

Career Prepared – Taking up any Challenge: The Lived Experience of Brazilian
Business Expatriates' Career Development in the USA

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Dedication

To my family.

Abstract

Expatriates' career development is a topic that has been presented as crucial to the competitiveness of Multinational Corporations' (MNCs) in this global mobility era. The importance of this topic generated a large volume of literature. However, most studies examined the case of expatriates working for large organizations from developed countries. Despite the ascension of MNCs from developing economies, also known as late movers, research on expatriates' career development in MNCs from Latin America are scarce. Thus, more research on the topic of expatriates' career development, especially professionals from Latin America who are working for late movers MNCs in a developed country, is needed to enhance the global understanding of this phenomenon.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Brazilian expatriates working for Brazilian MNCs' subsidiaries in the United States of America (U.S.). The research method selected was phenomenology which focused on the participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and reflection on the phenomenon of expatriate career development. This indigenous Human Resource Development (HRD) research examined the lived experienced of five men and two women. The data were collected via interviews conducted twice or three times with each participant. The interviews addressed participants' life stories, career advancements experiences, and their meaning of the expatriate career development phenomenon.

The data analysis was performed with the active participation of the interviewees during and after the data collection and writing process. Findings revealed family

is the priority to these expatriates and is likely to drive their career advancements. In addition, three career development themes emerged: (a) transcending difficulties, (b) embracing the challenge, and (c) balancing multiple priorities.

In addition, this study resulted in the introduction of the *career prepared* construct to replace the career path/plan concept. Specifically, *career prepared* emphasizes expatriates' and family members' flexibility and adaptability to undertake challenges and embrace personal and professional opportunities, while considering frequent changes in organizations' strategy and practices beyond national boundaries to embark on a unique transformational life journey.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Business expatriate career development is a topic that has challenged practitioners, consultants, and scholars in this global era. Careers are being driven by individualizations, with individuals assuming control of their career transitions (Hall, 1996), embracing “boundaryless careers” by considering career changes beyond the borders of one organization (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), engaging in international experiences as global careerists (Näsholm, 2012) and further adopting dynamic global career (McNulty & Vance, 2017). Studies suggest that careers are more personalized, boundaryless and global than ever (Altman & Baruch, 2012; Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2013; Zeitz, Blau, & Fertig, 2009).

Meanwhile, multinational companies (MNCs) have struggled to comprehend, leverage, and manage the expatriate career expectations (McNulty & Vance, 2017) in an era when having a strong pool of global talent is requisite for international competitiveness (Kim & McLean, 2012). A study with Western expatriates in Hong Kong showed that MNCs provide few organizational career advancement activities congruent to the expatriates’ expectation of career progression (Selmer, 1999b). Additionally, a study with German expatriates presented their widespread dissatisfaction with how companies rewarded international experience (Stahl, Miller & Tung, 2002). For McNulty and Vance (2017), MNCs need to embrace the dynamics of the global career and nurture expatriates pursuing frequent career moves that overlap among assigned expatriates’ and self-assigned expatriates’ settings.

Scholars have also claimed for more studies that consider national, cultural,

structural, and regulatory constraints when analyzing global careers (Baruch & Reis, 2016). Regarding location, for instance, the literature on expatriates has focused mostly on cases of expatriates working for MNCs from developed economies (Dabic, González-Loureiro, & Harvey, 2015). However, “many, perhaps most, companies with global or international aspirations, are neither large nor US-based... They need a different strategy, policy, and practice for their international operations, in all aspects of management, and in particular the management of their people” (Baruch, Steele, & Quantrill, 2002, p. 659). In this case, career aspirations of expatriates from developing economies may be different from those of Western or American expatriates, and strategies and practices developed based on Western expatriates’ experiences should not necessarily be applied to all expatriates.

These facets of the expatriation have to be rigorously researched for developing effective HRD practices and theories for expatriate career development. HRD professionals need to comprehend how expatriates make sense of their careers advancements in a different context and what practices and activities can cope with their career progression. Studying the lived experience of novices’ expatriates, as the case of expatriates from developing economies is a way of contributing to this gap in this literature.

Topic conceptualization

According to McNulty and Brewster (2017), the term ‘expatriate’ has been poorly used in the past causing problems of inconsistent research and incomparability of findings, which led to a lack of clarity in the field. To clarify the definition of the term

“business expatriates”, McNulty and Brewster (2017) established four boundary conditions for this term. The four attributes to attain the status of a business expatriate are: (1) employment with an MNC or global organization in a professional role; (2) temporary nature of the international assignment; (3) non-citizen of the host country with some exceptions, like those who are citizen but unfamiliar with the host country and their experience in the country would be compared to that of an expatriate (For instance, third culture kids, or expatriates of dual nationality); (4) having a working permit (McNulty & Brewster, 2017). To contribute to a consistent body of literature on business expatriates, the definition adopted in this study is: “legally working individuals who reside temporarily in a country of which they are not a citizen in order to accomplish a career-related goal, being relocated abroad either by an organization, by self-initiation or directly employed within the host-country” (McNulty & Brewster, 2017, p. 46).

Expatriates have a crucial role for the success of MNCs in foreign markets because they can assist the headquarters in managing and controlling the subsidiary, and ensure the transfer of organizational culture and knowledge between headquarters and subsidiary (Selmer, 1999a). Despite expatriates’ critical role in the success of any MNCs, many organizations fail to support expatriate development (Webb & Wright, 1996). The diversification of individuals’ career needs has made contemporary international career development even more complicated, and organizations have struggled to attend to expatriates’ career expectations while gaining global competitiveness (Altman & Baruch, 2012). Thus, expatriates have demonstrated agency in their career changes and have avoided relying on MNC’s traditional linear forms of career progression (Altman &

Baruch, 2012; Guo, Porschitz, & Alves, 2013). Building career capital and international competences usable within or across companies and countries have been requisite to expatriates seeking to increase their employability in the global context (Stahl et al., 2002; Yao, Thorn, & Doherty, 2014).

Historically, expatriates' career advancement has shifted from the traditional ladder of career progression to a multidirectional career system (Baruch, Altman, & Tung, 2016). Expatriate career advancement goes beyond the boundaries of intra-organization career practices (Baruch & Reis, 2016). Innovative perspectives on expatriate career advancement through a holistic approach (Baruch et al., 2016) and non-linear and flexible conceptualization (McNulty & Vance, 2017) shed light on the topic of expatriate career development. Scholars have referred to expatriate career development “as a result of a sequence of opportunities taken and rejected that create linearity or non-linearity” (McNulty & Vance, 2017, p. 217).

Despite the existing global mobility literature, research on expatriate careers continues to be a challenge. According to Baruch, Altman and Tung (2016), it is essential to consider individuals' perspectives on careers in different contexts using holistic frameworks (e.g., the career ecosystem theory). Also, McNulty and Vance (2017) suggest the expatriate career as a continuum that recognizes personal and professional aspirations according to the situation and context presented to the expatriate. Dabic, González-Loureiro and Harvey (2015) argued for more studies on expatriates of enterprises from emerging or transitional economies entering into developed economies.

Therefore, developing and maintaining global talent has been the ultimate challenge for MNCs in this global era. Especially for the MNCs from emerging/developing economies, known as “late movers” due to their recent internationalization process, such as the Brazilian MNCs. The lack of research on expatriates’ aspirations and career development practices in Brazilian MNCs hinders the design of HRD tools, practices, interventions, methods, frameworks and strategies to support their career development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of career development for Brazilian business expatriates who are working in the USA. The participants of this study are expatriates from a developing economy, Brazil, working for Brazilian multinationals in a developed economy, the United States.

Research Questions

The general research question guiding this study is:

What is the experience of career development for Brazilian expatriates who are working in the USA?

Significance of this study

This study makes three main contributions to theory and practice. First, it examines the lived experience of Brazilian expatriates’ career development. The literature on business expatriates from developing countries, particularly those from the Latin America, is scarce. For instance, little is known about Brazilian expatriates’ career aspirations, perspectives and progression. In addition, most of the existent literature on

Brazilian expatriates is in Brazilian Portuguese, which prevents these research findings to be incorporated in the global literature of business expatriates. Studies of expatriates from Brazil are needed to learn suitable practices of global talent development and career progression for these professionals.

Second, the study considers contextual aspects of the phenomenon by delimitating the nationality of the organization's subsidiary, and host country. Being global is no longer a reality only of large companies from developed economies, but a necessity to all organizations that want to be competitive in the global market. This factor, however, is troublesome to Brazilian MNCs because they have expanded internationally only recently (Ramamurti, 2004). As a result, they simultaneously need to accelerate international market learning, create policies and practices for employees in international assignments, and deal with financial restraints (Tanure, Barcellos, & Fleury, 2009).

The recent internationalization processes of Brazilian MNCs, followed by the economic crisis in Brazil since 2013, have reinforced the assumption that Brazilian MNCs' internationalization supports organizational growth and sustainability. Consequently, despite Brazil's economic crisis, many Brazilian MNCs have expanded their business by establishing subsidiaries in foreign economies, and the largest number of Brazilian MNCs' subsidiaries is in the U.S. (Barakat, Cretoiu, Simoes, Resende, & Alvim, 2017). In addition, according to Tanure, Barcellos, and Fleury (2009) Brazilian MNCs face high incidences of problems concerning expatriate international adjustment. Thus, learning about Brazilian expatriates' career aspirations, experiences, and their career progression may improve Brazilian MNC's competitiveness in the global market.

Third, this indigenous research contributes to enhanced understanding of global HRD practices. Tsui (2004) claimed that indigenous research produces contextualized knowledge and contributes to the global knowledge. The author explains that “with the emergence of many developing economies around the world, progress in building the body of global management knowledge could be enhanced by encouraging high quality indigenous research in these novel contexts” (Tsui, 2004, p. 491). To understand how HRD is used in the global context and to have a continuous improvement in this field, HRD scholars must research countries that have had no, or little, HRD research (McLean, 2017). This study contributes to the global HRD literature by exploring the experiences of professionals from a developing economy working in a developed economy.

Limitations

This study has transferability constraints that need to be considered. This study approaches expatriate career progression just from the individuals’ perspective, in this case, the Brazilian business expatriates’ lived experience. Therefore, the aspirations and expectations of expatriates regarding their careers could lack feasibility. Thus, HRD practitioners should be cautious when designing and implementing practices based on the findings of this study because this study has not considered organizational resources availability, organizational strategies, and institutional constraints.

Another limitation related to the transferability of the findings is the constraints of the expatriate type. In this study, the sample is composed of a particular type of expatriates, the Brazilian business expatriates. Thus, the findings should be carefully analyzed when considering the reality of Brazilian self-initiated expatriates, or Brazilian

business expatriates working for MNCs from countries other than Brazil. For instance, these findings may not explain the career development perceptions of a Brazilian self-initiated expatriate working in an American or Western MNC.

HRD practitioners working for Brazilian multinationals must be prudent in using the findings of this study in a future economic or social scenario. For instance, national leaders or presidents around the world have been active in developing and implementing public politics pro and against global mobility, which might create difficulties or opportunities for expatriates worldwide. These actions can affect the expatriates' perception of their career development continually, so the findings of this study are limited to this singular phenomenon within a temporal dimension, rather than predicting expatriates' future behavior.

Key Terms

Many terms were used throughout the dissertation. Some of the key terms of this study are:

Multinational Corporation (MNC): An organization operating internationally through foreign direct investment.

Subsidiary: A MNC's branch engaged in sales, production or distribution in a foreign country.

Global mobility: The movement of goods, capital, and people due to the exponential growth in the globalization of corporations and markets, facilitated by the technologies that simplify and speed up the flow of information and reduce communication costs. (This definition was adapted from Baruch et al., 2016).

Career: “A sequence of related work experiences and activities, directed at personal and organizational goals, through which a person passes during his or her lifetime, that are partly under their control and partly under that of others” (Selmer, 1999a, p.79).

Internationalization: The process of firms entering and establishing themselves in international markets in order to achieve global competitiveness.

Late movers: Corporations that had a late process of internationalization; usually this term is used to designate MNCs from developing economies.

Emerging-markets: In this study, this term is used as a synonym of the term “developing country/economy.” For example, “developing and transition economies opened up to the global economy in recent years” (Ramamurti, 2004, p.3).

Phenomenology: “The study of what it is that appears in consciousness; or what is the eidos (unique meaning) of what shows itself” (Van Manen, 2017, p. 775).

Jeitinho: “A special way of managing obstacles in order to find a way out of bureaucracy” (Amado & Brasil, 1991, p. 48).

Gambiarra: “A nonprofessional, cheap, and quick repair or mending. Gambiarra as a rule ‘break up’ in very improper circumstances because the definitive arrangement is always postponed... a providsory solution becomes a permanent one, despite the risks involved in its adoption” (Amado & Brasil, 1991, p. 56).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Global mobility and expatriate development

Geopolitical and economic forces worldwide have increased the flow of humans around the globe. Technological advancements, facilitation of commercial trade, the formation of the economic blocks, and the economic crises have been drivers of labor mobility worldwide (Baruch et al., 2016). All these changes have affected multinational companies and transformed the context of expatriation (McNulty & Inkson, 2013). Selmer (1999b) claimed that the development of a pool of mobile expatriate managers is a strategic necessity for globalizing organizations. Multinational organizations' practices and policies have been altered to embrace the new configurations of the international market. The Brookfield Global Relocations Survey (2017) identified that companies had made changes or planned to make changes to the employees' mobility management practices, and the priority is to improve planning of career progression and repatriation timelines.

International career mobility has presented itself as diverse and dynamic by converting linear careers to multidirectional careers paths (Baruch, 2004). Caligiuri and Bonache (2016) explained that the diversity of expatriates' profiles is one evolving challenge regarding career mobility. In the past, senior executives working for large organizations from developed countries represented the international pool of expatriates; today, diversity is the most accurate description of the expatriate pool worldwide. Another evolving challenge is the expatriate career dynamics. McNulty and Vance (2017)

showed that expatriates are deviating from the traditional “one international assignment experience” path and adopting a long-term international career approach.

Motivations and drivers

In this multifaceted context of international careers, it appears essential to understand expatriation drivers or motives from the perspective of MNCs and individuals. MNCs have strategic reasons for assigning expatriates. Harzing (2001) conducted a literature review and identified three main expatriates’ functions: position filling, management development, and organization development. Harzing explained assumptions behind each function. For position filling, MNCs assume that expatriates transfer technical or managerial knowledge; fill the gaps arising due to the lack of qualified local personnel or trained local professionals; or address the company’s lack of knowledge about the local labor market due to its recent establishment. For management development, companies presume that expatriation develops an international mindset among the top management. And for organization development, MNCs believe that expatriates can control and coordinate functions according to the headquarters expectations, alleviating the fear that local managers are less committed to the company (Harzing, 2001). In addition, organizations recognize international assignments as an important tool for developing global managers, and enabling them to lead an organization in the globalized marketplace (Shay & Baack, 2004).

Meanwhile, the individuals’ reasons for accepting an international assignment differ from the organization's expatriation goals. For Selmer and Luring (2012), the misalignment of goals between expatriates and MNCs introduces challenges to career

mobility research. At the individual level, career is shaped by personal characteristics and needs (Yao, 2014). For American expatriates, “possession of a global perspective is crucial to survival in the twenty-first century” (Tung, 1998, p.129), and the expatriation is a manner of gaining expertise, resulting in career development, either in their current organization or elsewhere (Tung, 1998). Selmer (1999a) pointed out the willingness of the expatriate and his/her spouse to live abroad for a while. In a study with German employees, the three most important motives for being expatriate are personal challenge, professional development, the importance of the job itself (Stahl et al., 2002). In a study with Indian women expatriates the primary drives were cross-cultural and scientific exposure (Valk, van Engen , & van der Velde, 2014).

According to Suutari (2003), international assignments provide an opportunity for the expatriate to learn international business skills, develop cross-cultural leadership skills, and improve career prospects. Likewise, Adler (2002) explained that an overseas assignment can benefit individuals in four different ways: (1) increasing promotion prospects; (2) increasing income; (3) offering opportunity of challenging tasks; and (4) enhancing private life experiences. Overall, an international experience through an overseas assignment is perceived as a way of being exposed to the current globalized world, and acquiring skills for advancing in personal and professional life. As the number of organizations operating internationally continues to grow, the number of people seeking to have an international career experience is also growing (McNulty & Inkson, 2013).

These different perspectives of expatriates on international assignment show that individuals are evolving their understanding of the nature of international career development. People's opinion on career advancement has overcome boundaries of organizations and countries (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006; Inkson, 2006), resulting in high career mobility (Guo et al., 2013; Mezias & Scandura, 2005). The traditional notion of the intra-organizational career ladder is losing importance among individuals with high mobility, who are valuing different career experiences for building and developing skills that may be useful in any organization (Baruch et al., 2016).

Selection of expatriates

Webb and Wright (1996) claimed that the selection of candidates with particular skills and characteristics is critical for the expatriates' career success. A contingency framework for selection and training of expatriates was proposed by Tung in 1981 and revisited in 1998. Tung (1981) concluded that besides technical competence expatriates should have strong relational and interpersonal skills. In the revisited article, Tung (1998) explained that to maximize expatriate selection effectiveness a holistic and systematic approach is needed. An effective selection process is designed considering organizations' repatriation policies and practices, compensation, performance appraisal and training (Tung, 1998).

Selecting the right candidate helps to avoid the premature end of the international assignment, reduce adverse outcomes for the expatriate and the organization (Adams, Srivastava, Herriot, & Patterson, 2013), reduce turnovers, and low performance (Harzing

& Christensen, 2004). One problem in the selection criteria is the primary focus on individuals' technical competence (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). For many years, organizations have assumed that an individual performing well in the home country can perform well anywhere in the world (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991). This assumption has been shown inaccurate through the high rates of expatriate failure in the international assignments (Yeaton & Hall, 2008; Gupta, Banerjee, & Gaur, 2012).

Some elements of consideration in the selection process of overseas personnel are the individual's factors, such as previous international experience and personal traits. For Varner and Palmer (2005) individual factors such as personal traits and personal characteristics of expatriates should be considered in the selection of expatriates because they affect international adjustment and career development. According to Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, and Ferzandi (2006, p. 111) "personality traits are relatively stable, enduring patterns of how individuals feel, think, and behave." A test often used to appraise personality traits of the expatriate is the Big Five (see e.g. Bhatti, Kaur, & Battour, 2013). The test measures individuals' extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Caligiuri (2000) suggested that individuals who possess the personal trait of openness have greater contact with host nationals, which is positively related to cross-cultural adjustment. Jordan and Cartwright (1998) highlighted the importance of personality traits such as low neuroticism for dealing with stress and anxiety issues overseas, moderate extroversion for developing appropriate relational skills with host nationals, and high openness to experiences for appreciation of cultural and environmental differences between the home and host country.

Another individual factor considered important for successful expatriation is family support (Gupta et al., 2012). The family is the most common reason for expatriate's premature return (Linehan & Scullion, 2001), ineffective performance on the assignment (Harzing & Christensen, 2004), or for refusing international assignments (Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012). Mendenhall, Dunbar, and Oddou (1987) argue that potential adjustability of spouse and family members in the host country is a neglected variable in the selection process of expatriates. According to Tarique and Caligiuri (2009), expatriates and family members must interact effectively with people from different backgrounds and sometimes communicate in a different language. These challenges faced by individuals may result in anxiety, depression, and costs. However, family members can also enhance the career development of the expatriate. Luring and Selmer (2009) pointed out the positive effects of trailing spouses on the expatriate career by using social strategies, such as creating alliances and establishing social networks.

When moving abroad, the expatriates' spouse may face the challenge of the dual career couple (DCC), thus planning an expatriate career without considering the spouse's career seems ineffective (Riusala & Suutari, 2000). A trailing spouse may be required to temporarily sacrifice his/her career; thus, the spouse's expatriation could be creating a highly problematic situation for a dual career couple (Handler & Lane, 1997). Handler and Lane (1997) suggested eight solutions for dual career couple issues, based on the article of Reynolds and Bennett (1991), which are: counseling, inter-company job networking, intra-company job networking, fact-finding missions, continuing education, commuter marriages, lump sum mobility payments and creative problem-solving.

Moreover, the expatriate selection process literature has presented diversity issues that seem to persist over the years. The expatriation process is mostly a “man” process, as stated by Harris (2002): “think international manager, think male” (p.175). According to Linehan and Walsh (1999), the selection of female managers for an international assignment is less likely than for male managers. Bhatti, Sundram, and Hoe (2012) explained that recruiters display gender bias behaviors and underestimation of women’s ability to navigate the demands of an international assignment. Female managers perceive disadvantages in the selection process due to assumptions regarding domestic responsibilities and believe that if they want to be considered in the expatriate selection process, they have to request this themselves (Linehan & Walsh, 1999). The glass ceiling expression is used to describe this transparent and subtle barrier that prevents women from moving up in the organizational hierarchy, merely because they are women (Linehan & Walsh, 2001).

Considering diversity, the sexuality dimension is an issue little explored in the expatriate literature. Gedro (2010) states that there is a lack of research investigating situations faced by lesbians when seeking or assuming an international assignment. As presented by Gedro, Mizzi, Rocco, and van Loo (2013) there are more risks for LGBT people than for heterosexuals in an expatriation, due to issues such as legal, social, cultural and family systems. For example, homosexuality is a crime in some countries.

Training and development of expatriates

Expatriate literature has often presented cross-cultural training (CCT) before departure as the key to the successful expatriate assignment. “CCT is defined as the

educative processes used to improve intercultural learning via the development of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies needed for successful interactions in diverse cultures” (Littrell, Salas, Hess, Paley, & Riedel, 2006, p. 356). CCT offered to expatriates prior to departure has been presented as an essential tool for expatriates’ success because it helps expatriates adjust to the life and work in the host country (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Littrell et al., 2006). Black and Mendenhall (1990) explained that CCT fosters the development of skills in the expatriate that are critical for succeeding in a foreign country, including self-wellness maintenance, relationship with host-nationals, and cognitive cultural and environmental awareness. Thus, expatriates who receive CCT are less likely to return early, intend to leave the organization, or perform poorly while in the assignment (Littrell et al., 2006; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2009).

There are many types of CCT, and many of them are focused on cultural knowledge acquisition, which is based on the differences between the home and host country cultures (Lenartowicz, Johnson, & Konopaske, 2014). Improving expatriate awareness of the cultural differences between the home and host country can be definitive in the expatriate’s adjustment to the host country (Morris & Robie, 2001), and may consequently assist in international career development.

Tung (1982) developed a study about the selection and training practices of U.S., Western European and Japanese multinationals’, and classified training programs designed to prepare individuals for international assignments into six categories: (1) environmental briefing (information about the geography, climate, housing, schools); (2) cultural orientation (information about the cultural institutions, and value systems of the

host country); (3) culture assimilators (brief episodes describing intercultural encounters); (4) language training; (5) sensitivity training to develop attitudinal flexibility; and (6) field experience (wherein trainees go to the country of assignment or another place where expatriates would face the emotional stress of living and working with people from a different culture). Moreover, Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) suggested that selection and training processes should be conceived according to four streams of expatriate acculturation: (1) self-oriented – activities and attributes that reinforce expatriates' self-esteem, self-confidence, and mental hygiene; (2) others-oriented – activities and attributes that improve interpersonal skills with host nationals; (3) perceptual – activities to understand reasons and causes of host-nationals' behaviors; and (4) cultural-toughness – some countries are more difficult to adjust to than others. These studies have contributed to the literature on pre-departure training by presenting approaches and dimensions of considerations for designing a training program for personnel moving overseas (Harvey, Buckley, Richey, Moeller, & Novicevic, 2012; Harvey & Novicevic, 2001; Wood & El Mansour, 2010).

A practical and theory-based approach for selection of cross-cultural training methods was presented by Black and Mendenhall (1989). The authors explored the utility of the social learning theory to evaluate the level of rigor of the methods and determine the complexity of the cross-cultural training. From the lower to the higher rigorous training the authors listed twelve methods, which are divided into factual, analytical and experiential, as follows: area briefings, lectures, and books (factual); films, language training, case studies, culture assimilators, sensitivity training (analytical); interactive

language training, role plays, field trips, and simulations (experiential). Thus, the framework's rationale is that the more rigorous the method, the higher the level of attention and retention, resulting in reproduction proficiency (Black & Mendenhall, 1989).

