

## Expatriation: the focus on Psychological contract

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### Abstract

In the past few years, the number of expatriates has shown a growth trend worldwide. Accordingly, the expatriate management, which integrates the subsystem of International Human Resources Management, has now a renewed attention and has been growing as an intervention area of Human Resources Management. Therefore, the psychological contract has been seen, more and more, as a relevant factor in explaining the labour relations and the number of studies around this theme has increased.

The success of expatriation is directly influenced by the psychological contract and depends largely on how HRM practices are developed (Homem & Tolfo, 2008). Understanding the reaction of workers through changes (Bligh & Carsten, 2005; Shield et al., 2002) is essential, since the response behaviour can be a crucial contribution to the success or failure of the international assignment. In the same context, we are witnessing an increasing attention on the contribution that the Psychological Contract may have under uncertainty. The individual, as an employee of an organization that decides to accept an international assignment and move to another country, needs to fit in a continuous and motivating relationship with the employer.

The concept of the psychological contract is fundamental to the understanding of labour relations, based on the perceptions of those involved. Many aspects of these relationships are implicit (unwritten) which can cause different interpretations of expectations, promises and obligations between parties. Several authors argue that the psychological contract is the key to understand and manage the attitudes and behaviour of individuals in organizations (Bunderson, 2001; Kraimer et al., 2005; Lemire & Rouillard, 2005).

The goal of this work is to understand the psychological contract in expatriates: before the assignment, after adjustment to the host country and repatriation. A qualitative methodology was used, and for that we applied semi-structured individual interviews and sociographic questionnaire to people who were, at the time, expatriate.

In total, ten interviews were conducted and the analysis of the interviews were made through Grounded Theory. The results suggest that there is only fulfilment of the psychological contract

in the stage of the preparation of the international assignment, existing, on the other hand, breach of the psychological contract during expatriation and at repatriation, according to the perception that expatriates have about the end of expatriation. However, most of the interviewed expatriates evaluates positively the expatriation experience, although organizations appear to have just a few rules to support expatriate, particularly logistical and financial support, and not having a complete and thorough program of support to the expatriation management. The results also suggest that it is essential that organizations encourage communication with expatriates and promote the continuous support, which should be constant and intrinsic to all phases of expatriation in order to avoid the “abandon” feeling.

Keywords: Psychological contract; International Assignments; Expatriation; Adjustment.

## Introduction

Over the past decade, there have been several changes in the relationship between the employee and the employer (Guest, 2004). In a context of social change and market, with a significant increase in the number of expatriates, requiring more of the organization's performance to be more competitive, the relationship that organizations had with its employees is affected.

The old psychological contract was characterized by loyalty, regulatory compliance, commitment and confidence of workers, replaced by security, promotion opportunities, training and development and help when the individual had difficulties (Herriot & Pemberton, 1997; Rousseau, 2004). The new psychological contract, in turn, has very different outlines, where businesses feel the need to maintain the levels of competitiveness in order to survive (Herriot & Pemberton, 1997).

Employees and organizations have realized that it is no longer possible to guarantee the "job for life" and, therefore, the employees have to be much more confident, especially working in a foreign country, and prepare themselves with skills to ensure their employability. Organizations in relation to personnel management, start to adopt the perspective of performance and cost containment, ie the relationship with employees is oriented to the short-term, emphasizing the immediate results (Van Der Smissen, Schalk, & Freese, 2013). It is now expected that the employee works on more flexible contracts, doing different tasks, a higher work rate and an increasingly technical environment. The employees are now

required to work long hours, to have more responsibility, to acquire more skills and tolerate continuous change and ambiguity in their work (Herriot & Pemberton, 1997).

This has influenced both organizations and employees, but also the respective psychological contracts, resulting in a decline in loyalty between the employee and the employer.

Therefore it is necessary to create another psychological contract that is advantageous to both. That agreement should be less emotional and to have a greater focus on the task and the performance while maintaining loyalty, security and commitment.

#### Critical phases of psychological contract in expatriation

Many organizations are unaware that only a psychological contract was violated when an expatriate left the organization to join a competitor (McNulty, 2014). Labour relations are constantly changing, psychological contracts follow and are evolving constantly. Sometimes there is a mutual understanding when an employee is hired that expatriation is a possibility; some employees aspire to work abroad and actively initiate this process (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009).

Psychological contracts are a very important factor in expatriation because a person who accepted an international mission and decide to change his life to another country (with or without families) are exposed to an increased risk than someone in his origin country, and also written agreements do not cover all the risks and uncertainties of an international mission.

Thus, Haslberger & Brewster (2009) define three critical stages where the psychological contract has a predominant role: when the employee decides to accept the international mission; when the employee moves, for the first time, to the new country; and at the time of repatriation.

