

Women's participation in expatriation: the contribution of organisational policy & practice. A case study of the oil & gas exploration & production sector

Susan Shortland

Westminster Business School

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**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN EXPATRIATION:
THE CONTRIBUTION OF ORGANISATIONAL
POLICY & PRACTICE**

**A CASE STUDY OF THE OIL & GAS
EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION SECTOR**

SUSAN MARGARET SHORTLAND

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Westminster
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to knowledge by demonstrating how organisational policies and practices can make a difference to increasing women's expatriate participation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector. Through a census survey of female international assignees and in-depth interviews addressing their concerns in a UK-based case study setting, it explains why women hold such a low volume (approximately one-tenth) of the sector's expatriate roles. International assignments are a business necessity as expatriates supply specialist skills and strategic vision. Given skills shortages in the sector, the case for increasing expatriate gender diversity is strong. This study is important and timely as, thus far, we know very little about how organisational policy and practice can increase expatriate gender participation. Hence, this thesis addresses deficiencies in the extant literature and contributes new academic knowledge. It also provides practical suggestions to enable organisations to widen expatriate gender diversity.

The thesis identifies the effects of horizontal and vertical segregation, assignment type and underpinning organisational policies on women's expatriate participation. Relatively few women are suitably qualified for the majority of expatriate engineering and exploration posts. Yet, even when they hold appropriate qualifications, women experience intense competition for career-enhancing expatriation and are segregated into non-internationally mobile occupations. As international experience is a prerequisite for career development, women are disadvantaged. Women prefer long-term accompanied assignments as these provide the highest career contribution coupled with home life/ family stability, underpinned by generous remuneration/ benefits packages. Unaccompanied short-term, rotational and commuter assignments are less attractive. As assignment lengths shorten due to cost and other pressures, career contribution and family life and, consequently, women's expatriate participation are affected detrimentally. Organisational policy supporting expatriation is implemented formally and informally. Yet, strong reliance on high levels of networking to gain expatriate roles potentially creates and reinforces vertical segregation. While equal opportunity is espoused and diversity policy is in place, strategic and operational action to increase women's share of expatriation is lacking. A meritocracy prevails and women compete in an expatriate 'male game'.

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I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“It is a man’s business ... because ... you are talking about the technical part. So who is going to be in a field operating a rig, it’s not a woman, no. Some might do it now but they certainly didn’t do it all those years ago, so it is a traditional male business, and then in the US of course, it is a traditional white man’s business, and, on top of everything, it is a traditional white man, Republican business. Let’s be honest about it, it is a very conservative, male-oriented, white culture. But that doesn’t mean that a woman cannot succeed in it.”

(Harriet, Expatriate with multiple assignments)

Research context

The oil and gas sector is one of the largest users of expatriates in its exploration and production functions where specialist professional skills and strategic vision are needed to negotiate entry, and discover, drill, produce and export oil and gas often from remote and harsh geographical locations and insecure, unpredictable regimes. Agreements with host governments increasingly hinge on the transfer of knowledge, and the training and development of local people. Expatriates from a wide range of corporate functions and occupations are relocated internationally by their employers to perform these roles. As world consumption of oil and gas continues to increase, so the demand for expatriates in this sector remains buoyant (Brookfield, 2009a, 2009b, 2011a). Set against this, the oil and gas exploration and production sector faces skills shortages due to an aging workforce (Browne, 2004). Given these factors, the business case for increasing diversity in expatriation appears strong.

The quote that prefaces this chapter highlights the state of play with respect to diversity in the oil and gas industry and expatriation within it. Reference to annual reports demonstrates that there has been a strong organisational focus on increasing gender and ethnic diversity. Yet, with respect to expatriation, action has primarily involved developing local nationals. This has the advantage of addressing host government entry conditions, reducing dependence and reliance on (expensive) expatriates through the use of local people, as well as taking an ethical, moral and socially responsible approach to the use of host country human resources (particularly given increased public awareness of a range of

corporate social responsibility issues in oil exploration following high profile disasters such as in the Gulf of Mexico).

Women's share of oil and gas industry employment has traditionally been low but is increasing as organisations in this sector highlight within their annual reports their pursuit of greater gender balance as part of their diversity strategies. Women's share of expatriation has never been high. In the early 1980s, when data were first available, women comprised around 3% of corporate expatriates across a range of industry sectors (Adler, 1984a); today they make up between 16%-18% of the expatriate population (Brookfield, 2011a; Permits Foundation, 2011). In oil and gas, data are limited but we do know that women's share of expatriation mirrored their all-industry average (5%) in 1992 (ORC/CBI, 1992). Yet, by 2007, women comprised 11%-21% of the all-industry average (Cartus, 2007; IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; ORC Worldwide, 2007) but only 7% in oil and gas (ORC Worldwide, 2007). Why female expatriation in the oil and gas sector should lag behind estimates of all-industry averages, particularly given the sector's rising demand for expatriation, its experience of skills shortages and its public effort to increase gender diversity, appears incongruous.

Expatriation not only provides value to organisations but career benefits to individuals; indeed, the literature exhorts international assignment experience as a prerequisite to leadership (Caligiuri and Colakoglu, 2007; Mendenhall *et al.*, 2002; Orser and Leck, 2010). Expatriation therefore presents significant advantages to those individuals who engage in it. As women's share is so low, this suggests that they are disadvantaged in their careers in a sector that is increasingly global in its activities and reach (Brookfield, 2009b). Expatriate gender diversity makes sound business sense: women's achievements as expatriates are widely reported; they are even heralded as being more successful than men in their international assignments across a wide range of countries (for example, Dallalfar and Movahedi, 1996; Napier and Taylor, 2002; Shortland and Altman, 2011; Tung, 2004). This suggests that organisations are also losing out by having so few female assignees.

Deficiencies in knowledge

If female expatriation is advantageous for both individuals and organisations, why are there so few women in these roles? To make sense of this conundrum, a more theoretical explanation might be sought. Regrettably, though, we still have far to go in achieving this objective, despite almost three decades of research. Setting out to explain the paucity of women expatriates, Adler (1979, 1984a, 1984b, 1987) explored the assumptions that women were unwilling to work abroad and they were unsuitable for a positive host country reception (hence suggesting why employers would not send them). She focussed on a number of explanations of practice related to women's supply characteristics: women were not interested in working abroad; domestic issues (including commitments to husbands and children) precluded their mobility; and they lacked the necessary preparation, managerial experience and level, technical background and self-efficacy in relation to their acceptance by foreigners. However, even when these 'myths', as she called them, were systematically proved unfounded, employers did not expatriate women.

These main themes (women's choices linked to family commitments, host country reception and women's assignee characteristics) have formed the bedrock of academic research ever since. The extant literature has included justifying the suitability of women, campaigning for their inclusion and acknowledging their advantages (Altman and Shortland, 2008; Tung, 2004). Yet, it provides only a patchwork of information on female expatriation, mainly practice-driven, across a host of geographies, with little standardisation of theoretical approach. Indeed, although much is written on them, only relatively few studies are based on data from expatriate women themselves; rather students' and human resource managers' perspectives are frequently used as a proxy (Shortland and Altman, 2011). However, because the views of female expatriates and their employers differ from each other (Stroh *et al.*, 2000a, 2000b), this presents a potential weakness within the literature in trying to explain the factors that result in women's low expatriate participation.

While theory relating to women's expatriation has focussed on family, country and assignee effects, it has not pursued a detailed line of enquiry into the influence of structural

issues such as occupational segregation. The effect of organisational policy and practice to address how expatriates' careers and family commitments are supported when they are deployed on different types of assignments remains hitherto un-researched. This presents a further weakness in explaining female expatriation. These deficiencies in academic and practitioner knowledge are thus addressed by this thesis.

There are a number of reasons why this research is valuable and timely. Despite the concern over the economy and security since 9/11, resulting in dips in corporate expatriate volume (Brookfield, 2009a, 2010, 2011a), the overall trend in the use of international assignments continues upwards (Brookfield, 2011a; ORC Worldwide, 2007). However, in their drive to reduce costs and become ever more competitive, organisations have trimmed back expatriate remuneration and benefits and modified traditional lengthy accompanied assignments, shortening their lengths and introducing and making increasing use of alternative types such as short-term and commuter assignments (Cartus, 2010; Forster, 2000; ORC Worldwide, 2004, 2006). Expatriation, while considered a business necessity, is no longer such an attractive proposition to employees (Altman and Shortland, 2008).

Research aim, objectives and questions

This thesis aims to identify the organisational policies and practices that make a difference to increasing women's expatriate participation in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector, thereby highlighting employer actions required to widen expatriate gender diversity. To do this, the following objectives are addressed:

- ❖ To identify the theoretical considerations best suited to explain women's current low share of expatriate assignments.
- ❖ To determine how the masculine nature of the oil and gas exploration and production sector – and expatriation within it – affects women's international assignment participation.
- ❖ To explain how the different types of assignments used in this industry affect women's expatriate participation.
- ❖ To determine whether, and if so how, expatriate gender diversity is addressed at industry and organisational levels.

- ❖ To explain the extent to which – and how – international assignment and other relevant organisational policy and practice: assist women to access career enhancing expatriate opportunities; support them in managing their family commitments; and facilitate their take-up of – and deployment in – different types of international assignments.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following research questions will be answered:

- ❖ Which theoretical perspectives best explain women's share of expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector?
- ❖ How do the masculine ethos of the oil and gas exploration and production sector and the male-dominated nature of expatriation within this industry affect women's international assignment participation?
- ❖ What effect do assignment purpose, location, length, pattern and status have on women's expatriate participation?
- ❖ To what extent and how do equal opportunities and diversity policy and practice support women's expatriation?
- ❖ To what extent and how do international assignment policy and practice support women's expatriation?
- ❖ To what extent and how do other organisational policies and practice relevant to supporting international assignees facilitate women's expatriation?

Research contribution to knowledge

Through a census survey of female international assignees, and in-depth interviews addressing their concerns in a UK-based case study setting, it is explained why women hold such a low volume (approximately just one-tenth) of the oil and gas exploration and production sector's expatriate roles. The types of international assignments used by organisations and the support given to expatriates via organisational policy and practice are shown to be critical to women's expatriate participation. The study goes beyond the extant literature's explanations of female expatriation (women's choices in relation to their

families and domestic constraints; their characteristics as assignees; and societal/ country norms) by also examining the structural effect of occupational segregation.

The thesis contributes to knowledge by explaining how occupational segregation, different assignment types, and organisational policy and practice influence women's expatriate participation within the oil and gas exploration and production sector. Horizontal segregation is evident as the majority of expatriates in the oil and gas industry are engineers or work in exploration in upstream environments. As relatively few women hold engineering qualifications, this limits their suitability for the bulk of expatriate posts. Yet, even when they have an appropriate educational background, such as in geology, they experience intense competition for career-enhancing expatriate roles and are segregated into those that are not internationally mobile. As international experience is a prerequisite for career development and, as most senior positions in the oil and gas sector are held by engineers, women face a double bind.

Women undertake international assignments to gain career contribution but they balance this against home life and family stability, also taking into account the remuneration and benefits that act as preconditions to assignment acceptance. Long-term accompanied assignments provide the best combination of these factors and are women's preferred assignment type. Unaccompanied short-term, rotational and commuter assignments are less attractive. As assignment lengths shorten due to cost and other pressures, this affects detrimentally both career contribution and family life and, consequently, women's expatriate participation.

Expatriate selection, preparation and training, support in post, performance and career management, employee development, and repatriation are supported by organisational policy and managed through a mix of formal and informal (but mostly open and transparent) approaches. Yet, the strong reliance on individuals developing suitable contacts to gain expatriate roles has negative implications for women as the necessity for high levels of networking potentially creates and reinforces vertical segregation. While equal opportunity is espoused, and diversity policy is in place, strategic and operational

action to increase women's share of expatriation is lacking. A meritocracy prevails and women compete in an expatriate 'male game'.

The thesis structure

Following this introduction, four further sections are presented within this thesis. The literature review is in section 2. The extant literature specifically relating to women's experiences of expatriation is very limited; many of the bedrock studies date from the mid-1980s, span the 1990s through to the early years of the 21st Century. This is explained by employers' concerns, particularly in the 1990s, over the "advent of globalisation", demographics, men's apparent increasing reluctance to relocate abroad, and consequent perceived expatriate shortages, suggesting an impetus to research women's expatriation given the economic imperatives of the time (Altman and Shortland, 2008: 206). More recently, as women's expatriate participation declines (Brookfield, 2010, 2011a; Permits Foundation, 2011), so studies of women expatriates appear less frequently. Hence, section 2 draws upon the extant literature in relation to women's expatriation since Adler's (1979) first call to explain why there were so few women expatriates and her first (1984a, 1984b, 1987) research studies. While recognising that the discourse has moved forward, from legitimising women's participation as expatriates to advocating their suitability through to protesting their exclusion from expatriate roles (Altman and Shortland, 2008), it is notable that the issues deemed to limit women's expatriation (women's choices and family concerns, host country reception and employer perceptions) have not changed (Adler, 2011).

The literature review is presented in seven parts reflecting the identified influences on female expatriation. Chapter 2 provides definitions and examines the nature of the oil and gas exploration and production sector and expatriation within it, thus setting industry context for this research into women's expatriate participation. Chapters 3-6 address the theoretical perspectives that might best explain women's low share of expatriate roles in the oil and gas exploration and production sector. Chapter 3 looks at the effect of the family on women's expatriate participation through an examination of relevant theoretical explanations and illustrative literature-based evidence. In so-doing, it sets context to

discuss how organisational policies and practice support female assignment participation by addressing women's concerns for their spouses and children. Chapter 4 discusses the factors that potentially affect women's participation in the labour market and in expatriation, linked to their organisations' home and host countries of operation, potentially leading to a 'country effect' on women's assignment participation. This sets context to examine how organisational policies and practice address impediments to women's assignment participation in sending and receiving countries. Chapter 5 addresses the 'assignee effect', examining women's supply characteristics and how these potentially influence employers' willingness to send them on expatriate assignments. In so-doing, the context is set to discuss how organisational policies and practice address selection and career development/ management and the outcomes for women's expatriation. Chapter 6 examines occupational segregation, reviewing the nature of horizontal and vertical segregation and how this appears embedded within expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector. In this chapter, context is set to discuss how organisational policies and practice might address gender diversity and equal opportunities and thereby reduce occupational segregation.

Chapters 7 and 8 provide literature-based context to examine the role of assignment types and supporting organisational policy and practice and their effects on women's expatriate participation. In chapter 7, how different types of assignment might affect women's expatriate participation is examined, taking into account purpose, length, pattern, un/accompanied status and location. The implications for this research into women's expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector are highlighted. Chapter 8 examines the extent to which organisational policy and practice used to support various types of international assignment affect women's expatriate participation. Implications for this research in respect of any gendered outcomes and their effects on women's expatriation are presented.