Despite, the researchers' claims about the efficacy of cross-cultural training, supported by many years of research, companies seem still skeptical of its benefits (Osman-Gani & Zidan, 2001; Tarique & Caligiuri, 2009). The most common reasons for not offering CCT to expatriates are: expectations of replacement of the expatriate by a local national, temporary nature of assignment, doubt about effectiveness, and lack of time before expatriation (Tung, 1982), or even the often held belief that a person working well in one place will perform well in a different environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1989). Waxin and Panaccio (2005) investigated the effects of four different types of cross-cultural training (conventional, experimental, general and specific) on expatriates' adjustment and concluded that any CCT accelerates expatriates' adjustment. The authors pointed out that the most effective type of training is experiential which is focused on the host country's culture, and the authors found out that the effects of cross-cultural training are more significant when there is a considerable cultural distance between expatriates and host nationals, or when expatriates have little or no previous international experience (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005).

Moreover, research suggests that CCT effectiveness may depend on individuals' skills and stakeholders' support. For instance, Mertesacker (2009) suggested the use of tests for identifying people's weakness regarding cultural competencies to create proper

training interventions. Vance and Paik (2002) highlighted the importance of host-national inputs for expatriates' pre-departure training. Puck, Kittler, and Wright (2008) investigated the impact of pre-departure CCT on German expatriates' international adjustment and found that language skills have a significant impact on all degrees of adjustment.

CCT has been proven effective for developing skills in expatriates that may assist their career development. However, organizations struggle to offer this training due to the lack of either time or budgets (Deshpande & Viswesvaran, 1992; Linehan & Walsh, 1999; Stalker & Mavin, 2011). For this reason, Lenartowicz, Johnson, and Konopaske (2014) analyzed CCT methods suggested by other researchers (e.g., Black & Mendenhall, 1989; Tung, 1982) and developed a framework combining six elements of cross-cultural training as a function of available resources such as budget and time to provide insights on how CCT tools could be created and diffused (Lenartowicz et al., 2014).

Practices for expatriate career development

Support from the organization, host nationals, and the expatriate's family are all critical to the expatriate's skill development, adjustment, performance and career advancement during the assignment. However, expatriates' skills development is likely conditional on them adjusting to the international context. International adjustment of business expatriates happens over the international assignment in the foreign environment and it has a great effect on job performance (Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001; Tucker, Bonial, & Lahti, 2004), and career development (Haslberger, 2012). Likewise, Osman-Gani and Rockstuhl (2008) highlighted that "one of the major determinants of expatriate

performance effectiveness is how well they adjust themselves to function effectively in the host culture” (p. 32).

Toward an understanding of one’s work role transitions over the career course, Black (1988) examined the variables related to work role transition when one is assuming an international assignment. This study considered the importance of adjusting well during the international career transition movement. Since the publication of this research, among all the issues related to expatriation, the issue of expatriate adjustment has received the most significant attention since the late 1970s (Black et al., 1991; Jackson & Manderscheid, 2015; Maertz, Hassan, & Magnusson, 2009; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008; Zhang, 2013). An influential study on international adjustment was conducted by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) who proposed an integrative model of international adjustment, and explained international adjustment as a multifaceted and multidimensional process. The model considered factors prior to and during the international assignment and concluded that these factors affect three degrees of international adjustment differently. These factors are: (1) work adjustment – variables related to work; (2) interaction adjustment – relational skills with host countries; and (3) general adjustment – variables that affect daily life outside the work.

Since Black and his colleagues proposed the adjustment model in 1991, many other researchers examined predictors of expatriate adjustment. For example, Aycan (1997) examined organizational practices and found that organizational support, such as MNCs' international structure, value orientation, organizational life-cycle, diversity training, strategic planning and socialization are predictors of expatriate adjustment.

Maertz, Hassan, and Magnusson (2009) focused on cognitive processes to explain international adjustment; according to the authors, expatriates may experience a cognitive dissonance from conflicts between expatriate's own values and attitudes, and expected cultural behaviors in the host country. In addition, Tucker, Bonial, and Lahti (2004) presented job performance as a predictor of international adjustment.

International adjustment has received attention from researchers and practitioners because poor expatriate adjustment has direct consequences for organizational performances, including: premature return, underperformance, damage of organization's reputation, loss of business opportunities and turnover (Swaak, 1995; Tung, 1987). The consequences for expatriates who experience a poor adjustment may include loss of self-esteem, loss of self-confidence in the managerial ability, and loss of prestige among peers (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Each of these consequences results in high costs and great risks, both for the organization and for the expatriate (Harzing & Christensen, 2004).

Due to the high cost and risk of an expatriation failure, an effort was made to measure and quantify expatriate failure rates. Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) claimed that expatriates' failure rates are very high if premature return is used as one of the indicators of failure. However, the research of Mendenhall and Oddou analyzed only the case of expatriates from U.S. multinationals; Tung (1987) found lower expatriate failure rates among Japanese and European multinationals. Meanwhile, Harzing (1995) pointed out that expatriates' failure rate may be lower than expected. The author also highlighted that expatriates' low performance in the host country can be even more harmful for the organization than premature return (Harzing, 1995). Later on, Harzing and Christensen

(2004) pointed out that expatriate failure rate is a myth that persists in the literature, and suggested that the related conceptual issues may be solved by applying performance and turnover HR practices in the international context.

Further, many studies suggested the importance of expatriate adjustment to career development; however, this relationship between expatriation and career is still not clear in the literature (see e.g. Bolino, 2007; Haslberger, 2012; Selmer, 1999a). Selmer (1999a) investigated the relationship between career issues and expatriates' adjustment in three dimensions: work, social (general and interaction) and psychological (wellness) adjustment. The author found that achievement of career goals in the organization has no effect on work adjustment, while meeting career goals affects the dimensions of social and psychological adjustment. Given the unexpected findings Selmer indicated that expatriate assignments are seen by many individuals as an opportunity to live abroad, and that this career decision, which was made longer before accepting the assignment, has eased the adjustment (Selmer, 1999a). Haslberger (2012) investigated the relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and career competency growth. He concluded that developing and maintaining relationships with locals has a positive influence on the expatriate's career capital growth. However, he also found that daily interaction with hosts is not related to career capital development (Haslberger, 2012).

Organizations have attempted to enhance the expatriate experience and develop the expatriate careers by providing a logical plan for career progression. However, parent organizations have failed to provide a comprehensive human resource support program to expatriates (Webb & Wright, 1996), and assistance to the business expatriates' career

(Selmer, 1999b), during the assignment. The Global Mobility Trend 2016 report showed that only 23% of organizations have a specific process for career planning from assignment acceptance. Moreover, Selmer (1999b) suggested that career paths should be congruent to organizational career activities and individual career counseling. Bolino (2007) proposed that career development plans are essential for expatriates to perceive the assignment as a positive effect in intra-organizations career success. In addition, organizational career development programs play an important role in fostering expatriate effectiveness (Feldman and Thomas, 1992).

To address this gap in career supporting practices during the assignment, some researchers noticed the importance of on-site training for expatriates' development and adjustment (Mendenhall & Stahl, 2000; Suutari & Burch, 2001). For Wright, Geroy, and Baker (1996, p.38) "brief employee development programs (on-site, or during furloughs) can help prevent stagnation". Likewise, Suutari and Burch (2001) argued that on-site training can capture the challenges in the present context, and facilitate the participation of family and the host nationals. The authors also suggested that on-site training increases the expatriates' perception of self-preparation, resulting in satisfaction and efficiency in the job role. Consequently, continued training and logical career path while on the assignment, seem to assist in the expatriate career development.

Another issue that research has highlighted is the common communication gap between expatriates and parent organization as one of the greatest struggles for expatriates, which is named as "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" dilemma (Mendenhall, Dunbar & Oddou, 1987; Wong, 2005). This dilemma refers to the expatriates' feeling of a loss of

connection to the parent organization due to lack of situational information, or knowledge of activities happening in the home country organization. This loss of communication may also result in loss of career advancement opportunities (Jassawalla, Asgary, & Sashittal, 2006). Mendenhall et al. (1987) suggested two practices for reducing this dilemma: one is to establish a network that will provide information about daily activities in the headquarters, and the other is to create and distribute a newsletter, designed to inform expatriates about the organization's situation and accomplishments. According to Webb and Wright (1996), expatriates should be provided temporary assignments back in their home country to facilitate their ability to stay connected with the parent organization.

For female expatriates, the career challenges in the overseas work role are even greater than for male counterparts. Selmer and Leung (2002) pointed out that organizations appreciate a female expatriate's career less; as a result, female expatriates have greater difficulty meeting career goals in the organization. In addition, female expatriates receive less corporate career support than male expatriates, which may reduce the motivations of female employees to accept an international assignment (Linehan & Scullion, 2001; Selmer & Leung, 2003). For Linehan and Scullion (2001) female employees who want to have an expatriate career, must be more determined and prepared than male expatriates. The authors explained that female employees have to break through the invisible career barrier known as the "glass ceiling" for female expatriates, by performing better than their male counterparts and assuming a greater number of simultaneous functions. According to Linehan and Walsh, (2001) "organizations that

adopt a proactive approach to female expatriate managers should have a competitive advantage in the international environment” (p. 85).

Mentoring has been presented as an efficient practice for maintaining continued professional growth of expatriates. Mentors can assist expatriates on cultural adjustment and language training (Wright, Geroy, & Baker, 1996), reduce stress and manage expatriates experience (Feldman & Thomas, 1992; Webb & Wright, 1996). Expatriates concur with the benefits of having mentors, either formal or informal, and perceive mentors as helpful in addressing issues, such as job definition, performance expectations, language support, cross-cultural training, and career path upon return (Jassawalla et al., 2006). While in the assignment, mentors can assist expatriates who experience the “out-of-sight, out-of-mind” dilemma by providing information about the organization directions and advocating for the expatriate in the home office (Jassawalla et al., 2006). Moreover, home and host country mentors’ psychological support, role modeling, and career development functions have a positive impact on expatriates’ general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment (Zhuang, Wu, & Wen, 2013). Carraher, Sullivan, and Crocitto (2008) examined the impact of home- and host-country mentors on expatriate career outcomes and found out that home-country mentors had significant positive effect on expatriate’s organizational knowledge, job performance and promotability. Host-country mentors had a significant positive effect on organization knowledge, organizational knowledge sharing, job performance, promotability, and teamwork. Surprisingly, the researchers found that mentors had no significant effect on reducing job tensions (Carraher, Sullivan, & Crocitto, 2008).

Overall, through an overseas assignment, individuals can obtain international experience and enhance career development (Inkson, Pringle, Arthur, & Barry, 1997). As pointed out by Stroh, Black, Mendenhall, and Gregersen (2005) many executives perceive the international assignment as the most influential factor in developing their managerial skills. Hence, organizations should foster expatriate career activities during the assignment, including logical career plan, on-site training, and mentoring. Meanwhile, some researchers suggested more research on the long-term impact of the connection between international assignment and career success (Bolino, 2007; Stahl et al., 2002).

Repatriation issues and the expatriate career

Expatriates who returned to their home country after completing their assignment overseas are known as repatriates. Repatriates claim that the returning process is a difficult period of the expatriation process because of uncertainties and anxieties related to work and non-work facets (Stroh, Gregersen, & Black, 2000). In a literature review on repatriates, Nery-Kjerfve and McLean (2012) identified four main issues regarding repatriation of expatriate employees: (a) repatriation adjustment, (b) organizational commitment, (c) turnover intention, and (d) career transition. Over the overseas assignment, expatriates and their family may assimilate the host country culture and modify his/her perspective of the home country culture, resulting in a “reverse cultural shock” (Harvey, 1982). As a result, repatriates may feel transformed as a person due to the time spent and experience gained in the overseas assignment (Osman-Gani & Hyder, 2008).

Often repatriates face readjustment problems because of changes in the life and work conditions in the home country (Osman-Gani & Hyder, 2008). For instance, it is likely that expatriates lose enhanced international assignment compensation packages (Webb & Wright, 1996), resulting in concerns about salary level and living standards (Riusala & Suutari, 2000). Thus, family members may have to adjust to a different living standard (Hurn, 2007), and children may have to adapt to a different educational setting (Clegg & Gray, 2002). Friends, family, and neighborhood also change, and suddenly the expatriates have to deal with inevitable surprises (Stroh et al., 2000). All these changes contribute to the feeling of being a foreigner in their country of origin (Webb & Wright, 1996).

Within the organization, repatriates experience job or position uncertainty and adaptation, which is also a challenge. Few expatriates are being given a guaranteed position within the organization upon return from an international assignment (Tung, 1987). When returning to the parent organization, expatriates face many changes at the organizational level; some managers have described that the changes can be so significant that they feel like they are working in a new organization (Black, 1992). Organizations may assume that repatriates have to figure out how to navigate their re-entry on their own when returning to the parent organization (Webb & Wright, 1996). However, when expatriates return to the parent organization they may face a phase in their careers where they do not have certainty of a role in the organization. As a result, they may assume temporary positions. This phenomenon is referred to as entering a “holding pattern” (Feldman & Thomas, 1992; Harvey & Moeller, 2009; Suutari, 2003).

Most of these uncertainties come from a long period of time away from the day-to-day organizational activities at the parent organization. When expatriates remain out-of-sight, out-of-mind during the international assignment, they lose the contact with supervisor and social networks, and, consequently, the bonds that could make their return easier (Suutari & Brewster, 2003). Thus, the repatriate needs to reestablish social contact, and learn new procedures and practices that have been executed in the organization. HR departments may play an important role in maintaining the expatriates' connection to the organization, and the repatriate satisfaction (Baruch et al., 2002).

Besides all organizations' attempts and efforts to develop managers with international managerial skills, there is a huge gap between expatriates' and organizational' expectations regarding career advancement. On the one hand, the expatriate expects that career opportunities will flourish due to their acquisition of international managerial skills and learning experiences acquired over the assignment (Black, 1992). On the other hand, organizations seem uncertain about how to best leverage those skills and knowledge for the benefit of the organization, and frequently fail to take advantage of the international managerial experience that the expatriate can provide (Webb & Wright, 1996). Bolino (2007) highlighted that repatriates often feel unappreciated by their managers and believe that their return to the parent company is mismanaged.

Long-term international assignments can present a particular challenge to the career success of the repatriate. According to Feldman and Thomas (1992) expatriates who stay for long periods of time in international assignments have trouble sustaining

their career development path compared to their domestic coworkers. Expatriates mentioned that being out of the country for a long period of time on the assignment can result in them being labeled as permanent expatriates, and being removed from consideration for promotion (Feldman & Thomas, 1992). In addition, U.S. expatriates claimed that it was hard to adjust to the U.S. again (Feldman & Thomas, 1992). In fact, expatriate assignments that were supposed to increase career mobility have slowed down promotion (Feldman & Thomas, 1992; Webb & Wright, 1996).

For female repatriates, the barriers of this international career move are even more stressful. According to Linehan and Scullion (2002) female repatriates have twelve different implications on their career when returning to the parent organization compared to male counterparts, including additional difficulties associated with male spouses, work-family conflict, lack of mentors, networking and female role models, difficulties involved in breaking the glass ceiling in home country organizations, tokenism, and lack of career planning for female managers. In the same research, Linehan and Scullion (2002) found that female expatriates evaluated as helpful the support of mentors or networks during the international assignment because they assist the expatriate in keeping informed about the organization, which may facilitate repatriation to the parent organization.

Due to the challenges expatriates face upon repatriation, many repatriates perform poorly in the new role, or leave the organization soon after returning from an international assignment (Black, 1992). Bonache (2005) investigated job satisfaction and career prospects among domestic employees, expatriates, and repatriates and found that

expatriates have greater job satisfaction and career prospects than domestic employees and repatriates. The Global Mobility Trend report 2016 listed three main explanations for post-repatriation attrition: (a) new role expectations not met, (b) employee more marketable, and (c) no opportunity to use the experience. These findings show that the dissatisfaction of returnees regarding job and career prospects may result in their turnover.

Turnover among repatriates is relatively high (Shortland, 2011), but it has not received enough consideration from organizations (Linehan & Scullion, 2002). Expatriate's career success upon repatriation affects the organizations' ability to retain future repatriates and recruit future expatriates (Bolino, 2007). Organizations fall short when they fail to recognize and address repatriate's expectations. By retaining repatriates, organizations have the potential benefit of enhanced global knowledge and organizational learning in multinational corporations (Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012).

Nonetheless, strategies for adjustment and career issues during the repatriation process are emerging. Often, researchers are advising expatriates to take a proactive role in the repatriation process. O'Sullivan, Appelbaum, and Abikhzer (2002) analyzed the cases of three Canadian multinationals and found that organizations expect the expatriate to be proactive regarding his/her career. Baruch, Steele, and Quantrill (2002) showed that many repatriates are making proactive career moves because of the lack of HR repatriation activities. Altman and Baruch (2012) recognized the importance of change from a traditional organization-based career system to individual career systems. Webb and Wright (1996) suggested that expatriates begin discussions and preparation to

repatriate six to twelve months before completing the assignment and that this preparation time should appear in the expatriation contract.

Career plans that include all stages of the expatriation process seem to assist the returnee employee by reducing uncertainties (Feldman & Thomas, 1992). By establishing a career plan that involves all stages of the process, the gap between expatriates' and organizations' expectations and high rates of turnover may be reduced. Selmer (1999a) presented career-planning workshops as learning experiences that enable self-assessment and provide skills for personal development plans. Career plans for expatriates should also consider expatriates' family members. Family repatriation program is one of the career support practices most appreciated by expatriates, as shown by Riusala and Suutari (2000).

According to Nery-Kjerfve and McLean (2012, p. 626) "repatriation policies are essential to assure the adjustment and retention of expatriate employees." Webb and Wright, (1996) suggested some practices of HR personnel that could reduce repatriate turnover: (a) review and document experience of the international personnel, (b) perform an exit interview with expatriates and their family members, gathering information for next expatriate, (c) provide review sessions with expatriates to learn characteristics and attitudes for successful expatriation, (d) promote international experience as an essential part of the career of top management, and (e) utilize the expatriates as a resource for training others in the skills required for international assignment. Bolino (2007) highlighted the need for connectivity mechanisms, such as mentors. Likewise, Selmer

(1999b) claimed that individual career counselors can help expatriates learn best practices for managing their careers.

Overall, repatriation is an under-researched topic in the literature of international career development (Nery-Kjerfve & McLean, 2012), and it deserves more attention due to its implications for improving multinationals organizations' efficiency, profitability, growth, and even survival (Selmer, 1999b).

Theories of expatriate career development

Theories validating individuals' career agency such as boundaryless and protean career studies have been central to explain the individuals' proactive role on the phenomenon of expatriate career development. The concept of boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) has emerged by recognizing that individuals are assuming control of their career paths and that they have overcome organizational career boundaries. Arthur and Rousseau (1996) stated, "boundaryless careers are the opposite of organizational careers" (p.5). Moreover, this type of career represents a new career model, which goes beyond the boundaries of one single organization, industry, or location by endorsing a value-driven and self-directed attitude toward career management (Briscoe et al., 2006). As a result, "the boundaryless career has become one of the most prominent and influential contemporary career concepts" (Gubler, Arnold, & Coombs, 2014, p. 641).

To advance the academic knowledge on the connection between boundaryless career concept and career mobility, Sullivan and Arthur (2006) analyzed individuals' psychological and physical degrees of mobility and created a model that assesses

individual's boundaries related to careers. Based on the model, the authors suggested five propositions: (1) individuals with greater career competencies have more chances of experiencing psychological and physical mobility opportunities; (2) when individuals are enhancing their career competencies, they are more likely to increase psychological or physical mobility non-simultaneously; (3) women might have greater physiological mobility, due to social norms and constraints, while men might have greater psychical mobility; (4) individualistic individuals are more likely to have physical mobility and move along groups and organizations, while collectivist individuals are more likely to stay in their groups and organizations and demonstrate more psychological mobility; (5) individualistic individuals are more likely to identify physical mobility opportunities, while collectivists individuals are more likely to recognize psychological mobility (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). This study has shed light on the boundaryless career concept, by connecting individuals' factors and its implications on one's career mobility degree.

Furthermore, studies have searched the connection between the boundaryless career concept and global careers. Baruch and Reis (2016) indicated that careers are becoming more boundaryless and global than ever, although the connections between global and boundaryless dimensions are ambiguous. By developing a two-dimensional framework, the authors stated that all global careers are boundaryless, but boundaryless careers might not be global. According to these authors, scholars need to consider factors like national, cultural, structural, and regulatory constraints. These aspects can modify how individuals and organizations reflect and deal with global career, including how the setting affects one's aspiration and meaning of global careers (Baruch & Reis, 2016).

Many studies have used the boundaryless career notion to study expatriates' career development. For instance, Stahl, Miller and Tung (2002) explored how 494 German conceptualize the expatriate career, perceive the impact of the expatriation on personal and career advancement, and analyzed the influence of corporate expatriate career practices. The results of this research showed that most German expatriates perceive the expatriation as an opportunity for personal, professional, and career progression regardless of the restricted availability of corporate career development practices. Moreover, they believe that the expatriation experience might not promote career advancements within the organization (Stahl et al., 2002). Thus, the findings of this study supported the application of the boundaryless career concept to exploring expatriates' career development.

The boundaryless career concept was also used to explore changing aspects of Chinese early career expatriates. Yao, Thorn and Doherty (2014) have investigated demographic and contextual factors affecting Chinese's perceptions on career mobility, and concluded that their perceptions on careers boundaries can facilitate or restrict career mobility according to contextual changes. The authors highlighted that the Chinese adjust their perception on career boundaries properties according to their cultural values, demographics, and life stages. Therefore, the results of this study supported that the boundaryless career concept contributes to the literature on expatriate career, and claimed that its effects are multi-dimensional and can change according to individuals, organizations, cultural factors, and contextual scenarios (Yao et al., 2014).

Complementing the boundaryless career studies, researchers have explored the protean career concept and used it to explain the role of workers' flexibility. As Haber and Bertone (2015, p.1134) explained: "the term protean comes from Greek mythology's Proteus, a sea-god able to easily alter his shape and appearance when necessary." The protean career concept was first introduced by Douglas Hall in 1976. A quarter-century after its introduction, Hall (2004) revisited the origins of the term "protean" and reviewed its developments, by reflecting on his personal and scholarly experiences, and analyzing career literature linked to the protean term. Hall (2004) defined the protean career as "a career that is self-determined, driven by personal values rather than organizational rewards, and serving the whole person, family, and 'life purpose'" (p.2). In these terms, one's career success is psychological, and organizations have a reduced agency on one's career progression and success. According to Hall, peoples have metacompetencies that shape one's behavioral responses to life and career choices' level. The two metacompetencies are: adaptability and self-awareness. The higher these metacompetencies, the higher the protean orientation (Hall, 2004).

The protean career concept has also contributed to the literature on expatriates' career development. Crowley-Henry (2007) explored the case of 20 expatriates from developed economies who decided to remain in France and in Germany, the host countries, for indeterminate time. This empirical study showed that expatriates have a holistic view of their careers and factors like quality of life, work-life balance, and family affect tremendously one's willingness of accepting an international assignment, remaining in the host country, and shaping future career directions (Crowley-Henry,

2007). The findings of this study provided significant support of the protean career concept to explore expatriates' career development. Likewise, Cao, Hirschi, and Deller (2013) analyzed 132 self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) in Germany, and found a positive relationship between protean career orientation and three main career outcomes: career satisfaction, life satisfaction, and intention to stay in the host country; yet a relationship was mediated by the expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment. Thus, the authors suggested that organizations and host countries should foster skilled international workforce with a protean career attitude to increase employees' retention and avoid talent shortages (Cao et al., 2013).

Additionally, researchers have investigated the interaction between these two career concepts. Hall (2004) pointed out the increased interest in the relationship between boundaryless career and protean orientation, and the development of a tool to measure one's boundaryless career and protean orientation. Results from this scale showed that there is a moderate positive correlation, which indicated that these two terms are related, but distinctive concepts. Inkson (2006) analyzed and evaluated the boundaryless and protean careers as metaphors to provide a precise and symbolic meaning, evaluated its elaboration in career theories, examined external understanding, presented their relationship, and asserted their reliability and utility. His analysis showed that both metaphors are suitable to study careers' dynamics (Inkson, 2006). For Briscoe, Hall, and DeMuth (2006) the protean career emphasizes emotional career success as a consequence of self-directed vocational behavior. While the boundaryless career, on the other hand, "focuses on crossing objective and subjective dimensions of career at multiple levels of

analysis, including organizational position, mobility, flexibility, the work environment, and the opportunity structure while at the same time de-emphasizing reliance on organizational promotions and career paths” (Briscoe et al., 2006, p.31). Along the years, both concepts, the boundaryless and protean career, have provided evidences to understand the challenges and dynamics of global careers in the 21st century.