Employees begin the process of expatriation with a certain psychological contract. The expatriation is a significant transition in the life and career of a person marked with a high level of uncertainty. These promises will influence the assessment of the risk that every expatriate will have, increasing their perception of the potential benefits that the international mission may bring. Therefore, the psychological contract plays a particularly important role when the employee decide to accept or not accept an expatriation.

Another moment of great importance of the psychological contract is when the employee moves to the new country and the period following it. Moving to a foreign country involves a lot of uncertainty, employees will be especially sensitive to any reliable sense of loss or promises made by the company, namely the lack of support in changing or the cost of living unexpectedly very high and without proportional compensation (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009).

Finally, the repatriation is also an important moment in this process, especially the possibility of a new and better career opportunities upon return to their country of origin, also involves great

moments of uncertainty. This is the third and final critical point giving the company the ability to comply with its part of the psychological contract. The high turnover rate at the time of repatriation is often linked to the perception that expatriates have related to the smash of psychological contract (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009).

Considering the importance of the psychological contract, namely in expatriation, this paper aims to know the state of the psychological contract in expatriates, specifically to characterize the state of the psychological contract prior to expatriation, after the adaptation phase to the destination country, and to understand the perception of the psychological contract status in the repatriation phase.

## Method

For this study we used two instruments to collect information. First we applied a small socio-demographic survey to collect information such as age, gender, education, marital status, the country of destination, the total duration of the expatriation and current duration of the expatriation.

The semi-structured interview was the preferred technique for acquiring information on the participants since through this qualitative method is possible to understand the experience of participants and build meanings. This information gathering technique requires that the interviewer dominate all topics on which you need to get answers from the respondents, but on the other hand enables the respondent can give such a long answer as you like (Yin, 2009). In total 10 interviews were carried out the Portuguese who were at the time of the interviews, expatriates. The semi-structured interview guide was divided into three major chapters to capture as much information as possible about the three phases of the expatriation: preparation of the mission; mission; repatriation. The number of people or conditions used depend on access, time and resources available to meet the requirements of building a theoretical sample. Glaser & Strauss (1967) report that the appropriate procedure for these cases is to go making and analysing interviews successively ending when it reaches the theoretical saturation, ie when the categories found begin to stabilize and new cases do not provide anything new to study and researcher.

As mentioned above, the selection criteria of the participants was the fact that they are, the interview date, expatriates regardless of age, sex, marital status, number of children and professional category. This study focuses solely on expatriate individual side and how it understands their psychological contract in the different phases of expatriation.

For this study were interviewed ten expatriates, including five men and five women. The oldest expatriate was 41 years old and younger expatriate is 29 years old, with a mean age 37 years, (SD= 4,25). According to their education, eight (80%) respondents had higher education qualifications (seven have bachelor's and a master's degree), and two (20%) had the 12th grade. With regard to marital status, seven (70%) of respondents are single and three (30%) were married. Regarding to their seniority in the company this varies greatly, five (50%) participants had a higher antiquity to eleven years, and the other five (50%) had an antique one to eleven. The average is nine years old (SD=3.61). Finally, according to the destination country, four (40%) respondents were expatriates in European countries and six (60%) were expatriate American countries.

### Procedure

For the data collection, several companies were contacted via e-mail explaining the study's purpose, requesting contact expatriates and ensuring immediately complete confidentiality and anonymity in the name of companies and expatriates. In that same contact was informed that he had full availability and author of interest for a face meeting to further explain the purpose of the study. There as we were getting expatriate contacts, there was always a first contact with the expatriate via email and so were accepted to participate in the study would be a second contact by phone to set some details for the interview. The interviews were performed using Skype, since respondents were all expatriates, and the average duration of 35 minutes and took place between 16 May and 25 July 2015. All interviews were verbatim transcript. Data were analysed according to Grounded Theory procedures (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

### Results

In our study emerged three main themes: mission preparation, mission and repatriation.

#### **Mission Preparation**

Referring to this stage of expatriation, prior to going to the expatriate destination country were defined four dimensions of analysis: the company , defining the rights of expatriates; the expatriate with the characterization of his duties; recruitment and selection, addressing what methods of recruitment and selection privilege ; and individual motivations, the reasons that led respondents to accept an international mission.

The company

The first category presented, general support, comes in order to understand how expatriates define, in a comprehensive manner, the support given by the organization in preparation for the mission, with a right of Expatriate:

Had the right to have someone from the company to help me in this long process ... (SM)

They promised that I would give all the support in the preparation and my integration ... (AF)

According to the analysis of the information collected, we found that there were different levels of compliance with this law, in particular, poor compliance, sufficient and good. In one case, there was even a breach of this right.