Section 3 comprises the research framework and methodology. The research framework is presented in chapter 9, taking into account the findings from the extant literature. The aim of the thesis, its objectives and research questions are articulated with

the latter presented diagrammatically, linked to the research framework. In chapter 10, the methodological considerations and detailed steps taken to address these are set out.

In section 4 the research findings are presented and evaluated within the extant literature. The industry effect on women's expatriation is addressed in chapter 11. The masculine nature of oil and gas exploration and production, and the sector's expatriate work environments and occupations, affect women's participation negatively. Hence, it is suggested that greater emphasis on gender diversity in expatriation is needed at industry level. In chapters 12 and 13 the findings are presented in relation to the assignment types used in this sector. First, the purpose and location of assignments are addressed, identifying the relevance of career contribution, family considerations and assignment preconditions to women's assignment participation. Next, the length, pattern and un/accompanied status of assignments are considered in the context of career and family outcomes and necessary preconditions being met, and women's preferred assignment type is identified. A model is presented proposing a relationship between assignment type and career contribution, home/family life and preconditions/ rewards.

Having established the potential for different types of assignments to generate varying levels of career contribution, home life and family stability and financial reward, and thus suggest which are most likely to encourage women's expatriate participation (subject to essential preconditions being met), the findings in relation to the influence of organisational policies and practice in facilitating women's expatriation are presented. In chapters 14 and 15 organisational policy and practice in respect of access to and development of career contribution are addressed. In chapters 16 and 17 organisational policy and practice supporting family life and work-life balance are presented. Finally, in chapter 18, organisational policy and practice with respect to necessary preconditions underpinning assignment acceptance are reported. Assignment type implications are identified, indicating that organisational policy and practice support different assignment types differentially, reinforcing women's assignment type(s) of choice, linked to their career aspirations and family circumstances.

In section 5 the discussion of the findings and conclusions are presented. First, the key findings concerning the relationship between assignment type and career contribution, home/ family life and assignment preconditions are discussed in relation to the theoretical explanations identified from the extant literature. Those that best account for women's expatriate participation in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector are presented to identify the contribution of this research to academic knowledge. Implications for organisational practice to increase gender diversity in expatriation are highlighted, thereby providing a contribution to practitioner knowledge. The value of this research is presented and aspects for further research identified before conclusions are drawn.

The researcher was privileged to be given unrestricted access to all current women expatriates in the case study firms and to receive an excellent response rate to her requests for assistance both from these assignees and also from the human resource experts holding responsibility for policy and practice governing their international deployment. The data gathered and analysed from the census survey of female expatriates, as well as the in-depth and candid interview responses from assignees and human resource experts, resulted in a highly valuable contribution both to academic and practitioner knowledge. It is clear that organisational policy and practice make a difference in supporting women's expatriate participation. Organisational action to address the effects of occupational segregation and assignment types through policy development and implementation will help to increase expatriate gender participation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector to the benefit of organisations and the women employed by them. Lessons from this sector can be applied to other organisations and sectors; as such, this thesis provides a platform for further academic and practitioner research.

SECTION 2: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 2: THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY EFFECT

Introduction

Definitions and expatriation context are presented in this chapter to set the scene for this research into women's assignment participation within the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector. This highlights what little we know about women's expatriation generally and, particularly, within the oil and gas industry. Publicly available sources of company information on the scale of operations of UK-based oil and gas exploration and production firms, together with data on gender diversity, are examined. The potential implications for an 'industry effect' on women's international assignment participation are then highlighted.

Expatriation: definitions and context

The term 'expatriate' was used some 30 years ago simply to indicate "employment outside one's native country" (Edström and Galbraith, 1977: 249). For example, BP (2010a) defines expatriates as individuals working outside the country of their nationality, being based in another country. Corporate expatriation is instigated by an employing organisation and is distinguished from self-initiated expatriation (Cerdin and Le Pargneux, 2010; Howe-Walsh and Schyns, 2010). The traditional use of the descriptor 'expatriate' has connotations of a long-term corporate posting in which the expatriate (usually male) is accompanied by partner and family (Julius, 1982). The use of 'rotational assignments' as standard practice is a feature of the energy and mining sectors (Brookfield, 2011a), being used particularly in oil and gas exploration and production for offshore and remote locations (Inwood, 2007). This type of expatriation is defined as rotation for a set period of time into another country (BP, 2010a).

As organisations come under increasing pressure to quicken the pace at which they internationalise and complete projects, so traditional lengthy expatriation is giving way to 'short-term' assignments (generally between three months and one year long) and shorter long-term assignments (over a year but less than a traditional three to five year long-term assignment) (Cartus, 2010; Forster, 2000; ORC Worldwide, 2004, 2006). Additionally,

‘mobile *cadres*’ involving a linked series of postings without necessarily involving repatriation are used (Bonache, 2005).

The terms ‘international assignment’ and ‘expatriate’ are used interchangeably within the literature (for example, Tung, 2004). The term ‘international assignment’ reflects the changing nature of international mobility: it is used to encompass a wide variety of arrangements going beyond traditional expatriation out and back from the headquarters sending location (Banai, 2004). The term ‘flexpatriate’ (Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004a, 2004b) is beginning to be used as a supplementary descriptor in reference to specific alternative mobility strategies such as ‘short-term’, ‘commuter’ and ‘frequent flyer’ assignments. Commuter assignments involve the employee commuting from home to the assignment location on a regular basis. This type of assignment is distinguished from daily commuters, cross-border workers and rotators (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996). Frequent flyer style mobility can refer to a series of international business trips (Welch *et al.*, 2007). Such assignments may have a flexible base location with the company willing to discuss where the role is located depending on business need and employee preference (BP, 2010a).

Expatriates/ international assignees may be described as ‘parent country nationals’ (PCNs) (sometimes as home country nationals) – they are sent from the headquarters base and are of the same nationality as the parent organisation – or ‘third country nationals’ (TCNs), being of another nationality and being sent to live and work abroad, typically from another base of origin. ‘Host country nationals’ (HCNs) (also called local nationals), working locally in their home country, are not expatriates (Dowling *et al.*, 1999). However, they may be brought to the headquarters typically for training purposes, being referred to as ‘inpatriates’. Inpatriation may also refer to the transfer of TCNs to the headquarters location (De Cieri *et al.*, 2007; Harvey *et al.*, 1999). An inpatriate staffing strategy may be used on a temporary or permanent basis combined with trips between the home and host locations to share and transfer knowledge (Novicevic and Harvey, 2001). This is particularly prevalent as a resourcing strategy within foreign operations setting up in emerging markets (Harvey *et al.*, 1999). In addition, ‘ex-host country nationals’ (ex-HCNS) – local nationals who have studied or worked abroad but returned to their home

countries with foreign experience to join the local workforce – may also be used (Hsieh *et al.*, 1999; Thite *et al.*, 2009).

There are strong arguments for ‘localisation’ – employing local nationals – on cost and local morale grounds (Armstrong, 2002; Barnum, 1990; ExxonMobil, 2010a; Hailey, 1996; Nielsen and Nielsen, 2010; Solomon, 1995; Thite *et al.*, 2009). Yet, they may lack the mindset that multinationals require, for example within joint venture and merger arrangements (Hsieh *et al.*, 1999). At managerial level, deployment of expatriates can help to redress these issues. Long-term expatriates remaining in-country may be ‘localised’ – their expatriate employment terms are removed in the assignment location (Ernst & Young/CBI, 1996).

Expatriate population data

There are no comprehensive organisational expatriate population data available from official sources. For example, the UK Office for National Statistics’ International Passenger Survey does not define ‘expatriates’ although it indicates outflows of employed nationals from the UK by gender (International Labour Organization, 2007a). Differences in skilled emigrant and immigrant numbers between the UK and OECD countries are available but no detail is given by gender or on whether such migration is self- or organisationally-initiated (OECD, 2005). The Institute for Public Policy Research reports on the scale of British emigration but does not provide definitive statistics on expatriation in an organisational context (Sriskandarajah and Drew, 2006). While expatriate consultancies and relocation management companies collect data on corporate expatriate numbers, this tends to reflect only their client base.

Work permit and visa data collected by governments can provide an indication of the scale of organisational involvement in the movement of the highly skilled, for instance via corporate intra-company transfers and/ or external hires into shortage occupations. However, as not all personnel require permits/ visas, only a partial picture of volume is presented (Millar and Salt, 2007). While around two-thirds of the work permits issued within extractive industries (mining, oil and gas) relate to intra-company transfers, only

around 1% of the work permits issued for the health sector concern this category of employee (Salt and Millar, 2006a). These data demonstrate the significant emphasis placed on the international relocation of known, highly skilled and managerial personnel within mining, oil and gas.

Despite the lack of official statistics providing a definitive number of expatriates in the organisational context, Permits Foundation (2011) estimates that corporately supported expatriation typically represents around 1% of multinationals' workforces, although the figure may be a little higher. Salt and Millar (2006b) report on the overall increase year-on-year in the issue of UK work permits and practitioner surveys have indicated a continuing rise in expatriate volumes (ORC Worldwide, 2007), albeit with a reduction during the recession (Brookfield, 2010).

Women's expatriate participation

Participation is taken to refer to current employment and intent (Atkinson, 2006). Academic and practitioner survey research into various aspects of expatriation reveals a slow upward trend in women's participation as international assignees from the 1980s when they were recorded as comprising 3% of expatriates (Adler, 1984a), levelling off at just around one-fifth of the expatriate population in 2009-2010 (Brookfield, 2009a, 2010, Cartus, 2010) before declining in the recent recession. Brookfield (2011a) records female expatriate participation at 18% while Permits Foundation (2011) records it at 16%¹.

Data covering similar periods but presented from different sources may result in a range of figures purporting to represent the percentage of women expatriates. This is because the various data sources are based on non-matched samples and represent different geographical bases. Although firms based in Asia-Pacific are beginning to send more women on assignment (Anon., 2007), where considerable participation by Japanese and Asian organisations is included in survey data, for example ORC Worldwide (2007), female expatriate participation is lower (Thang *et al.*, 2002). By comparison, Asia-Pacific-

¹ Illustrative data are summarised in appendix 1.

based organisations comprise only a small percentage of respondents in Brookfield's (2009a, 2010, 2011a) surveys which record higher female expatriation.

Average female expatriate participation figures hide sectoral differences. The goods and services and finance sectors provide examples of women's international assignment participation above the all-industry average in the early 1990s (ORC/CBI, 1990, 1992); potentially reflecting feminisation of these sectors in the 1980s (Reskin and Roos, 1990). More recently, data show: non-profit/ charity and governmental organisations recording female expatriate participation of 30%; legal, consulting and professional services with 27%; advertising, media and publishing with 25%; transport, distribution, pharmaceuticals and health care/ biotechnology with 18%; and computers, internet/ e-commerce and telecommunications with 17% (ORC Worldwide, 2007).

WERS data (2004) indicate that, while 52% of employees in the UK are women, their share of employment in male-dominated sectors such as electricity, gas and water comprises just 36% (Kersley *et al.*, 2006). Female expatriate participation in the utilities and energy sectors is 8% (ORC Worldwide, 2007). Other male-dominated sectors include construction (Dainty *et al.*, 1999, 2001) and engineering (Powell *et al.*, 2004). For comparison, these record only 6% female expatriate participation (ORC Worldwide, 2007). In 1992, women comprised 5% of expatriates in mining and oil, in line with the all-industry average (ORC/CBI, 1992). However, although expatriate careers have proliferated, women's share of expatriate participation in this sector has failed to keep pace with the all-industry figure – reaching only 7% by 2007 (ORC Worldwide, 2007).

Despite relatively low female expatriate participation rates, mining and oil organisations are major, and increasing, users of expatriates (Brookfield, 2009b). Hence, even though the percentage of women employed in this capacity is relatively low, this sector has some of the highest numbers of female assignees. In addition, a number of multinationals within oil and gas are particularly active within lobbying organisations, promoting gender diversity as a business case within international assignments (Permits Foundation, 2007). The oil and gas exploration and production sector therefore presents a viable industry in which to research women's expatriate participation. The following

section provides a summary of publicly available data on gender diversity and expatriation in the UK-based oil and gas industry to set context.

Gender diversity and expatriation in the UK-based oil and gas sector

A total of 18 oil and gas organisations were identified with UK bases of operation².

Women typically comprise between a quarter and a third of the workforce in oil and gas companies. This is the case in the major oil giants such as ExxonMobil (2010b) and Repsol (2010a) as well as in a number of the smaller players such as BG Group (2010a), Nexen (2007a) and Tullow Oil (2010a). Yet, around 40% of Hess's (2008a) workforce is female and just over half of Marathon's (2007a). Women in senior leadership positions comprise between 7%-14% in oil majors such as BP (2010b), Chevron (2010a), ConocoPhillips (2010a) and Royal Dutch Shell (2010a), as well as in smaller industry players such as BG Group (2010a) and Hess (2008b). Statoil (2010a) is notable as it records 40% women at board level. Gender diversity is increasing in large and small oil and gas firms, for example Total (2007a, 2010a) and BG Group (2007a, 2010a). However, no detail on women's expatriation is publicly available.

The websites and annual reports of 16 oil and gas organisations provide a range of data on – and indicate support for – gender diversity initiatives, while 11 comment on work-life balance. With respect to diversity, examples include statements of strategy and intent, winning diversity awards and supporting lobbying organisations to gain work visas for expatriate spouses. Examples include: BP (2007, 2010a, 2010c, 2010d; Permits Foundation, 2007); Chevron (2010b); ExxonMobil (2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2010c); and Royal Dutch Shell (2007a, 2007b, 2010a). Examples of firms with early public statements on work-life balance/ flexible working include: BG Group (2007b); ExxonMobil (2007a); Talisman (2005, 2006a); and Total (Diversity and Accountability Department, 2007). More recently firms such as BP (2010e), ConocoPhillips (2010a), Nexen (2010a) and Repsol (2010b) report their support for work-life balance.

² Appendix 2 provides data relating to their size and scales of operation, expatriation and gender diversity.