Another important consideration in the expatriate career development theory is the role of the family. Tung (1987) presented family as the principal reason of American and Europeans expatriates’ failure, and noticed that the family impact on Japanese expatriates’ failure is lesser, because Japanese wives are more compliant to adversities encountered in the host country. Likewise, Linehan and Walsh (2001) presented work-family balance as a conflicting experience to senior female international manager. Chiotis-Leskowich (2009) examined family as an expatriate failure factor, and claimed that the literature has fixated on training and development of expatriates, and undermined the effects of family issues on expatriate career success. For, Ananthram and Chan (2013) who interviewed 26 Canadian and American HR executives, the work family balance was a major challenge faced by global human resource executives. Despite of substantial evidence that family is a key element to expatriate career success, to my knowledge none of the extant studies has selected the family system theory perspective to examine expatriate career, while only one study has used the family system theory to understand expatriates’ cross-cultural interaction processes (e.g Rosenbusch & Cseh, 2012).

An insightful article on the family systems dynamics was written by Miller, Ryan, Keitner, Bishop and Epstein (2000) who developed The McMaster approach to families,

based on a system theory, and provided five basic assumptions about family functioning and treatment:

(1) all parts of the family are interrelated, (2) one part of the family cannot be understood in isolation from the rest of the family system, (3) family functioning cannot be fully understood by simply understanding each of the individual family members or subgroups, (4) a family's structure and organization are important factors that strongly influence and determine the behavior of family members, and (5) the transactional patterns of the family system strongly shape the behavior of family members (Miller, Ryan, Keitner, Bishop & Epstein, 2000, p. 169).

Based on these major concepts of the McMaster approach, the researchers developed and integrated three teachable and transferable methods that can be applied to diverse family problems in different settings: "(1) a multi-dimensional theory of family functioning, (2) assessment instruments to assess these constructs, and (3) a well-defined method of family treatment" (Miller et al., 2000, p.168). Rosenbusch and Cseh (2012) claimed that this family systems perspective created by Millet et al. (2000) provides insights to organizations, HRD professionals, expatriates, and expatriates' family members on how to understand the social dynamics that emerge in an expatriate family and its implications to the family flexibility.

Moreover, new theoretical approaches to explaining expatriate career development have emerged in the literature in recent years. For instance, Baruch et al. (2016) presented expatriation and repatriation as a career ecosystem model, showing the different facets and dimensions of this multifaceted and multidimensional process, given

a holistic approach to the expatriate career literature. McNulty and Vance (2017) deconstructed the predominant linear approach to global careers, suggesting an intersection among assigned expatriates (AE) and self-initiated expatriates (SIE), and theorizing an AE-SIE *career continuum* by explaining the dynamic changes in career orientation that nurture the engagement of expatriates in different types of international work experiences.

Brazilian multinationals and expatriate career development

The international business literature has extensively explored the nature and characteristics of developing countries' MNCs, and have asserted that Western or traditional multinationals, such as the ones' from Europe, the U.S, and Japan, differ in terms of structure and strategy from the emerging MNCs or late movers, such as the multinationals from Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (Cuervo-Cazurra & Genc, 2008; Ramamurti, 2009). The Brazilians MNCs are considered late movers, as many other MNCs from developing economies, due to their late internationalization process.

Brazilian MNCs' internationalization process is late even when compared to the internationalization process of MNCs from some other countries of Latin America (Rocha, Silva & Carneiro, 2007). The recent and accelerated internationalization process of Brazilian MNCs started in the 90's, with a radical political and economic decision to open the country to the international market (Tavares & Ferraz, 2007). However, this international market' openness revealed that the Brazilian organizations were unprepared to compete globally. For instance, the Brazilian MNCs were oblivious to foreign

languages, international market structure, customers' preferences, international legislation, technical norms, and business practices (Tanure, Cyrino & Penido, 2007). This problematic scenario showed that Brazilian MNCs needed to build competencies rapidly to thrive in the competitive international market (Tavares & Ferraz, 2007). Thus, in 2004, governmental agencies started to support the internationalization process of Brazilian MNCs (Fleury & Fleury, 2007).

The traditional MNCs had competitive advantages that imposed the need to develop unique competitive advantages to the late movers including the Brazilian MNCs, such as the creation of organizational competencies related to customer satisfaction, and the development of technical and human resources (Borini, Urban, Fleury, & Rosas, 2007). Nevertheless, Tanure et al. (2009) explored Brazilian MNCs' corporate expatriates' practices and observed that the Brazilian MNCs have disregarded customary corporate business expatriate practices like selection and training.

Muritiba, Muritiba, Albuquerque and Fleury (2007) interviewed six Brazilian MNC HR managers from different industries to analyze corporate expatriate management practices, and identified six main challenges for the Brazilian MNCs' HR departments: (1) creation of long term expatriate planning due to its expatriate management complexity; (2) development of new configurations and standardization of practices; (3) selection and development of professionals; (4) design of training and development tools for developing global competencies; (5) creation of a structured compensation system based on the host country's rules; and (6) management of the organization culture to nurture a global organizational culture (Muritiba, Muritiba, Albuquerque, & Fleury,

2007). Consequently, Brazilian MNCs acknowledge that human resource practices play a major role in the Brazilian MNCs' internationalization success.

Another important feature in the Brazilian workplace is the Brazilian cultural effect on organization's and individual's behaviors. Azevedo, Ardichvili, Casa Nova, and Cornacchione (2016) explored how the Brazilian culture and sociopolitical and institutional settings have influenced human resource development in Brazil. The researchers described the impact of the cultural term *jeitinho* on the business environment in Brazil. Amado and Brasil (1991, p.10) described *jeitinho* as "a rapid, improvised, creative response to a law, rule, or custom that on its face prevents someone from doing something." In addition, Brazilian workplace culture has other particular features:

- (a) paternalism, which is defined as a dyadic relationship between superiors and their subordinates in which superiors provide protection and guidance in exchange for loyalty and deference on the part of subordinates (Kjellin & Nilstun, 1993);
- (b) power concentration based on network of personal relationships between executives and top managers;
- (c) the loyalty of employees to peers and leaders;
- and (d) flexibility in work arrangements" (Azevedo, Ardichvili, Casa Nova, & Cornacchione l. 2016, p. 251-252).

In addition, the particularities of the Brazilian setting have implications at the individual level. Gannon and Pillai (2013) explained that the Brazilian' diversity, historical social contrasts, and political and economic uncertainties have confronted Brazilians with many adversities, but the Brazilians' passion for life refills their spirit to overcome these difficulties continuously. By using samba, a popular Brazilian musical

style, as a metaphor, Gannon and Pillai claimed that “samba encapsulates this passion for life and serves to replenish the well in both good times and bad” (p. 547). The authors also explored issues related to Brazilian’s personal lives, and claimed that one can easily socialize and establish a network of people, but one will take a long time to develop a deep and lasting friendship. Although when one achieves this long enduring friendship, one might be considered like a family member (Gannon & Pillai, 2013). Moreover, “Family is the most important institution and, hence, greatly influences the individual” (p.552).

Azevedo et al. (2016) asserted that Brazilians have plenty of particularities that inference workforce development approaches, and suggested that HRD professionals should be aware that frameworks and theories developed in other countries might be unsuitable to comprehend and assure Brazilian workforce’s development.

Summary of the literature review

This literature review addressed three main topics regarding expatriate career development: (1) the multilevel, multifaceted and dynamic process of expatriate career development; (2) the theories that have been used by other researchers to study this phenomenon; and (3) the particularities of the Brazilian setting that can affect Brazilian expatriates’ career development.

The first section of the literature review explained the complexities of the expatriate career phenomenon by addressing issues like the global mobility landscape, the motivations and drivers of expatriates in global labor markets, the types of expatriate training and their influence on expatriate adjustment and development, corporate

practices for expatriate career development, and the issues related to the repatriation process. Overall, this section provides many evidences of the complexities of this phenomenon and its dynamics.

In the second section, I examined theories that have been used in previous studies to conduct research on this phenomenon. My review suggested that there is a strong stream of theories emphasizing individuals' proactivity related to career development, and individual mindsets and perceptions of the world where labor mobility results in fading of the organizational and national borders. In addition, this section showed the recurrent and important role of family in expatriates' career advancements. Most studies have considered family as a singular facet of the phenomenon, while only one study has suggested to conduct research on expatriates by selecting a family system theory perspective to understand family dynamics and implications for the expatriate experience. Other emergent theoretical approaches to conduct research on expatriate career are the ecosystem theory and dynamic career theory.

The third section suggested that the expatriate career development literature is extensive, but has a number of gaps. Specifically, there is scarcity of research on expatriates from developing countries and emerging economies, and expatriates working for small and medium-sized organizations. Research on Brazilian expatriates and Brazilian Multinationals that have particular cultural, economic and historic characteristics, is especially scarce. Therefore, it would be beneficial to expatriates, organizations, and the research community to conduct studies that use a holistic approach to the analysis of frequent global changes, consider multifaceted nature of the

phenomenon and its interactions, use new theoretical approaches, and study groups of expatriates and organizations little examined to date.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter presents the overall approach and rationale of this qualitative research, explains population selection and sampling strategies, provides a personal biography of the researcher, discusses ethical and political considerations, and describes data collection methods, analysis procedures, and procedures used to address trustworthiness and credibility.

This qualitative study applied a phenomenological approach seeking to explore the meaning of individuals' lived experiences. According to Titchen and Hobson (2011), "phenomenology is the study of lived, human phenomena within the everyday social contexts in which the phenomena occur, from the perspective of those who experience them" (p. 121). Husserl argued for a demanding and impartial study of things as it is to reach the vital understanding of the subjects' mindfulness and experience (Dowling, 2007). By following this philosophy, Husserl introduced the term bracketing used for phenomenological reduction, which means to capture the essence of the phenomena from the perspective of the subject being studied, while the researcher abdicates from any understanding of the phenomenon before studying it (Crotty, 2013). Phenomenology "is not only a research method as employed frequently by qualitative researchers; it is also a philosophy" (Dowling, 2007, p. 131). As asserted by Crotty (2013) "phenomenology is about saying 'No!' to the meaning system bequeathed to us. It is about setting the meaning aside...to take a fresh look at the phenomena." (p.82).

The data of this study were collected through in-depth interviews with Brazilian business expatriates, without the guidance of theories or frameworks on expatriate career

development. The main goal was to hear their lived experiences, to allow the participants to tell their story related to the phenomenon of expatriate career development. In addition, I have used a hermeneutics approach to analyze the data.

Overall approach and rationale

The literature on business expatriates described the multifaceted and multilayered views of the expatriate career development phenomenon as a process that needs to be viewed holistically for full understanding (Baruch et al., 2016). Most of this literature built on the data on expatriates from Western countries or developed economies, working for multinationals well established in the international markets. In today's international business settings, multinationals with less international experience or/and from developing economies are sending growing numbers of employees abroad. The perspectives of these expatriates from different nationalities have been slowly added to the literature (e.g. Gupta et al., 2012; Ishii, 2012; Selmer, Ebrahimi, & Mingtao, 2002) and findings of this research have shown different realities according to expatriates' nationalities. For instance, expatriation failure rate is higher among American than Japanese expatriates (Tung, 1987), and demographics and contextual factors have a strong influence on Chinese expatriates' perception regarding their career mobility and development (Yao et al., 2014).

These findings support the claim that individual lived experiences matter for studying this phenomenon and understanding it holistically. Besides, examining professionals from different nationalities, who experience different educational, social and economic realities contribute to an increase of indigenous research on expatriation,

resulting in pragmatic findings. Therefore, this qualitative research was conducted by using the phenomenological approach, focusing on Brazilian expatriates' lived experiences.

Study population and participant selection

According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), phenomenological studies usually involve “several long in-depth interviews with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest” (p.18). This study will contribute to the literature on business expatriates, through the lens and perspectives of expatriates from a developing economy, such as Brazil.

The population of Brazilians expatriates for this study is only those working for subsidiaries of Brazilian MNCs. The MNCs were selected through a list of the most internationalized Brazilian multinationals in an annual report published by an educational institution named Fundação Dom Cabral (FDC). The most recent report dates from the year 2017 (Barakat et al., 2017) . This list of MNCs was manually searched to identify companies with subsidiaries in the USA. The host country is an important delimitation of this study, because institutional resources can affect expatriates career development (Zeitz et al., 2009). Therefore, this delimitation is necessary due to the implications of the institutional environment on expatriate career development.

Corporate expatriate career practices are valuable for developing skilled expatriates capable of supporting the corporation's competitiveness in the global market (Selmer et al., 2002). Meanwhile, Brazilian multinationals, due to their recent internationalization, have faced multiple challenges of managing and developing

expatriates (Tanure et al., 2009). Brazilian multinationals are latecomers in the international market. Thus they have less experience and expertise at managing and developing expatriates, when compared to American and Western firms, or other multinationals from developed economies. Likewise, Selmer, Ebrahimi, and Mingtao (2000) found that corporate career practices are less available to Chinese expatriates than Western expatriates. In this scenario, it is reasonable to assume that perceptions of Brazilian expatriates working for Brazilian multinationals differ from the experience of Brazilian expatriates working for a foreigner organization that has more international experience and consequently more developed expatriation-related corporate practices.

Therefore, it was important to consider two main characteristics of the population: the citizenship of the subject of the study, and the national origin of the MNC's subsidiary where the expatriation process is presented. The population of this study was composed of Brazilian expatriates working for Brazilian multinationals' subsidiaries. On the one hand, this study acknowledged that corporate expatriation practices have a strong effect on framing the perspective of expatriates. On the other hand, it is important to highlight that this study made no pretense of providing a comprehensive analysis of corporate expatriation practices. Some of these practices were only displayed to provide a portrayal of the settings that frame the expatriates' perspectives on the expatriation processes and careers.

The selected host country is the United States of America. Selecting only one host country was important to account for the institutional effect on career development. In this case, the United States of America was chosen because this country is the country

where Brazilian multinationals have invested the most, as shown in reports developed by an organization dedicated to studying Brazilian multinationals, the Fundação Dom Cabral (Barakat et al., 2017). It is also acknowledged in this study that a developed host country offers different career development opportunities than a developing country. Furthermore, when focusing on Brazilian expatriates in the United States of America we assume that the expatriates will have high levels of English language proficiency, which could provide additional benefits regarding future career opportunities to the expatriate in the international job market. English is a language often used in international business worldwide. In sum, the population of this study is composed of Brazilian expatriates working for a Brazilian multinational in the United States of America.

Selection is a conceptually or theoretically informed process by which researchers become interested in studying a particular issue, phenomenon, or group of people and then go about establishing a set of criteria for identifying and bounding that issue, phenomenon, or group for an actual research project. (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, pp.2323)

Regarding participant selection, the following characteristics of the population were considered: (a) Gender. I attempted to find an equal number of male and female expatriates. However, I encountered a predominance of male expatriates, which converged partially with expatriates' literature worldwide that has shown a predominance of white males as expatriates (Baruch et al., 2016). (b) Duration of expatriation. All expatriates worked for at least one year in the host country previous the interview. This delimitation was necessary to provide reasonable assurance that the expatriates have

achieved at least partial adjustment to the host country culture and environment and had several chances of identifying multiple concerns and expectations regarding career development prospects and activities; (c) Type of work. The study included expatriates who work in technical or managerial positions. This delimitation was needed to provide a focus on how expatriates with a substantial professional experience perceive career development.

Participant recruitment

Four different approaches were used to recruit participants: (1) Social media that provided information about expatriates' nationality, location, and some relevant career trajectory (See Appendix A); (2) Introductory letter sent to organizational HR manager in the HR department of the MNC's subsidiary (Appendix B); (3) Snowball sampling, asking Brazilian employees/expatriates to refer to an expatriate that he/she knows; and (4) Referrals by people in my network of expatriates.

An invitation letter was sent individually via email to those expatriates who fit the delimitation criteria and expressed interested in participating in the study (Appendix C). After the participant's initial approval was received via email or phone call, I sent a signed letter to the qualified expatriate to provide details of the study and evidences of its confidentiality (Appendix D). Although these four methods were used, only approaches (1) and (4) were effective. In sum, seven expatriates accepted the invitation and were interviewed.

Researcher's background

Marshall and Rossman (2016) claimed that “in qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument” (p. 118) and, therefore, there is a need for disclosing information on researcher's identity, voice and biases which helps to separate personal insights from data collection and findings.

My first personal experience with global mobility was when I when to London to study English and travel around Europe. I met my husband, and few years later when we were living in Brazil, we experienced our first expatriation. Suddenly, I became a trailing spouse, due to my husband's expatriation to India. At that point, I had no intention of working as a researcher in this field. My husband and I were a young couple with a very adventurous spirit, and we had no kids. As the years passed, I gave birth to a child born in India, faced the difficulties and opportunities of the expatriation, and after two years we were repatriated to Brazil. The cultural distance between the two countries and the need to provide the best environment for our son were certainly the main drivers of our repatriation. After enrolling in a master's degree in Brazil, my academic career progressed in the field of international business, although my interest was always related to its implications to people in this process.

Later, my husband accepted an international assignment in the U.S., and I took this opportunity to pursue a PhD degree. When I started reading about the HRD program I could identify myself as a professional in this field. However, my interest in studying expatriates only developed during an epiphany moment when I first interacted with the literature on expatriates and recognized that the articles were misrepresenting my

family's reality as expatriates. For instance, as an expatriate family, we never received cross-cultural training, and my husband never received the amount of expatriates' benefits and compensation described throughout the literature on expatriates.

Since I decided to study Brazilian expatriates, I had the intention of giving voice to these expatriates that have been scarcely studied in the literature. My personal experience showed me that many peculiarities of these participants were not reflected in the literature. Therefore, I noted I could not assume that the results from previous studies with expatriates from different nationalities working in different countries would be applicable to the case of Brazilian expatriates in the U.S, working for Brazilian Multinationals. Despite my initial preference for post-positivist approaches to research, I observed that qualitative methods were more suitable to examining the issues of interest to me. In addition, the phenomenology method and philosophy seemed the best match when studying these expatriates due to their indigenous characteristics.

Today, my family and I are permanent residents in the USA, and we no longer have any affiliation with Brazilian Multinationals, but studying them is important for me because I want these Brazilian companies and expatriates to succeed internationally. I have great interest in assisting expatriates and their families to overcome the challenges of the international assignments, and take advantage of the opportunities. I acknowledge that my motivations might influence my perceptions, so as a researcher, my strategy for keeping objective was to discuss the preliminary findings and emerging categorizations with my interviewees before coming to conclusions.

Ethical and political considerations

One ethical concern of this study is to preserve the confidentiality of interviewees and their organizations. The assurance of participants' secrecy provided a safer environment for discussing career issues that might be perceived as harmful if open to the public and leading to one's identification. The Consent form (Appendix D) was an instrument used to guarantee the confidentiality of the human subjects. Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2014) claimed that the protection of human subjects' rights in a research project begins with the right of the participant to make free and informed choices (e.g., to refuse to participate in the study in the first place or to withdraw their consent to participate at any time during the study). None of the participants withdrew from this study.

Another concern related to ethics was the secrecy of the Brazilian multinationals. As a researcher, I assumed that all organizations have many job security issues, and this could impact one's willingness to share their experience. Thus one strategy to assure total secrecy was to perform interviews in an environment neutral to expatriate, such as the participants' residence or via FaceTime or Skype. This visual conversation provided greater empathy between the researcher and the interviewee. Another factor considered was that some MNCs could have been investigated for corruption. As this is a criminal matter, I decided to avoid questions related to this subject. However, I acknowledge that this might have implications for the phenomenon studied, and consequently this is one more limitation of this study.

Beyond these concerns, as a researcher who belongs to a community of Brazilian expatriates, I made sure to interview only people with whom I have no personal relationships. This commitment was to avoid making conclusions based on unconsciously recalled information, provided to me outside the interviews. Some qualitative studies claimed that it is important to establish a strong relationship with the participant in order to have access to relevant data. I disagree with this claim because I believe that strong relationship requires social time spend together and similar personal profile or interests. Thus, I approached and treated all participants respectfully to establish a candid conversational environment, and mentioned at the beginning of the interview that the participants could refuse to answer any question. In case of situations where they were feeling uncomfortable or not willing to share the information, I instructed them to simply say: I will skip this question. Only once did one expatriate refuse to answer one of the questions and declined to provide details regarding family issues. I immediately proceeded to the following question, which was not related to this matter. Actually, I think that the personal distance between the participants and me resulted in more reliable data collection. I have the feeling that the participants shared many events with me that they would not have been comfortable sharing if we had a closer relationship.

Data collection methods

The primary method of gathering information in this study was in-depth interviewing. As this study is focused on individuals' lived experiences, this data collection method has been commonly applied in research where the subjects of study

have been understudied, and questions remain unanswered, such as the case of European female expatriates (e.g. Linehan & Walsh, 1999; Linehan & Scullion, 2001).

The data collection phase of the study started with collecting the information on participants' characteristics relevant to this study's outcome. Hence, prior to the interview, the participants answered a short introductory questionnaire (Appendix E) via email that aimed to collect the following information: Gender, age, profession, education level, years in the international assignment contract, years in the international assignment, number of previous expatriation experiences (with time and location), marital or civil status, number of family members and age of each member, self-assessment of current English language proficiency, assessment of family member's English language proficiency, and citizenship. Some of this information is described in Chapter four, where I introduce each participant. This information was not provided in full in this report due to the confidentiality agreement.

Next, the expatriate was contacted to schedule an online video call. Audio interviews were used only in three interviews with one of the participants, and one interview with another participant due to internet connection issues. I made an effort to use the three-interview series approach proposed by Seidman (2013), where the researcher interviews each participant three times. This method of collecting data was effective, but also complicated to implement with participants who have a hectic personal and professional experience. At the first interview, I asked context questions to understand the life history of the participant. During the second interview I sought to gather details of the experience as an expatriate and her/his career progression. In the

third interview, I encouraged the participant to reflect on the meaning of the phenomenon being investigated. Although I had a questionnaire guide to the interviews, the questions were open-ended and the interviews were treated as a conversation. All interviews were audio recorded.

The questions in the questionnaire were developed according to the phenomenological approach and the Seidman's methods of interviewing. Merriam (1998) suggested that researchers combine different types of interviewing to obtain some standardized information. Initially, I asked the open-ended questions of the semi-structured questionnaire, but when new information emerged or the data appeared tangled, I asked follow-up questions. Besides, as a researcher, I also took notes of my reflections on the interview data simultaneously, which allowed me to share these data reflections with the participants at the beginning of the following interview. All interviewees provided me insights on how they comprehended and endorsed my reflections. "Less structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways" (Merriam, 1998, p.74). According to Linehan and Walsh (2000), deviations from the sequence of the interview guide are important to follow interesting lines of inquiry and enable an unbroken discussion. Marshall and Rossman (2016) argued that follow-up questions provide the richness in an interview. In addition, I took field notes. The field notes instrument to collect data offers details that might help with the data quality or interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

I conducted and transcribed the interviews in Brazilian Portuguese, the expatriates' and researcher' native language. Yao et al. (2014) claimed that the use of the

interviewees' and interviewer's native language helps to avoid misunderstanding in translations and creates a trusting relationship among them. However, as the research project will be documented in American English, the semi structured interview guide was developed in two languages (Brazilian Portuguese and American English) and validated by a scholar fluent in both languages to avoid misinterpretations of the research questions. This procedure assured that questions had the same meaning in both languages. The interview guide is presented in the Appendix F: Semi-structured interview guide.