Failure (an interviewee) - I had no preparation at any time me some kind of support was available. (LC)

Poor compliance (five respondents) - The company, which was extra professional, gave me very little support except for the part of the director of the factory, my boss, who was with whom I directly dealt with some things. I never had support from human resources. The only thing they did was pay me the trip and the hotel when I arrived and had a taxi waiting for me. (AA)

sufficient compliance (two respondents) - I think that was enough but there is much more that can be done for those who will make such a drastic change in your professional and personal life especially. (AP)

good compliance (two respondents) - were all arranged by the company, both as regards seen either as regards the provision of services of a company "relocation". I think it was a good support for the first time ... (NM)

The first category to emerge, reported by all respondents (100%, n = 10) is the support for relocation, citing the importance of the support of specialized companies to assist in the rental of the house / apartment where they will be during the expatriation companies specialized in the transport of personal property between home country and destination country and car rental for the first time so that the expatriate has time to get your kind of personal transportation. This support helps reduce seizure levels and stress by the expatriates. There was compliance in nine cases (90%):

... Also it gave me support the change through a company that made the transport of my personal belongings to Mexico and offered me also another relocation company that helped me in the house search. (HC)

With regard to the demand for home, I think that the support could have been better. They helped me to introduce myself some houses, but did not give great support on the lease, or to deal with light, water, and the like that for those who do not know the system is quite complicated. (LT)

However, an expatriate (10%) this support was not given:

Should have been given a contact or a real estate company to help me in the house search, learn the safest places to live (...) and found home alone, no one helped me. (AA)

Another type of support also approached by all respondents (100%, n = 10) was the recognition program in the country / city. This program consists of a pre-city trip destination for first contact with customs, with the inhabitants and is one of several practices that can contribute to a better adaptation of the expatriate and respective family. However, this program was made available only one expatriate (10%):

... I had a colleague highlighted by the company that introduced me to the city. He explained the transport system, which were the main places such as hospitals, banks, finance, etc. Also gave me great tips for walks with my family, what can I do to-a-week, web sites to know what is being organized in relation to social events. (LT)

The remaining nine expatriates (90%), this program is not available:

I had no right to advance to visit the city and make the first recognition. The recognition of the city was done while we visited homes (...) but I think they should have more attention to this point ... (NM).

Additionally, administrative support was a type of said support. Nine respondents (90%) said it is beneficial to have help from the organization to questions as well presented and clear explanation of the expatriation contract, explanation of specific global health insurance for expatriates, necessary bureaucracies to work visa and specific social security of the country destination. Administrative support was given to the nine expatriates (100%):

The company also helped me in the administrative part such as with regard to health insurance, driving license, social security number and all the paperwork necessary to become a US citizen. (NM)

The company said people who supported me in the paperwork for obtaining my work visa. (LT)

Six respondents (60%) mentioned the importance of fiscal support, ie the support that the organization gives to clarify the fiscal regime of the expatriate and other technical issues, since all respondents have received salary divided; that is, a part remains to be paid by the country of origin and the other party shall be paid by the destination country. For these expatriates it is important that all issues should be resolved a priori such as, as will cash every month of their total income and that the country will make the respective discounts. For these six expatriates (100%) that support is given by the organization:

...Had the right to have meetings with the company that deals with these tax issues for expatriates to ensure that everything was settled and clarified. In this they were clean. (SM)

...Provided me with fiscal support through a specialized company, which works with the company in these situations. (TC)

For six (60%) expatriates, there is also concern for the realization of prior configurations, considered a fundamental program for the effective preparation of expatriates. local language of the destination country training, multicultural integration and training courses on local legislation applicable to the destination country were the training courses referred to by these six expatriates. However only three expatriates (50%) had access to these formations:

I also had an intercultural training that allowed me to see the differences between my country and Mexico. (HC)

In reporting to the breach of this right, this was part listed for three (50%) expatriated:

Give me the possibility of advance training in the labour law of the country where I was. I should also be given Spanish training, since I went to Uruguay, but none of this was allowed to do. (AA) Financial support was reported by five expatriates (50%), which indicated that it is necessary that the organization makes available to them some money, either through contracted benefits or salary advance so that he is able to meet the considerable expenses either with bureaucracies or the first weeks of expatriation. Two expatriates (40%) this support was given:

... The company granted an advance on my salary which helped me to overcome the great expenses that had all the documents I had to go asking the embassies and consulates and the first time I had there. (NM)

However, the other three expatriates (60%) this support was not given:

Not to mention that an expatriate arrives and receives only the end of the month, but we have to pay all the paperwork necessary to regularize our situation and the accounts they are all up to the 10th day of each month and have to buy food nor advances made. Moral of the story, if you do not have money, it's hard to be expatriated. (AF)