Nine organisations provide data on expatriate numbers, ranging from 20 at Talisman (2006b) to 7,400 at Royal Dutch Shell (Mays *et al.*, 2005). If expatriates typically represent 1% of multinationals' workforces (Permits Foundation, 2011), the significance of international assignments to oil and gas becomes very clear. Apart from at Talisman (2006b) where its expatriate population mirrors the average, all of the other eight firms for which data are available have higher expatriate percentage figures. In the smaller companies, expatriates comprise between 2% of the workforce at StatoilHydro (2007a), 10% at BG Group (2010a) and 25% at Tullow Oil (2010a). For comparison, the oil majors' expatriate percentages range from 2% at Repsol (2010c) and 4% at ENI (2007a), ExxonMobil (2007d) and Total (2010b) to 7% at Royal Dutch Shell (Mays *et al.*, 2005). The major oil firms have large retail operations which do not typically involve expatriation suggesting that, if retail is excluded in the calculations, the percentages of the exploration and production workforce who expatriate are likely to be higher. Given this strong focus on expatriation, it is not surprising to find supporting expatriation policy to be relatively generous in its financial underpinning compared with other sectors (CBI ERC, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1996; IDS, 2002)³. Yet, male imagery predominates in company publications featuring expatriate exploration and production settings: annual reports show photos of men in hard hats on offshore and onshore rigs (for instance, BG Group, 2010b; ENI Power, 2010; Occidental Petroleum Corporation, 2010a; and Talisman Energy, 2011); few women are seen.

Summary and implications

Women comprise between one-quarter and one-third of the workforce and around one-eighth of senior management in the majority of oil and gas organisations with UK bases of operations. Oil and gas firms place high emphasis on expatriation, typically employing higher percentages of international assignees than other multinationals. Yet, expatriation is concentrated within exploration and production upstream operations – an environment portrayed as masculine. While around 16%-18% of the all-industry expatriate population is female (Brookfield, 2011a; Permits Foundation, 2011), women make up only around 7% of

³ Appendix 3 outlines the limited publicly available data on expatriation policy in oil and gas firms with UK bases of operation.

expatriates in mining and oil (ORC Worldwide, 2007). Nonetheless, the UK-based oil and gas sector appears to place significant emphasis on increasing gender diversity and, indeed, there is evidence of a rising proportion of women both in the workforce and in managerial positions. Although there are no published organisational female expatriate data, women's assignment participation does not appear to be keeping pace with gender diversity progress being made in oil and gas in its general recruitment and management.

These issues generate two key areas of focus for this PhD research. These relate to: the male-dominated nature of exploration and production within the oil and gas industry and the effect this has on attracting women particularly into this sector; and the extent to which the industry's commitment to increasing gender diversity extends into supporting women and developing their careers via expatriation in its wide variety of upstream countries of operation. In short, to what extent does the oil and gas exploration and production sector create an 'industry effect'? To set the context to address this research question, explanations for female expatriation are examined. Next, the different types of international assignments available and the organisational policies and practices in support of them are analysed to establish their potential 'effects' on women's expatriate participation in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector.

CHAPTER 3: THE FAMILY EFFECT

Introduction

International relocation involves not only the expatriation of the employee but also places pressures on the whole family to move with the assignee or to experience family separation as a result of the transfer. In recognition of this, for many years considerable emphasis has been placed within international human resource policy and practice on family issues (Coyle, 1988; Coyle and Shortland, 1992). Family responsibilities have a differentiating effect on men's and women's participation in the labour market (Anker, 2001). Yet, to what extent do women's family and domestic circumstances affect their expatriate participation?

This question is addressed in this chapter through an examination of relevant theoretical explanations and illustrative literature-based evidence concerning women's labour supply in domestic employment and expatriate contexts. Through a focus on the theoretical considerations with the greatest potential to explain the 'family effect', the context is set to discuss how organisational policies and practice in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector support female assignment participation by addressing women's concerns for their spouses and children.

Women's choices: real, compromise or sacrifice?

Rational choice theory proposes that individuals behave in a rational economic sense to achieve their aims or to maximise or optimise their desires, suggesting that personal or mutual advantage can be gained through co-operative exchange. Thus, any division of labour in the family and specialisation in market or family work is deemed to be efficient; workers act rationally to maximise their lifetime earnings (Becker, 1981). Occupational gender stereotyping acts a mediating effect, channelling women into the occupations which present them with conditions and benefits that compensate for their choice of focusing on domestic responsibilities (Anker, 2001). Thus, this form of traditional economic analysis treats the segregation of men and women in the labour market (for example, men

predominating in the expatriate workforce) as the aggregate outcome of economically rational individual decision-making. Yet, as Corby and Stanworth (2009) note, women's work choices are not generally based on detailed economic considerations, rather upon incomplete information.

The concept of rational choice is integral to family power relationships within expatriation (Harvey, 1998). Each partner's relative resources play a part in the assignment take-up decision within the family unit: the family member with the most power (usually in a financial sense) is able to impose outcomes to further his/ her career goals to the detriment of their partner's. This suggests that a couple would find it easier to accept the negative effects of an international move on one partner's career (including loss of employment while abroad) when the other who is offered the international assignment has the higher income and/ or better career prospects (Dupuis *et al.*, 2008; van der Velde *et al.*, 2005).

Rational choice theory cannot explain why men work and women stay at home with children. Hakim (2000, 2004) suggests that, as only a minority of women conforms to the 'work-centred', male profile of continuous full-time employment, the 'adaptive' female majority elects to balance being secondary earners with family life or remains 'home-centred' by preference. Yet, the rules made – and resources deployed – by human beings create structures that give properties to social systems which, in turn, enable or constrain human action (Giddens, 1984): social norms oblige men (but not women) to undertake paid work and adopt a careerist lifestyle (including expatriation); and oblige women (but not men) to focus on family responsibilities. As preference theory suggests that women are typecast and that they make real choices, it is subject to much criticism and is unsuitable as a framework in which to consider explanations for women's participation as expatriates. In short, while family responsibilities can be significant predictors of both men's and women's preferences (Corrigall and Konrad, 2006), the preference rhetoric takes no account of constraints: outcomes do not reflect context and circumstance (Bruegel, 1996; Crompton and Harris, 1998a), or compromise (Corby and Stanworth, 2009). Hence, while men can achieve their employment goals (potentially including expatriation) without necessarily losing a family life, women cannot so easily do so (Crompton and Harris, 1998b; Greenwood, 2001; Linehan and Walsh, 1999a). Thus, preference does not

acknowledge the constraints on women's expatriation choices and the compromises they may make in combining assignments with their family responsibilities.

Women who are unwilling to maximise career goals at the expense of family but wish to reach a high level in both engage in 'satisficing' behaviour. Satisficing can be effective in certain professions (for example, medicine) but is less so in industry at managerial levels where there is less flexibility in working patterns available to them (Crompton and Harris, 1998b, 1999). Women in industry must make compromises when they try to balance paid and family work (Corby and Stanworth, 2009). Hence, it might be expected that expatriate roles with their requirements to work full-time, across time zones within a '24/7', 'globalised day' (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010; IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; Kissel, 2005; Pascoe, 2005), present few opportunities for satisficing. Expatriate roles in industries such as oil and gas exploration and production potentially provide even lower scope for satisficing than expatriation generally: locations can be remote while the timescale of projects and contracts allows for little work pattern flexibility (Inwood, 2007).

Rational choice theory implies that when potential economic outcomes change, so the sexes' distribution across occupations will alter. However, parental attitudes, school experiences, personal interests and abilities all impact on career choices (Cubillo and Brown, 2003). Even at an early age, children stereotype work as appropriate for their sex (Miller *et al.*, 2004; Women & Work Commission, 2009). In the UK, women's traditional occupations are classified as the '5Cs' (catering, cleaning, caring, clerical and cashiering) and women are encouraged to enter them (CIPD, 2005). Even though it is not unusual to find women engaged in heavy, manual work such as construction in less economically developed countries, in the West such occupations are stereotyped as male (Whittock, 2000). For example, the stereotyping of engineering careers in the UK as masculine discourages women from entry (Powell *et al.*, 2004); women are also under-represented in engineering courses of study, for example in the USA (Bowman, 2011) and Turkey (Küskü *et al.*, 2007) and in science and technology careers (UK Resource Centre for Women in SET, 2007).

Occupational gender stereotyping influences early life decisions concerning fields of study resulting in young women opting for subjects less relevant to the labour market

(Anker, 2001). In turn, women's subject choices restrict employer demand for them particularly affecting their entry into male-dominated fields (Melkas and Anker, 2001). Rubery *et al.* (2001) suggest that, even with the gender gap in educational attainment narrowing, there remains a gender difference in subjects studied. Occupational gender stereotyping does not provide a full explanation for women's expatriate participation because gender stereotypes do not act as qualifiers or disqualifiers to entering particular professions. Yet, it does lend itself to understanding male domination of the oil and gas exploration and production sector: young women are filtered out (Crompton and Harris, 1998b); they gender stereotype the subjects required for oil and gas exploration and production and careers within the industry as masculine.

A further explanation of women's low representation as expatriates in oil and gas might be attributed to compensating differentials. Under this model, women 'prefer' occupations with good working conditions and fringe benefits over high monetary rewards. Although this model does not explain the situation where women are the principal wage earners, women may choose to enter occupations which are relatively easy to interrupt for childbearing/ rearing with such decisions influenced by learned cultural and social values and stereotyping of occupations (Anker, 2001). Oil and gas exploration and production is perceived as a 'rich industry' with high salaries and generous benefits, yet its 'tough image' of harsh and remote environments, working out on oil rigs and in masculine work environments (Browne, 2004; Werngren, 2007) does not suggest that women can avail themselves of the 'good working conditions' needed for them to engage in satisficing behaviour (Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b).

Women want expatriate careers – or do they?

“Opportunities will accrue to those whose careers reflect the global nature of business” (Dickmann and Baruch, 2011: 5). However, reconciling career and family issues inhibits women's managerial progression (Domsch and Autenrieth, 1993), and their career choices are mediated by the reality of family constraints (Özbilgin *et al.*, 2005). To succeed in their careers, women must adopt the style and commitment associated with male management (Wajcman, 1996) but postponing marriage and children to pursue a career reduces

women's chance of family life (Elmuti *et al.*, 2003). Indeed, women who reach the highest corporate levels are no longer a rarity but they are typically single, divorced or childless (Tharenou, 2005). This suggests that the actions required to reach senior levels are perhaps not worth these sacrifices (Nicholson, 2000).

The expatriate literature demonstrates a mixed picture with contrasting points of view as to whether women want expatriate careers. Some studies have shown women's strong interest in them (Adler, 1984b; Linehan, 2000; Stroh *et al.*, 2000a, 2000b), to women being as receptive to them as men (Tung, 1998; Wang and Bu, 2004), or even more so (Hill and Tillery, 1992). Others find men more willing to accept an international assignment (van der Velde *et al.*, 2005), more receptive towards international careers (Tharenou, 2003), or proactive in seeking out international opportunities (Tharenou, 2008).

There is a clear difference between expressing interest and actively engaging in expatriation (Andresen *et al.*, 2006). Decisions to seek out/ accept international assignments are affected by dual careers and income as well as issues related to marital status and the family (Chew and Zhu, 2002; Dupuis *et al.*, 2008; Taillieu, 1992; Tharenou, 2008; Zhu *et al.*, 2006). Juggling family commitments and the demands of expatriation are known to place particular strains on married women and those with children (Linehan, 2000). Women have to be better at balancing a number of competing duties than men with sacrifice of personal life being common at senior expatriate levels (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a). Assumptions by employers that (particularly married) women are not interested in international roles (Adler, 1984c, 1985; Schafer, 2000) mean that women specifically have to ask if they wish to be considered (Linehan and Walsh, 1999b). This hurdle is less frequently reported by men (Anon., 2004). Expatriate assignments appear to reinforce traditional gender divisions between paid and family work (Hearn *et al.*, 2008).

Women's 'keenness' to enter the international assignment labour market does not appear to fit particularly well with rational choice theory although the outcome in terms of 'willingness' in practice (represented by their relatively low participation) is perhaps explained in part by it. Gender is not a central concept in this theory but the (rational?) sexual division of labour in the home influences gender distribution across jobs in

recognition of the limits arising from women's greater share of domestic responsibility (Konrad, 2003; Piotrkowski *et al.*, 1987). Thus, women's participation in expatriation as the relocated employee (as opposed to the accompanying partner) might be precluded, not through choice but through family constraints requiring career compromises, even sacrifices. The effect of marital status, dual careers and children on women's expatriate participation is therefore considered next.

Marital status

The typical expatriate profile comprises married males and single females (Selmer and Leung, 2003a), aligned with the traditional career life form of the leader (male) with a female non-working spouse and the single career life form of women leaders (Esseveld and Andersson, 2000). It is known that a spouse's willingness to relocate internationally affects employees' intentions to take up an assignment (Brett and Stroh, 1995; Dupuis *et al.*, 2008; Mäkelä *et al.*, 2011).

The difficulties faced by spouses in adjusting to living abroad are well documented (Suh and Lee, 2006) including: loss of employment (Pratt, 1997); the consequent focus on a domestic, household role (Yeoh and Willis, 2005); and the couple's potential loss of income and financial independence of the relocated spouse (Sriskandarajah and Drew, 2006). Expatriate spouses are relegated to a 'trailing spouse' inferior status (Yeoh and Khoo, 1998). Spouses' feelings of 'disenfranchised' self-esteem are recognised (Shaffer and Harrison, 2001) and hence their needing social support (Copeland and Norell, 2002). The blurring of the boundaries between work and home with consequent implications for increased work-family conflict as traditional family roles are disrupted is also documented (Gutek *et al.*, 1988; Harris, 2004).

Expatriate performance and assignment success are known to relate directly to spousal happiness and ability to adjust; successful spousal adjustment is typically thought to have a positive effect on the adjustment of the expatriate (Aycan, 1997; Brett and Stroh, 1995; Punnett, 1997; Tung, 1982). Mutual reinforcement between the expatriate and spouse is beneficial to the couple (Mohr and Klein, 2004). Indeed, Selmer and Luring (2011) find

a positive association between being married and work effectiveness/ work performance with no moderating effect of gender amongst self-initiated expatriates. The effect of the spouse on expatriation is therefore by no means clear cut.

Nonetheless, the challenge to gender boundaries in the family and marital tension may result in women holding back their careers to prioritise their marriage (Linehan and Walsh, 2000a). Thus, women may not accept international assignments despite willingness to engage in them. While the literature focuses on marriage in respect of assignment take-up and success, being single (or divorced/ separated) also can present problems for women in maintaining personal relationships and friendships and through their responsibilities for elder care. However, as Linehan and Walsh (*ibid.*) suggest, single status does, overall, enable greater international mobility.