Data analysis procedures

The data analysis was executed in Brazilian Portuguese, started at the first interview, continued throughout the data collection, and during the writing process uninterruptedly. The data were translated from Portuguese to English only when I wrote the first draft of the findings chapter. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) claimed that data analysis should happen simultaneously to data collection. The simultaneous analysis of the data during the data collection allowed me to share observations and reflections of the data with the participants, and clarify responses when needed. Also, the field notes facilitated the data analyzes. Seidman's method of three interviews enabled participants to engage in deep reflections about their lived experience and gave me a second chance to explore unclear themes and examine them further.

Maxwell (2013) listed some qualitative data analysis steps that were followed in this research. After all the interviews were transcribed, I revisited the interviews transcripts and observational notes. During this transcribing time, I wrote notes with the

purpose of developing tentative ideas about categories and its relationship. When I perceived to have a significant amount of data, all the interviews files were transferred to Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software. By using the phenomenological reduction process, I started the hermeneutic analysis. First, I hand-coded each participant's interview by assigning codes and sub-codes to each participants' narratives. Maxwell (2013, p. 106) stated that "coding is a typical categorizing strategy in qualitative research." Hence, these codes were synthesized by creating categories. From these categories emerged a keystone finding and three themes. This process resulted in a codebook of a topic, nodes, categories, and themes, which were submitted to the translation validation of a scholar fluent in both languages. In addition, I shared them with a member of my dissertation committee for feedback. Finally, I wrote memos in English during the process of writing up the findings and shared them with one of the members of the committee that suggested changes and helped me to clarify the understanding of the phenomenon.

In the last part of the analysis, I visualized these essences and themes as a whole, and answered the mental question: What is the story? Then, I noticed that family was placed as an essence presented in all themes. Therefore, after a discussion with a scholar I decided to present family as a major topic, in addition to the three emerged themes of the phenomenon studied. Later, I discussed my observations with my dissertation advisor who encouraged me to organize the findings in a keystone finding and three themes that represent the participants' lived experience related to the expatriate career development phenomenon.

Chapter Four: Participants

The seven participants in this study received a pseudonym to ensure the confidentiality of participants' responses. Therefore, I assigned popular male and female Brazilian names to the participants.

Ana

Ana studied communication during her undergraduate degree years and started her career as a trainee in a multinational in the field of corporate communication, while she was still an undergraduate student. Her interest in writing lead her to the corporate communication career path. Today, she is a communications manager for a multinational company in the U.S. and has more than 20 years of professional experience. She said:

I have always been a communicative person, I have always liked writing.

On the other hand, I am a very private person. During my adolescence, I was introduced to a magazine for teenagers. I was crazy about that magazine; I felt like it was my friend. Then, I decided to be a journalist. I got admitted to a prestigious University committed to political issues, but I wanted to be a journalist for a teen's magazine. I was 17 years old, very young, so it was a hard transition.

She worked at the first job for two years as a trainee and two years as a regular employee. Her experience at a multinational made her comprehend the need of being fluent in English. She said, "I realized how much being fluent in English is important." Ana described her first contact with the English language when she was 11 years old and mentioned how her teacher's comments impacted her: "My teacher said some people

learn languages easily, but for others it is hard. For you, learning English will always be hard. That event created a barrier in my mind.”

However, Ana was persistent and decided to learn English in different English schools, and later decided that she needed full immersion in the English language, so she moved to the U.S. In the U.S., she met her husband and had her first child. Five years later, she returned to Brazil. When she looked for a job, she noticed that her fluency in English provided many job opportunities, including a position at the company where she is working today. Ana highlighted that even though the job description required fluent English language skills, in the beginning, she did not have the opportunity to apply her English language skills at all. The story changed when the company bought a large company in the U.S.

This new scenario prompted her interest in working in the U.S. She asked for her supervisor’s support, who promptly offered her help and started a conversation with the CEO regarding Ana’s expatriation. All parties supported her expatriation but conditioned her transfer to the U.S. on branch director’s acceptance. The director interviewed her and assigned her to two communications projects. She executed these projects effectively and finally started her expatriation process.

Ana came to the U.S. with her husband and two kids. Sometime after her expatriation, Ana got divorced, and today she lives with her two kids. Among the many insights that Ana shared regarding her life story and career path, she pointed out the company’s CEO as mentor to her.

Antonio

Antonio has more than 20 years of professional experience. He started working in a multinational as a trainee, and today he performs the role of business director in the same company. He has experienced two expatriations, the first one in a country in Latin America, and the second in the U.S. He has a bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration. He is married and has two kids. Antonio described himself:

I am the only child of a poor widow. My father died when I was very young. I lived near the beach, and I have always been very passionate about sports such as swimming, surfing, and diving. Fighting sports were also part of my childhood and adolescence. Regarding school, I have always attended private schools, so I had the clear goal of performing well at school, so my mom would not bother me. I started working when I was an adolescent. I worked as a restaurant manager and Taekwondo instructor.

Antonio highlighted the role of his mom in providing advice. He elaborated: "my mom is my queen." According to him, he got a job at a prestigious company soon after he started pursuing his bachelor's degree. He mentioned that his career began at that moment. His salary was less than that of an instructor or restaurant manager, but his credibility as a professional acquired by working in that company would change his career path forever.

His first expatriation experience came as a result of an invite from a project manager. Antonio said that this offer grabbed his attention immediately because of the project's complexity. He said that this project was executed in five different countries at

the same time, and he noticed that this would be an excellent opportunity for personal and professional growth. Along with this opportunity, Antonio had his family's support. He said that his spouse had a solid career, but she did not hesitate to embrace the expatriation. He said to his wife: "let's be together for whatever it comes." As a couple, they realize that the expatriation was a great learning opportunity for their kids. He added, "My wife did not think twice about it." She was very supportive on the second expatriation invite. The project developed in the U.S. seemed like a great opportunity to avoid the economic crisis that was hitting Brazil. Antonio highlighted that the success of the previous expatriation was decisive in embracing the second expatriation and moving to the U.S.

Carlos

Carlos is a mechanical engineer, married, and has one child. He said he was an unplanned child, born into a low-income family who always valued education.

We lived in a shack in my grandma's backyard until I was thirteen years old. My parents deprived themselves of many things so that they could give us [him and his sister] access to an excellent education. Therefore, I always studied in good schools, and this was a sensational foundation for us.

He has worked in a Brazilian multinational since 2012, and he was expatriated at the beginning of 2017. This is his first expatriation experience. He highlighted how the crisis in Brazil had affected his motivations and perceptions regarding the expatriation and pointed out the unsafe environment in Brazil since the beginning of the economic and

political turmoil: “I really like how this country provides a safe environment for my family and me; everyone knows that with the crisis the violence increased in Brazil.”

As many of the participants in this study, Carlos works in a multinational with few years of experience in the international market. He mentioned how the company started its internationalization process less than ten years ago, and how this global strategy has helped the organization to overcome the crisis in Brazil: “The company is growing in the US, so we decided to open a subsidiary here.” This new organizational strategy brought him here. He was charged with building a subsidiary in the U.S. from scratch: “I like how they trusted me with starting a subsidiary from scratch. It motivates me, and I like the challenge.”

According to Carlos, he developed his professional skills since he started working in the organization, which were an essential factor for the top management in deciding to expatriate him. He claimed that he received the expatriation invite during a rough moment for the organization, which did not leave him much room for making a choice: “In 2013, I was managing seventeen people. When the crisis hit Brazil in 2014, I had to fire fifteen people. It was a difficult time. On the day when my supervisor invited me to come here, I thought I was going to be fired.”

Francisco

Francisco is an engineer with a graduate degree in business. He is married, has two kids, and has worked in a Brazilian multinational for thirteen years. He and his family have lived in the U.S. for two years. Francisco described having a particular view of the expatriation definition which is connected to the benefits offered by the company

and its practices related to expatriation. According to Francisco, the company identified the employee transferred to the U.S. with short-term benefits, and no guarantees of repatriation as “localized.” Francisco lived four years in a country in Asia as an expatriate before being expatriated to the U.S.

Here in the U.S., I am not an expatriate; I am a “localized.” I am just like any other employee; I have a green card if I leave the company I can get a job at another company. In sum, I do not have a strong relationship with the company... When you are an expatriate, you are almost a hostage of the organization because you depend on the organization for being in the host country.

During the interview, Francisco shared much information about his experience during his first expatriation in Asia, and explained what it was like to be a professional working there, types of support received, and how this experience changed his ways of viewing the world resulting in personal and professional advancements. It was evident that his previous experience as an expatriate in Asia informed and prepared him and his family for their expatriation in the U.S. Francisco is the participant who experienced expatriation for the most prolonged period, six years.

Francisco demonstrated a high level of self-motivation to work internationally. Also, he mentioned that his spouse always encouraged him to accept international assignments.

Life is not just to work. Work is important but having an opportunity of traveling to paradise by expending \$200.00 is not easy. I do not mind if tomorrow

I am fired, and the company did not appreciate my professional experience because my personal experience makes it worth.

Francisco explained that when he was in Asia and his contract expired, he was specific about requesting to be expatriated to the U.S. At that time, the company's projects in Brazil had been canceled because of the crisis. Therefore he visualized the U.S. as the country with better opportunities: "I knew about the crisis; I knew they would fire people, I was sure that I would be fired in Brazil." He said that he would rather stay in Asia, but he realized that he would have a job only in the U.S.

Joao

Joao is the youngest of the participants; he is less than 30 years old. His parents divorced, and his mom raised him alone. He earned a bachelor's degree in international business and a master's degree in business administration, with a minor in Finance from an American university. He has been in the U.S. since the beginning of 2016. He declared to be single, and he has no kids. Regarding initial professional experiences, Joao said that he began working when he was seventeen years old, and his first job experience was as an intern in an organization which he perceived as not providing many career development opportunities. After these experiences, he graduated and got a job with a multinational, and he has worked in this organization for the last eight years.

He defines expatriation as an excellent opportunity to learn a different culture, to meet and interact with diverse people and develop personally and professionally. When talking about his work in Brazil, he described his interaction with other cultures like commercial transactions. In the U.S., he portrays the experience as a full immersion in a

learning space, where he is not required to seek for the knowledge or novelty because they are presented to him naturally. He feels like living in the Americans' shoes, while he starts losing the strings that pull him back to Brazil:

Now I am immersed in the American culture since I put my foot out of the door, I am receiving different information. Information that once I had to seek for it. Today this information comes to me. I am living as an American, everything that I do is related to the American life. Brazil is still my country of citizenship, but I am just observing it from far away.

Since an early age, he had the goal of living in the U.S. He pursued a bachelor degree in the field of international business because he thought that someday he would have a job opportunity in the U.S.: "I had this desire of living here, so I started to work on it since then." He connected his early interest in living in the U.S. to the fact of having dear friends and family members who were living in this country. Therefore, learning English and studying International Business was his priority.

Joao's expatriation happened after a long period of waiting. He claimed that his international assignment offer only happened when he learned to create value for the company across borders. This attitude made the upper management of the company notice his efforts.

Jose

Jose moved to the U.S. with his spouse and four kids. When the Brazilian multinational where he works decided to create a joint venture with an American organization, he was invited to be expatriated. He has worked for the Brazilian

organization for more than 15 years, and Jose is very passionate about his job. He said: “Here, I am the [organization name]. I am all the employees of the organization when I am in front of a client. ” Jose earned a technical certificate degree, assumed a managerial position, and describes himself as a self-directed learner, interested in cutting-edge technology.

One of the benefits of being an expatriate according to him is to be exposed to a diversity of people and ways of doing business:

This country has a vast diversity of cultures. Therefore, when one is working here, one is not only working with Americans, one is working with people from diverse countries. It is not uncommon for me to work with people from India, Vietnam, and Europe on the same day. And each one has a different way of doing business, greeting, and behave.

According to Jose, his technical skills of integrating different products to achieve a primary purpose provided him with the chance of assuming numerous positions in the organization over the years. Thus, he has been involved in large projects, which resulted in career advancement. Jose explained what motivated him to accept the expatriation: “I am always looking for learning opportunities, and I thought that the expatriation was going to offer me new experiences.” He elaborated saying that he had a good quality of life in Brazil, so his main expatriation drive was the professional challenge. Besides, Jose pointed out that the job market is global, and for his kids learning a second language is imperative, and a significant advantage for preparing them for the globalized world.

Jose stressed that there were four primary factors affecting his personal and professional story. First, he emphasized that his father's financial support was critical during the academic years. Second, his organization promoted self-development through offering frequent international travel opportunities and engagement in different project positions. Third, his mentor guided him through career transitions and strategies for gaining professional experiences. Finally, an important factor was his will for self-directed learning and development.

Maria

Maria is a young professional with more than 20 years of professional experience. She began working at a young age to fund her studies. Maria first earned a technical certificate degree in mechanics, which enabled her to get her first job as a trainee. However, the position did not last long because the company went bankrupt.

Maria explained that at her early career stage, she faced prejudicial attitudes from people surrounding her, regarding her choice to work in a male-oriented field: "When I told my dad that I was going to study mechanics, he asked me if I was crazy because I would never get a job." The resistance continued during her first career years, and she stayed unemployed for one year until she was able to get the next job offer. Maria described the conversation with the person offering the job: "He said, Maria you have technical skills and experience, but how can I put you in a men's place? You will have to wear man's clothes and carry heavy pieces." She accepted the job offer.

This situation made Maria think about a backup career plan. Consequently, she enrolled in an undergraduate degree in Portuguese - English language to become a

teacher. She highlighted that this backup plan became a crucial competitive advantage. In this program, she developed teaching skills that enabled her to get involved in critical projects and to be professionally recognized by the top management.

Her expatriation proposal came during the crisis in Brazil, and after a position has opened at the U.S. subsidiary. She moved to the U.S. with her child and husband in 2016. Initially, she was assigned to working in one city, but after six months into the assignment, the company reassigned her to work in a different town. These changes brought some difficulties to her family. She explained that her husband took more than one year to get a work permit and start receiving the first job offers and when everything was getting in place they had to move again.

On top of that, Maria described an unpleasant experience that occurred soon after her arrival to the U.S. She spent many months ill and had to visit many doctors, and take several lab tests. All costly procedures, at a time when she had no knowledge of the U.S. health system. Maria said that the company neglected to provide health plan advice, and an uncomplicated treatment for a non-life-threatening illness resulted in significant expenses that she was not expecting at the time of her initial adjustment to the country.

Besides this issue, Maria appreciated working in the U.S., describing pleasant professional experiences, and feeling satisfied with an opportunity to offer her husband a new career perspective, and to her kid a magnified international experience.

Summary

This summary of the participants' profiles sets the stage for understanding their life stories and lived experiences regarding the phenomenon of career development. One

similarity among the participants is that all of them entered the job market at an early age. Likewise, the seven participants presented themselves as goal-oriented and highlighted the role of their parents in guiding their career path or providing financial support for formal education. While four participants were presented with the international assignment offers, three of them self-initiated their expatriation to the U.S. The participants in this study were born in four different states in Brazil with significant cultural differences, which provides a some representation of the Brazilian cultural diversity.

Another common characteristic of this sample of participants is the timing of the expatriation. All participants were expatriated after Brazil started to encounter an economic crisis in 2013. While, domestic organizations were downsizing in Brazil, the Brazilian multinationals were expanding internationally as a way of reducing the negative impact of the economic crisis. In the findings chapter that follows, I attempted to present the participants' views on their expatriation and career progression and described the findings as they emerged while describe the work setting of these professionals.

Chapter Five: Findings

In this study, I explored the experience of career development of Brazilian business expatriates who are working for Brazilian multinationals in the USA. The inquiry focused on the lived experience of the participants during the phenomenon of career development. The participants described their life history and details of expatriate career development experience and offered reflections on the meaning of the lived experiences. After transcribing, coding, and analyzing the interviews, a keystone finding (family) and three themes emerged: (1) transcending difficulties, (2) embracing challenges, and (3) balancing multiple priorities. The keystone finding and the three themes are explored in depth in sections below.

Family

Throughout the interviews, the topic that became the most prominent was family. The family was presented as one of the most important variables of expatriate career development phenomenon. The connection between family and an individuals' career is strong and could easily affect all the themes that have emerged in this research. Family is claimed to be a variable that goes in parallel with the phenomenon of career development or even as a priority guiding one's career progression. In this study, family will be presented as a keystone finding, due to its influence on the other themes, and due to its importance and implications to the phenomenon.

Participants stated that their family's struggle correlated to the way they experience and perceive career development. Joao mentioned being raised by his mom after his parents got divorced. Also, he said that his best friend and cousin moved to the

U.S. with his family, which amplified his commitment to developing an international career and moving to the U.S. Carlos noted that his dad stopped studying when his mom got pregnant with him and explained that due to this event his family provided him with the best education they could afford. Consequently, he dedicated himself intensely to becoming an exceptional professional. Francisco highlighted his family's frequent moves, the death of his dad, and the small town where he was raised with limited career opportunities, and how this situation prompted him to pursue his career dreams. Antonio was also raised solely by his mom, who became a widow at an early age. He praised her for good advice and hard work as a role model.

The participants explained that the expatriation affects each family member differently, which results in implications for career motivations. They highlighted that family members need to give up life stability, career dreams, and the proximity to other relatives, difficulties imposed by the novelty of the host country, and the distance from home. The decision to pursue an expatriate career becomes viable if the family members' gains compensate or overcome its strains. Ana said:

When you lose the daily life [with your family], there is a high price to pay. I think that only a person who lives far from the family knows how much this is valuable, but we learn. When we see our loved ones every day, we never think that we are seeing them for the last time. During these two years here in the U.S. I lost some family members and friends. Last time I went to Brazil, I tried to spend as much time as possible with them because we do not know if I will see them

again. I have lunch alone and think about the people I left there. I value the moments I had with my family and friends in Brazil.

Antonio stated, "my wife was an accountant and a designer of interiors when we were living in Brazil." He explained that she had her own business, but when the expatriation invitation came, she embraced it without hesitation because she evaluated it as an opportunity for the family. Maria explained that her husband was very supportive regarding the expatriation because he had the desire of living abroad for some time. However, he had to give up his own business. Maria's husband waited for one year to complete the process of getting a working permit and a job. She said, "He was completely impatient about that situation, but he knew that he had to wait for that." She added: "When we came here, he had basic English language skills, he took more than 100 hours of English lessons, so he learned a lot." Maria, Carlos, and Jose recognized that pursuing a dual-career is the ideal for the family development and fulfillment. For Carlos, the family's adjustments will be facilitated when his wife has her working permit granted. He continued "I work because I want to earn money so that I can provide a nice quality of life to my family. We are here because they accepted it." Jose offered an observation: "Among the couples that I know and succeed during the expatriation, are those whose both had the opportunity of getting a job."

Spouse satisfaction can affect expatriates' mobility and consequently their career goals and expectations. Francisco pointed out that the first expatriation in Asia was hard for his spouse, so he felt more motivated to pursue an expatriation in another country since Brazil was in crisis. "My spouse could not stand being there anymore. She wanted

to move away; she did not want me to renew my contract there”. For Ana, the expatriation was even more disruptive. She mentioned being married when she came to the U.S; her husband wanted to live here again: “My husband always wanted to live in the U.S. again.” However, sometime after the expatriation, they got divorced. The dissatisfaction of one family member can impact the satisfaction of the whole family, and jeopardize the expatriates’ career.

When the expatriates explain the effects of the expatriation on their kids, the decisions become even more complicated. Jose highlighted that his choice of accepting the international assignment was entirely related to his four kids. He said: "We tried to provide a better life, to support our kids’ dreams.” According to Maria, her daughter’s development was impacted by the expatriation: “She was so little; she could not understand what was going on, so we started to mention that she would be away from her grandparent's bit by bit.” She also mentioned the process of selling all the furniture: “It was difficult for my daughter, she did not want to sell her bed.” Antonio described that when he accepted the international appointment, he believes that the expatriation was beneficial to his kids. However, he continued by saying that today the situation is different because his kids are at the age of going to college. He said: "now I am at a phase that my kids are finishing high school, then my mobility diminished because it is imperative that they have access to a nice education."

Francisco described that his job in Asia required a long time away from his kid. He noted: “being so far from my kid had a great impact on me. It was the major drive for coming here.” Antonio added that his previous expatriation experience alleviated the

impact of the expatriation on his kid. He offered: "When we returned from the first expatriation, we suffered from my youngest kid. He was having difficulties to learn Portuguese." He completed saying that they hired a private tutor to help his kid. Carlos had a unique experience that changed his life. He was robbed in Brazil, and this event was a wake-up call for looking for a country change. He said: "Now I have a family to support, it is not that simple." Ana had a unique view; she perceived being in the U.S. as a way of offering to her kids an English immersion. She struggles with learning English, so she did not want that for her kids.

The expatriates also described their concerns and expectations of their parents or even the spouse's parents. Expatriates' parents and other relatives are considered when moving abroad. These family members' proximity, wellness, opinion, and expectations were evaluated during the career decision process. Being aware of the challenges, and having strategies to cope with these challenges were mentioned as cooperative on the expatriate's career accomplishment.

Carlos explained that in Brazil he had the family tradition of having lunch with his parents, grandparents, cousins, and other relatives every Sunday. Here he misses it. Carlos claimed: "regarding family, it is the worst part [of the expatriation], we miss them a lot". Carlos continued explaining that he visited Brazil twice last year because he misses his family. He said: "I desire to bring my family here, I want to show them [the U.S]. My family is poor. I want to show them a different way of living." Carlos mentioned that his wife misses her family in Brazil. He said: "My spouse is in Brazil, she

did not want to come back to the U.S. with me, she wanted to stay with her mom and family longer.”

For Francisco, the expatriation forces the family to deal with the distance of relatives and friends. He said:

My wife was born in that city where we used to live. She knew people since from the elementary school. She had many groups of friends. She used to go out with her cousins. Then, in the beginning, it was hard for her. She went back to Brazil several times. However, after some time people lose interest in you, and they keep a certain distance. Last time she went back there, she met fewer people. The distance affects the expatriation. This happens with the family too. It depends how close you are with your family, but the communication tools have helped. For example, we talk to our family every week, so the grandparents can see the kids growing. The distance is hard, but it is part of the deal.

Maria highlighted the role of family members in her career development:

My mom is a teacher. She was the director of a school. Today she is retired. I always liked playing as a teacher. Thus my mom said that I should be a teacher and she would financially support me. I ended up applying for a teaching program. My purpose was to pursue a degree that would get me a job. My mom started paying for my teaching program, but soon I got an interview with a company in the mechanic industry.

In addition, Maria exalted the important role of her parents in her life. She highlighted:

I am very attached to my family. I talk to my parents and my sister every day. Of course, we are not physically there. Today, for example, is my dad's birthday. Then, today is a stressful day for me. However, every day I talk with them, I check their health, know about their projects, the house remodeling activities. I am distant from them, but nothing has changed. I am always present in their lives. The technology helps us a lot.

The expatriate career can be seen as a prestigious career by the family members, relatives, and friends. The expatriates explained that their family is honored by having a family member working in the U.S. as a skilled and qualified worker. Family members, relatives, and friends perceive the U.S. as a country with a competitive and trained workforce, so an expatriate who is working in the U.S. has the know-how of being a competent professional. According to the expatriates, organizations in Brazil also see it as a competitive advantage. Ana said: "I think that [being an expatriate] creates admiration. I see my niece. She is very proud of me because she says 'my aunt works in the U.S.'" She also explained that her co-workers and friends see her as a role model. She added: "some people who worked with me. There was a girl who used to work with me. She is studying in Canada, so we exchanged a few messages. She sends me a message saying to me that she learned from me that she should pursue her dreams." Maria described a similar appreciation from her family: "They [parents] are super proud. My mom and my dad, they speak with pride that their daughter is working in the U.S." Carlos family shared similar gratitude. Carlos said: "he [Carlos' dad] is fulfilled. 'My son is living in the U.S.' He says it to god and everyone else. He is so proud of me. Today our

relationship is excellent. Before coming here, we did not call many times. Now we speak every day."

Therefore, the participants recognize that family members can also benefit from an international assignment, including learning new cultural context, language, and developing a new career path. Being appreciated as a professional to their family has a significant effect on their careers' expectations and goals.

Themes

Theme 1: Transcending difficulties

The first theme that emerged was related to the expatriates' focus and determination to transcend the challenges and strive throughout their lives to leverage their career. Many expatriates mentioned life events that represent their dedication to learning and development when telling their life stories and explaining how they connected their life story with their current state as a person and professional. Among the categories of this theme are: commitment to self-development, and context awareness. Topics inside each of these categories are described in decreasing frequency order.