Five expatriate respondents (50%) mentioned the importance of having a monitoring by the organization even during the mission preparation. This monitoring is characterized by the constant contact between the organization and the expatriate to care issues of current affairs and offered to expatriates. In all cases (100%) has been infringed:

So they put me in touch with these companies stopped worrying about me and questioned me not like was running the process of change. Basically their job done and over, run to another. There is no monitoring of the expatriate. (TC)

I was always left much part and never engaged or never bothered if everything was going well or if needed more support. (AP)

Finally, three (30%) of respondents reported that the family followed in the international mission. These three expatriates have the support of family, that is, the organization helps in



finding a job for the spouse and for school son as an important supporting element. However, this right has been neglected in all cases (100%)

#### Expatriate

For the analysis of the interviews it was apparent that the respondents had difficulty identifying their duties in preparing the mission. Only four expatriates (40%) were able to list their duties; contrary six (60%) reported not knowing their duties in the preparation of the international mission. Of the four replies were defined two categories: transparency and administrative support.

The transparency referred to by only one expatriate (25%), being understood as the sincerity of the Expatriate in proactively notify the organization their feelings about all the expatriation process so that, in case of need, some practice can be previously adjusted avoiding maladjustment:

I was clear with them to know how I felt about the process for it to work once they had pushed for me to be chosen as it was already part of the Group. (AP)

Another category was defined administrative support, ie the support that the expatriate should give in all bureaucratic issues and documentation necessary for the work visa. This type of duty mentioned four expatriates (100%), having been completed on the part of all.

It was my duty that I was involved in the process and help proactively in all that was needed. Despite being an asset to the company I have been expatriated, it is a great opportunity for me and so I had to do everything in my power so that the process unfold as quickly as possible. It's not just expect the company to do everything for me. (LT)

#### Recruitment & Selection

The type of privileged recruitment was internal recruitment with nine of the respondents expatriates (90%) were already part of the organization and only one expatriate (10%) were recruited externally, but that had been previously involved in the recruitment process for the same organization:

Well, this opportunity came about through an interview I did for a position (...) for which I was not selected because I was working for another company (...) about two months after the director of human resources (...) returned to contact Me to an open position in the United States. He explained the position, asked if I was interested and then to consider as well, because at the time was professionally dissatisfied, I decided to accept. After we started the process. (NM)

For the nine internally recruited expatriates, the preferred selection method was informally through direct invitations to eight expatriates. Only one expatriate was selected through a formal method, internal competition.

There was this need and the company spoke to me in this case was the director of the factory where I worked, giving me the opportunity and I would be interested in going. (AA)

The opportunity came because I ran through the company intranet to a function outside of Portugal. No one spoke to me and asked me to expatriation, I was I who took the initiative to apply for the job myself. (LR)

### Motivation

Regarding the individual motivations for expatriation it was reported about eight individual motivations since each respondent was free to submit the number of motivations that desired. The career development is the primary individual motivation to decide to have an expatriation experience. This motivation was reported by all respondents expatriates (100%, n = 10). Respondents who identified career development as a reason to accept the expatriation related it with the opportunity to acquire more responsibilities and new experiences.

The ability to learn and evolve in my career because I think that when the country salts and you will learn about other cultures, whether you like it or you will not have an evolution, a learning, adaptation and this will cause both professionally and personally faster growth than if I stayed in Portugal. (AA)

... I thought it would be good for my career. What I was doing in the factory was 1/10 of what I do in this function and I already knew that, and wanted to learn more. It is a function that requires me to constantly be in the factories, in the middle of the business and is something I love. (LR)

... I wanted to develop my knowledge and it wanted to return to the automotive sector and decided to accept. (NM)

International experience was another individual motivation that six expatriates (60%). This motivation associated with expatriation to it being a challenge and contribute to the personal and professional growth:

... One of my career goals was to make international career. In recent career interviews that I was having, let this clear and asked so there was an opportunity to tell me. (SM)

The familiar question, ie the family support the expatriate was also one of the identified motivations. This motivation has been mentioned four expatriates (40%), and for three

expatriates (75%) is the possibility of lead their families, for an expatriate (25%) was the ability to approach his father who already resided in the destination country:

The possibility to be accompanied by the family because at the time my daughter was 2 years old and did not want to come alone. (LC)

In addition to professional factors also weighed the fact that my father live for many years in the United States and wanted to take this opportunity to be closer to him. (NM)

Knowledge of the new function , which is characterized by familiarizing the Expatriate already have with the function that will perform during the international mission, it is another of the reasons that led some expatriates, including three (30%), to perform the expatriation:

... I have a friend ( ... ) I was doing the function for which I applied and therefore knew the function , had spoken to her several times and found quite interesting her work , super challenging. (LR)

The financial component was identified as motivation to accomplish the mission by two expatriates (20%). Not only for the salary increase that had but also by additional conditions to the salary offered by companies, a fact that makes it very attractive to monetary level expatriation:

And a little by the advantages with regard to the benefits: paid apartment, paid travel, salary increase. (LR)

### **Mission**

Regarding the phase of the international mission revealed three dimensions of analysis: the company, defining the rights of expatriates; expatriate, setting some individual characteristics including adaptation to destination country, family support and social support; and work through the characterization of the duties of expatriates, since all fit the performance of the function.