Dual careers

Dual income and/ or dual career couples have become more prevalent (Gordon and Whelan-Berry 2004; Harvey, 1995; Perrone and Worthington, 2001; Reynolds and Bennett, 1991; Smith, 1992); some 75% of expatriate managers are estimated to be in dual career relationships (Sandico and Kleiner, 1999), defined as “couples in which both partners are employed and psychologically committed to their work” (Harvey, 1997a: 627). Career and family conflict result from the relocation of a dual career spouse potentially becoming a trailing spouse without career focus, as tension from the work domain spills over into the family (Cappellan and Janssens, 2010; Harvey, 1997b; Harvey and Buckley, 1998). Spouse-related problems are greater particularly when men have to adjust to the foreign environment (Punnett *et al.*, 1992) and to being secondary breadwinners (Harvey and Wiese, 1998). It is also notable that corporate career support is focused to a greater extent on female trailing spouses than on trailing males (Harris, 1993; Selmer and Leung, 2003b).

Society judges men more than women by their career advancement (Linehan and Walsh, 2001). Being part of a dual career couple correlates with lower expectations of career development for women (Wilton and Purcell, 2010) and career priority is a key predictor of a couple’s willingness to accept an assignment (Groeneveld, 2008). Men

refusing to relocate on grounds of the potential impact on their spouse's career are seen as committing 'career suicide'; female managers consider their spouse's career to a greater extent than do men in making assignment decisions (Linehan and Scullion, 2001a). Although female leaders are less likely to be married than men, when they are they tend to have more educated partners than their male counterparts (Neale, 2000) and be part of dual career families (Kuusipalo *et al.*, 2000). This has implications for women's participation as the lead expatriate: women in dual career relationships appear to be hindered in their ability to relocate internationally (Moore, 2002), being more likely to refuse assignments if suitable employment and career opportunities cannot be found for their spouses (Adler, 1984b; Brzeskwinski, 1984). Hence, they accept slightly fewer international assignments than single women or those with non-working partners (Stroh *et al.*, 2000a). For example, progression in scientific careers is recognised as demanding a high level of international mobility, resulting in the tendency of the female partner to leave her career or not progress in it (Ackers, 2004).

The male trailing spouse is therefore suggested as a major contributory factor in explaining the scarcity of female international managers (Linehan, 2002; Linehan and Walsh, 2001). Certainly the predominance of women as the trailing spouse in international mobility cannot be denied (De Cieri *et al.*, 2007; Punnett, 1997). However, there is increasing evidence of women taking the lead in career terms (Linehan and Walsh, 1999b; Linehan, 2000); and of men becoming the trailing partners (ORC, 2005). Migration can be helpful to women's labour market activity (Bonney and Love, 1991), with career-oriented spouses significantly more likely to find suitable employment than those who are non-career oriented (Stephens and Black, 1991). Male and female partners may: negotiate and re-negotiate their roles within the household (Milligan, 2000); co-operate to discuss strategy and timing of action, advising and inspiring each other (Diem-Wille and Zeigler, 2000); make career decisions as a couple (Budworth *et al.*, 2008); prioritise one career at a time rather than giving both equal weighting, with the prioritised career not necessarily being the male career (Hardill *et al.*, 1997). Trade-offs and sacrifices are practised to maintain mutual support (Gordon and Whelan-Berry, 2004). Spouses cannot automatically be assumed to block their female partners' careers, alternatively they may support or add value to them or even sacrifice their own (Välimäki *et al.*, 2009).

Dual career couples may be employed by the same employer (known as co-working couples). Co-working occupations and careers typically involve the female spouse in a junior support role (for example, diplomats and clergy) (Hakim, 2000). However, greater career equivalency can also be in evidence: the spousal role can prove to be supportive of international mobility at similar career stages (for example, in the armed forces), with the intentions of one partner to remain in that employment being positively related to spousal intentions to stay also with the same employer (Lakhani and Gade, 1992).

So again the effect of dual careers on female expatriate participation is not clear cut. Assumptions that dual career issues are only a woman's problem can be challenged. Yet, despite a relatively balanced picture in the academic literature, the practitioner literature appears quite alarmist in focus. Even with organisational emphasis on developing policies to mitigate spousal concerns (Swaak, 1995) dual careers are highlighted as a key inhibitor to expatriate mobility (ORC, 2002; Permits Foundation, 2009). They are reported as having a negative effect on the career progression of accompanying spouses (Anon., 1993, 2000; Hansen, 2005; ORC/CBI, 1990, 1992). With the practitioner literature having drawn attention to dual career concerns for some years, it is possible that dual careers may be cited by employees as an acceptable reason for assignment refusal rather than actually being genuine reasons precluding international mobility.

Children

Children's adjustment and schooling as well as childcare availability affect willingness to relocate internationally (Dupuis *et al.*, 2008; Hutchings *et al.*, 2010; Tharenou, 2008; Tzeng, 2006; Zhu *et al.*, 2006), in particular to developing or culturally dissimilar countries (Tharenou, 2003, 2009). Those with high school-aged children are most reluctant to take up an assignment (Dupuis *et al.*, 2008; Tharenou, 2009). From the organisational perspective, children are seen as impediments to women's careers (Wood and Newton, 2006) and family ties as obstacles to overseas assignment availability and consequently promotion (Linehan and Scullion, 2002a). This is reinforced by data indicating that the percentage of relocating employees with children is falling (Brookfield, 2010, 2011a; deValk, 2004).

College-educated women assume having a career and a family are both possible (Hallett and Gilbert, 1997), and care-giving responsibilities can limit the realisation of employment potential for both men and women (Coyne, 2002). Yet, women still bear primary responsibility for family life and caring for children (Gordon and Whelan-Berry, 2004). Both home country management and societal assumptions indicate that a woman's primary role is of mother, not international manager (Linehan and Walsh, 2000a). Hence, it is women's commitment that is doubted once they become mothers (Linehan and Walsh, 2001). The guilt and conflict derived from the way society defines parental roles force women to make choices, compromises and experience greater sacrifices to reduce work-family conflict than men pursuing international careers (Linehan, 2002). Time spent with children provides greater feelings of work-family balance for mothers than for fathers (Milkie *et al.*, 2010). Flexible hours (including part-time work) are important to women returning to their careers after having children (Shaw *et al.*, 2000); women recognise foregone career opportunities through time spent with children but are happy with the choices made (Gallhofer *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, women expatriates state that having children reduces their willingness to accept an international posting (Stroh *et al.*, 2000a). While work environments remain insufficiently flexible to enable women to balance international careers and family responsibilities (Linehan and Walsh, 2001), it might be suggested that women are likely to find having children is a major deterrent to – or constraint on – their expatriation.

Summary and implications

While the extant literature suggests that women want expatriate careers, this does not translate in reality into high levels of female participation (Adler, 1984a; Stroh *et al.*, 2000a, 2000b). Theoretical explanations linked to labour supply and women's choices suggest that it is economically rational for women not to work in paid employment, specialising instead in raising their families (Becker, 1981), indeed preferring 'adaptive' or 'home-centred' roles (Hakim, 2000). Thus, the rhetoric would suggest that take-up of expatriation is secondary to women's family responsibilities. Indeed, the family member with the highest income and career resource power (Dupuis *et al.*, 2008) – most usually the male (Harvey, 1998) – is more able to accept an expatriate role if, by so-doing, the partner

cannot engage in paid employment abroad. Men's greater family power potentially cements women's 'home-centred' status and helps to provide an explanation for their relatively low expatriate participation.

In oil and gas exploration and production, occupations are usually portrayed by men working abroad in 'tough', challenging conditions. While such occupational gender stereotyping does not disqualify women from entry, it reinforces the unlikelihood of it (Anker, 2001). In addition, jobs that require frequent geographical mobility, such as in exploration and production, can be accepted by men but become less accessible to women through family constraints (Bruegel, 1996; Crompton and Harris, 1998a; Özbilgin *et al.*, 2005). In contrast to oil and gas exploration and production, occupations in other industries that stereotypically appear to enable women to combine family rearing with employment (Anker, 2001) encourage their entry by suggesting that women can maximise both their careers and family life through satisficing behaviour (Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b). The reality though is more likely to result in career compromise (Corby and Stanworth, 2009).

In summary, jobs that involve international mobility, particularly in male-dominated sectors such as oil and gas exploration and production, appear subject to constraints that hinder women's ability to enter and participate on equal terms to men. It seems that women cannot "‘have it all’, that is, a successful career, a good personal relationship and children" (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a: 268). Thus, the literature suggests that there is a 'family effect': women's marital, dual career and family status have particular implications for their expatriation. Therefore, in this research, the following question is considered: how do the types of assignments offered, supported by organisational policy and practice, address family responsibilities and enable women to pursue expatriate careers within the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector?

CHAPTER 4: THE COUNTRY EFFECT

Introduction

The factors that potentially have a differentiating effect on men's and women's participation in the labour market and in expatriation, linked to their organisations' home and host countries of operation, are considered in this chapter. The following question is addressed: how far might country factors affect women's expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production industry? By examining relevant theoretical explanations, and illustrative literature-based evidence to determine any country effects on female expatriation, the context is set to examine how organisational policies and practice in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector address impediments to women's assignment participation in sending and receiving countries.

Gender is a social construction (Loutfi, 2001; West and Zimmerman, 1987). It encompasses relationships between the sexes formed collectively by society or culture which are imposed, not chosen (Bell, 2001). Early research suggests that host countries' societal cultures may be viewed erroneously as unreceptive to women expatriates (Adler, 1987). Patriarchal attitudes and associations of male breadwinners and female homemakers in different host countries potentially affect women's reception as expatriates. Patriarchy and breadwinner models are therefore discussed here within a geographical context to explore their inter-relationships with societal culture and any implications for female expatriation. Yet, research studies across a wide range of host locations do not appear to support the assumption that local cultural and patriarchal attitudes towards women apply in relation to Western female expatriates (for example, Adler, 1987; Dallalfar and Movahedi, 1996; Varma *et al.*, 2006). Although data are limited, female expatriates' ethnicity does appear to have a bearing on host country acceptance (for example, Tzeng, 2006). This suggests that patriarchal structures are applied to women when they appear to 'fit' within a cultural group but this is less the case when their appearance differentiates them from local women. In addition, home country selectors' perceptions, based on cultural stereotypes concerning local nationals' receptivity towards women as expatriates (Paik and Vance, 2002; Vance and Paik, 2001) are of significance in explaining women's expatriate

participation. In the following sections, these issues are explored and critiqued, setting context through the female expatriate literature.

Patriarchy and breadwinners

Within a patriarchal perspective it is argued that men dominate, oppress and exploit women through systems of social structures (Walby, 1990). Men generate institutional impediments to hinder women's advancement and rely on solidarity at the cultural level to divide and control them. Thus, women have not been freed from family life oppression through entry into the paid labour force; rather they continue to suffer from it (Cockburn, 1991). Male solidarity acts to exclude and exploit women (Walby, 1990; Woodward, 1996). Certain geographical regions and countries are regarded as having particularly strong patriarchal societies. The Middle East, as an example, is a significant expatriate destination in the oil and gas industry, despite its challenges of uncertainty and instability (Özbilgin and Healy, 2003). It is presumed to be one of the most difficult geographical locations for Western working women, despite a shift away from traditional patriarchal attitudes among the younger generation, for instance in the United Arab Emirates (Mostafa, 2005). The picture is by no means straightforward though as set against this is the rise of fundamentalist religion reinforcing women's traditional role (Liddell, 2005). Certainly, the difficulties facing women working in this region should not be underestimated (Ramirez, 2006). Yet, Dallalfar and Movahedi's (1996) study of white American and Western European expatriates in Iran reports the women performing more effectively than their male counterparts. Although their study pre-dates the Iranian revolution, more recent research in Iran demonstrates that women can participate actively in most fields of study at university, can work in most occupations (Ghorbani and Tung, 2007) and have made significant advances into leadership and political roles (Metcalf, 2008).

Western perceptions suggest Turkey to be ill-disposed towards foreign women managers; there is still a climate of male domination, despite political and economic developments since the 1980s in respect of women's rights (Sinangil and Ones, 2003). Organisational approaches to gender equality lag behind espoused management theory here (Özbilgin, 2000). Yet, women have made considerable progress in particular careers, for

instance academia (Özbilgin and Healy, 2004), potentially challenging assumptions of vertical sex segregation (Healy *et al.*, 2005). In Turkish businesses though, fewer than 10% of managers are women (Omar and Davidson, 2001). When the numbers of female expatriates are low, it can be argued that women are disadvantaged to a greater degree, particularly in locations where cultural distance is high, the potential population from which contacts may be drawn is transient (Hartl, 2004), and public support is not forthcoming without clear company top management support (Fingar, 2000). Research into the experiences of American women working in Turkey (Taylor and Napier, 2001; Napier and Taylor, 2002) reports interviewees speaking of few Turkish women at senior levels in the workplace with whom to develop friendships, more junior women colleagues being uncomfortable socialising with them, while local women occupied with family concerns viewed them as being a threat through their single and foreign status. Yet, despite these potential difficulties, research into expatriate job performance using host country national ratings indicates that male and female expatriates are rated similarly (Sinangil and Ones, 2003).

A region of increasing interest to the oil and gas industry is South America. Here the concept of *machismo* concerns the “ideology of manliness that confers privilege on men, whose role is to protect the weaker and more vulnerable women” (Owen and Scherer, 2002: 38). *Machismo* has connotations of both male ascribed status (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997) and abuse (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003). Yet, women comprise half of those completing undergraduate degrees in South America, and one-quarter of management in US Fortune 100 subsidiaries in the region (Maxfield, 2005). Female expatriate research in Latin America is lacking, but studies of university students’ perceptions of women managers in Chile are “relatively positive” (Owen and Scherer, 2002: 39). Cordano *et al.* (2002) report no differences in the acceptance of women as managers by students in Chile compared with American students.

Patriarchal models draw a distinction between homemakers (women) and breadwinners (men). Under the breadwinner model, homemakers engage primarily in domestic labour while breadwinners assume responsibility for primary wage earning, reinforcing patriarchal relations (Crompton, 1999). Certain countries place greater

emphasis on a male breadwinner model than others (Daly, 2000; Millar, 1999). The Nordic countries are of particular interest to the oil and gas exploration and production sector given North Sea reserves. Yet, even though these countries have weak male breadwinner models, gender inequality remains. For example, higher status occupations such as engineering remain strongly male-dominated while those of lower status (such as laboratory technicians) feminise (Melkas and Anker, 2001). This is of significance to women's expatriation in oil and gas exploration and production given the sector's focus on expatriating engineers (Gordon, 2006).

Although there are some signs of change in respect of a decline of the male breadwinner (Crompton, 1999), women's entry into male patriarchal labour market domains remains limited (Bruegel, 2000; Jenson, 1989; Walby, 1989): expatriates are typically male. While patriarchy potentially provides a promising lens, it cannot convincingly explain women's low expatriate participation. This is because it: is descriptive rather than explanatory; denies the role of individual agency and structural issues; and does not address the diversity and different experiences of women (Kirton and Greene, 2005), particularly in different cultures (Colgan and Ledworth, 1996a). There is also evidence that patriarchy is reinforced by both men and women, with women expressing perceptions of the lack of normality of role reversals (Cockburn, 1991).