Commitment to self-development

The expatriates claimed to have a clear goal since an early career stage, and they perceive it as an important factor in their career progression. The self-interest in their profession resulted in an engagement in activities that they perceived as collaborative to their career advancements. The seven participants provided examples of their persistence regarding self-development to achieve their career goals.

Jose said: “Look, I am someone who has always sought for self-development. I join online forum groups, I read and keep up-to-date regarding technologies”. Likewise, Maria explained that she earned one technical certificate, two bachelor’s degrees, and one graduate degree to adjust her qualifications according to the job market. Maria said:

In sum, I have always been someone who enjoys studying, my whole life. I have few friends. I am very focused on results. If I tell someone that I will do something today, today it will happen, even if I need to work the whole night to get it done.

Some expatriates highlighted that they had the desire to live and work abroad even before been exposed to any job opportunity. Joao, the youngest expatriate, said:

Since I was 11 or 12 years old, I had the desire of coming to the U.S., so I put this idea in my mind. Since that time, I started studying for developing myself personally and professionally. To be enabled and prepared for having a job opportunity in the U.S. I believe 100% in it; I studied English and International Trade. At that time, I pictured that these actions would take me here, so all my choices as a young man were designed to bring me here.

Francisco highlighted his attempt at being expatriated by enrolling in an expatriate program in his organization. His first expatriation was to a country in Asia, and second to the U.S.

I wanted to visit new places; I did not want to be limited to the city or country [where I was born]... I am a descendant of immigrants, so over the years, I got mature, and started to notice that the country where one is born should not

be a limitation... I am not religious; I do not believe in god or a second chance. I believe that if one wants to do something, one should do it now.

All these expatriates have shown to be goal oriented and persistent in focusing on their career goals at a very early point of their careers, and continue overcoming difficulties to achieve their goals. Maria added: "I have no doubts that my characteristic of assuming commitments and responsibilities have taken my career to where it is."

Beyond having a clear goal, the participants also highlighted the importance of their positive attitude regarding their career progression. When asked to share stories elaborating on what led them to their current career paths, several attitudes and behaviors were pointed out.

Carlos provided a story that showed that establishing a close relationship with the founders and his supervisor was ideal for receiving candid feedback which facilitated his development in the organization. He highlighted that his immediate supervisor valued his hard work, even when the company started to face the economic crisis. Carlos said:

I had a healthy relationship with my supervisor, who was also my friend, but when we were working, he was not my friend he was my boss. I have always called him by his last name as a way of showing respect. Therefore, he has always provided candid feedback on my work. The company used to work with a bonus system based on the employees' efficiency. I have always got the highest amount in bonus. People used to say that the president of the company was like a demon. Once he called me because he thought I had not done something, but I had done

it, so he said sorry. In sum, he was not a demon; he was just a demon to people who do not do their job.

According to Ana, some personality traits have been key in her life: “I am a very organized person since as a child, I have been very active and responsible. I always take my commitments seriously.” She shared a story about her first time learning the English language. When she was eleven years old, an English teacher told her that some people will always struggle with learning the English language, and she was one of these people. Initially, she felt like she would never be able to learn English, and she struggled for years by jumping from one English language school to another. When Ana realized that she needed to overcome her trauma and learn language English independently of doing it perfectly well or not. She said, “With time, I started to realize that his opinion [her English teacher] should not affect me, and today I am the communications manager of a multinational in the USA.”

Antonio connected his positive attitude toward complex projects to his career achievements inside the work setting. He noted that his co-workers began to praise him for his extra efforts in overcoming crisis events. Antonio offered:

I am a specialist in crisis. I tell you this, due to my lived experience and professional challenges that I have assumed. Here it is an ugly son. [Brazilian proverb ‘ugly son has no father’, it means none will be responsible for a problem]. Here is a problem. Does anyone want to solve it? Raise your hand. I would raise my hand. I do not want a shortcut, or something easy. If there is a challenge, bring

it to me. Therefore, I started to develop a perception of co-workers that I am competent for solving crisis events or working under pressure.

According to Jose, his ability to integrate different products was essential to his career advancement: “I have the capability of gathering different products and making them communicate and interact with each other. Maybe, at first sight, it is so obvious, although it is a big challenge to many companies.” He argues that his skills and attitude regarding consolidating different products to create new solutions have been essential in being invited to be part of big projects that offered great knowledge, skills, and career prospects.

For Joao, his career development is associated with his will to execute roles that go beyond the ones listed in his job description. He said: “I have tried to do more than the things listed in my job description. I have always been innovative, by trying to find alternatives not considered before.” According to Maria, being persistent was essential for achieving her career goals: “I am very persistent with the things that I believe in. When I decided to study mechanics, people did not like it, but I said: ‘I like it and I am doing it’.”

Throughout the study, the participants highlighted the value of skills acquired and nurtured as a manner of engaging in self-development. Their perceptions’ on self-development indicated an individualized emphasis on the individual as an agent of their career advancement. Joao provided examples of skills that he attained through his initiative. He explained that he decided to promote organization development with new organizational practices used in subsidiaries abroad. Thus, he looked for innovative and

effective practices worldwide: “I want to know what is happening around the world, and improve the process.”

Ana believes that her dedication and persistence in learning the English language and having fluency skills has opened a new door for her career development. She noted that after returning to Brazil after a period in the U.S., she managed to get a job in a multinational where having a fluent English language skill was mandatory, even if she would not use it in performing her job. She offered:

Having this skill benefited me because I could use the literature in English, granting me access to a more substantial amount of literature, which kept me informed and enabled me to produce higher quality content.

For Jose, being prepared for dealing with cross-cultural differences can enhance one’s performance and prepare one for the nuances when doing business abroad. He shared a story about a negotiation: “the way of doing business here is different than in Brazil. In Brazil, my clients always asked me for more discounts, but here my clients want me to present the final price”. He emphasized that one needs to be prepared to not make an assumption and behave according to the customer expectations in order to succeed in business. He added:

One needs to be prepared for reading peoples’ expectations, so one can navigate in a conversation in a way that it creates a positive and healthy relationship with the clients. Otherwise, it can become a nightmare, where the customer might say: This company is a no go, I do not want to deal with this people. Therefore, the cultural differences need to be considered.

Carlos claimed that one of his nurtured skills facilitated his development and consequently his expatriation. According to him, since he started to work in the organization, he has worked closely with the top management of the organization. Thus, he learned that they valued immensely the customer service department. He argued: “They believed that the company growth is associated with high-quality customer services.” From this premise, he focused and embraced their value, building a reliable and trustful relationship between him and the top management: “I think that this trust was built daily over the last four years.”

Maria cherished her interpersonal skills built over the years as a vital point in her career. She stated that during her teaching bachelor program she developed communication skills that allowed her to express her ideas more simply and practically. This enabled her to train people in the field of engineering. “I was a shy person, and became talkative.” Maria added that during all these years she learned that to succeed in an engineering industry a person needs to learn interpersonal skills. She argued: “You can be the best engineer in the world, but if you do not know how to build relationships you go nowhere. If you go, you will come back quickly.”

As shown above, the expatriates observed that skills such as fluency in the English language, cross-cultural awareness, customer service, communications, and the ability to build interpersonal relationships had unleashed personal growth and ability to surpass barriers in their careers.

When discussing their decision to move abroad, two participants in this study highlighted mobility concerns and considerations. While one expatriate had reservations

about being mobile, another participant was excited about global boundaryless career prospects. Francisco expressed his mobility expectations: “I do not have defined roots; this is something that has a strong correlation with my expatriate career.” He explained that many of his friends were in shock when he decided to leave his small town to pursue a bachelor’s degree in a large city. He emphasized that only the thought of being stuck in a place could scare him. He added: “for my friends, the distance was a limitation. When they decided not pursue a bachelor’s degree because the university was far from home, I thought this decision was bizarre.”

Conversely, moving to another country was unattractive to Maria. She explained that she is very introverted and being near her parents is one of her life priorities. She explained:

I have a younger sister; she is five years younger than me. She was always the popular girl; everybody invited her to play sports. I was an extreme opposite of her. I am very attached to my parents. I have never considered moving to a different city, not even after I got married. When I was in Brazil, I used to visit my parents every day. I only accepted this international assignment because it seemed like a personal challenge.

These two participants pointed out two extremes of perceptions regarding global mobility. Although they have a different point of view, both decided to face the expatriation and perceive it as a career advantage.

Beyond physical mobility, three expatriates connected professional development to international career orientation. For Ana, Joao, and Francisco, the expatriation was

possible due to their focus and persistence in pursuing an international career. Ana said that when the multinational acquired a company in the U.S., she started to develop the willingness to work in the U.S. She said:

I had a good relationship with the CEO and founder of the company because of my supervisor. Then, I learned about the challenges that were emerging with the acquisition of the American organization, and I started to feel the desire to come to the U.S. In 2014, I talked with my supervisor about it, and she said that she would support me, and she was going to talk to the CEO. My supervisor said: 'if I see the possibility, I will let you know.' Then, the CEO supported me but left the final decision to the director of the subsidiary here [US].

For Joao, the desire was present since the age of eleven, and he took action to make it a reality when he attained his majority. (In Brazil, people attain the majority, or adulthood, at the age of 18).

I tried to come here when I turned 18 years old; I was planning to study English and staying at my family member's house. Because of the economic crisis in the US, I could not come, but I did not give up. I got a bachelor's degree in International Business because that was my [U.S.] plans. Therefore, since at the age of 11 I have been preparing myself to get here.

Joao continued explaining that after earning his bachelor's degree he decided to pursue a graduate degree, so in 2011 he came to the U.S. to attend some classes at an American university. He considered these actions useful for receiving new opportunities in the organization, including the expatriation.

Francisco approached the international assignment differently because of the organization's global talent development program. He mentioned being in his assignment in Asia when the organization contacted him because of the end of his contract. He offered:

They asked me: What do you want to do? I said I want to go to the U.S..

Nobody promised me anything. They made it clear that they would try it but there were no guarantees. They were very candid.

In sum, the participants believed that having an active role in their career progression has helped them to achieve some of their career expectations.

In light of women's perspective, Maria and Ana had significant difficulties in reaching their career goals, and they associated the reasons with gender bias in the workplace. Both Maria and Ana shared stories of stereotyping and prejudice during various career stages. As mentioned before, Maria worked in a field considered male-oriented due to the high number of men and a low number of women. After securing for herself a space in the quality area, Maria decided to accept an opportunity in the international sales department. She shared that when the top-level management realized that she had got the position, they decided to have a conversation with her. She narrated:

He asked me if I understand the expectations for the position and he asked me how a woman would be able to perform that job. He explained to me that some sale employees would take clients to prostitution spot to celebrate orders. They were all men, the employees, the clients, everyone. I was in his office, and he asked me what would I do because the guys go to prostitution spots and get

drunk. I said that I would never take a client to a place like that, and I intended to persuade them with different strategies. I can take them for dinner. I will be respectful, and I will demand to be respected. Our conversation started on these terms. I have always respected my superiors, but I am not scared of them. I think that I have to say what I think and that is it. I remembered being in his office; the image comes to my mind, we were on the meeting table. It was huge; he met me before, he had congratulated me on my work, we used to discuss investments. I told him, I will never take someone to a hooker. I am really not doing it. Then, he asked me about my English language skills, and he told me that I should be tested. A professional from a very well-know English school came to test me. I had an oral test, grammar test, writing test, I was hardly tested. Thus he could say: 'I think you fit, but I really want to see how this is going to work.'

Notably, Maria's gender was an important variable when managers considered her for the position. She described that she was subjected to a test to obtain this position, and she was asked whether, to her knowledge, other employees had to take such a test. She responded emphatically: "No way, I am sure that I was tested because I am a woman. It scared me, but I had accepted the offer from the director, so what could I do?" Also, Maria described how difficult it was for her to balance her personal and professional life after maternity. She noted: "It was a very hard decision for me to go back to work when I could be with my daughter." She added that serious issues were raised when her baby got sick.

Similarly, Ana got through a complicated process of selection and testing before obtaining a new job position. Even after the CEO approved her expatriation, she had to be assessed and evaluated by other professionals. “We began talking in 2015; I had an interview. He gave me two assignments. Actually, he was just testing me. When I completed them successfully, he gave me two more assignments.” Ana highlighted that they wanted to assess her knowledge about the organization, and the international assignment that she would be assuming. After one more project presentation, she received the offer to be expatriated. According to her, she faced more steps than anyone else before receiving the expatriation offer. She offered that her challenges related to being a woman professional did not stop in Brazil. She described an event in a restaurant in the US when she came to attend a conference: “ I asked the waiter if the dish was hot. He replied saying that nothing is hot to a Brazilian woman.” She explained that the bad taste joke was so embarrassing that she did not know how to react. She was frozen when a guy who used to work with her interrupted them and made the situation even worse: “The guy said: ‘She does not understand English well, I will order for her.’ I could not believe it was happening.” Ana was visibly upset and frustrated while sharing the story. Beyond it, she questioned what that she would have done to deal with the situation.

Context awareness

Acknowledging organization’s strategies along with its strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats, and placing this context setting information in a perspective of career development has assisted participants in assuming positions with growth potential

in the organization. Expatriates pointed out that being well informed regarding the organization's strategies has contributed to gaining access to current career opportunities.

All expatriates interviewed perceived that their knowledge of the organization strategies sustained their continued development. Jose said: "I have worked in many areas in the organization." He explained that along the years he has worked for the same organization in three different locations and added: "There were many moves, which promoted my growth and proved that my decision was correct, paramount to my expatriation." When the company offered him the expatriate position, he was involved in the partnership project. Jose noted "The company expatriated me because they partnered with a company here in the US. They wanted to be able to offer a wide range of products in this field. After a few years, this partnership became a joint venture."

The acquisition of American organizations by Brazilian multinationals has increased the career growth expectations of the participants. Carlos reported that the company decided to open a factory in the U.S. after noticing the steadily growing demand in the American market starting in early 2000s. Due to the success of the factory in the U.S., a new subsidiary was created in the country. Carlos narrated: "the company was growing in the U.S., so they decided to expand the organization in this market [U.S.]. As it is focused on customer services, I ended up coming to the U.S.". He explained that the organization's strategy was aligned with his role and expertise. Carlos said: " I think that the reason for me being an expatriate was related to the position that I had in Brazil, I was customer services manager, and they wanted to open a subsidiary for customer services."

He concluded by saying a Brazilian paternalistic proverb: “They value those who wear the organizations’ shirt.”

According to Ana, when her organization bought a large American company, the organizational growth rate was significant, and she saw it as an opportunity: “I started to realize that our operation here in the U.S. was growing.” For Maria, a restructuring in the organization opened some doors for development: “Some staff changes happened in the U.S. subsidiary, then a new opportunity open to me.” Similarly, the fast internationalization of the company opened career prospects to Joao. He said: “After the company was bought, new opportunities started to emerge and the department where I was working ended up becoming global.” Likewise, Francisco noticed that the company’s strategy in Asia made him pursue a job position in a subsidiary abroad. He said: “the business in Asia would not advance because of a strategic decision of the company, then if I had decided to stay there, it would have been the wrong decision.”

Henceforth, Antonio summarized his reflection on the connection between business awareness and his career by saying:

It comes to the point at which technical competence is not the most important. What matters is to decide at the right time using your technical skills and knowledge of the business. The business knowledge is a result of the culture, experience, information. All of these lead one to make the right decision during that period. After some time, one will realize that one could have done it better. I have made many wrong decisions. However, when I evaluate my life-work balance, I think I made more right than wrong decisions.

Another critical point in the relationship between expatriates' career advancement and context is the economic crisis in Brazil that started in 2014. Among the seven participants, five demonstrated that the crisis affected their expatriation career decisions. They clarified that being aware of the effects of the crisis on their job made them open to ventures not explored before. Companies canceled projects and downsized because of the crisis. In this scenario, participants analyzed the impact of the crisis and evaluated the implications for their careers. This rationale prompted them to look for new opportunities, and move beyond their comfort zone.

Carlos illustrated: "The company started to decrease sales, it was going through a tough time, like many other companies in Brazil." He continued by describing his frustration with seeing the organization downsizing: "I feel pity seeing a bunch of empty chairs, where 220 people used to work now there are 40." Carlos was certain that he, too, was going to be fired at some point: "When my supervisor called me, I thought he was going to fire me, I thought. Now that is it." Carlos emphasized his fear of being fired when he got the expatriation offer:

I was afraid I was going to be fired. I have to mention it. I was afraid because I did not have much to do there. We fired many people in the sales department because there was no work. The products were there in the factory; our clients were not buying them. Thus, we were there with our arms crossed.

Likewise, Francisco and Antonio also feared the unemployment. Consequently, Antonio sought the expatriation as a way of avoiding being fired:

I was aware of the crisis, at that moment, I knew I needed to be transferred to the US. I used to come here since 2010. Every month I used to come to the US. As they open the opportunity of working here, I came to coordinate and integrate operations of different markets. It was an excellent challenge from the professional perspective. I was aware of the life quality because I had some friends living here. It was a condition: grab it or let it go. One has to go where the organization needs, especially during a crisis where there weren't many projects. You go where they need you, or you leave the company.

Francisco had a similar perspective; he was looking for a position with better opportunities considering the crisis scenario that the organization was facing. When asked about his motives for expatriating to the U.S., he promptly said:

The crisis, no doubt. Brazil was melting down in 2014 and 2015. I was fortunate, but I was also prepared. The job position I have today matched perfectly with my experience. I have implemented many things. They needed me when I was hired here. I knew that in Brazil the same thing that happened to my co-workers was going to happen to me. They fired many people. And I was going to be just one more. When I was interviewed, I was extremely nervous because my contract was expiring, and I needed to move to another country. I had all your stuff packed, and I didn't know where to send it. I did not know if I was going to be transferred to the US, or repatriated to Brazil or fired. It was a complicated moment, but fortunately, I had a good interview.

For Maria, the economic crisis in Brazil did not impact her job, but it did affect her husband's company:

My husband had a company. He had a partner, and the company was not doing good. He had many debts. The economic situation in the country was bad, he was at that moment where he wanted to try to make it right, but the situation was not helping it. We were in a challenging situation. Thus, this [expatriation] opportunity seemed to me, also as an opportunity of taking my husband out of that situation. You know, to save him. I knew that he always wanted to have that company, so the only way of convincing him to get out of that business was by moving out of the country. If he were there, he would have even more debt, because Brazil's economic situation just got worse since we left. My company made me the offer, and I decided it for my family, my husband so that I could take him out of that situation.

Theme 2: Embracing the challenge

Participants repeatedly mentioned the word challenge during the interviews. Sometimes they even used the word challenge interchanged with expatriation. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the definition of challenge is: "a stimulating task or problem." The participants claimed to perceive the expatriation experience as an inspiring and exciting duty, a task, that when performed effectively, has the potential to unleash their potential and generate career progression. They recognized the barriers imposed by the expatriation process as a lever to increase and leverage learning capabilities and skills sets, which might prepare them for a global work setting. Participants were unanimous in

claiming that when presented with difficulties, they felt stimulated to do their best work and to overcome the difficulties to achieve a career goal. In this section, I present the two categories under the umbrella of this theme: (1) Being an expatriate; and (2) Taking advantage of the challenge.

Being an expatriate

In this section, I describe topics that represent what it is like to be a Brazilian expatriate working in the U.S. for a Brazilian multinational. The participants portrayed a unique experience of managing the challenges when assuming a position in the Brazilian subsidiary in the U.S.

Discrimination and stereotyping were topics frequently mentioned by the participants. All participants in this study claimed that they expected to face discrimination. However, only two expatriates described episodes that they considered discriminative. They explained that when discrimination occurs, it has a subtle way of presenting its face. In this sense, I named these episodes as microaggressions. According to participants, stereotyping is more common than discrimination or microaggressions.

Joao and Carlos shared the feeling that they were facing resistance from the host nationals. Joao said: "I am a foreigner, so people ask, what is a foreigner doing here? I figure that people ask that, but I am ok with it. I think this will always happen." When asked to describe an event when this happened, Joao said: "I just picture this happen, but I have never felt discriminated, this never happened to me."

Similarly, Carlos offered:

I was apprehensive regarding the prejudice. I feared for being a foreigner, and for being seen as someone who is stealing a job from an American. However, this is not true. People here, they welcome me, and they see me as someone who is creating jobs here.

Similarly, Francisco claimed: “I do not feel I am discriminated against,” and added “but I feel like they [co-worker] are apprehensive”. Francisco and Maria described differential treatment according to nationality. Francisco noted:

I do not want to generalize, but I think that according to the nationality [better the treatment]. I do not want to say names, but I work with two supervisors, one Brazilian and one Canadian. The Canadian, they treat him as he is an American, but I do not feel the same thing being Brazilian. Although, it can be just my impression.

Maria said:

Being a Brazilian has no positive or negative effects. Maybe if I had another nationality, it could be difficult. In general, they are receptive, and I believe it is good. I had no problems as a professional.

Antonio and Ana described episodes of microaggressions in the workplace when they disagreed with co-workers. Antonio said: “It is important because the doses of prejudice are very subtle.” He clarified that during a discussion followed by a disagreement, it is common to hear ‘Maybe it is a misunderstanding.’ However, Antonio offered with caution: “If you are in a cosmopolitan city, you are better welcomed, with

rare manifestations of prejudice.” He continues by describing an episode that he experienced:

I lived an experience where I disagreed with someone, and the person noticed that he had no more arguments against my statements, then he said ‘It is a misunderstanding because of your English language skills.’ This is disrespectful and discriminatory. The person moved from a technical discussion to focus on pure prejudice. The issue was not related to language skills preventing him from understanding me; the issue was that he did not agree with me. It was ridiculous.

Ana also handled a situation of prejudice, similar to Antonio. She described the event:

I had a complication with an employee. It was clear that he did not want to work. After three or four months I went to the HR department and said that I would like to fire him. When I proposed that, I had all the evidence that he was not working. The HR director asked me the reason, and I told him that when I give him a task, he does not deliver it or does it incorrectly. The director said ‘maybe he did not do it because he does not understand you.’ I was in shock, I was there to get support and got out of the conversation completely devastated. I was feeling like it was my fault if he is not doing his responsibilities. That was the most challenging moment in the workplace. It was a long process because the HR manager understood as I was not capable of evaluating the situation. How could a Brazilian girl come here and fire an American? Everything that my employees do

incorrectly, it is because there was a misunderstanding. Of course, since I am not an English native speaker, so it was all my responsibility.

Later on in the interview, Ana described moments of fear when the employee started to become aggressive and punched his desk.

Moreover, the participants shared that stereotyping is more common than prejudice and has a more significant impact on their careers. The participants, who work in organizations that produce technological products, mentioned that their clients have issues to rely on the technological products of Brazilian organizations. Jose said:

In some organizations that I visited, people are willing to hear my presentation, but as soon as they perceive that I am selling a cutting-edge technology, they get puzzled. They have the perception that Brazil is only as a touristic place, not a country that can create technology. To overcome this impression, I provide technical information to them, and I mention an example that they could not deny. I ask if they flight with United or Delta, then I mention that they have traveled with a Brazilian airplane already.

Francisco explained how expectations related to quality are different when something is assumed to be Brazilian. He offered an example:

We have a management system, and it is really bad, it is a system made in 2010, but we are in 2018, and we are still using the same system. They [American co-workers] used to complain a lot about this system because they assumed it was a system created by our Brazilian organization. When I told that an American organization made the system, they were in shock. They did not know how to

react. Like if it is a Brazilian invention it has problems, but an American has no problems.

Ana explained that she feels that some people perceive her as less knowledgeable because she is Brazilian. She provided an example:

We were having lunch, and a trivia competition was happening. There was a question about the difference between Great Britain and England, something like that. They started to discuss, and I gave them the correct answer. She could not believe I knew the answer, so she searched on google because she could not believe that I knew that answer.

Being an expatriate also means dealing with co-workers' expectations. The participants claimed that they have to manage the relationships with co-workers in Brazil and in the U.S. The expatriates highlighted some differences between these two types of co-workers. While the relationship with co-workers in Brazil is close and friendly, the relationship with co-workers in the U.S. is professional but distant.