### **Company**

Once again, the first category presented refers to the general support, in order to understand how expatriates define, in a comprehensive manner, the support given by the organization during the international mission. Most respondents (70%, n = 7) characterized that the support is weak:

The support was and is scarce to say void in my presentation to the company and colleagues here in Brazil, to stay for a long time in hotels, I was that I had to always treat everything in monetary issues, cultural differences, the bureaucracy to be legalized. I had to always be me to find something to do. (AF)

The remaining respondents (30%, n = 3) characterized this support as sufficient:

Yes, it was somewhat helped by the procedures, ie the Group level there are procedures which require that the parties meet certain minimum to support the expatriation, but much more could have been done. (AP)

At the same time, they have also been reported to support specific types of expatriates during the international task, as can be seen in Table 6:

Table 6 - Characteristics of different media types in expatriation.

The first right to be identified because it was reported by all respondents (100%, n = 10) is monitored by the organization during the expatriation. This monitoring is characterized by the organization's support on issues such as integration of the expatriate in the target company, monitoring the adaptation of the expatriate and respective family to a new culture, initial support for the exercise of the new role, career management and expectations of management. However, this right is not fulfilled by the organization:

I feel that I came to Brazil and was completely forgotten by the country of origin ( ... ) feeling of abandonment. (AF)

... It seems to suddenly cease to have any kind of support and were forgotten. It was a change from 80 to 8, as they say. (LT)

They shall ensure that the expatriate is due psychological transition to the new country of destination. At this point has not been reached ... (LR)

It is therefore important to characterize the communication between the organization and expatriate, i.e., if there is a regular contact between the two. Communication between the organization of origin and the expatriate during the international mission, is an important factor for the development of realistic expectations, because the higher the frequency of communication, the greater the flow of information, and will reduce the feeling of isolation expatriate and the feeling that has been forgotten by the organization. After analyzing the interviews, it was found that only two expatriates (20%) maintains frequent contact with the country of origin organization, but communication reasons are not expatriation:

Communicate with the company in Portugal almost daily but for matters other than the expatriation. For matters of work and friendship. (TC)

Eight expatriates (80%) said that communication is rare or did not exist:

Communication is very little. I feel that I "abandoned" and I'm here forgotten by all and will only remember me when my contract is almost over and have to get me solution. I have no one to contact me regularly to see how I am. (SM)

None ... I have not any contact with Portugal and to date the company has not come to my contact. (AA)

Another emerging category was administrative support, ie the support of the organization to bureaucratic issues such as completion of the work visa process and specific social security the destination country, said four expatriates (40%). Three expatriates (75%) had access to this support:

... The organization continued to support me for some time in necessary administrative matters so that the process of becoming a US citizen stay finalized. There are a number of procedures to be followed and the company was giving me some support in this aspect. (NM)

However, an expatriate (25%) this support was never provided:

As for help in bureaucracies' necessary for my legalization in Uruguay, no one helped me, I had to do it all alone and that's why I only had my papers recently. (AA)

Support the family was referred to by the three expatriates with family (30%), to be understood as a very important factor for the family to adapt to the new country. This right is again neglected in all cases (100%):

I did not have any support for seeking work for my wife or other support to make you feel more comfortable or support to find school for my daughter. Then we decided that the first time my wife stay home to take care of our daughter until we are more acclimated to the city and we take another decision, which would put our daughter at school. (LC)

Finally, the social and cultural support was indicated by two expatriates (20%) and indicated the importance of preparing extra professional activities for expats feel more cherished. There was non-compliance by the company in these two cases (100%):

It is important to organize some social activities for expatriates, so that they can integrate more easily. Lunch just that to help in the first contact. You should also have in mind that after the expatriate working hours go home, there is no host social activities with data from the country to help the expatriate to join the new company. (TC)

## Expatriate

Adaptation consists in reaching, by the expatriate, the psychological and emotional balance after several moments of uncertainty from their move to a new country. After detailed analysis of the interviews, we found that seven expatriates interviewed (70%) say that their adjustment was difficult, creating inhospitable times:

... If he had an adjustment program to the city and the people, customs, their habits might have been easier for me. My integration was difficult in some circumstances that created anxiety and feelings of isolation. (LR)

Sometimes the feeling was not belong to any side! (HC)