Cultural theory

Locations typically perceived to be masculine in socio-cultural terms are characterised by emphasis on distinct gender roles, material success and assertiveness (Hofstede, 1991, 2001). Masculine societies would be expected to allocate expatriate positions according to defined gender roles with these positions offered to men and few, if any, women posted as expatriates. Yet this is not the case in the USA which is considered 'masculine' in Hofstede's framework (Caligiuri and Tung, 1999).

If expatriation of women is culturally determined, it might also be expected that selection decisions would also be mediated by issues of 'uncertainty avoidance'. High uncertainty avoidance societies are typified by low tolerance of ambiguity and a preference

for rules and certainty (Hofstede, 1991, 2001). This suggests that such societies would be unwilling to post women abroad while low uncertainty avoidance nations may tolerate ambiguity and 'take the risk' (Israeli *et al.*, 1980). Although there is some evidence to support Caligiuri and Tung's (1999) hypothesis that there will be fewer women in management in high uncertainty avoidance societies and that low uncertainty avoidance countries (such as USA and Canada) seem more willing to risk sending women abroad, the evidence is unconvincing. For instance, other societies characterised by low uncertainty avoidance (such as Great Britain) appear unwilling to tolerate ambiguity in risking women's expatriation unless there is strong evidence of individual achievement at home as a proxy for potential success in the foreign location (Rodrigues and Blumberg, 2000).

Japan has one of the most masculine and high uncertainty avoidance cultures in Hofstede's (1991, 2001) framework and would thus be predicted to be a location where male and female workers' job roles would be distinct and women would be unlikely to be accepted in management. Yet, Japan has been shown to be a country where women expatriates have been very successful (Adler, 1987; Anon., 1997; Harris and Harris, 1987, 1988; Taylor and Napier, 1996a, 1996b; Volkmar and Westbrook, 2005).

Drawing upon Hofstede's (1991, 2001) distinction between individualist and collectivist societies, it might be predicted that women are more likely to reach management levels within individualistic nations where women are valued as individuals for their abilities that set them apart and bring economic success. In collectivist societies that judge a person's worth through group affiliation, it may be suggested that women are less likely to reach management ranks (Caligiuri and Tung, 1999). Yet, as collectivist countries become more affluent, their populations become more individualist (Triandis, 2004). Nonetheless, unwarranted attention centred on individuals (for example, women) in such societies does still run counter to social norms. Such attention may cause discomfort and impact on the working relationships of women in non-typical employment positions (Shaffer *et al.*, 2000) and managerial roles (Owen *et al.*, 2007), as highlighted in Taylor and Napier's (2001), and Napier and Taylor's (2002) expatriate research.

High power distance societies are typified by hierarchies and thus emphasis is placed on barriers between individuals (both male and female) at different levels (Hofstede, 1991, 2001). High power distance has ramifications for the potential success of, for example, mentoring initiatives (Maxfield, 2005), the provision of upward feedback from subordinates on managerial performance (Adsit *et al.*, 1997) and the building of networks and friendships considered critical for expatriate success – issues considered important, in particular, for women’s expatriation (Linehan, 2000). In Caligiuri and Tung’s (1999) research, women expatriates’ cross-cultural adjustment was negatively affected by work values associated with high power distance (evidenced in autocratic management styles) and masculinity (manifested in distinct societal gender roles).

The oil and gas industry is particularly active in Asia. Asian countries are typically ‘collectivist’ and ‘high power distance’ societies (Hofstede, 1991, 2001). Thus, women expatriates would be predicted to be unsuccessful. Yet, Adler’s (1987) study indicated female expatriate success across a wide variety of Asian locations. In India, Varma *et al.* (2006) find American female expatriates preferred over men as co-workers by Indian local nationals. Central Asia presents a rapidly changing business environment, receptive to Western management methods (Harry, 2006). Kazakhstan, in particular, is of major significance to the oil and gas sector. Russia too is of importance. While men’s superiority in the management hierarchy is highlighted in these countries (Harry, 2006; Mellow, 1998), the entry of Western firms and introduction of their managerial practices suggests that there is potential for women expatriates to succeed.

Hofstede is well-known and widely cited in respect of analysing societal cultures (Hoppe, 2004, Triandis, 2004). Yet, his work is criticised on a number of levels: micro-locations potentially unrepresentative of national cultures; national, organisational and occupational cultures being inseparable; questionnaires being flawed instruments to measure culture; workplaces generating atypical attitudes and responses (McSweeney, 2002) and not presenting true alternatives (Fang, 2003). Examining women’s expatriation using Hofstede’s framework is therefore perhaps unhelpful, particularly given that the role of women within different countries is not given particular emphasis. Assumptions cannot be made of cultural coherence within every society (Pfau-Effinger, 1999); and when the

rules concerning the behaviours of men and women in multicultural situations are unclear, actors are likely to apply stereotypical gender solutions (Woodward, 1996). This raises questions as to the intertwined nature of the prejudice (patriarchal and/ or cultural?) and where the prejudice lies (in the host and/ or in the home country?).

Home country prejudice

Evidence concerning the success of expatriate women from various home countries can be drawn from across the world regardless of the receiving host country's local culture (for example, Taylor and Napier, 2001; Varma *et al.*, 2006). Yet, research has not been conducted systematically to control for expatriates' culture of origin (Waxin, 2006) and only limited attention has been paid to the effects of their ethnicity. For example, Japanese-American women were found to experience greater adjustment difficulties than other ethnicities working as expatriates in Japan (Taylor and Napier, 1996a) and women of Japanese descent expatriated to Japan experienced greater initial resistance than their Caucasian counterparts (Napier and Taylor, 2002). These data are supported by similar findings in respect of female expatriates of Chinese descent working in China (*ibid.*).

Tzeng's (2006) research into the experiences of female expatriates working in Western multinationals in Taiwan suggests that, while local reaction to expatriate women of non-Chinese ethnicity still reflects Adler's (1987) findings that female expatriates are seen as emissaries of their sending corporations, expatriate women who more closely resemble the ethnicity of locals are treated to a greater extent like local women and, as a result, face greater gender discrimination particularly from men of the same ethnic background. In Mathur-Helm's (2002) interviews with female expatriates/ repatriates in South Africa, Caucasian women did not report gender or racial discrimination in contrast to black women who experienced both. Hence, it seems that the uniqueness of the host cultural locality affects the career progress of local women (Wakisaka, 1997) and expatriate women of similar ethnicity to their hosts. Although cultural factors may be thought to be directly responsible for women's slow advancement in expatriate participation, questions arise as to where the barriers actually lie (Osland, 1997). For example, the attitudes and

prejudices of colleagues from the home country may influence negatively the behaviour of locals towards expatriate women (Fingar, 2000; Kollinger, 2005).

Research evidence appears to place greater weight on gender bias in the home country rather than the cultural dimensions of the host. Organisational cultural values – and to a greater extent organisational practices reflecting a high humane (modest and compassionate) orientation and gender equity – have been identified within the Project GLOBE cultural study as being related to women's advancement into leadership roles. This is important to women's participation as expatriates because, although organisational values may reflect gender equity, institutional actions via organisational practices determine women's inclusion in the expatriation process (Liddell, 2005).

While the sample of nations/ cultures studied is small (USA, Germany, Korea and Mexico) and the findings may not be generalised to other countries, a bias in selection practices has been demonstrated in respect of US managers posting female expatriates abroad, a bias not replicated in the receiving countries as the women expatriates were successful there (Paik and Vance, 2002; Vance and Paik, 2001). This suggests that women face the biggest obstacle to career success as expatriates at home, in their own 'backyard' (*ibid.*; Comeau-Kirschner, 1999). Four main (and unfounded) reasons given for not selecting women as expatriates are identified: fears over cultural restrictions as to what they can and cannot do; the predominance of men in business who are more aggressive in their dealings; men being better qualified for international assignments; and the inability of women to rise to the challenge and adjust successfully (Vance and Paik, 2001). Indeed, unfounded bias against female expatriate selection predates employment – existing in US student populations, particularly amongst men (Vance *et al.*, 2006).

Schwartz's (1992, 1999) work in respect of culture concerns dimensions such as self-transcendence and self-enhancement and is potentially of relevance in explaining the 'backyard' effect. The self-transcendence dimension reflects the notion of accepting others on their merits (egalitarianism) while the self-enhancement dimension refers to the pursuit of self-interest; hierarchy is used to maintain ascribed roles and to preserve social fabric. Potentially the dominance of the 'backyard' in influencing women's selection reflects the

sending managers' preference for self-enhancement, rather than accepting female candidates on their merits. Cole and McNulty (2011) suggest that female expatriates have higher self-transcendence than men. If women play a lesser role in expatriate selection than do men, this might further explain why women are less likely than men to be selected for expatriation. A further bi-polar dimension might also be invoked as explanation – that of conservation versus openness to change (autonomy) – the first dimension stresses security and conformity while the latter suggests independence and action (Schwartz, 1992, 1999). The dominance of the 'backyard' here may be related to preferences by the home managers for security and conformity and thus in maintaining the *status quo*. If women can succeed as expatriates, it follows that foreigners' prejudice is a home country cultural perception – a 'pervasive myth' (van der Boon, 2003) – rather than a host country cultural fact.

Summary and implications

A wide range of studies across the world have explored the notion that many receiving societal cultures will deem the supply of female expatriates unsuitable simply due to their gender. Yet these various researches, across a broad gamut of receiving countries and cultures all appear to indicate a similar finding – women can and do succeed in them (Shortland and Altman, 2011); gender is unrelated to expatriate performance (Holopainen and Björkman, 2005). Yet, cultural, patriarchal and breadwinner norms all have an influence on women's perceived reception abroad, affecting employer decision-making. While patriarchy cannot provide a convincing explanation of women's low expatriate participation, the argument that suggests host country cultures preclude women's expatriation does not stand up to scrutiny either. Although research evidence is limited, it is suggested that home country sending managers' pre-supposed norms of women's acceptability in host country cultures outweigh actual host country prejudice (Paik and Vance, 2002; Vance and Paik, 2001); home country managers' *penchant* for self-interest and conservatism provides a stronger basis to maintain the *status quo* than self-transcendence and openness to change (Schwartz, 1992, 1999).

It is clear that organisational perceptions of women's acceptance in different patriarchal and cultural domains have significant implications for their expatriation and

thus for this research. For example, do country effects influence women's (constrained) choices in undertaking expatriation? How does organisational policy and practice support women's assignment participation, facilitating and enabling their selection from, and deployment to, the various home and host country operations of firms in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector?

CHAPTER 5: THE ASSIGNEE EFFECT

Introduction

How far do women's supply characteristics potentially influence employers' willingness to send them on expatriate assignments? This question is addressed in this chapter through an examination of women's education and training, their networks of social contacts and typical career paths. Relevant theoretical explanations are examined together with practical implications in relation to female expatriation with reference to the oil and gas exploration and production industry. By focusing on women's 'assignee effect', the context is set to discuss how organisational policies and practice in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector address such issues as assignee selection and career development/management, thereby supporting women's expatriation.

As discussed in chapter 3, women make choices or compromises giving necessary consideration to their family responsibilities. As such, it would be expected that women invest less in their education, training and career development (human capital). While engaging in family responsibilities, women would also develop fewer networks of work-based social contacts (social capital). Women's time out of the labour market for child rearing results in them having discontinuous careers (Powell and Mainiero, 1992). This suggests that, as a consequence, their job tenure, careers and managerial progression are negatively affected (Burke and McKeen, 1994, 1995, 1996; Ginn *et al.*, 1996), as are their expatriation prospects.

These issues influence women's labour supply characteristics: they present employers with a different set of attributes than men. Although the theoretical rationales concerning women's human and social capital and career paths do not acknowledge the constraints that shape women's engagement with education and the workplace and employers' actions in respect of female careers, they do provide a helpful starting point to explain women's relatively low expatriate participation in creating an 'assignee effect'.

What women know – the relevance of education and training

Human capital theory suggests that people are rewarded for their investment in education and training (Miller *et al.*, 2004) and, as women invest less in their education than men, it predicts that they bring less human capital into the labour market. As international assignments are used to fill skills gaps, transfer knowledge and provide strategic direction thus developing the organisation (Hocking *et al.*, 2004), it would be expected that women would be less qualified for expatriate duties. Women also develop less human capital in the workplace due to periods out of the labour market through their domestic responsibilities and are less able to gain experience of value to employers as a result (Anker, 2001). Caring and family work are excluded as relevant to human capital (Badgett and Folbre, 2001; Nelson, 2001); such work is considered merely altruistic (Benería, 2001). A woman's multiple roles thus act to reduce experience, training and development, potentially reducing her managerial advancement and expatriation prospects (Tharenou, 2005).

The rhetoric is clear – women do not hold sufficient and/ or relevant human capital for expatriation. Thus their labour supply characteristics appear, at first sight, inappropriate for assignment selection. However, the extent to which this impacts on organisational deployment of female expatriates requires further consideration. Historically, women were presumed to be less qualified than men; they were more suited to staff rather than line positions and so organisations were reluctant to send them (Adler, 1984c). As expatriates, they held only 'token' status (Kanter, 1977). Although women's expatriate participation is increasing (Altman and Shortland, 2008), women believe that they have to be better qualified and more ambitious than their male counterparts to be selected for an assignment (Linehan, 2000; Linehan and Walsh, 1999a). Unlike men, they also have to persuade home country management to take the risk to send them (Linehan and Walsh, 1999b). The convention in the expatriate literature appears to support organisational reluctance to deploy women on human capital grounds. Although the literature draws from both employer and assignee viewpoints, it is limited in scope and does not address women's qualifications in any detail.

Women's attainment of higher qualifications (defined as above GCE A level and equivalent) has been increasing steadily (Duffield, 2002; Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2007a, 2010a; Rubery *et al.*, 2001). Indeed, women's educational achievements in the UK exceed those of men's in respect of first and higher degrees and the gap is closing between men's and women's achievement of doctorates (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2007a, 2010a). Managerial and professional women are as well-educated and trained as their male counterparts (Burke, 1993). The oil and gas exploration and production industry employs a range of occupations in expatriate positions, although it is widely recognised as a major employer of internationally mobile engineers and geologists (Werngren, 2007). In the UK, men outnumber women by around seven to one in taking engineering degrees, although in geology the male/ female ratio is more balanced. There has been little change in recent years (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2007b, 2010b). As women take what once were men's educational subject choices, so professional socialisation by these women when they become mothers influences, in turn, their daughters' studies and careers (de León, *et al.*, 2000).