The expatriates explained that the relationship with Brazilian co-workers located in Brazil has maintained strong and pleasant, but they struggle to show them that the expatriation reality also has its constraints. Francisco said: "my relationship with co-workers in Brazil did not change. We have a very good relationship". Likewise, Jose offered that his Brazilian co-workers were his friends. He stated that his co-workers have not changed their attitude towards him, they still nurture a nice friendship, and he added: "However, some people think that if you are distant, you will not remember them.

Recently, a friend told me ‘I am glad you did not forget us.’” Maria also likes her relationship with her co-workers in Brazil; she commented:

As an expatriate, one participates less in the company’s decisions. When I was working in Brazil, I used to hear things. The person who is in my position today complained that he could not understand what was happening in Brazil. We cannot understand the product strategy, directions, and responsibilities.

Carlos noted that when he was in Brazil, there were jokes about the expatriates. He said: “the expatriate is a card out of the pack.” He explained that expatriates would not be consulted for decision and opinions anymore. Carlos observed that when he became an expatriate, he said: “I was feeling kind of off.” He described that the novelty of the job and the setting required a lot of him, so he had no time to communicate as often with people in Brazil. He summarized by saying: “I am very careful regarding not giving the impression that I forget the company in Brazil.”

The participants perceived that their Brazilian co-workers assume that they have an easy life and job, while the American co-workers assume that they are watching them to inform the headquarters. Meanwhile, the Brazilian expatriate stays in the middle trying to balance their expectations. Antonio stated:

People in Brazil think that you are in Disneyland, that you are working in one of the best places in the world. In my company, they always make jokes with the expatriates who are working in the U.S., Europe, Australia. They say that we have the winning ticket. There are many jokes.

Francisco explained that co-workers in Brazil mentioned that they would like to work in the U.S. because the Brazilian co-workers see it as a privilege. Joao also observed that Brazilian co-workers assume that expatriates in the U.S. have a very glamorous life, and they do not know the challenges of being an expatriate, and how much the expatriate needs to work harder to conquer his space. According to Jose, it is a challenge to explain to people in Brazil that the company is not as well-known here as it is in Brazil, that you are facing more challenging barriers. He stated:

We are here struggling to get a place in the business, so we need to provide additional value. People in Brazil perceive it differently, which ends up creating a barrier for our work here, and it becomes a big challenge.

Maria mentioned:

I think that people perceive that being in the U.S. is a luxury. They think that we are thriving, everyone sees glamour because now we are earning in dollars. If one has never experienced being an expatriate, they do not know the difficulties. Even the company sends this message like an expatriation is one's dream promotion.

For Joao, co-workers in Brazil can only see the pros of expatriation, and they cannot see how difficult is to leave your family and friends who stay in Brazil. He summarized: "People [Brazilian co-workers] have a completely different perception of reality." In addition, Antonio believes that co-workers in Brazil think that expatriates are working with people who are more informed and qualified, which creates the wrong impression that an expatriate has less work.

Despite these difficulties with Brazilian co-workers, the expatriates claimed that they enjoyed working more when they were in Brazil. Francisco noted: “The work climate in Brazil was so much better, I cannot compare. I was always very professional, but in Brazil it was more fun.” Carlos noticed that his American co-workers are very respectful, but he can not count on them. He said: “maybe here, people have more tasks. I always try to help but it is not like in Brazil, but it is good too.” For Francisco, some American co-workers perceive him as a “spy,” someone who is watching them to keep the order by using his power of connections to the supervisors and the headquarters. He continued: “I am careful about this, I am not here to do this, but they see me as a spy.” Francisco claimed that the company made mistakes regarding organizational practices in the past, by trying to impose practices, developed at the headquarters, on the subsidiary. This situation caused a conflict with the employees in the subsidiary, because they had the feeling that people in Brazil were not seeing them as competent: “They think that I came here to tell them how they should work.” He provided an example of this ‘spy feeling’:

There is someone that always comes to me asking if I know about the company’s strategies. ‘What do you know about this?’ I don’t know anything, man. When part of the company was sold, I learned it from this person, but they thought that I knew all strategic decisions, like if I have privileged information. I don’t have it, but they think that I do because I am Brazilian.

The participants portrayed a particular way of performing their job, as a unique way of being a Brazilian expatriate. According to five participants, the Brazilian expatriate has the characteristic of being multifunctional.

Ana explained that people get surprised about how Brazilians are flexible and fast. She said, “we have a very peculiar way of helping others.” She explained: “the Americans complete their job and that is it. They do not get into someone’s job, because of this culture of covering their back.” Ana sees that the Brazilians behave differently in the workplace. She added: “We, Brazilians, help our co-workers without thinking about consequences. We do not think that if we do it incorrectly, we will be penalized. We do it because we want to help.” Therefore, she continued: “my director kept coming to me and giving me one task, then another, and I was accepting it. Then, I got a new role.”

Carlos also highlighted that his capability of being multifunctional affected his career positively. He noted: “When the company fired 200 people, we noticed that those who stayed were people who were multifunctional. They do not limit themselves to one single activity or responsibility.” He added by sharing a story that happened when he was working in Brazil:

One day, a client called me, but everyone had left. It was after work hours. He wanted to buy a product. The sales workforce had left. It was easy for me to say I am sorry but there is no one here anymore. I decided to help; I knew where the key was, I drove the fork-lift. I think I should not have done it. Anyway, I got the product and put it on his truck. The client was super happy. When I was driving back the fork-lift, the president of the company saw me. He was proud; he took a

picture of me. I think that what I did contribute to me being here today. I have to do a little bit of everything.

Francisco pointed out that while an American employee does what is in his/her job description, the Brazilian expatriate has to go beyond his/her job description and execute the strategy to achieve to the organization goals. He said: “When I am working, I know the organization’s national and global goals, I know what I can do beyond my role to assist the company in reaching its goals, this does not happen with my co-workers. They only perform their job roles.”

Antonio provided a thorough explanation of the multifunctional Brazilian expatriate’s characteristics, and compared this with the specialized characteristics of the Americans. He claimed that Brazilians believe that employees need to see the business as a whole, and the leaders in Brazilian corporations need to be able to interact, provide suggestions, share experience in different departments. Antonio asserted that in the U.S., professionals are very competent in one singular field, and they do not get involved in other areas of the organization. He highlighted that the differences are cultural and regulative. He shared his thoughts about being a Brazilian expatriate in the U.S.:

We are multifunctional. They [Americans] are more disciplined and focus on more specialized areas. They know from the beginning their job description, and they are very focused on it. While the Brazilians, I see them as more flexible, and they express a greater interest in other areas to understand the system as a whole. An analogy is a human body. I cannot have an organ more developed than other,

so we need to comprehend many organs without losing track of the whole system functionality.

For Jose, the Americans believe that they need to specialize to perform their role effectively, while the Brazilians think that they need to go beyond their role to achieve high performance. He explained how this characteristic is reflected in his career achievements. He said:

Here in the U.S., all our clients were acquired because of this Brazilian expatriate's characteristic. We are competing with Americans, so they share the same language, they have a relationship because they grow up together, they have the culture in common, so we are far behind in the game. Therefore, we have to provide something additional and show them that you can provide something else, and finally convince the client.

The company's nationality has affected the expatriates in diverse manners. On the one hand, working for Brazilian companies that have internationalized only recently seems to provide more challenge for the expatriates. On the other hand, expatriates in a solid internationalized Brazilian company have the challenges reduced.

Joao was the only expatriate that did not notice any particular differences due to the company's nationality. Maria pointed out that the Brazilian context affects the Brazilian multinational financially. She offered an example of the currency value variance and the impact on the price of the products. This complication brings more challenges to the expatriate who has to explain high-interest rates and monetary exchange to someone who does not live that reality. Maria added: "we also had to explain the

impeachment of the president and the inflation.” For Ana, the Brazilian multinationals do not have a tradition of developing technology, so it is difficult to communicate its values, in a competitive market. Jose agrees with Ana; his company is new to the market and still fighting for market share. He noted: “sometimes I have to convince not only the client but my co-workers, too.” Jose commented that this struggle has generated exhaustion to him.

Francisco and Carlos work for large family-owned multinational companies. Therefore, they feel like they belong to a family. Francisco said: “The Brazilian nationality is important for me; it is like this is my family business.” He provided an example:

I have been working in this company for thirteen years. Thus I know all the leaders, who make the decision worldwide. I know many people, so I have a bit of influence, and it might seem like a private group, a particular community. Thus, there is a thing of calling the Brazilians as one of us. Like, I am protected.

For Carlos, a Brazilian multinational has Brazilian leaders that sometimes do not acknowledge the differences in the market or culture of the country when making a decision. He described that he received directions that do not attend the market’s expectations, and sometimes harm his image projected to the stakeholders.

As part of being an expatriate, participants highlighted the role of networking for developing their careers. Meeting the right people at the right time seemed to contribute to the career progression of the participants.

Francisco explained that a friend from his master’s program was selected in a recruitment process of a multinational, and his friend encouraged him to apply for an

internship position. He claimed: “He stimulated me to apply, so I went there, and I was selected.” Francisco presented a clear picture of the importance of professional networking in his career, especially in the first stages. He noted: “I meet people who helped me to be here, no doubts about this.” People from his network also assisted him to get an international assignment offer. He explained that the organization prefers to send in international assignments employee who is working in a specific role, and this job position is not a role very much required in the U.S. Therefore; he connects his expatriation offer to his networking. Francisco added: “my network help me to get prepared for the interview, I knew the person who was interviewing me, but I did not know his history, and the other person interviewing me I meet in Asia.” Hence, Francisco highlighted that his professional networking had assisted him throughout his career.

Joao believed that “the international assignment offer only happens if someone from the upper management knows you, if nobody knows you, your career will not move forward.” For Antonio, one’s supervisor needs to appreciate the expatriate’s performance. He said: “my leader is an educator, his primary skill is to tutor people...He changed my life.” Antonio explained that he strives for an effective relationship with his supervisor. He elaborated on this: “Usually; he gets to the office before 7 am, as I was his assistant, I need to work at that time too. I wanted to be in the office when my leader was there”.

Carlos mentioned the help of a friend from his college:

I was going to marry, so I was dropping off my wedding invite to a college friend, he asked me where I was working. I said where, and he mentioned to me an open position as a manager at the company where he was working.

In sum, all participants have emphasized the role of their networking on having access to diverse job opportunities, forcing a career development that culminated with the expatriation.

Four expatriates pointed out a unique role of Brazilian expatriates working for a Brazilian multinational in the U.S. They claimed to assume the role of mediator or liaison, someone who carries the information and establishes the communication from headquarters to the subsidiary, and vice versa. They have noticed that people at the headquarters and subsidiary have the challenge in communicating due to language differences, and lack of relationship with decision makers; therefore, they have contacted the expatriate who has the knowledge from both workplaces and can navigate easier between these two work settings. The participants stated that this attitude has introduced them to new information and people in the organization, and enhanced their career prospects.

Carlos explained: “It is very helpful the fact that I have met many people in the organization. Thus I know where to get specific information, and as I know everyone in Brazil. I know with whom I should talk to. Therefore, this is a great advantage for me”. Francisco added that both in Asia and in the U.S., people rather contact him than call the supervisor. He noted: “They rather talk with me because we can talk in Portuguese, so they have a more informal conversation. It does not mean they do not know English,” he explained that this behavior of people in Brazil strengthened his relationship with people at the headquarters, but it also created problems of confidentiality and power distance. Jose has the similar impression: “if one can speak the language spoken at the

headquarters, one can communicate more effectively with the headquarters.” Jose mentioned that he never noticed it before moving to the U.S. He believes that it gives him an advantage over the other employees. He provided an example: “when I am having a conference call with Brazilian and Americans, it always comes up a bit of Portuguese, like people in Brazil want to certify that they got the message.” For Ana, this situation exposed her to activities and situations that promote the development of new attributes. She explained: “I have worked for many years at this multinational, and I speak Portuguese, so people in Brazil see me as a liaison who will send the message of the company to the subsidiaries.” As a professional, Ana believes that this action enhanced her professional value.

Less often mentioned, but equally important, the expatriates observed that they like taking the risk, being exposed to different situations, and engaging in learning and changing during this process. This drive for adventure and novelty keeps them passionate about new challenges and consequently about acquiring more knowledge and experiences. Joao observed: “life is to be motivated to find new things, things that make you learn and keep the ball rolling.” For Jose, the expatriation keeps one in touch with different nationalities and forces one to behave properly to attend people’s cultural expectations. Antonio believes that expatriates are more willing to assume risks, he said: “the world does not move forward with people who look for stability.” Francisco claimed that the changes make him be engaged and move forward in his career.

In sum, participants described seven different main issues regarding what it is like being a Brazilian expatriate in the US: (1) prejudice and stereotyping, (2)

multifunctionality skills, (3) co-workers' relationships, (4) particularities of Brazilian multinationals, (5) mediator and liaison role, (6) networking, (7) and intrinsic drive for change. These topics were described by the expatriates as challenges that they have faced and that have contributed to their career development.

Taking advantage of the challenge

Although expatriation is about being challenged, to learn how to take advantage of these challenges seems to be a great way of nurturing career advancements. In this section, I expose the challenges faced by expatriates, present the connection of the challenges with personal growth, and clarify the career progression through the process of learning from Americans.

Participants claimed that the difficulties presented by the novelty of the job, place, and culture force one to make a strong effort to adjust and consequently promote self-development. This personal development has an immediate effect on the expatriates' career by enhancing one's capability to deal with global complex projects.

Francisco said:

When you are an expatriate, you are exposed to challenges that you were not prepared for. One thinks one is prepared, but one is not, so this forces one to self-develop. The companies noticed this forceful self-development and encouraged it. The experience is like a catalyzer for your own personal growth, and your business, and world vision. Everything changes and the companies know about it.

Joao explained that personal growth that an expatriate experience, creates advantages for one's career. He said:

I believe that the expatriation takes you further than anyone else because you are exposed to new cultures, people and challenges. The benefits of this experience are immeasurable, and what it can do with someone's career. I think that when you accept a challenge, you are forced to develop yourself, and understand cultures and people. Your development is immediate because the environment that you are in is different than everything that you knew before. It forces you to adjust to new situations and I think this is very positive [for my career].

Sometimes you work for too long in a position and you feel like you don't have any more challenges. When you change the position and start to work in something different it motivates you. I think there are two reasons, one is you are learning something new, and second, you will need to find a solution for what you are discovering. For me, every day is a surprise, I see change all the time, and this is very challenging and exciting for me.

Similarly, Antonio claimed:

When you are learning and working with new things, new projects, different people in a different culture. It promotes your personal growth in a way that you cannot measure it. One who designs one's career only considering salary has a narrow view because the learning experience and career advancement opportunities should be considered. All these experiences will build a foundation for enabling their capabilities to assume a larger and more complex project.

Professionally, I see myself more capable of facing complex challenges, especially during a crisis.

Moreover, Jose explained that the expatriation forces one to get out of their comfort zone:

When one works at the headquarters, one has all the support from other areas to perform the job. Here, in the U.S., I work alone. Therefore, I have to be very prepared when I am going to meet a client. My first experience with the client can define what the client will think about the company. Thus, I am very careful, because I am representing the other thousands of employees that the company has around the world. These challenges are an opportunity to keep me updated as a professional. Consequently, these experiences enabled me to accumulate knowledge that I can use anywhere else. I can transmit trust to the client and to the company. All of these enhance the challenge, and force one to adapt one's strategic plans.

Maria highlighted that the expatriation process imposes novelties. This newness challenges expatriates' former assumptions and beliefs. She said:

What I like the best is the challenge. I have to learn how to deal with things that I was not used to face in Brazil. I need to evaluate paths that I have never imagined I would evaluate. I have to deal with a different language. When I came here it was so difficult, I went to a restaurant I noticed that I knew little about the language. Regarding personal development, I like being close to my clients to learn about their culture. When I was in Brazil and used to travel to visit them, I did not know much about my clients. Here I have access to my client easily, and it

makes me understand the market, and this generates advantages for my career progression.

Carlos also believed that the challenges of the expatriation strengthened his personal and professional growth:

I came here to make important decisions, where we are growing a subsidiary from scratch. I have to decide about products, services. I hired people. In sum, I managed the whole project alone. When I was assigned to open a new subsidiary in a different country, I got super excited because it is a big challenge. I like a challenge and the unknown. My spouse commented that I do not like routine. I need challenges to keep me motivated. For me this expatriation has many benefits. I am seeming in the company as someone who trusts and embraces the company. It is more important than an academic degree because I have developed skills that only this challenge could present me.

According to the expatriates, another tactic to embrace the challenge and take advantage of the experience is to learn how to appreciate positive characteristics of host country nationals. All expatriates expressed admiration for the host country economy and job market. They connect it to the behavior of people, and their business practices to the organizations' and country's economic success.

Francisco observed that he learned how to communicate with Americans. He claimed that Americans have an objective way of talking, which takes the conversation directly to the point. Therefore, this establishes a candid relationship and feedback. He appreciates working in a place where people are candid and honest about their opinions.

Meanwhile, Joao noted that Americans are more productive than Brazilians and the lack of informal conversation during work increases the work productivity. He noted: “It is different to work here. People are more productive. There are few small talks during work time, so people are more focused. Thus, I have to adjust to this.”

Antonio highlighted the discipline of the Americans. He said:

We must adopt what is interesting of the other culture, like the discipline of the Americans. In Brazil, we are used to the culture of creativity and “gambiarra,” or even the “jeitinho.” Therefore, we do not have the practice of documenting procedures. In the U.S., everything is more systemic and has a higher quality standard, including regarding academic education, which enables the American to execute specific tasks. They are concerned about reporting the most effective practices through manuals. Consequently, the behavior expected in the workplace is clear and limited to the society’s rules.

Likewise, Ana noted the importance of designing and documenting procedures. She claimed: “We should learn everything about their work process. They are a great economic power for a reason. They are so organized, and take responsibility for what they are doing.” She continued assessing the importance of learning from the Americans: “We should always leave a bit of us, and catch a bit of them. This can transform us into a better person, professional, and enhance the workplace.” Jose pointed out the high quality of the American academic education and its focus on specialization. He claimed: “An American is very good at performing the role that he/she has assumed.” Carlos asserted

that the business system created and nurtured by the Americans is more effective due to the reduction of bureaucracy:

Some days ago, I looked for a supplier. He told me that I should place the order and sent him an email. He never saw me, but he sold it to me. I filled the form and placed the order, and he delivered the products. Things here are more agile and easy because there is not much bureaucracy. In Brazil, our financial department had 30 people because they needed to calculate all the several types of taxes.

Here, I am the financial department. Things work smoothly, and I appreciate it.

In sum, the expatriate career to Brazilian expatriates means to navigate career assumptions and issues never expected, while one embraces these challenges in order to transform the issues in learning opportunities to accelerated career self-development.

Theme 3: Balancing multiple priorities

This theme addressed the participants' reflection on the meaning of the expatriate career development phenomenon. Participants in this study were unanimous in acknowledging that the expatriates' careers have many factors that should be considered from several lenses to be able to adjust, and align personal and professional goals according to present reality where the phenomenon is occurring. For instance, they pointed out that they have personal goals and strive to pursue their objectives; however, these goals need to be situated in a multilevel perspective to attend to all the stakeholders' needs.

For the participants, career progression is established when one understands the world's needs and is able to adapt according to its' needs. In this scenario, the world's

needs are priorities that should be assessed, developed and evaluated before and during the career advancements. Below I describe some of these multiple priorities that the expatriates have mentioned during the interviews, and explain how they are addressing these needs in order to have an international career progression.

Expatriates asserted that fluency in the English language is a primary need in one's international career. When being an expatriate, specifically in the U.S., it is very important to enhance one's English language skills. The immersion in a host country whose language and ways of doing business are highly regarded worldwide is an additional benefit to one's career. For Antonio, many Brazilians have the desire of living in the U.S. temporarily in order to learn the English language. He explained that his spouse struggled to learn English, but she appreciates the opportunity of language immersion. Francisco explained: "You cannot have fluency in a foreign language if you have not experienced full immersion in a country with that language." He pointed out that his organization values employees fluent in English and support their English language learning by paying for English classes.

Jose explained the importance of communicating properly and its impact on one's career:

Undoubtedly, one has to know the culture and language. It does not work to behave as a Brazilian. I have nothing against the Brazilian culture, but if one is living in a different context, one has to adjust to it. I have to be fluent in the language, no doubt. If I am going to execute a good job, I must be fluent in English, especially in my case. Last week, I sold a 5 million dollars product, and

this week I am working on a 12 million dollars project. Therefore, I cannot make many mistakes while I am communicating with the client. I am also selling my image, and the image of the company. The message needs to be clear, and proper, always respecting the culture of the place.

Maria explained that before moving to the U.S., she had the erroneous impression of being fluent in English, and she just realized she needed to improve her English language skills when she started to live in the U.S. and was exposed to a different vocabulary. Carlos agrees that the English language fluency is imperative for someone who has an expatriate career. He mentioned that he still needs to continue learning English, even though he has been living in the U.S for some time. He said: “I thought I could speak English until I came here. Then, I realized, I had to improve it a lot.” Ana highlighted that people expect the expatriate to be fluent in English. As she had some struggle to learn the English language in Brazil, she believes that the expatriation is a great opportunity to improve her English language skills. Maria, Carlos, and Ana added that being immersed in a country with the English language is also beneficial to the family members’ careers.

In addition, expatriates pointed out the need to have a mentor who would help one to design and execute a career goal. Some participants mentioned the guidance of family members, others appreciated their supervisor’s vision, and others got the support from co-workers. According to the participants, mentors can predict organizational needs and job market opportunities, which might contribute to the expatriate’s career progression. Some expatriates even emphasized the value of having two mentors who have different skills

and career progression visions. Expatriates claimed that the expatriation experience can extrapolate the challenges that one expected, so mentoring is a need to the expatriate.

Jose commented on having two mentors: one supervisor who promoted him several times, and one who taught him many skills. He said: “He granted me the opportunity of joining diverse projects, I traveled the world. He was the one who promoted to different locations.” Regarding the person who tutored him, he said:

The first time that I made a deal of 36 million dollars, he was with me. A lot of the sales strategy that I use today, I learned from him, I can tell you that he was my instructor. He taught me even behavior during negotiations.

Jose stressed the importance of receiving feedback from a mentor:

A mentor can provide a second perspective on your work. There are many things that I cannot see. I receive feedback from my supervisor, but it is nothing formal. Actually, I have received a few feedbacks in the last years, which is terrible for me. You have to have a very positive head not to make huge mistakes because it is difficult when you are abroad. I think that if I had a mentor, I could make better career choices in the long term.

Ana claimed that she learned to be humble from her mentor, and this attitude has fortified her career progression. She said: “He practices this a lot. He replies to all my emails in a kind and gentle way. He is not a perfect person, no one is, but he is a role model for everyone, the first one to arrive and the last one to leave. It is delightful working with someone who inspires you.”

Antonio highlighted the advantages of having an inspiring mentor, who taught him the skills and strategies that result in positive outcomes during his professional journey. Antonio explained that his mentor was a leader who would educate people throughout their work. This mentor engaged him in significant and complex projects, which provided him with a holistic view of the activities performed in the whole organization. Besides, Antonio emphasized that his mentor would let him make mistakes so that he could learn from failure. He stressed that these experiences made him an expert in crisis management.

Joao explained that host country nationals and co-workers had been great mentors to him. He claimed: “As they are native, they have a different perspective, they help me to understand both sides of the story, including economic and financial markets, and leaders’ values.” He concluded that while one mentor helped him to learn about the market and American behavior, the other helped him to develop leadership skills.

For Maria, the hectic professional context of an expatriate requires someone who provides support and guidance. She noted:

Sometimes, I realize that daily activities are harder when you are abroad. It is hard because my supervisor in Brazil has a busy agenda, he travels all the time, so it is very difficult to talk to him. I only receive feedback about my performance once a year, so I rely a lot on my gut. Sometimes, I face huge problems, the client is on the phone, and I have to decide without discussing the issue with someone.

Therefore, I miss not having a mentor to count on.

Carlos shared a similar story. On the one hand, his supervisors in Brazil have great expectations about his job performance, but the supervisors in Brazil cannot provide frequent guidance due to the numerous activities that they have to perform. He claimed that the distance demands that he makes decisions without his supervisor's instructions or opinions. On the other hand, Carlos indicated that he has more freedom to do his job.