For the remaining three respondents (30%), adaptation was considered normal in view of the situation and that they were adapting to a new country:

The adaptation was normal although at first the language differences have hindered a bit but as the lifestyle is similar to Europe, eventually help a lot. (LC)

A family matter was referred to by some expatriates. On the one hand, the three expatriates (30%) who were accompanied by family mentioned the importance of family adaptation to their well-being, and in two cases (67%), family adaptation was considered normal:

This is normal, it is a normal adaptation process. Has gone all right, there are ups and downs, which is normal, but we are all happy and this is the most important. (LT)

However, one of expats (33%) stated that the family has not adapted to the destination country, resulting in the early return:

... Eventually return to Portugal! My wife and my daughter were with me in Mexico only one month because they have adapted and my wife chose to seek work in Portugal. (AP)

On the other hand, three expatriates (30%) reported the distance and the absence of the family as a difficulty:

Also the fact that we do not have our family close, staying in the country of origin, creates us a sense of isolation. (LR)

To combat loneliness, social support, ie the created bonds of friendship, social activities with co-workers, was reported by five expatriates (50%). For these expatriates difficulties were easier to overcome the social support they had:

Fortunately I made a few but good colleagues and friends who helped to overcome everything else (...) I was setting there co-workers, some friendships that played a big role in my well-being! (AP)

In this case I was lucky because in the city where I lodged, there are many Portuguese colleagues which helped me a lot. (AF)

## Job

With regard to the duties of expatriates during expatriation, after analysis of the interviews, we found that all (100%, n = 10) relate to the function. Eight expatriates (80%) identify performance as one of the duties, which is characterized by compliance with the set work objectives. All of these respondents (100%) fulfilled their duty:

I had the right to set work objectives for me, after all the madness of change and had the right I successfully fulfil them and do a good job. (LT)

The right that I fulfil my goals and exercise my function. (SM)

Four expatriates (40%) report that, in addition to performance, it is important to be exemplary and professional, that is, well represent the organization:

Particularly to be an example below. Once I came to a place where the organization is less developed I have to set an example because I came to represent the company. (AA)

I have a duty not let you down my organization. Always be professional wherever you are, and have been 100%. (HC)

## **Repatriation**

Regarding the final phase of the international mission, the repatriation were only defined two dimensions of analysis: the company, featuring the rights of expatriates; and expatriate by setting personal expectations regarding this phase.

### **Company**

The first category that comes up, being identified by all expatriates (100%, n = 10), is the return, which is the management and organization of support to repatriate the employee and welcome him back into the company origin. However, there are several interpretations of the fulfilment of this right: seven expatriates (70%) believe that the organization is not managing his return and therefore will not have a place to return; two expatriates (20%) have a passive attitude not appreciating too return, including Portugal; an expatriate (10%) believes that the company will ensure the return to the company source:

... The company will do nothing to take me again (...) this time the feeling I have is that the company only makes my contractual and financial management. From the point of view of management and development of my career I think nothing will be done. (LR)

I do not know, I honestly do not think about it, it all depends on the next professional opportunities, they have to offer me. (SM)

As for the return at the end of certain contract I will return, I'm expecting to learn that conditions and to function but still a long time so it's not something you have been thinking ... even because they promised that he would return at the end of the contract expatriation. (LT)

Support adaptation is also identified by four respondents (40%) as a right in the repatriation. If the return to Portugal and to the company source happens, these four expatriates report that it is important to have the support of the organization because it returns to a new clash of different realities. Two respondents (50%) believe that this support will be given:

Support the replacement, as turns out to be a new "shock" return to our country. (HC)

Two other respondents (50%) believe that this support will not be given:

I think it will help only on the return trip. The experience when we came here, as did not help in finding work for my wife or school for her daughter, I doubt you do in Portugal. (LT)

#### Expatriate

From the viewpoint of Expatriate, it can be seen that the respondents have two great expectations for repatriation. The first category to emerge, referenced eight expatriates (80%), is the return to Portugal, that is, these eight expatriates wish to return to Portugal at the end of the expatriation contract.

He liked to return at the end of my expatriation contract and come near my family ... ( AP )

Yesterday was late. Once you finish the expatriation contract want to go back. I am not aware and do not have high certainty about the future but I want to believe you will find solution for me at the end of my expatriation contract. (TC)

The second category mentioned by six expatriates (60%) refers to career development, which is characterized by expectations that expatriates have the evolution of his career when repatriation:

... I have expectations to evolve in my career, for that reason is that I accepted the expatriation. As for my salary I can not ask for an increase over what I have at this time because the wage levels are different between the two countries but I have expectations of at least maintain the same standard of living that I have the time and improve what I had when I came away from Portugal. (LT)

This is my goal to have an evolution in my career and therefore on my salary. As a result of my good performance and my good results I'm having so far. (SM)

Returning there must be an evolution in my career or at least maintain the same position I have right now. And the salary is fair according to function. There is no logical regress in my professional career. Not for what I have given up so much of my life away from my family. (AA)

#### Discussion

Today, regarding the recruitment of expatriates, the kind of privileged recruitment is the internal (Camara, 2008; Martins, 2013). Our results confirm this trend, with all respondents expatriates, except one, had been recruited internally. Depending on the company's strategy and why use expatriation, one begins to see a greater propensity to external recruitment (Avril & Magnini, 2007), however this did not happen on the results.