Given this educational backdrop, it is difficult to give credence to human capital explanations of women's lower participation rates within expatriation generally although within oil and gas exploration and production it is acknowledged that the supply of women engineers with UK qualifications is more limited. Even though women with higher level qualifications have similar employment rates as men, they are under-represented as managers – the level from which expatriates are typically drawn (Duffield, 2002). It appears that, even when qualifications and experience are held constant, women are still at a disadvantage compared to men (Miller *et al.*, 2004).

Whom women know – the importance of having contacts

To consider further how far women's supply characteristics potentially influence employers' willingness to expatriate them, it is necessary to look beyond the human capital ('knowing how') arguments and consider 'knowing whom' (Terjesen, 2005). Having political influence is necessary for global leaders and men have more of this than women (Harvey and Novicevic, 2004). Men advance through organisational hierarchies to a greater

extent than women (Tharenou, 2001) because the social capital that women can draw from their position as individuals in relationship networks that enable access to embedded resources of valuable information, co-operation, trust and reciprocity (Terjesen, 2005) is lower than men's.

The problem is clearly stated in the literature – men advance more because of social capital (Tharenou, 2005). If this determines women's entry into leadership positions, it might be inferred that women need more social capital to enter the expatriate arena than men. Yet, by having lower social capital, women's chances of being expatriated by organisations are reduced. For instance, where networks and informal contacts predominate in the expatriate selection process, fewer women are successful (Harris, 2002). If expatriate selection hinges on 'knowing whom', potential women expatriates must increase their social capital, for example via the use of networks, role models and mentors. However, such action may be subject to constraint.

"Networks usually involve contacts with a variety of colleagues for the purpose of mutual work benefits" (Linehan, 2001a: 823). As Ibarra (1993: 74) indicates, women may find themselves having to build networks through adoption of a strategy of "functional differentiation" and thereby having to "navigate a course between two different social circles". In effect this means building networks within both their (female) social group and within the more senior (male) managerial group. This is problematic in that it is difficult to maintain relationships within two differing work-related social groups and thus women can feel pressure to demonstrate their allegiance to both while effectively finding that inter-group sanctions prevent them from fitting into either. Female-only networks may help to provide support for women but potentially might create male backlash (Shortland, 2011).

Women are in a 'catch-22' situation. When they hold top posts and have similar personal and career characteristics to their male counterparts, their relative isolation from male peers diminishes (Moore and White, 2000). The issue though concerns women having insufficient networks to reach these positions in the first place. Uncertainty at senior levels demands trusting relationships (Edström and Galbraith, 1977) and women need to earn recognition before they can fully enter networking arrangements on similar terms to men

(Nicolau-Smokoviti and Baldwin, 2000). Within networks, men make more frequent contact with other men than with women (Moore and White, 2000). Participating in networking provides greater career satisfaction for men than it does for women (van Emmerik *et al.*, 2006). Thus, even when women enter networks, they do not benefit as much from them as men.

Networks assist expatriates in: gaining an international position (Linehan, 2000; Shortland 2011); preparing for an assignment (Shortland, 2011); adjustment and job performance (Li *et al.*, 2010); knowledge transfer (Crowne, 2009); maintaining contacts due to absence of family and friends (Linehan and Walsh, 2001); and influencing promotion and acceptance (Linehan and Scullion, 2002b). Although Linehan and Scullion (2004) suggest that women should make use of networking strategies and operate in a political manner to ensure their visibility, this is difficult. Networking often means membership of ‘old boys’ clubs’ and women are excluded from such established male preserves by men’s power denying them entry (Linehan and Walsh, 1999b). Women also have less time to work at gaining entry and acceptance due to their family roles (Linehan, 2001a).

In ‘female friendly’ occupations, women are more likely to reach the higher *echelons* of management (Blackburn and Jarman, 2005a). Yet, even in female-dominated professions such as human resource management (Tasker, 2005), women perceive their lack of career advancement as being hindered by too few women role models (Ackah and Heaton, 2003). Not only are numbers of female role models small, but role model status is gendered – women are less readily seen as role models than men (Murrell and Zagenczyk, 2006). The absence of female role models in male-dominated industrial sectors affects negatively: female recruitment (Miller *et al.*, 2000); women’s self-efficacy (Mitchie and Nelson, 2006); and their progress into leadership positions (Bowman, 2011). In addition, there is a lack of female expatriate role models (Altman and Shortland, 2001; Hutchings *et al.*, 2010; Linehan and Walsh, 1999a). In male-dominated industries requiring high levels of international mobility (such as oil and gas exploration and production), the likelihood of there being any significant number of female expatriate role models declines significantly.

Women expatriates appear less able to benefit from networks and role models than men and so may turn to other sources of support such as mentors (Linehan and Walsh, 2000b). Mentors are higher ranking, influential, more experienced individuals who advise, counsel and enhance their *protégés*' career development (Kram, 1985; Linehan and Walsh, 1999c). Mentors also assist expatriates in socialisation (Feldman and Bolino, 1999) and adjustment (Harvey *et al.*, 1999). Mentoring helps to: reduce the complexity of expatriation (Harvey *et al.*, 2010) and associated stress (Insch *et al.*, 2008); create support (Ezzedeen and Ritchey, 2009; Harvey *et al.*, 2009); and increase job satisfaction (Bozionelos, 2009). However, women may not realise the career benefits that flow from mentoring to the same degree as men (Germain and Scandura, 2005) and they may have less time to pursue mentoring arrangements due to family responsibilities (Palgi, 2000).

When mentors are of a different gender and nationality from their *protégés*, less support appears to be given in relation to tasks, social issues and career development (Feldman *et al.*, 1999). Female mentors can act as role models (Burke *et al.*, 2006), sharing life situations and coping styles (Palgi, 2000). The implications are that female mentors may be of greater value to women expatriates, but women's paucity in management and in expatriation in particular means that there are insufficient of them to mentor women at the early stages of their international and managerial careers.

As the rhetoric places emphasis on the benefits of mentoring but without any accountability built in, the efficacy of this intervention may be questioned. Sponsors have responsibility for others and powerful sponsors are valuable to women's career advancement (Kumra, 2010; Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2010). Although the literature is limited in this respect, sponsors may prove more helpful to women's expatriate participation (O'Higgins, 2001). Yet, finding sponsors and developing such relationships potentially presents similar if not greater difficulties than building mentoring relationships.

Career considerations

Traditionally men's careers follow a linear path from education through full-time career to retirement (Mavin, 2000), starting with challenge, followed by authenticity and finally

balance (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007). Participation in international assignments forms part of this male linear track, particularly at managerial level in multinational organisations (Linehan, 2000; Nicholson, 2000). However, women's careers are neither linear nor continuous in form as family demands require non-work and career concerns to alternate in priority as circumstances dictate during their life-cycle (Levinson, 1996; Powell and Mainiero, 1992).

The literature thus suggests that women and men have different career tracks. While men's linear career paths continue unabated, women's do not. Yet careers today are less secure and linear in form for men and hence men and women may be considered to compete on equal terms; potentially women may even have "a head start" as they are used to this non-linearity (Woodd, 2000: 104). So, it might be argued that women's non-linear career paths should make little difference to expatriate participation as the penalties for not following a linear career are more severe for men than for women (Burke and McKeen, 1994, 1995, 1996). Women also are not necessarily penalised directly for taking career breaks because it is expected that they will do so (Metz, 2005).

Rather than the linear track that is used to describe men's careers, circles or spiral patterns are invoked to describe women's life stages. For example, the kaleidoscope career model suggests career challenge in early career, balancing relational demands mid-career, through to focusing on issues of authenticity in late career (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007). Pringle and Dixon (2003) suggest career phases circular in nature from early exploration and career focus, rebalancing in child-bearing years and revival with freedom to investigate alternative options in later life. O'Neal and Bilimoria's (2005) career phase model similarly suggests three phases – idealistic achievement, pragmatic endurance and re-inventive contribution. Thus, the literature suggests women's careers are driven by their personal values: early careers are based on career satisfaction; by mid-career, their career development becomes impacted by others and no longer provides personal happiness and fulfilment; while later in life, careers are seen as vehicles to make a difference. Potentially organisations that align their career paths with these life stages will achieve competitive advantage (Cabrera, 2009; Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007).

If women's career stages and motivations vary through real choice or by preference, credence might be given to suggestions such as: women may simply not wish to engage in international mobility as part of career progression (Nicholson, 2000); and/ or they are less assertive than men in their actions within both career planning and career development (McKeen and Burke, 1993). Set against these viewpoints though, the contribution of a corporate career to overall life satisfaction for managerial and professional women appears to decline with age (Lee, 1993) as women perceive fewer corporate advancement opportunities available to them than men (Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron, 2005). As such it appears that their corporate career paths become subject to constraint and their options narrowed, potentially suggesting that women have to make career compromises. For example, women who display equivalent performance to men are not seen as ready for expatriation at the same rate as them (Connerley *et al.*, 2008); women need more experience than is required by men to be selected for expatriation and have to persistently ask for their next career move (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a); and female expatriates achieve their career goals less often than men within their organisations (Selmer and Leung, 2002). Hence, it is possible that organisations may be predicted to lose potential female expatriates from their selection pool as women take up alternative career paths not necessarily through freedom of lifestyle choice but in response to actual or perceived lower corporate career opportunities, thereby compounding their already low expatriate representation.

Summary and implications

Women are portrayed as being less qualified and effective than men for expatriation (Adler, 1984c) and have to prove their worth and press for career moves to a greater extent than men do (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a). Yet, women's educational qualifications do not provide a differentiator that justifies their relatively low participation as expatriates (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2010a). Thus, the argument suggesting that women's human capital is inferior to men's does not stand up to scrutiny as an explanation for employers' reluctance to expatriate women. However, even when women's qualifications, employment and experience are equivalent to men, they are under-represented in the managerial *echelons* from where expatriates are typically selected (Duffield, 2002; Miller *et al.*, 2004). This implies a constraint not directly linked to their human capital. Entering the managerial

ranks and expatriating from these requires social capital – but women's is lower than men's and women have less access to networks, mentors, role models and sponsors to improve it (Linehan and Walsh, 1999b) due in part to time constraints in juggling work and family responsibilities (Linehan, 2001a) and through exclusion from "male buddydom" (Nicholson, 2000: 180).

Women's non-linear careers also suggest that at the age where expatriation is most likely (in mid- to late-career) (Brookfield, 2010), women have either taken time out for child rearing or have opted out for greater career fulfilment (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007) – potentially because lower corporate advancement opportunities are available to them (Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron, 2005). Their expatriate non-availability at key career stages may not be through choice but made in compromise or sacrifice to external constraints (Nicholson, 2000).

Women's lower social capital and their non-linear career paths appear to provide promising theoretical explanations for their low levels of expatriate participation, with particular implications for their international mobility in the male-dominated oil and gas exploration and production sector, thus raising a number of pertinent questions to be addressed in this research. How does organisational policy and practice in assignee selection support women's expatriation in this sector? Do female expatriates foresee their careers remaining within this industry and to what extent do organisational policies and practices support this via career development and career management?

CHAPTER 6: THE OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION EFFECT

Introduction

Gendered structures within labour markets result in occupational segregation – both horizontal and vertical (Blackburn and Jarman, 2005a; Siltanen *et al.*, 1995). Occupational segregation provides a descriptor of women's position in the labour market and the potential inequalities that flow from it. Society values certain occupations over others and women appear to be constrained within those that command only low status. Yet, how far does occupational segregation affect employer demand for women expatriates in the oil and gas exploration and production industry? This chapter sets out the backdrop to horizontal segregation in the workplace and critiques the following theoretical considerations: sex roles, statistical discrimination and queuing as potential explanations of women's expatriate participation. The invisible but firmly embedded 'glass' structures in the workplace are then examined to explain the nature of vertical segregation in relation to expatriation. Isomorphic behaviour whereby organisations mimic each other (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) is suggested as leading to conformity rather than diversity, cementing women's minority position within the oil and gas exploration and production industry. Context is set in this chapter to discuss how organisational policies and practice in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector might address gender diversity and equal opportunities and thereby reduce occupational segregation, thus potentially supporting women's increased assignment participation.

Horizontal segregation

Occupations tend to polarise into those with high male or female concentrations; with segregation measuring its degree. Female occupations refer to those where the proportion of women working in them is greater than women's representation in the labour force (Blackburn and Jarman, 2005a). Siltanen *et al.* (1995) suggest that horizontal segregation (women are employed in different sectors and jobs from men) does not imply inequality, although this perspective requires deeper analysis as the suggestion that horizontal segregation does not disadvantage women implies all sectors and occupational roles are

perceived as equal. However, inequality stems not from the differences themselves *per se*, but from the values society attaches to them. These relative values determine, for example, the status, prestige and pay attached to particular occupations (Blackburn and Jarman, 2005b). Fewer female occupations are high status; low status occupations attract low pay. Hence, young women seeking high status/ paid work must look outside traditional female occupations (Miller *et al.*, 2004).

As discussed in chapter 2, oil and gas exploration and production is a masculine industry. Expatriation is male-dominated as well (Brookfield, 2011a; Permits Foundation, 2011). Within oil and gas, expatriation is even more male-dominated than in almost all other industry sectors (ORC Worldwide, 2007). Yet, in the UK for example, despite initiatives to encourage women into high status, male-dominated work such as science and engineering (WISE, 2007), women remain discouraged from entry, particularly into engineering (Powell *et al.*, 2004) where they face organisational barriers in pursuing engineering careers (Evetts, 1998). Hence, sectors (such as oil and gas) and jobs (such as those held by expatriates) remain strongly horizontally gender-segregated (Miller *et al.*, 2004). Horizontal segregation therefore suggests a reason for women's low representation as expatriates in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector.

By way of explanation, sex role theory suggests that through socialisation men and women are conditioned into behavioural roles (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003), reflecting stereotyping of women's career success within organisations as being lower than men's (Marshall, 1984). By sex stereotyping women to female roles, supervisors act as gatekeepers, reduce sex integration and preserve male *camaraderie* (Reskin and Padavic, 1988). The rhetoric appears negative. Nevertheless, although sex stereotyping has a major influence on the typical characteristics of male and female occupations, it should be of less relevance in qualifying or disqualifying women's entry to them (Anker, 2001). Yet, as discussed in chapter 2, the oil and gas exploration and production industry is sex stereotyped as male in publicly available literature: men work on rigs or in the field; women, if they are shown, are in office roles. The use of stereotypical images carries a message of prevalent sexism (Plakoyiannaki *et al.*, 2008) and as such, does little to dispel traditional conceptions of oil and gas industry sex roles.

