length of stay
10	Following friends
11	For health reasons
12	Having the relevant job skills
13	Host culture
14	Impact on career
15	Maintain personal networks
16	Maintain work networks with the home country
17	Opportunities to network in host country
18	Personal financial impact
19	Personal safety
20	Poor employment situation at home
21	Possibility of gaining permanent residency in host country
22	Potential for skills development
23	Potential role(s) available after your work abroad
24	Pre-departure preparation
25	Prestige of working in the host country
26	Professional challenge of working abroad
27	Reputation of host country being open to foreigners
28	Reputation of host country in your area of work
29	Standard of living in host country
30	Successful previous experience in a foreign environment
31	Superior career opportunities in the host country
32	The job you were offered
33	The opportunity to improve your language skills
34	To be with/near loved persons
35	To distance yourself from a problem
36	To see the world
37	Willingness of family/partner to move
38	Your ability to adapt to host country

Appendix K. Motives to expatriate from trailing families vs. families in SFE

Dang (2020)

Motives to expatriate from trailing families	Motives to expatriate from families in SFE
Financial benefits	Financial benefits
International working interest	International working interest
Professional growth and meaning	Professional growth and meaning
Work-life balance	
Host country environment	
Children's education	
Country escape	
Entrepreneurship opportunities	
Family`s member enhancement	

Appendix L. Propositions

RQ1. What are the characteristics of families that engage in SFEs?

Proposition 1. Families that engage in SFEs have two distinct characteristics: the expatriate has prior experience with global work, and the family has prior experience of being separated from the expatriate due to work.

RQ2. What are the characteristics of SFEs?

Proposition 2. Depending on the moment during the expatriation when it occurs and the intended duration, three distinct types of SFEs are likely to exist: 1) SFEs that happen at the beginning of an expatriation with the intention of the family to join the expatriate later; 2) SFEs that happen at the beginning of an expatriation with the intention to last for the entire expatriation; 3) SFEs that happen during an expatriation with trailing family with the intention to last until the expatriate can join the family when the expatriations finishes.

RQ3. How do organizations manage SFEs?

Proposition 3. Expatriates high on perceived organizational support are likely to confide personal information with the organization's representatives.

Proposition 4. Organizational expatriates in SFEs are likely to receive HR treatment as expatriates when the international relocation is temporal and as local-plus when the relocation is permanent.

Proposition 5. Self-initiated expatriates in SFEs are likely to receive HR treatment as local employees.

Proposition 6. Organizational expatriates in SFEs are likely to receive single-status expatriate packages when the organization learns of the split-family arrangement and can modify the contract's conditions.

Proposition 7. Families in SFEs are challenged by family dynamics generated by the long-term separation from the expatriate.

Proposition 8. The family's lack of adjustment to the SFE is likely to impact the expatriate's performance negatively.

Proposition 9. Organizational support is likely to facilitate the adjustment of families in SFEs.

Proposition 10. Organizations with occasional exposure to SFEs are likely to have reactive behavior when managing SFEs.

RQ4. Why do families engage in SFEs?

-Motives

Proposition 11. Two distinct sets of motives in the SFE decision pull family members apart: motives to engage in an international assignment and motives for the partner and children not to accompany the expatriate.

Proposition 12. Partners and children interested in trailing in an expatriation, yet with an imposed temporary restriction to trail, are likely to engage in SFE type I.

Proposition 13. Partners and children not interested in trailing in an expatriation, yet with a permanent restriction to trail, are likely to engage in SFE type II.

Proposition 14. Partners that do not accompany the expatriate in the international assignment are likely to be driven by motives or by an imposed restriction.

Proposition 15. The restriction on partners not to accompany the expatriate in the international assignment is likely to be imposed by the organization, the expatriate, or a third-party authority such as legal or immigration.

-Aspirations

Proposition 16. Organizational expatriates are likely motivated by intrinsic aspirations in their decision to expatriate.

Proposition 17. Self-initiated expatriates are likely motivated by prosocial aspirations in their decision to expatriate.

Proposition 18. Partners considering a split family arrangement for an expatriation are likely motivated by prosocial aspirations.

Proposition 19. Expatriates influenced by prosocial and/or extrinsic motives, in addition to intrinsic motives, are likely to persevere longer in the expatriation than those driven by intrinsic motives only.

Proposition 20. Partners influenced by prosocial and intrinsic motives are likely to persevere longer in the SFE than those driven by prosocial only.

-Energization

Proposition 21. Expatriates are likely driven by approach motives in their decision to expatriate.

Proposition 22. Expatriates with co-occurring approach and avoidance motives are likely to persevere longer in the expatriation than those driven by approach only.

Proposition 23. Partners with co-occurring approach and avoidance motives are likely to persevere longer in the SFE than those driven by approach only.

-Regulation

Proposition 24. Expatriates are likely driven by autonomous motives in their decision to expatriate.

Proposition 25. Expatriates with co-occurring autonomous and controlled motives are likely to persevere longer in the expatriation than those driven by autonomous only.

Proposition 26. Partners with co-occurring autonomous and controlled motives are likely to persevere longer in the SFE than those driven by autonomous only.

-Assignment termination

Proposition 27. Family issues driven by the long-term separation of family members while in SFE are not sufficient reasons to terminate the expatriation.

Proposition 28. Expatriate families in SFE frequently re-evaluate their decision to continue in the SFE.