There are two types of internal recruitment: direct choice if the seats to be filled are of global management or reliable places; and the internal competition, which is chosen from the pre-selected candidates who are on the recruitment bag (Camara, 2008). Bonache et al. (2010) and



Martins (2013) highlight the selection of expatriates through personalized invitations by the organization the workers they trust the performance and technical skills demonstrated along the route in the company origin. Indeed, the results of our study confirm the literature because almost all expatriates were selected by invitation, there is but one expatriate who was selected through internal competition.

Regarding the individual motivations of expatriates, the study results confirm what is referred to in the literature. The rise of career opportunity, happy to spread or improve the knowledge and skills, the desire to know another culture, taste for adventure (Camara, 2008; Martin, 2013; Rego & Cunha, 2009) were some of the listed motivations in our study. It is important to note that individuals seeking international experience are more likely to overcome the difficulties of adaptation, to feel more satisfied with the greatest allocation and show intention to stay until the end of the international mission (Pinto Cabral-Cardoso, & Jr, 2012).

The support mechanisms identified in this study are supported by the literature, where we can identify logistical support as favourable as the adaptation of the expatriate residence, costs relating to school fees of children, supporting the professional integration of spouses and travel recognition of the target country (Black et al., 1991; Caligiuri, 2000; Dowling et al, 2008; Schuler, 2000). According to Dowling, Welch, & Schuler (1998), intercultural training, language training and practical instruction in the destination country may also lessen the culture shock of the expatriate. Our results confirm once again what the literature states, the importance of training as key programs for the effective preparation of expatriates. Black et al. (1991) consider that adaptation to a new environment is proportional to the distance cultic between the country of origin and the destination country, therefore, the greater the difference in the most important cultural become intercultural training for adaptation of expatriated. However, these same authors consider that intercultural training is also needed in cases where the expatriation occurs between countries considered culturally similar. In turn, Suutari & Burch (2001) argue that language training enhances the interaction, and consequently intercultural adjustment of individuals to the new general and professional environment abroad. As our results suggest, although identified, not all such support mechanisms are made available to respondents expatriates.

According to the results, in general, all organizations involved have the necessary support to their expatriates, although they were identified compliance levels / different satisfaction. In only one case was no breach of the psychological contract, since no type of support was given to expatriate preparation of expatriation. In this case psychological breach of contract we can not say that there has been violation of the psychological contract because it would mean "an affective and emotional experience of disappointment, frustration, outrage, anger and

resentment that arises from the interpretation of an employee" (Morrison & Robinson, 1997, p. 242), which is not the case, after detailed analysis of the interview. We cannot also say that there has been breach of the psychological contract because it breaks happens when one of the parties, although able to fulfil its part of the contract, refuses to do so (Rousseau, 1995), and we have no data on allow to confirm that there was refusal by the organization in support expatriate. For this reason, we classified as negligence because the breach of the psychological contract by negligence happens when a party fails to comply with its obligations passivity.

In this regard, it is noted that depreciates the support for the preparation of expatriation; however, we believe that the psychological contract in most expatriates interviewed was fulfilled.

#### Characterization of the psychological contract after the adaptation phase to the destination country

Bonache et al. (2010) state that few organizations that accompany both personal development as a professional expatriates, even if the expatriation is considered one of the most important methods for the development of people in organizations. The results of this study corroborate the literature in that the monitoring / psychological support has a right of tenants mentioned by all respondents and in all cases there was a failure. The company does not make appropriate follow-up of expatriates, who are aware of the situation.

Consequently, our results indicate that no expatriate interviewed regularly communicates with the company. Tung (1988) recommends the creation of specific organizational units for the guidance of expatriates during the expatriation period and an effective communication channel with the organization of origin. Close communication with the source organization results in the constant updating of events and internal policies of the company and thereby fosters the professional growth opportunities in the future (Tung, 1988).

The adaptability of the expatriate family is positively related to better and easier adaptation by the expatriate to the host country (Caligiuri, 2000). Our results suggest that expatriates who were accompanied by family, also mentioned during the expatriation the organization's support of the need for adjustment of the family; however, in one case the family has not adapted prematurely and returned to Portugal. We can thus conclude that psychological contract was, in all cases, neglected.