Becker (1971) suggests that it is a rational economic choice for employers to discriminate between groups of workers if the cost involved in the decision to identify one particular group over the other as being suitable exceeds that of sustaining the differences between the abilities of the groups of workers. Statistical discrimination would imply that the cost of identifying women's suitability exceeds that of maintaining gender bias, although as Anker (2001) notes, less prejudiced employers would decrease their costs and increase profits by employing from such a group. In summary, the rhetoric is that it is economically rational to discriminate between women and men as the cost of identifying women as suitable expatriates is too high. In oil and gas exploration and production women's relatively low expatriate participation potentially makes their identification more costly because employers have less evidence of a successful track record upon which to base their selection decisions. Yet, in the high volume expatriate environment of the extraction industries, the majority of international assignments involve the movement of known employees on intra-company transfers, not unfamiliar externally recruited hires (Salt and Millar, 2006a, 2006b). At the individual level, once having held a gender atypical job, men and women are perceived as more suited to holding future atypical sex roles, suggesting that career history can help to reduce gender bias for women (Hareli *et al.*, 2008). Statistical discrimination therefore does provide some explanation but does not fully account for men appearing favoured for expatriate roles.

The demand for expatriates continues to grow and skills shortages have emerged; yet expatriate packages have become less generous and repatriation more hazardous (Altman and Shortland, 2008). Disadvantages include: uncertain career paths (Feldman and Thomas, 1992); reductions in financial rewards (ORC Worldwide, 2007); concerns over repatriation (Fish and Wood, 1993; Forster, 1992; Tung, 1988); unrealistic expectations (Napier and Peterson, 1991); lack of suitable jobs or redundancy (Forster, 1992); cultural reintegration – both organisational and societal (Dowling *et al.*, 1994; Paik *et al.*, 2002); partners' careers (Hardill, 1998; Izraeli and Zeira, 1993) and disruption to family life (Forster, 1992). Under Reskin and Roos' (1990) queuing theory it would be predicted that expatriate opportunities would become more open to women as expatriation becomes less attractive to men: women's terms, conditions and prospects should improve as the expatriate (male) occupations they manage to enter are predicted to be better than those

female jobs they held before. However, despite expatriation becoming less attractive (Feldes and Steinhaus, 1998), it has failed to feminise (Brookfield, 2009a; ORC Worldwide, 2008a) dismissing queuing as a theoretical explanation.

Vertical segregation

Vertical segregation refers to the gender inequality which results from women's concentration in the lower *echelons* of organisational hierarchies (Siltanen *et al.*, 1995). Horizontal segregation affects vertical segregation – the smaller the percentage of women in a profession, the lower their chances of getting to the top of it (Blackburn and Jarman, 2005c; Wirth, 2001). Despite a rising trend in women's labour market participation (International Labour Organization, 2007b) women have found it difficult to penetrate managerial ranks, particularly in male-dominated sectors. In more female-dominated sectors where women have succeeded to a greater extent in obtaining higher level jobs, men still hold significantly more managerial positions (Wirth, 2001).

Vertical segregation is compounded by women's propensity to work part-time. While facilitating their entry and exit into the labour market, it acts as a trap (Bollé, 2001): resulting in lower career and pay prospects (Fagan and Rubery, 1996; Tomlinson and Durbin, 2010); maintaining women on the margins of the labour force (Markey *et al.*, 2002); and inhibiting processes of desegregation (Horrell and Rubery, 1991). Part-time working restricts women's access to management (Markey *et al.*, 2002) as it is assumed that leadership roles cannot be performed on a part-time basis (Bakker, 2000). Yet, even when women do take on full-time leadership roles, male leaders gain more experience and enhanced career prospects from them than women (Drew, 2000). Part-time managerial work creates more challenges than opportunities (Tomlinson and Durbin, 2010); indeed, part-time expatriate work is not considered a feasible option due to cost and timescale considerations (Inwood, 2007).

Assisted by legislation and a changing social climate, women's representation in the managerial pool at lower and middle management levels is, however, slowly being translated into more senior appointments (Altman *et al.*, 2005). Yet, women remain under-

represented within powerful positions (Adams and Ferreira, 2009; Berry, 2006; Cassell and Biswas, 2000; Claes, 2001; Doke, 2002; Farrell and Hersch, 2005; Heaton *et al.*, 2000; Hoffarth, 1996; Igbaria and Shayo, 1997; Large and Saunders, 1995; Nielsen and Huse, 2010; Sealy *et al.*, 2009). Rubery *et al.* (1999) suggest that women's under-representation at senior levels might result from the age structure of women within management – a proxy for levels of experience. Yet, there has been little change in recent years in women's appointments as directors within FTSE 100 companies (EOC, 2007; Sealy *et al.*, 2009). Women's representation as heads of multinationals is 'miniscule' (Klenke, 1999). An explanation for the reinforcement of vertical segregation over time may lie in invisible (but firmly embedded) 'glass' barriers to women's career progress within organisations and as expatriates.

Discrimination, stereotyping and gender bias combine to create the 'glass ceiling' (Auster, 1993; Burke and McKeen, 1993; Cai and Kleiner, 1999; Chênevert and Tremblay, 2002; Miller *et al.*, 2004). This acts as an "invisible but impermeable barrier that limits the career advancement of women" (Burke and Vinnicombe, 2005: 165). The 'glass ceiling' influences women in rating poorly their chances of career progression (Jackson, 2001). It also affects their labour turnover (Foley *et al.*, 2002). Negative perceptions may in themselves act as tangible barriers to women's upward progression (Powell and Butterfield, 1994). For instance, Kavčič and Merkač (2000) report women who reach top positions perceive themselves to have less power than men, being appointed as 'tokens' within the dominating male culture (Burgess and Tharenou, 2002). Woodward and Lyon (2000) draw attention to the requirement for leaders to fulfil 'super human' hours and meet tests of demanding geographical mobility. Indeed, women's perceptions of long hours' working reflect the reality of senior management positions (Ogden *et al.*, 2006). Hence, Liff and Ward (2001) posit that issues linked to long hours' working as well as perceived personality and behaviour characteristics may affect women's decisions to strive for promotion into senior management. Strategies to cope with managerial careers involve living alone and forgoing partners and children (Esseveld and Andersson, 2000; Vianello and Moore, 2000). Yet, this is a heavy price to pay for breaking down vertical segregation. In relation to international mobility, women may impose their own 'glass ceiling' (Cross

and Linehan, 2006) with self-efficacy influencing their occupational mobility (Chang, 2003).

Despite the gloomy rhetoric, young women managers have begun to outpace their male counterparts' career progression, and so the 'glass ceiling' may become 'time bounded' (Simpson and Altman, 2000). Although Altman *et al.* (2005) assert that the 'glass ceiling' has retrenched to the very top, Moore and Vianello (2000) suggest that women's exclusion from elite positions is slowly declining. Nonetheless, women face greater demands than men in proving themselves, having to out-perform them to get to this level (Burke, 1995, 2005; Lyness and Thompson, 1997).

Expatriates are generally selected from a managerial pool and women's entry into this is beset by barriers (Forster, 1999; Linehan and Walsh, 2000b; Liu and Wilson, 2001). Once in this pool it might be argued that the 'glass ceiling' affecting women's expatriation has been broken, yet a further barrier remains: the requirement to convince selectors of women's abilities to work across geographical borders. Supervisor-subordinate relationships (where the supervisor is typically male) potentially affect women's selection and deployment internationally (Varma and Stroh, 2001; Varma *et al.*, 2001). Thus, even though women are willing to go on international assignments and will accept assignments at the same rate as men once offered (Stroh *et al.*, 2005), men hold the decision-making roles affecting women's careers (Egan and Bendick, 1994). Women therefore face a further glass structure acting as a barrier to their expatriation: the 'glass border' (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a). To compound the issue, as career progression in multinationals is potentially enhanced by expatriation (Domsh and Lichtenberger, 1992; Gedro; 2010; Jokinen, 2010), the 'glass border' reinforces the 'glass ceiling' and *vice versa* (Haines and Saba, 1999a), creating a double glazed effect (Harris, 1992; Insch *et al.*, 2008).

The literature on glass ceilings and borders provides a descriptive framework of vertical occupational segregation of relevance to women's participation as expatriates. However, to understand why the relatively low employer demand for female expatriates is perpetuated, it is necessary to seek further theoretical explanation as to why organisations

continue to take such similar approaches to female expatriate deployment and so little change is apparent.

Isomorphic explanations

Oil and gas exploration and production firms operate in similar geographical and political environments. The concept of institutional isomorphism relates to where one unit resembles others facing the same environmental conditions (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The authors suggest three types of change that create isomorphic responses: ‘coercive’, resulting from political influence (including formal and informal pressures exerted by other organisations and through cultural expectations); ‘mimetic’, stemming from standard responses to uncertainty (under which, in poorly understood or ambiguous conditions, organisations model themselves on others through copying or borrowing of practices); and ‘normative’, linked to ‘professionalization’ (via professional education and networks).

To examine these in turn, political influence can lead to ‘coercive isomorphism’. Oil and gas exploration and production firms require agreements with host country governments to explore, drill, produce and export oil and gas. Culture, organisations and markets can all provide alternative perspectives on legitimacy of behaviour (Jørgensen *et al.*, 1986) and various control systems (such as laws and rules, incentives, penalties, customs, values and beliefs) can be used to reinforce it (Pandya and Dholakia, 1992). However, multinational enterprises experience complexity in maintaining legitimacy across a range of different environments (Sally, 1994) and oil and gas firms’ foreign subsidiaries face local isomorphic pressure as well as from the headquarters (Kostova and Roth, 2002). These pressures have implications for the implementation of headquarters’ policies in host countries; host country practices may over-ride home country policies.

Short-term benefits gained through non-compliance with industry practice can result in retaliatory action. Hence, even in a rapidly changing environment, oil and gas organisations adopt standard approaches and thus demonstrate considerable stability in their policies and practices (Blom-Hansen, 1997) through ‘mimetic isomorphism’

(DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). In short, firms mimic the most successful policies and practices, leading to greater uniformity rather than diversity of approaches (Chow, 2004).

Oil and gas firms also adopt ‘normative isomorphism’ (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) through their development of early careers as part of graduate fast track development programmes (drawing from similar universities and courses) and by selecting for top management positions from those with an international track record in the industry (Gordon, 2006). This can result in ‘mimicking people’, meaning that those reaching the top are potentially barely distinguishable from each other due to this ‘professionalization’ form of isomorphic behaviour (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). In addition, as management is ‘professionalized’ similarly and personnel and information are exchanged across organisations within the sector, professionals whose ideas are developed in this way then continue to exercise control systems based on their beliefs through normative processes (Scott, 1995).

Summary and implications

As the attractiveness of expatriation declines (Altman and Shortland, 2008), it would be expected, following the queuing process (Reskin and Roos, 1990) that women would take up a significant proportion of expatriate roles. However, as this has not been the case the reason for women’s relatively low level of expatriation may lie more convincingly in statistical discrimination (Becker, 1971): the cost of identifying employees capable of filling expatriate roles is higher for women than for men. However, this argument is weakened, particularly in the extractive industries, by the majority of employer-initiated expatriations being drawn from an existing employee selection pool (Salt and Millar, 2006a, 2006b). Hence, the cost of identifying female expatriates should be the same as for men. Potentially, sex roles provide stronger explanations of women’s paucity within expatriation. Yet, while sex stereotyping has a major influence on the typical characteristics of female occupations, it does not act as a disqualifier to women’s entry (Anker, 2001). Vertical segregation is firmly embedded and manifested in the workplace as the ‘glass ceiling’. This invisible barrier to women’s career progress created by social structures reduces their opportunity to enter the managerial pool (Burke and Vinnicombe, 2005). Yet

it is from here that expatriates are selected, creating a 'glass border' (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a). To compound matters, the 'glass border' appears to reinforce the 'glass ceiling' and *vice versa* (Haines and Saba, 1999a).

All of these theoretical considerations play a role in maintaining occupational segregation and partially explain women's low expatriate participation. However, institutional isomorphic organisational behaviour (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) can be considered to be particularly pertinent as an underpinning. This leads to greater uniformity of approach than might be expected from competing entities (Chow, 2004). Thus, it is suggested that isomorphic employer behaviour cements the invisible 'glass' barriers in the workplace that disadvantage women through repeated reinforcement of employer policy and practice; predicting women's entry to the expatriate arena being locked behind the 'glass border' (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a).

In summary, the sex-stereotyped nature of the oil and gas exploration and production industry and embedded glass structures that disadvantage women's expatriation are reinforced through isomorphic employer behaviour. These issues, in particular, raise implications for women's expatriate participation and questions for this research. For example, how far do organisational policies and practices in support of gender diversity and equal opportunities widen the prospects for women's expatriate participation and challenge the gendered *status quo*?

CHAPTER 7: THE ASSIGNMENT TYPE EFFECT

Introduction

The extent to which different types of assignment affect women's expatriate participation is explored in this chapter. Assignment purpose; length – long-term versus short-term; pattern – commuter and rotational; status – accompanied or not; and geographical location, and their implications for female expatriate participation are considered. Illustrative literature-based evidence is presented with potential implications for women's expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector highlighted.

Assignment purpose

The purpose of expatriation is classified in a variety of ways. For example, Hocking *et al.* (2004) suggest a three-fold framework comprising: business applications (filling positions); organisation applications (developing the organisation); and expatriate learning (developing managers). Delios and Björkman (2000) state that expatriates are used as agents of control to align subsidiary operations with those of the parent, as agents in knowledge transfer from the parent to the subsidiary and in the acquisition of host country knowledge. Lazarova and Tarique (2005) focus on how the key purpose of an expatriate assignment rests on knowledge transfer. Novicevic and Harvey's (2004) role architecture links assignment purpose with value and uniqueness: job-based (low value and uniqueness); learning-based (low value but high uniqueness); skills-based (high value but low uniqueness); and competency-based (high value and uniqueness).

In the practitioner literature, assignment descriptors flow from the rationales that underpin expatriate use (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996). Classification of assignments by purpose is not, however, as clear cut as theoretical frameworks and assignment descriptors imply due to the significant overlap in organisational purpose that takes place (Hocking *et al.*, 2004). Although there is little evidence on individual motivations for assignment acceptance (Collings *et al.*, 2009), individuals may view the purpose of expatriation differently from their employing organisations (Thomas *et al.*, 2005). The literature on

assignment purpose classifies assignments, but does not specifically address gender issues. Thus, how far women's expatriate participation is affected by assignment purpose is unknown.