Moreover, participants indicated that corporate career development practices are important to attend the expatriates' career expectations of development. Study participants claimed to expect a basic level of support from the corporation to attend to their expectations regarding their careers. Some expatriates communicated the desire of assuming top-level positions in the organization, in the U.S. or another host country.

Joao envisioned a director's position in the organization: "In the future, I want to assume a director's position. I believe that being an expatriate places the career development on a fast-track. I would like to stay in the U.S., but I would move to another country, too." He continued by explaining that some companies support their employees by paying for a graduate degree. He said:

I think this creates a stronger link between employer and employee. It is like if you feel that the organization is investing in your development. You feel that the organization is promoting your progression that will bring solutions to the organization. I think that this is a very interesting way of supporting someone's development.

Francisco expressed the interest in being assigned to different host countries without increasing his level of job responsibility. He expects that the organization will

offer him positions in new subsidiaries in different countries, but without compromising his personal life. He noted:

Today I have a technical career. The company has a technical and a managerial career track. Considering my age, I believe that my career is on a proper track. In order to progress in my career, I should go to a managerial career track. However, I am not sure if I want this for me because money is not the most important. The responsibility in my job will increase, so I am not sure if this will be valuable for me.

Francisco explained that being in the same position or a lateral position in the same organization is what he expects for his career in the future. However, these decisions would depend on the number of projects that the organization will undertake. Jose and Ana have similar points of view regarding their career development and how the organization could contribute to it. They both claimed that the best for them is that the company supports them in continuing to work in the U.S. since their kids have adjusted to the country. In the meantime, they hope to have promotion opportunities in the U.S. subsidiary. Jose observed:

Because of my kids, I wish the company to keep me here. I do not like to expose my kids to many changes. Coming here was a big change for them, so I do not want to disturb their lives again. Moreover, the experience has been great for them. However, there are things that we cannot control. The company is investing in my green card, so I guess they intend to maintain me here. I do not see myself

working in any other organization. I believe that at some point they will offer me a managerial position here.

For Ana, the experience of being an expatriate here is valuable, and she wants to the company to keep her in the U.S. However, her loneliness here, and distance from the family makes her express some interest in living in Brazil again:

I am building my life here, and my kids are growing here, so we would like to stay here. On the other hand, I am always thinking of going back to Brazil. Here I am lonely; it is just my two kids and I. I do not have much mobility because I do not like driving. So, I feel limited by my fear, so I am always thinking of going back to Brazil to be in my comfort zone. Of course, this is not right. Right?

Two expatriates presented the desire of assuming a top level position in the organization. Carlos mentioned his intention to assist the organization to grow. He expected that the organization will provide him with the opportunity to achieve his objectives. He said: "I want to make this subsidiary to grow as big as the headquarters." He added: "when everything is going well here, I want to have the chance of opening another subsidiary." However, he explained that his career success would not be measured by promotion. Carlos reflected: "I believe that having success means to do what you like. You do not need to get a higher position; you might get new assignments. This is very interesting for me." He concluded by saying that he expected the company to invest in him by sponsoring a graduate degree.

Antonio intends to assume a position that will expose him to new situations that will trigger his personal and professional development. He highlighted his interests for

assuming a managerial position in a Non-Government Organization (NGO). Antonio explained that he has worked in an NGO project that the multinational has sponsored, and he had great personal and professional satisfaction from performing that work.

For Maria, the organizational support should match with her career expectations. She explained that she learned from the expatriation experience, and she expects that the organization recognizes her collaboration. She said:

I never planned to be an expatriate, but it was a very positive thing for my career. If the organization will not recognize my efforts, and will not provide new perspectives on growth, I think I would seek a new job. I have many doubts about the organization's recognition of my efforts here because the leaders in my organization are very difficult. If I have to come back to Brazil, I expect that they provided me at least the position that I had before leaving.

Overall, expatriates expressed a candid concern about corporate practices of career development. Most of them expect to keep working at the same organization, but they condition their continued engagement with the organization on practices that might recognize their efforts during the expatriation.

Also, expatriates believe that their commitment and engagement in informal career development practices is relevant to their career advancements. The expatriates in this study took upon themselves the responsibility for their career promotion and progression. Many expatriates in this study asserted that their responsibility for their career progression was greater than the organization's responsibility. Participants

mentioned knowing effective actions or activities to advance their careers, but explained that the hectic role as an expatriate limited the execution of these actions.

Francisco believed that his career prospects depend on his employability, which is defined as the match between his skills with the skills required from a professional in the job market. In the case of being prepared for assuming a position in the American market, he did not feel confident due to the lack of a graduate degree, or a degree from an American university. He claimed: "I think that I am not doing what is needed to develop my career. Of course, I am gaining experience by working, but I know that I should be pursuing other learning practices, for instance, a graduate degree." He added that coaching activities would be an efficient manner to advance his career, but he postponed taking advantage of such opportunities due to his business with his day-to-day work commitments. Nevertheless, he explained: "Regarding my work, I do not work thinking about my next job position, I only do my best. This is bad for me because I waste time, but I have to do my best in everything that I do."

Joao explained that the nature of the expatriate experience nurtures self-development. He, for instance, has developed more emotional intelligence. Joao feels the need of being more rational and less emotional in the American workplace. Meanwhile, he reflected that his interpersonal skills have improved due to the contact with people from different cultures. He expects that his career will advance if he keeps an open mind to these subtle particularities of the expatriation settings.

For Antonio, it is important to balance corporate career development practices with personal goals. Only the balance between the two will provide him with career

fulfillment. Similarly, to Jose, Antonio claimed that the expatriate experience per se is an activity of self-development, which makes one accumulate knowledge and experience, and consequently develop new competences. The combination of these factors facilitates decision making and encourages one to engage in more social activities and organizational projects. He noted: “The most important is the result that this career progression will bring to you. Outcomes that are a consequence of knowledge, experience, and competence.” He added: “This [career development] happens in a very natural way. Therefore, it is important to have the flexibility and awareness that one’s knowledge needs to be adapted to transfer to a different setting.”

Jose values a graduate degree as a career progression activity, but he explains that due to the lack of time and job and family pressures he has failed to apply to a graduate program. He asserted that sometimes the most important is to be self-critical in order to develop one’s career. Jose also added that he needs to be connected to diverse forms of training, including conferences, and technical certifications. Similarly, Maria claimed that she wishes to pursue a graduate degree. However, while she was willing to reduce the amount of time she is spending with her family, she was not willing to pay for a graduate program. She expected the company to pay for it, but so far the organization denied her requests for tuition reimbursement. She added: “I think my career development is stagnated here. My development only comes from contact with the client and the lived experience of the expatriation.”

Getting out of the comfort zone through their initiative seems to be the way of developing expatriates’ careers abroad. Carlos reflected that during the expatriation he

became even more willing to be involved in challenging projects that require complex solutions. He claimed that new roles added to his job role have helped him to learn new skills. He said: "I love challenges. I get a challenge and try to come up with something else. I get to the point I cannot do it alone, so I hire someone to help me."

Ana thinks that she has become a better observer. She claimed: "Today, I am much more aware of the details. Even when it requires to slow down." Likewise, Ana believes that the expatriation is enhancing her network and this is a valuable career development practice.

Expatriates described the need for self-assessment of their learning and career satisfaction regularly. They described the assessment of their career path by connecting to informal learning strategies adopted to their self-development outcomes and personal satisfaction. The satisfactory perception of their advancement was presented as essential to their career progression.

Carlos said: "In this organization, I have been feeling satisfied with my professional advancement because the owners recognize my work and they appreciate my interaction with them. In this company, I can work freely; I have a voice, I can get help, they are supportive." For Ana, it is important to be engaged in activities that result in learning. The process of learning new approaches and accomplishments produces the motivation to further advance one's career progression. She observed:

I am always studying different areas where I do not have much knowledge; as I said, I have never developed content for social media. I study every day; I read eBooks. Today I read one about social selling, which it is the use of social media

for selling products. It is a marketing tool. Therefore, every day I get something new to read, even that I do not finish the book. And, I use it to identify what I need to learn, and how I can develop it. First, because we need to keep up-to-date and we need to learn tools that makes us acquire new knowledge.

Similarly, Joao claimed to seek learning constantly through diverse methods. He mentioned reading journals, magazines, attending training. He added: "I am always trying to develop myself cognitively."

Francisco asserted that the expatriation nurtured his social skills and, consequently, he feels more fulfilled. He noted:

I changed a lot my behavior because of the expatriation. I was famous for confronting people in my organization. When I was in Brazil, it did not matter whether the person was a director or a manager. If the person was in front of me and was saying something stupid, I would point out to the person that what the person said was stupid. During my expatriation, I learned that some people do not accept critique, or sometimes they accept feedback, but deep down I hurt their feelings. Now, I learned how to observe people and adapt my approach to that person according to their attitude. Today, I know that I can be candid, but I need to evaluate peoples' reaction because sometime my candid behavior will have no benefit for me or the organization, and the person will continue being the same. Before the expatriation I was in a bubble, I could not see it.

Jose claimed that expatriation sets the stage for his personal learning due to the independence he has in performing his job. He explained that as an expatriate, he needed

to elevate his commitment to his learning because he would not have the constant support from the organization. He claimed that expatriates are the ones who have more knowledge on the international market, so expatriates become more confident regarding making decisions on behalf of the organization, which subsequently will promote one self-development and learning.

Also, the expatriate career requires flexibility from the expatriate to adjust to job market's dynamics, visualize opportunities, and achieve career goals. According to Joao, his job mobility is affected by monetary incentives and opportunities for taking his career to a different scenario or position. For Jose, "You are responsible for your destiny." He acknowledges that at the end of the day someone needs supervisors' approval to advance in a career, but the motivation to achieve your career objectives must be intrinsic and connected to one's capabilities of adjusting to the settings. He added:

Obviously, many external factors are affecting one's career, such as economic crisis, organization internationalization capabilities, and strategic plan. I could have stayed in Brazil like many people, but I decided to be here. However, I do not know if I had better or worse outcomes. I know that my world continues without any borders.

Francisco described his reflections on his flexibility in response to the national and international job market dynamics. Also, he felt that he had developed himself as a person and as a professional during the expatriation experience. At the same time, he observed:

My lack of an American academic degree and my limited experience working in the American market is a downside of my career. If I lose my current job, it will not be the end of the world, but it will be a problem because I am not prepared.

Maria claimed that having a flexible attitude towards one's career can bring benefits that were never expected. She said: "If someone asked me five years ago where I would be, I would have said that I was going to be there, in Brazil, I would never have said here, in the U.S." She added: "Today, it will be difficult to leave the U.S. because my husband's career is here now, and it is difficult to decline to the comfort, safety and life quality in this country [U.S.], I tried not think about it and let it be."

For Carlos, expatriates need to have a flexible attitude to be open to new possibilities and achievements. He said: "I am taking advantage of this moment. I have grown enormously since 2012 because the organization has grown here too. What they cannot produce here, they produce there. Thus they take advantage of the situation, while I develop my career."

Expatriates claimed that assuming a flexible attitude to deal with market changes and opportunities facilitates career achievements. Ana explained that her openness to a global mindset is creating channels to promote her intercultural learning and to be noticed as a globally minded professional, which is an important requirement for a communications person in a multinational corporation.

Carlos argued that any international experience could be positive. He said that he would move to a less developed country if the move does not compromise his family's safety and wellness. Maria has already observed that the expatriation provided her with

new new job opportunities and promotion potential. During her last trip to Brazil, her director offered her a position as a manager of the engineering department.

Participants have expressed the interest in maintaining their job in the organization while assuming different roles that expose them to unknown scenarios where they can learn new skills and perceive their contribution to the multinationals' success. In the case of the Brazilian expatriates in this study, the borders of their career are seeing inside the borders of the Brazilian multinational. The repatriation to Brazil was one of the issues discussed by the participants when reflecting on and evaluating their career advancements. Expatriates acknowledged that their return to Brazil might be required, but they also claimed to consider the return to Brazil under certain conditions. The family safety and life-work balance were placed as more important than a promotion after repatriation. Most of them trust that their international experience will be valuable at any organization, meaning that they believe that the expatriation and the skills acquired during the expatriation have provided them with greater employability.

Francisco highlighted: "To return to Brazil is easy because now I have more experience. This [the expatriation] will certainly enrich my resume." Maria stated that she would like to return to Brazil and she has received a promotion offer from her supervisor, but she declined it because her husband was satisfied with his job in the U.S. She said: "The organization does not let you choose if you want to stay or return. They asked me to return, and I said no; because of my husband, then they said 'OK, but the opportunity is gone.'" She explained that she would like to return to Brazil because of her parents and

sister, not because of her career. She claimed: “It is all because of my family, if I could bring my parents and my sister here I would not want to go back to Brazil.”

Carlos also believed that the experience has enriched his resume and increased his employability. He said: “I think that everyone who has the opportunity should embrace it, because it is great for one’s career, especially if I go back to Brazil. I am sure that if I go back, this experience will have a positive impact on my career. The experience is not comfortable, but it is worth it.”

According to Antonio, a person has a successful career if he can balance four factors: professional challenge, financial goal, personal satisfaction, and family happiness. He also pointed out that this is not a formula that can be used by everyone, because each career has lots of individual expectations. He explained: “There is no personal development without sacrifice; at the beginning of my career, my family had to live without me, but as I acquired experience, I started to value it differently. I learned to negotiate this with the organization.” Francisco also claimed that the life-work balance is essential. He noted: “Sometimes I observe my neighbors; they almost kill themselves with working to buy stuff. This does not work for me; I have a car and not many debts so that I can live my life comfortably. I rather spend my money traveling.”

Carlos explained that an event in his life changed his way of seeing his career and making life resolutions. He described his reflection after being robbed in Brazil:

When I was robbed, my daughter was a baby. I was walking in a park, and he took my cell phone and my wedding ring. After this episode, I got home, saw my kid

in the cradle, and I started to wonder which type of place my kid was growing up in. This changed my perspective on life.

These reflections expose connections between expatriates' career motivations, goals, and perspectives. They point towards a scenario where personal and family satisfaction is a priority and the career is designed considering everyone's needs.

Each expatriate was asked to provide a final reflection on the definition of expatriate career development. The definitions, provided by expatriates, are shown below.

Ana:

It is to deal with diverse people, change, and diverse values, and learn how to take advantage of each factor to transform yourself. It is to learn from the differences; for instance, we have a culture based on flexibility, so people who work with me can learn how to be more flexible, on the other hand, I can learn from them how to be more processual. I learned that what I used to consider boring and bureaucratic, or a waste of time, now means the quality of my work process. It is also to be open to learning every day, finding new forms to improve myself. I can learn from failure because this happens obviously. You can also learn from someone else's mistakes, so you do not make your own.

Antonio:

For me, there is no difference between developing my career in Brazil or internationally. Of course, I understand it is different to develop my career in a global organization. Also, there is a trend of people becoming more globalized.

The book: *The World is Flat*. In my case, I work for a global organization, so it is required that I understand about the global market. The work experiences that I have in Latin America or here in the U.S. certainly contributed to my career development and put me in a privileged position in the job market. I feel my resume is adequate for the global job market.

Carlos:

It means that there is only one world. We get stuck in our daily job activities, then when you are expatriated you feel like there is no comfort zone. If you are in a comfort zone, be sure, it will change. My life will always be: before and after the expatriation. I believe that from now on if I am talking with someone about my career, I think the person will get interested in hearing my expatriate experience. How I faced the challenges, how I found solutions, how it changed you. This experience will be a starting point in my career.

Francisco:

For me, there is no expatriate career development; there is just career development. The fact of being an expatriate accelerates some things. Actually, every time you assume a new position in an organization you will develop your career. However, when you are abroad, things happen faster, unless you do not manage the challenge. My organization values people's mobility, so if you are not mobile, your career will not develop. Many people think that they need to have a nice job title to be valued. I refused a promotion when the company offered to extend my expatriation in India. That was not the most important for me. The

most important for me was to be near to my family. The time passes by, and if you do not spend this time with your family, you will never do it again.

Joao:

It means to have an excellent opportunity for personal and professional development. It is a lifetime opportunity. An opportunity that when presented to you, you should embrace it. It is a great advantage for someone because you get exposed to diverse cultures, people, and challenges. I think I cannot measure this experience regarding the benefits that it brings to my career. When you accept this challenge, you are forced to develop and understand how things work from a different perspective.

Jose:

Career development has a strong personal factor because you have to increase the quality of your work, as you do not have the support from the organization as often as you had before. Subsequently, if you do good work, it will make you visible in the organization, so certainly when a new opportunity is open, someone will take your name to the table. Also, as the company expands itself, you can grow with the organization.

Maria:

It means to achieve a [career] goal for everything that I have done, my studies, my commitments. I have spent many nights working, or even weekends. The trips are also crazy. Therefore, career development is the paramount of all the effort that I have put into my job.

Summary of Findings

The seven expatriates I interviewed provided details about their personal and professional life story, described their experience of career development as an expatriate, and offered a deep reflection on the meaning of expatriate career development. From a careful review of their stories, I observed family as a keystone finding to their career development, and I identified three themes that portrayed their career development stories. The three themes are: (a) transcending difficulties; (b) embracing the challenge, and (c) balancing multiple priorities.

In the family section, I explain how the career is framed around the family's needs and present its implications to the expatriate development. The first theme, transcending difficulties, I observed difficulties that the expatriates had to overcome in order to progress their careers and the effects of these difficulties on the way that they see and perceive the expatriate career and how they connect it to their development. In theme two, I explained that expatriates claimed the need for embracing a challenge in order to take advantage of the best opportunities and grow along the way. In the last theme, balancing multiple priorities, I exposed their reflection on their career advancements and pointed out issues that expatriates have found valuable to their satisfaction and achievements.

A thoroughly discussion of the findings of this study and their connection with the literature on business expatriate career development is presented in the chapter six.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Summary of the Study

In this phenomenological study, I explored the lived experience of career development of Brazilian business expatriates, including five men and two women, who were working for seven different Brazilian multinationals' subsidiaries in the United States of America. During the interview process, the participants were asked to tell their life story, describe their experience as an expatriate and to reflect on the meaning of expatriate career development. Six participants were interviewed three times, and one participant was interviewed twice. This process allowed the participants to describe their lived experience as an expatriate in detail, and to reflect on the phenomenon of expatriate career development.

This study presented a thorough literature review on the topic of expatriate career development, which showed a gap in the literature of expatriates from developing economies. The studies of Brazilian expatriates, for instance, have been limited to a couple of articles published in English. As being an expatriate is no longer a reality for only employees of large Western multinationals, to develop a holistic understanding of this phenomenon it is important to conduct studies that consider diverse insights and settings, including situations where expatriates from developing countries and emerging economies work in other countries of the world.

Furthermore, in the literature review chapter, I described not only different studies related to the expatriation experiences, but also connected this literature to the studies of the career development phenomenon. The literature on this phenomenon showed four

major implications: (1) the multi-levels and multifaceted characteristics of the phenomenon, (2) the complex interaction of the variables affecting the phenomenon, (3) the diversity of theories on expatriate career development, and (4) the particularities of Brazilian multinationals and their effect on expatriates.

Considering the literature review's findings, the phenomenological method seemed to be suitable to explore the phenomenon of Brazilian expatriates' career development. Therefore, when I was collecting and analyzing the data, I often pondered my personal bias, and cautiously considered my knowledge on the phenomenon to reduce assumptions based on theories and frameworks developed in different settings, and with expatriates that lived a distinct experience. As a researcher, I tried to deconstruct the layers of the phenomenon and acknowledge my assumptions to truly comprehend and portray the uniqueness of the participants' stories. Therefore, I often asked myself: What is the story? This mental open-ended question set the stage in my mind to foster a broad and deep understanding of these participants' experience on the phenomenon of expatriates' career development.

In the findings chapter, the family is described as a keystone finding because expatriates asserted that family members have unlimited power to guide their career goals, affect their career expectations, and transform their career progression. In this keystone finding, I explained how family members including spouse, kids, parents, and other relatives influence expatriates' career advancement. The participants also passionately commented that friends could improve their career prospects, so friends were included in the family keystone finding due the emotional connection. According to

this study, family represents an individual's priority and has the capability of shaping someone's career growth. Following this keystone finding, I presented three emerged themes of the corporate expatriate career development phenomenon.

Each theme offered several issues that were presented within categories, or individually. The theme *transcending difficulties* exposed the constraints that expatriates faced in their lives and explained how the process of overcoming these difficulties set a consistent foundation to their career advancement. This theme has two main categories: commitment to self-development and context awareness. In the category of commitment to self-development, expatriates described six main topics, including having a clear goal, positive attitude, acquisition of skills, mobility concerns, international career orientation, and the effects of gender bias on female expatriates. In the category of context awareness, the participants explained how their accurate perceptions and knowledge of the company's strategic and economic setting have contributed to their career progression.

Expatriates frequently mentioned the word "challenge" during the interviews, and sometimes they even used "challenge" as a synonym of expatriation. Challenges were presented by the participants as complex experiences comprised by difficulties and opportunities that, when assimilated, can nurture personal growth and promote career progression. As a result, the second theme was identified: *embracing the challenge*. In this theme, two categories emerged. The first category is *being an expatriate*. In this category, I listed some issues or challenges that represent being a Brazilian expatriate in the U.S. working for a Brazilian multinational. Participants pointed out issues including prejudice and stereotyping, multifunctionality, co-workers' relationship, the

particularities of Brazilian multinationals, expatriate's role as a mediator or liaison, the importance of networking, and the asset of being change-driven. In the second category, *taking advantage of the experience*, participants explained how someone could exploit the challenges to expand career opportunities and consequently generate career progression. This category was represented by two main topics: practices for personal growth, and learning from the Americans.

In the third theme, *balancing multiple priorities*, I identified multiple issues that can affect one's career progression by displaying the reflection of the participants on the meaning of expatriate career development. Participants argued about the importance of learning the host country language, shared expectations related to mentoring, indicated appreciation for corporate career development practices, declared to be engaged in informal career development practice, claimed for the need of constant self-assessment, asserted the strength of having an adaptive behavior to adjust to the market's dynamics, and expressed constraints regarding repatriation and mobility. In describing the last part of this third theme, I presented the definition of expatriate career development, according to each participant.

In the discussion section below, I proposed a new concept to the expatriate career development literature by connecting the literature to the findings of this study, and discussing the implications for the HRD field.

Discussion and Implications for the HRD field

The data of this study supported the claim that traditional linear careers have been replaced by multi-directional career paths (Baruch, 2004), and that global mobility has

accelerated career changes at all levels of analysis including individual, organizational, national, and global levels (Baruch et al., 2016). As presented in the findings, expatriates have abandoned the concept of traditional linear careers and supported the multi-directional career approach. Moreover, they have somewhat diverged on the benefits of the career plan notion. All expatriates have mentioned that labor market uncertainties and societal changes have forced them to change their career goals and explore unexpected career ventures, sometimes without a corporate career plan. The main implications of these frequent career changes and the abandonment of the concept of career plan to the HRD professionals is to design and implement multidimensional career development practices that embraces these often changes in the global career.

In this study, expatriates have acknowledged that the complex interactions of the phenomenon's facets and its multiple levels have challenged the efficacy of the stagnant concept of a career plan. The expatriates asserted the need for a flexible and broad approach to overcome difficulties and acquire skills that enable individuals to be prepared for diverse scenarios and opportunities that can enhance one's career. Thus, to provide an environment where individuals are prepared for the world's novelty, uncertainty, complexity, instability, and mobility can have positive implications to one's career and consequently strengthen organizational performance. This is especially true in the case of Brazilian expatriates who, according to Gannon and Pillai (2013), "have a tremendous spirit in the face of adversity." (p. 547).

At the individual level, expatriate career development varies immensely due to individuals' characteristics, family profile, expectations, goals, professional expertise,

mobility, and previous experiences. The individuals interviewed were unanimous in sharing that they have assumed the responsibility for their career planning and management. In addition, they recognized the organization as a site or an agent that can offer resources to achieve their personal and professional goals. Considering this scenario, the results of this study seem to be consistent with the philosophy of individual's career agency that views individuals' careers from the job market perspective instead of an organization perspective (Guo et al., 2013). This is similar to the boundaryless career (Näsholm, 2012) and the protean career (Briscoe et al., 2006) models that claimed that expatriates are flexible in gaining knowledge and expertise according to job opportunities that will better suit their individual needs. In this setting, culture is influential, but also unique to an individual who can assume job roles worldwide.