Understanding the perception that the expatriate has the psychological contract status in the repatriation phase

Black & Gregersen (1999) refers to the development and use of competences developed over the international mission and the definition of a structured program of repatriation and career practices to all expatriates, as the practices related to the success of the repatriation. The devaluation of international experience has negative consequences, such as creating frustration returnees which could lead to poor performance in the new position, and the motivation of potential candidates for future expatriation, taking into account that the expected development career is pointed out as the main reason why expatriates accept the international mission (Black & Gregersen, 1999). Tung (1988) also identifies two key factors for effective repatriation of expatriates being them assistance in relocation in the country of origin and the expatriate career management.

The results obtained in this study allow us to state that expatriates perception of return to Portugal as a right at the stage of repatriation. Besides being a right of expatriates, returning to Portugal is part of the personal expectations as well as career. For this to succeed it is necessary that the organization in advance prepare a repatriation program and career practices as reported in the literature. However, the results indicate that most expatriates surveyed do not believe that the company is actively working for their return, without much hope for the future. For this reason, we characterize that expatriates perception there will be breach of their psychological contract.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how expatriates characterize their psychological contract becoming an important contribution to the existing literature in this area, to the extent that the psychological contract in the Portuguese expatriates is a theme unexplored.

In conclusion, organizations continue to use the practice of expatriation quite often, as we are in an increasingly globalized world. They use mainly the internal recruitment through informal selection of expatriates, including through direct invitations.

The main motivations of expatriates to accept an international mission are professional development and, consequently, career progression, the possibility of having an international experience and to employees with family, the possibility to be accompanied by family and so live together this unique experience. As mentioned above, these motivations run counter to the existing literature.

Despite being an asset for organizations expatriate internal employees or for the trust given to them or the know-how they possess, process and management of expatriation and expatriated himself is, in most cases neglected.

Consequently organizations may suffer great losses, both monetary, in that expatriation is an expensive practice for an organization, or loss of consciousness, as the expatriate can take the organization out decision to join other and all the knowledge acquired during the expatriation will with him.

However, most expatriates interviewed positively evaluates the experience of expatriation, although organizations appear to have only a few rules to support the expatriated, including logistical and financial support, and they do not have a complete and thorough program of support to the management of expatriation. This review seems to be related to the individual motivations and expectations they have for the future. Briefly, individual motivations identified by expatriates are in accordance with the theory of self-reported by Pinto et al. (2012), in that the intrinsic motivation for an international task is related to the inherent interest in pursuing such activity because of its natural value and simultaneously the extrinsic motivation that reflects individual interests in the international task because of its results such as financial rewards and career prospects.

That is, individuals looking for an international experience are more likely to overcome the difficulties of adaptation, to feel more satisfied with the assignment and show greater intention to stay until the end of the international mission (Pinto et al., 2012).

Regarding the state of the psychological contract of expatriates can get the following conclusions: the stage prior to expatriation, there was mostly fulfilment of the psychological contract; at the stage of expatriation, particularly at the stage after adaptation, there was breach of the psychological contract by negligence; at the stage of repatriation, the expatriates perceived that their psychological contract will again be neglected.

This research presents some contributions to either the literature or to institutions with expatriates. Having obtained unanimous results among all expatriates, the results can contribute institutionally in the analysis, evaluation and possible changes of tools and practices management expatriates enhancing communication between expatriate and more effective and regular organization, building on the principles of training and development the psychological contract and the effects of breakage / violation to improve the management of expatriates which had provided important organizational outcomes. The contribution from the point of view of the practice, our study provides access to objective information about the psychological contract in expatriates and the risk that organizations will be running verifying the breach of the

psychological contract. Companies can, with this study to identify areas of greatest investment if they wish to initiate or maintain international missions.

On the other hand, it caveat some limitations of our study. The psychological contract has recognized influence in the way it manifests and develops the relationship between the individual and the organization, and the role of the organization in its management becomes difficult, which would be relevant that it could also take into account the organizational perspective / employer so we can compare both perspectives on the subject under study and thus increase knowledge of this. Another limitation was the concentration, for time reasons, our study on stage after adaptation, not having the possibility to follow expatriates during the various stages of expatriation.

As it relates to the contributions of this study for research in the area, it seems important to conduct a longitudinal study to allow an assessment of the psychological contract at different stages of expatriation. On the one hand, it seems relevant to determine the slope of the organizations in this process so that the study of the psychological contract is more comprehensive. On the other, we suggest the use of qualitative methods in order to obtain a broader sample, allowing the generalization of results.

Organizations should support programs to complex expatriates, fostering the growth of communication between the organization of origin and expatriate, to not feel "abandoned" and make this international mission experience a positive experience.

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