This study showed that family is a component that has strong effect on and can give direction to one's career development. This finding complements the results of Rosenbusch and Cseh (2012) who positioned family flexibility as a major component playing a key role in expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment. The findings of this study, as well as the results of Rosenbusch and Cseh' research give support to the use of the family systems theory when studying, training and developing expatriates.

The findings of this study also strongly support Xie and Wang's (2011, p. 560) statement that "the more intense an expatriate's work-family conflict is, the less desire the expatriate has to remain working overseas, the worse he or she performs, and the more obvious tendency of transferring post an early departure is." Overall, the findings of

this study reinforce the Gannon and Pillai (2013) statement that for Brazilians “family is the most important institution and hence, greatly influences the individual” (p. 552).

An important finding of the present study is that the notion of family goes beyond the spouses and kids, and could include parents, cousins, and other relatives. As pointed out by Gannon and Pillai (2013) and supported by the findings of this study, Brazilians treat close friends as family members. The extension of the concept of family in the Brazilian setting goes beyond the traditional view presented in the literature on expatriate that limits the discussion of family to spouses and kids. People from other countries might have similar perspective on the family keystone finding. For instance, a study on repatriation of self-initiated Chinese expatriates named by Guo, Porschitz, and Alves (2013) as sea turtles briefly mentioned boundaries that constrain and enable global careers, and claimed that four returnees who were the children because of the Chinese one-child policy claimed to have returned to China because of their parents. Overall, expatriates from all countries that have a strong family culture might benefit from more studies that consider extended family members and friends and their implications on expatriate career development.

Given the importance of the family component, organizations should design and offer corporate family support practices, tailored to specific needs of expatriates from specific countries and cultures. Participants of this study made some suggestions on how to address this issue, among them: assisting spouses in finding jobs in the host country, sponsoring spouses’ education, offering coaching for adjustment to the new setting, providing a support network of caretakers for the kids, introducing the family to an expert

on the host culture who will hear the family's reflections on the host country characteristics and assist them to adjust to the new setting. As a researcher, I believe that it is also important to design and implement practices to attend to the needs related to concerns with expatriates' extended family members, including providing trips for expatriates' extended family members, counseling to deal with the stress triggered by the distance to the family members, and plan for dealing with cases of a serious illness or death of an extended family member (e.g., a bereavement leave). HRD professionals should consider these suggestions when assisting a Brazilian expatriate in developing her/his career.

The first theme of the phenomenon studied situated the issues discussed at the individual level, connected them to the issues at the organizational and national level, and provided insights into their interactions. All participants described having a clear vision of their reality, organizational practices and national opportunities, which was critical for the participants to draw a mental map that provides guidance in transcending their difficulties and acquiring skills needed to meet the job's requirements. A take away from this theme is that when individuals are motivated and prepared to succeed, the required adjustment to the experience and setting might not become a career development barrier. As pointed out by the participants, having technical skills is essential to perform a job effectively, which parallels the assertion made earlier by Webb and Wright (1996). The participants were hired at the first place because of their technical skills, and their continuous effectiveness in performing their job has led them to assuming a position abroad.

Consequently, I argued that it is necessary to accept that the technical skills criteria will continue to be used by multinationals in expatriate selection, despite the criticism of the use of this criterion expressed in some of the expatriate selection literature (e.g., Mendenhall et al., 1987). However, in emphasizing the importance of the technical skills, it is not my intention to detract from the importance of the relational and interpersonal skills needed for expatriates as pointed out by other researchers (i.e., Tung, 1998). Based on this study's findings, I suggest that HRD professionals and researchers need to focus on supporting the organization in designing practices and developing tools that can assist any expatriate and his or her family in succeeding abroad, by evaluating individuals' particular skills and needs and proposing adjustment interventions to adapt to the particularities and changes occurring in the specific setting.

This study has shown that HRD professionals should advocate for the avoidance of the emphasis on searching for the "right" expatriate candidate, and help organizations to consider all employees as potential candidates for assuming an international assignment. By adopting this approach, HRD professionals will also contribute to the reduction of conscious and unconscious bias during the expatriate selection. As presented by the female participants interviewed, gender bias and stereotyping in expatriate selection is still predominant. This study's results reinforced Linehan and Walsh's (1999) assertion that females are less likely than males to be selected for an expatriate position. After many years, the glass ceiling phenomenon, articulated by Linehan and Walsh (2001), is still prevalent.

The second theme, embracing the challenge, provided a unique perspective on the experience of expatriates from a developing economy working in a developed economy. For the Brazilians expatriates, the expatriation is a challenge with ambiguous and complex issues that have a direct effect on their career advancement. A surprising issue identified was the complete absence of cross-cultural training offered to these expatriates. This is especially surprising since earlier expatriate literature has documented the benefits of cross cultural training in successful adjustment and developing expatriates' ability to interact with people from different cultures (Littrel et al., 2006). This lack of training and other related organizational practices could be a consequence of the challenges that late movers face when entering the international markets for the first time.

In addition, this study's findings suggest that both expatriates and host country nationals might have prejudices and engage in stereotyping. Consequently, MNCs should offer cross-cultural training and diversity training to both expatriates and host country nationals. A training program that involves expatriates and hosts country nationals and provides them with an opportunity to reflect on their assumption, prejudices, and stereotyping can be a positive complement to the traditional cross-cultural training. HRD professionals and researchers should explore new ways of developing reflective models to identify bias, reduce stereotyping, and prevent prejudice. These practices could enhance expatriates' experience and their interaction with host country nationals.

Beyond the topic of prejudice and stereotyping, expatriates have emphasized differences in how they approach their job roles compared to their American co-workers. The multifunctionality characteristics pointed out by the expatriates as an advantage in

performing their jobs, could have legal consequences in the U.S. context. For expats to perform tasks that are not specified in a job position could have negative implication for organizations and employees. An implication of this behavior at the organization level is that according to these participants, the multifunctionality attitude is valued in a Brazilian MNCs setting. While the Brazilian expatriates use this to advance their career, the American co-workers might not be receptive to this idea. Moreover, such behavior has the potential to trigger conflict among the employees and create organizational climate problems. The design of strategies to clarify expectations and perceptions of involved parties would be an important task for HRD practitioners.

Expatriates have also discussed career challenges related to the Brazilian subsidiary's characteristic, such as being a latecomer in the international market. Like many other multinationals from developing economies, most Brazilian multinationals are characterized by a relatively short history of operation in the global markets and a scarcity of established global corporate practices. This scarcity of global practices leads to the lack of clarity on what to do in ambiguous situations arising during the expatriate experience. As presented by the participants, Brazilian multinationals have to compete with established organizations in the international market, which creates an unbalanced competition and raises complex issues for the expatriate. At the same time, Western multinationals have established globalized practices that have been assessed and refined for many years to attend to the expatriates' and market's needs. Due to the paucity of studies on expatriates working for small or late mover multinationals, the relationship between the late mover conditions and the expatriate career development is

underexplored in the literature. The findings of the present study underscore the need to study experiences of diverse types of expatriates to comprehend the expatriate career development phenomenon holistically. The HRD professionals and researchers can contribute by studying, assessing, creating, evaluating and identifying the career development practices suitable to small multinational organizations, multinationals from developing economies, and/or late movers.

Further, under the theme of *being an expatriate*, expatriates asserted the positive influence of the expatriation experience on their informal development as a leader, especially through the acquisition of skills such as mediator and liaison, expansion of their professional network, and development of career-change readiness. Likewise, the participants' perceptions of learning and development during the expatriation are similar to those described in the literature on the journeys of global leaders. As described by Cseh, Davis and Khiji (2013, p. 489) "global leaders' learning journeys were characterized by informal learning during everyday work and life experiences." Then, the question is: would expatriates become global leaders just by living and embracing the experience? This study has not answered this question, but it has underscored the importance of clarifying the relationship between the concepts of expatriates and global leaders.

Moreover, participants offered a discussion on opportunities that the expatriation challenge generates to leveraging one's career. As observed by the participants, the expatriation experience can provide many learning opportunities, but the individuals need to acknowledge how to absorb this wisdom. According to Haslberger (2012), the

relationship between expatriation and career development is unclear in the literature. The category *taking advantage of the challenge*, identified in this study, can shed some light on its relationship. For the participants, one way of benefiting from the experience is to engage in informal activities that can promote personal growth; the other way is to observe host nationals and learn from their effective practices. The expatriates expressed that access to limited corporate development practices should not prevent them from moving forward regarding learning and career growth. Overall, the participants believe that expatriation challenges maintain them motivated and engaged, and promotes career advancements if one's capabilities to deal with difficulties are on par with the challenge's complexity level. Therefore, HRD professionals and researchers should be aware of these complex dynamics and try to develop expatriates' capabilities to deal with the expatriation's complexities.

Balancing multiple priorities is the third theme that emerged in this study.

Expatriates reflected on multiple variables affecting their lived experience and provided a broad perspective of its meaning and consequences for their personal and professional lives. According to the participants, many variables need to be considered when analyzing an expatriate career, and the main one is the frequent changes in the expatriation settings. They seemed to agree that changes happen at all levels and it is up to them to adapt to these changes and attend to individual, family, organizational, and context requirements. In addition, they agreed that the more prepared they are for the changes, the better outcomes they will achieve when facing a new challenge. Participants believed that one is responsible for their career progression regardless of the availability

of corporate expatriate career development support. However, available corporate support for individual development is very much appreciated by the participants, who claimed that the such availability has the effect of enhancing one's commitment to the company's growth. Most participants claimed to have the intention of working in the organization for a long term. These findings are coherent with the paternalist concept in Brazilian organizations (Kjellin & Nilstun, 1993), and to the Brazilian notion of employee engagement, reflected in the saying "we wear the company shirt" (p.48) as presented by (Amado & Brasil, 1991).

Describing the constantly shifting and unstable environment, expatriates identified competencies that they need to have in order to be prepared for whatever it is presented to them. Among these were: English language fluency, self-flexibility, frequent self-assessment, engagement in informal career advancement practices, and reassessment and alignment of expatriation reality to their expectations. All these strategies help them to prepare for future career development opportunities. Hence, there is an important key question that arose from these reflections: Can a corporate expatriate career plan be adequate in balancing multiple priorities of someone? According to the participants, expatriate career plans were not offered to them by their organizations, and if they were offered, it is likely that the career plans would change soon. Therefore, is the corporate career plan concept for expatriates an outdated concept? According to the findings of this study, the answer is that it is. Expatriates have embraced the key notion that it is more important to be "career prepared." They argued that if one is prepared, one can navigate

his or her career in any direction according to global opportunities, despite being confined to the borders of the organization.

Based on the literature review and findings of this study on the expatriate career development phenomenon, I argue for the introduction of the concept of “career prepared” as a replacement for “career plans or career frameworks.” HRD professionals and researchers play an important role in this setting where the occurrence of fast change is a fact. Therefore, HRD professionals need to develop individualized practices, tools and interventions that promote individual change and constant re-assessment of individuals’ career advancement opportunities both within the organization and on the inter-organizational level. I define “career prepared” as ‘one’s capabilities to acknowledge constant changes and adjust to diverse challenges while embracing one’s potential of personal and professional fulfillment within the venues of organizations considering global opportunities.’

Future Research

The results of this study shed light on topics, concepts, and theories relevant for future expatriate career development research. More studies on expatriate career development should consider additional levels of analysis and additional variables, including nationality of the expatriate, nationality of the multinational sponsoring the expatriate, host country’s characteristics, and global labor market conditions. In addition, future research should explore how the interaction of the presented facets shown in this study can contribute to expatriate career development literature.

The rapid and constant changes in the environment where the phenomenon is taking place also require additional research. As shown in this study, expatriates have to deal with constant changes that generate multiple challenges and opportunities. One research question for future studies would be: How practices for developing expatriate career flexibility can affect organizational performance? In this sense, theories that consider the interaction of individual agency and career development, and concepts like boundaryless and protean career deserve to be further explored. Thus, which interventions can prepare expatriates to a change-driven career?

The use of family system theories to understand career development of expatriates also deserves more attention. The family, as shown in this study, has a strong influence on individuals' expatriate careers. Therefore, what can we do to foster positive effects of family on an expatriate career? The participants of this study suggested some corporate family support practices. How can HRD interventions promote these family support practices?

Another important topic that should be further assessed is the expatriate selection criteria. Can the HRD professional be able to assist expatriates being flexible and adjust according to the job's and country's need regardless of their personal characteristics? In addition to the topic of expatriate selection, I argue for the need for more studies on unbiased expatriate selection process to promote career development of expatriates regardless of their identity group. As HRD professionals we need to create models that assist us in advocating for diversity in the expatriation.

Regarding expatriate training, this study gives support to the need for more reflective practices for reducing prejudice and stereotyping on both sides, the expatriate and the host country nationals. Another important component that should be added to expatriates' and host nationals' training is a deep reflection on organization's characteristics, and how these characteristics can affect career development. As presented in this study, expatriates were engaging in practices that may not be in compliance with their host countries' labor regulations. Thus, future research could investigate how the organizations' practices are aligned with host country's regulatory frameworks, and how this can affect the progression of expatriate's careers in these organizations.

This study revealed many issues related to expatriate career development that are insufficiently explored in the literature. For instance, the study of career development phenomenon with expatriates from multiple nationalities, or who are working for small multinationals, or multinationals from developing economies could enhance the literature on the phenomenon. In addition, I suggest that there is a promising avenue for research the similarities and differences between expatriates' career development and development of global leaders.

The complexities of the expatriation career development ("the challenge" as labeled by the participants of this study) need to be further investigated. Meaningful studies on the complexities of this phenomenon could assist expatriates and organizations to untangle the jigsaw puzzle that this phenomenon represents.

"Career prepared" is a novel concept that this study has introduced to the literature on expatriate career development. As argued in the discussion section, the

notion of a career plan is losing value due to its difficulties in adjusting to the rapid changes that are occurring in the expatriation field. Future studies should consider this concept and its implications for the expatriate career development. As the participants of this study claimed, expatriates should be prepared to take up any challenge. How can the literature help them to get prepared for these challenges? As claimed by the scholars of protean careers, individuals have the capability of changing the shape of their careers to assume new roles. HRD professionals need to explore these changing characteristics of expatriates to improve practices of corporate career development. Due to the constant changes, expatriates will hardly ever be career ready, but they can develop a readiness to be *career prepared* to respond to any challenge.

Concluding thoughts

To summarize my thoughts on this phenomenon on Brazilian expatriate career development in the U.S., I reflected on the question that guided my analysis: What is the story? In my view, the story is about considering family as one's priority or a guide to one's career growth. It is to recognize that one needs to transcend personal and contextual difficulties to have career advancements, and that as this process unfolds, the whole family can be subjected to enormous challenges. Challenges, when embraced, can fortify the entire family and teach them to adapt to unexpected ventures with multiple paths to reach self-discovery, progress, and happiness.

These observations reminded me of a Brazilian proverb, *Preparado para o que der e vier*, that means: To be prepared to take up any challenge at any time. In addition, it made me recall a Brazilian song whose lyrics represent this study's participants' values,

experiences, and expectation regarding their career development. The title of the song is *Tocando pra frente* (meaning *Moving on*), written by Almir Sater and Renato Teixeira, and translated by Lyricalbrazil.com. A video of Almir singing the song, with English subtitles is available at (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmG7w3HEkYw>).

Connections between the lyric's verses and the lived experience of career development of Brazilian expatriates in the U.S are provided below:

I go slowly because I've already been in a rush

And I wear this smile because I've already cried too much

Today I feel stronger, happier – who knows

I carry with me only the certainty that I know very little, or I know nothing.

Career development is an incremental learning process that takes time and requires one to persist to achieve the goals. One's perception of career success only comes after transcending many difficulties. Today, expatriates feel more prepared for complex job roles due to their lived experiences during career progression and expatriation. Expatriation can be seen as an ultimate career and result in more career satisfaction, maybe it can even make them happier. Who knows? Expatriates need to carry with them the moving on attitude, because the more they experience, the more aware they are about restrictions and opportunities.

Getting to know mannerisms and mornings

The flavor of almonds and apples

A lot of love is necessary to push forward

Peace is necessary to be able to go on

And rain is necessary for blooming

Expatriate career development is about learning to navigate the challenges and its nuances and to acknowledge the effect of its interactions. One has to experience it to understand it, because it is an individualized process of transformation. Family love is a motivator and guide, stakeholders' support is essential and gives to expatriates the harmony to move on, while corporate practices can unleash their expertise to enlighten their careers.

I think that to make a good on life may be simply

To understand the march, and go playing ahead

Like an old cattleman driving the oxen, I go on driving the days

Down the long road, I go, I'm a road

Expatriation is a challenge that when embraced can offer many opportunities of growth. However, one needs to recognize how to direct it with a purpose. Like many other professionals, expatriates have to adopt a changing posture and adapt fast to the novelty of situation and setting. To perform well, one needs to become the trigger of her or his career progression. Individuals are able to transform and choose their paths.

Each one of us composes our own story

And, each carries within the gift of being able to be happy

Everyone loves one day, everyone cries, one day we arrive, and the next we leave.

All individuals can be *career prepared* for the global mobility challenges by mutating according to the frequent changes in global settings. However, organizations

need to consider that everyone has family obligations and family influences on careers expectations, so they should provide support to expatriates and assist them to become *career prepared* individuals. In sum, combining a family perspective, the protean and boundaryless career concepts with the construct of *career prepared* could be an effective way of addressing the challenges of the dynamic organizational and global mobility scenarios.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participants' invitation letter via social media

Hello,

I am Daiane Polesello a Ph.D. candidate in Human Resource Development at the University of Minnesota. I am contacting you because I am conducting a research about Brazilian expatriate career development. According to your LinkedIn profile, you are a Brazilian expatriate working in the USA for a Brazilian multinational. If this information is correct, please contact me I would like to invite you for participating in this research project.

Regards,

Daiane Polesello

Here are my email and telephone number

Appendix B: HR entry letter

Dear HR Manager,

I am a graduate student in the Program of Human Resource Development at the University of Minnesota, Minnesota. I would like to ask for your help in recruiting Brazilian expatriates working in your organization for participation in a research project about the Expatriate Career Development. I am interest in exploring explore the experience of career development for Brazilian business expatriates who are working for a Brazilian multinational in the USA.

I will perform three interview with each participant. Each interview with the participants (Brazilian expatriates) will be 60 to 90 long. A second interview could be added if it seems necessary after the first interview. And follow-up emails could be send to the expatriates if there will be need for clarifications.

The participants' names will be kept strictly confidential. I will protect individuals' and organizations' identification by using pseudonyms for the expatriates' and the organization's name.

The results of the study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members of the University of Minnesota community. The dissertation that results from this work will be published in hard copy and will be available on line at the University of Minnesota library system.

I appreciate your giving time to this study, which will help me learn more about the Brazilian expatriate career development. If you have any question, please feel free to

call me at +1 (651) 233 0073 or poles004@umn.edu. You may also contact my committee chairperson, Professor Dr. Alexandre Ardichvili at ardic001@umn.edu.

Thank you,

Daiane Polesello

Please send me an email if you are willing to help me to recruit participants for this dissertation research project

Appendix C: Participants' invitation via email

Dear (name of the person being contacted)

I am a doctoral candidate in the Program of Human Resource Development at the University of Minnesota, Minnesota. I would like to invite you for participating in a research project about Expatriate Career Development. I am interested in exploring the experience of career development for Brazilian business expatriates who are working for a Brazilian multinational in the USA.

I will perform three interviews with each participant. Each interview will be 60 to 90 minutes long. Moreover, follow-up emails could be sent to you if there will be the need for clarifications. The interviews in be performed in Brazilian Portuguese.

The participants' names will be kept strictly confidential. I will protect individuals' and organizations' identification by using pseudonyms for the expatriates' and the organization's name.

The results of the study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members of the University of Minnesota community. The dissertation that results from this work will be published in hard copy and will be available online at the University of Minnesota library system.

I appreciate your giving time to this study, which will help me learn more about the Brazilian expatriate career development. If you have any question, please feel free to call me at (phone number) or (email). You may also contact my committee chairperson, Professor Dr. Alexandre Ardichvili at (email).

Thank you,

Daiane Polesello

Please send me an email if you are willing to participate in this dissertation
research project

Appendix D: Consent form**Career Development of Brazilian Expatriates in the United States America (USA)**

You are invited to participate in a research study on Brazilian expatriates' career development. You were selected as a potential participant because you are a Brazilian expatriate who is working in the USA for a Brazilian multinational company (MNC). Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. This study is a dissertation research project conducted by Daiane Polesello, PhD student in Human Resource Development at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of career development for Brazilian business expatriates who are working in the USA. The main question that will frame this study is: (1) What is the experience of career development for Brazilian expatriates who are working in the USA?

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

To answer few questions about your expatriate career development during three interviews sessions. The interviews will be performed in a place of your preference, and will be performed in person or by using video camera, and it will be audio recorded. You might be asked to answer further questions by email, if there is a need for clarification on some data. Each interview will be between 60 and 90 minutes long and will be conducted by the researcher and PhD Candidate, Daiane Polesello. The interview will be conducted in Brazilian Portuguese.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The study has no known to us risks. If the interviewee feels any significant risk to participation, the researcher should be told. Thus, the researcher will terminate the interview. The benefits to participation are: To be part of a study that may contribute to the evolving literature on expatriates, by studying the case of expatriates from a developing economy. The current literature on this topic was mainly developed based on cases of expatriates from developed economies, including the USA, Germany, France, Britain, and Japan. Another benefit could be to develop greater level of awareness about one's expatriate career development process by communicating one's thoughts on this subject to the researcher.

Compensation:

There is no compensation.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that might be published later, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject/interviewee or the organization where the expatriate works. Research records will be stored securely and only researcher and the dissertation advisor will have access to the records. The audio records will not be used for any other purpose. These will be erased after the completion of the study and publication of its results.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relationships with the University of Minnesota or

with the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting these relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Daiane Polesello, with the supervision of the advisor and Professor, Alexandre Ardichvili, PhD. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact us at University of Minnesota, 178 Pillsbury Dr SE, 254 Burton Hall, Minneapolis, MN, 55455, phone number, e-mail or Dr. Alexandre Ardichvili, email, phone number.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Introductory questionnaire

Gender:

Age:

Profession:

Education level:

Number of years in the international assignment contract:

Number of years in the international assignment:

Number of previous expatriation experiences (with time and location):

Marital or Civil status:

Number of family members and age of each member:

Self-assessment of current English language proficiency:

Assessment of family member's English language proficiency

Citizenship:

Appendix F: Semi-structured interview guide

Interview Series	English version	Portuguese version
Topics	Questions	Perguntas
First interview – Focused on participants’ life stories	1. Tell me what you like the best about being an expatriate.	Me diga o que você mais gosta com relação a ser um expatriado.
	2. Tell me a little about your life before your career. Help me understand who you are.	Me conte um pouco da sua vida antes da sua carreira. Me ajude a entender quem é você.
	3. How did your life story lead you to your professional position today?	Como essa sua história de vida te levou a sua posição profissional atual?
	4. Describe important earlier events and experiences before being assigned for this international assignment.	Descreva eventos ou experiências importantes que foram precedentes a sua expatriação.
Second interview – The details of experience	5. What is it like to be a Brazilian expatriate working in the USA?	Como é ser um expatriado Brasileiro nos Estados Unidos?
	6. Tell me stories about being an Brazilian expatriate, working for a Brazilian multinational company in the USA.	Me conte histórias a respeito ser um expatriado brasileiro trabalhando para uma multinacional brasileira nos Estados Unidos.
	7. Talk about your relationship as an expatriate with your family, coworkers in Brazil, and in the USA, and mentors in Brazil, and in the USA.	Me fale como é seu relacionamento de expatriado com relação a sua família, colegas de trabalho no Brasil, nos Estados Unidos e mentores no Brasil e Estados Unidos.
Third interview – reflection on the meaning	8. Given what you said about your experience as a Brazilian expatriate, what is the meaning of expatriate career development for you?	De acordo com suas experiências como expatriado discutidas anteriormente, Qual o significado de desenvolvimento de carreira de expatriado para você?
	9. Where do you see yourself going in the future?	De acordo com as entrevistas anteriores, onde você se vê no future?