Assignment length

International experience profoundly influences leaders' worldview and strengthens their ability to create collaborative environments (Cassiday, 2005). Hence, assignments with the primary business driver of global leadership through planned career development are likely to result in long-term deployment strategies (PWC/Cranfield, 2006). Long-term assignments are also used for knowledge and technical skills transfer, new start-ups and to transfer corporate culture and train local people (Cartus, 2007, 2010; CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996; ORC Worldwide, 2006). Long-term assignments deliver a greater likelihood of maximum return on investment (McNulty and Tharenou, 2004, 2006; PWC/Cranfield, 2006), albeit there are difficulties in measuring this (McNulty *et al.*, 2009). They are the most frequently used assignment type (Brookfield, 2010).

Yet, despite the clear rationale for long-term deployment of individuals, there is increasing evidence that lengthy expatriation is in decline (Morley *et al.*, 2006; Scullion and Brewster, 2001); traditional three to five year expatriate assignments are being shortened to two or three years as a maximum (Collings *et al.*, 2007; Forster and Johnsen, 1996; Konopaske and Werner, 2005). Cost considerations act as a major impetus to shortening assignment lengths (Cartus, 2010) despite organisational awareness that reactions to short-term economic pressures can damage longer-term strategic objectives (Brookfield, 2009b).

Skills shortages promote the requirement for rapid deployment of individuals to meet short-term business needs with the demand for project work, mergers, divestitures, start-ups and restructuring requiring this type of mobility (Cappellen and Janssens, 2005). Short-term assignments (defined as between three and 12 months in length) are also used to fill skills gaps (Cartus, 2010; CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996; ORC Worldwide, 2006). This type of assignment: cuts costs (Anon., 2006a); reduces the 'out of sight, out of mind'

syndrome (Konopaske and Werner, 2005; Starr and Currie, 2009); helps reduce problems of re-integration on repatriation (De Cieri *et al.*, 2009); and addresses barriers to mobility such as dual careers and concerns over children's education (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996). Employees are able to work abroad without having to move their families due to the short timescale of separation (Forster, 2000).

Mobile *cadre* assignments typically involve a series of short-term postings in a succession of countries (Harris and Dickman, 2005). They are used for senior management mobility to transfer commercial and operational philosophies and for early career and graduate populations, with repeated international mobility central to their training and development (Perkins and Shortland, 2006). However, such continual mobility is considered a 'myth' as few employees want – or can withstand psychologically – the pressures of such a nomadic lifestyle (Forster, 2000).

It is notable that the distinction between the rationales for using long-term and short-term assignments is breaking down. The use of short-term assignments for technical skills and knowledge transfer has begun to grow. They are also now frequently used for career development and training as emphasis on new business/ operation start-ups has declined. In effect, organisations are increasingly turning to the use of short-term assignments to carry out expatriate functions that have traditionally been part of the rationale for long-term assignments (Cartus, 2010). In the main, practitioner expatriate policy surveys indicate increasing use of short-term assignments, reflecting a suggested employer preference for this form of international mobility (Anon., 2000; Cartus, 2010; CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996; GMAC GRS/NFTC, 2007; ORC Worldwide, 2006). However, although it is difficult to tell from unmatched data, the rise in the use of short-term assignments may be starting to level out (Brookfield 2009a, 2010).

While short periods of work abroad provide some international experience, they do not lead to cultural competence (Adler and Bartholomew, 1992) as they may provide insufficient time to overcome culture shock and to adjust successfully (Torbiörn, 1982). Takeuchi *et al.* (2005a) suggest that, if the expatriate task requires adjustment at the outset, employees with greater international work experience will be selected whereas, if the

assignment is more developmental in nature, then assignees with less international experience will be chosen. As fewer women have international experience, this suggests that their expatriation will fall primarily into the developmental category. Career development assignments have traditionally been long-term (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996; ORC Worldwide, 2006). However, there appears to be a trend towards increased organisational use of short-term developmental assignments with their attendant cultural adjustment difficulties (Cartus, 2010).

While Brown (2008) notes that both long-term and short-term assignments increase stress on family members, expatriates suffer stress particularly through family separation and lack of family support (Starr and Currie, 2009; UCL/CBI ERC, 1991); this is potentially a widespread problem as around three-quarters of all short-term assignees are unaccompanied (ORC Worldwide, 2006). It might therefore be inferred that the shortening of assignment lengths and an increasing use of short-term assignments has a disproportionately negative effect on women assignees. Yet, the literature is silent on the effect of assignment length on women's participation in expatriation.

Assignment pattern

Besides long-term and short-term assignments, expatriation also takes the form of 'flexpatriate' style international mobility (Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004a, 2004b). Types of flexpatriation include commuter and rotational assignments. Virtual 'assignments', where business is conducted remotely combined with repeated/ extended 'frequent flyer' business travel, are not classified as organisational expatriation (Vance, 2005).

Commuter assignments involve unaccompanied, frequent international mobility. In the 1990s such assignment patterns were linked to regular weekly or monthly commuting from home to service long-term, intra-regional assignments, driven not so much by business need as by employee concerns over dual careers and children's education (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996). Today, they are increasingly used to service short-term assignments and projects on a less regular commuting basis, both within and between regions (ORC Worldwide, 2006); suggesting a blurring and overlap between length and

pattern of assignments (Bonache *et al.*, 2010). Cost containment has become a major organisational driver for their use (Welch *et al.*, 2007). Deploying individuals on commuter assignments is rising, particularly in Europe (Cartus, 2010; Scullion and Brewster, 2001) and in the oil and gas exploration and production sector (Inwood, 2007).

Unaccompanied rotational assignments are common in the oil, gas and mining industry (Brookfield, 2011a) and typically involve regular working patterns (such as 28 days on shift, working 12 hours a day, followed by 28 days off shift at home). They tend to be used in remote, hostile or unpleasant locations as part of a strategy of position filling for operational roles (Inwood, 2007).

While traditional expatriation is typically a career choice, flexpatriate working is not – it is explicit in job descriptions at senior and professional levels. Commuter assignees are required to cross cultural boundaries at short notice and for short time spans (Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004a). Such assignments may require individuals to work concurrently on numerous tasks, in different locations and with flexible travel schedules (Mayerhofer and Hartmann, 2004). While this may result in gaining significant cross-cultural understanding (*ibid.*), it might be argued that, without true long-term cultural immersion, only superficial cultural awareness is possible with consequent negative career implications (Adler and Bartholomew, 1992). Organisations also appear to place greater emphasis on the importance of long-term rather than flexible assignments in terms of the strategic deployment of individuals (Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004b). This may be the result of alternative assignment types falling under the realm of line and operational managers and thus lying outside the sphere of interest and control of corporate human resource departments (Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004a). Thus, ‘flexpatriate’ assignments may not provide such a large career contribution as traditional long-term and short-term assignments.

Research in the oil industry finds flexible assignments less disruptive than traditional long-term postings (Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004b). Potentially, flexpatriate assignment patterns and short-term assignments enable women to balance international mobility with family and domestic roles (Demel and Mayerhofer, 2010; Harris and Dickman, 2005; IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007). Although not empirically tested, Meyskens

et al. (2009) propose that commuter assignments give high goal congruence (the extent to which the goals of the multinational match those of its subsidiary, a factor considered necessary for assignment success) and medium levels of work-life balance. By comparison, they suggest that: frequent flyer assignments provide high goal congruence but low work-life balance; short-term assignments provide low goal congruence and low work-life balance; while for expatriate assignments goal congruence is low, but medium levels of work-life balance apply. Their model suggests that commuter assignments potentially offer the highest potential for assignment success and family life.

Yet frequent travel and family separation are stressful to individuals (Ivancevich *et al.*, 2003; Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004b; UCL/CBI, 1991; Welch *et al.*, 2007). Stress affects health and wellness (including anxiety, fatigue and exhaustion) (Demel and Mayerhofer, 2010) and, as a consequence, employee turnover and performance (Coyle, 1988; Coyle and Shortland, 1992; IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; Ivancevich *et al.*, 2003; Perkins and Shortland, 2006). Flexpatriation's requirements for repeated mobility and flexibility cause family conflict (Welch *et al.*, 2007), straining and ultimately destabilising nuclear-centred families (Carnoy, 2001). Given the nature of the locations and family separation involved in rotational assignments, it might be expected that these assignment patterns, in particular, would not encourage female participation. Hence, alternative assignment patterns may discourage women's participation due to their effects on home life, family separation and associated personal difficulties (IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; UCL/CBI ERC, 1991) as well as career contribution effects (Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004a, 2004b).

Research specifically into the effect of flexpatriate assignment patterns on women's expatriate participation is extremely limited (Shortland and Altman, 2011). In Hearn *et al.*'s (2008) study, female expatriates' male partners did not give up their careers; instead the wives opted for commuter assignments. By comparison, when men took up expatriate assignments their wives gave up their careers and stayed at home with the children. Yet, although women can work as successfully on flexible global assignments as men, the commuter lifestyle has a greater impact on women than on men: women are more likely to give up this assignment type if their personal and family lives demand it (Mayerhofer *et al.*,

2004a). However, with such limited data, the effect of alternative assignment patterns on women's expatriate participation is unknown (McKenna and Richardson, 2007).

Assignment status

Assignment status (accompanied or unaccompanied) is linked to length, pattern and location and is driven by business need and cost considerations (Cartus, 2010; CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996). Long-term assignments are generally offered as accompanied postings while short-term assignments are, in the main, unaccompanied (ORC Worldwide, 2009). By their very nature, commuter, rotational and mobile *cadre* style short-term postings as part of an extended period of international mobility are unaccompanied (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996).

Yet the picture is not this straightforward in practice. Long-term assignments in remote or hostile locations, which either present a danger to – or a lack of facilities for – partners and families, are likely to be offered on an unaccompanied basis with trips home provided by employers to maintain contact. The frequency and duration of these depends on the distance (representing time and cost issues) between the home and host locations (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996; UCL/CBI ERC, 1991). Short-term assignments may be offered on an accompanied basis with the family's needs, job level and country of assignment playing a role in the status decision (ORC Worldwide, 2009). However, the very shortest assignments (under six months) are likely to remain unaccompanied (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996).

Recent practitioner surveys provide breakdowns by gender, by accompanied/unaccompanied status and on the use of flexpatriate style assignments (for example, Brookfield, 2010, 2011a; Cartus, 2010; ORC Worldwide, 2009), but do not explore the inter-relationships between these issues. Thus, while there is information to show trends by gender, assignment length and pattern, there is no information that provides data on assignment status by gender according to assignment type. The academic literature also reveals very little information on women's participation linked specifically to accompanied or unaccompanied assignment status (Shortland and Altman, 2011): Ackers (2004) notes

that the proportion of independently mobile women declines over time, linked to their tied status; Linehan and Walsh (2000a) report that work-family conflict results in women having to choose between an international career and family life. These examples suggest that women withdraw from international mobility rather than engage in unaccompanied assignments. In Mayerhofer *et al.*'s (2004a) research, those women who did undertake flexpatriation still placed family ahead of unaccompanied mobility.

We do not know whether women prefer accompanied postings to maintain family relationships and thus would tend to participate in assignment types that offer accompanied status (in the main long-term assignments) or whether unaccompanied assignments could be favoured. These might be either long-term with home visits or short-term/ flexpatriate mobility, structured and supported to facilitate dual career continuity and children's education in the home country (Anon., 2006b, 2006c, 2007; ORC Worldwide, 2008a).

Assignment location

A wide variety of geographical issues have a bearing on the assignment type including: climate (weather); amenities; health; and political unrest/ security. For example, locations in remote, climatically extreme or dangerous locations are more likely to involve shorter, 'flexpatriate', unaccompanied mobility. Camp environments or compound living result in work and social lives inextricably intertwined, creating 'in-groups' (Lauring and Selmer, 2009). The extant literature provides little detail on the relevance of location factors to women's expatriate participation (Shortland and Altman, 2011), although we do know that certain geographical locations present greater challenges in managing dual career partnerships and children's education issues due to their less developed infrastructure. Hence, women are less willing to move to developing than to developed countries (Tharenou, 2009).

Summary and implications

Assignment type can be defined according to purpose, length, pattern, status and location, although these factors are frequently inter-related. The extant literature provides little

information on how these factors relate to women assignees: overall, the effect of assignment type on female expatriation is unknown. Yet, the purpose of the assignment, its length, any 'flexpatriate' assignment alternatives, its un/accompanied status and specific geographical location factors all present themselves as being of significance to women's expatriation through their influence on career contribution and stability of domestic and family life and thus are suggested as potentially important factors in determining women's expatriate participation. In addition, the effect of the inter-relationships between the various aspects that comprise an assignment type is currently unknown and this provides a further potential fruitful avenue of enquiry in understanding female expatriation. The question as to how far assignment purpose, length, pattern, status, and location affect women's expatriate participation is therefore considered in this research.

CHAPTER 8: THE ORGANISATIONAL EFFECT

Introduction

How far do the policies and practices that organisations use to support various types of international assignments affect women's expatriate participation? Through an analysis of illustrative literature-based evidence, the effect of organisational policy and practice in supporting expatriation is discussed in this chapter. Potential gendered outcomes are identified and implications for women's expatriation are highlighted.

Unwritten rules and multifaceted approaches present a dilemma to organisations (Kostova, 1999). Corporate policies aim to address this by providing formality and consistency, typically being written by human resource specialists located in multinationals' headquarters. However, implementation is usually devolved to line managers and supervisors who depend upon expatriates' performance for success and who may undermine policy to achieve it. This creates tension as policy specialists are more dependent on supervisors not to vary policy by making individual deals than supervisors are dependent on specialists to provide policy guidance (Perkins and Daste, 2007). However, if policies are to be transferred across international businesses, they need to be internalised in – and followed by – the recipient units such that their value is recognised, and subsidiaries act in alignment, preserving equity. To achieve this, subsidiary unit line managers must have commitment to the practice, psychological ownership of it and appreciate its organisational value. The extent to which this takes place represents the difference between the institutional profiles of the country of origin and the subsidiary (Ferner *et al.*, 2005). This is of particular relevance to oil and gas exploration and production as line managers have responsibility for expatriate selection, deployment and compensation in a wide geographical spread of operations, many of these in remote locations, distanced in both space and time from the headquarters' policy specialists. Organisational practices can potentially provide a stabilising function through routines that become taken for granted. Any gendered implications within expatriation policy can therefore become institutionalised in support (or not) of women's expatriation.

Expatriate selection

The expatriate literature places emphasis on the requirement for a wide range of specific competencies within internationally mobile populations (Forster and Johnsen, 1996; Scullion and Brewster, 2001) and on competency development via expatriation (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Perkins and Shortland, 2006). Competencies refer to personal attributes, knowledge, experience, skills and the value sets used to apply these in practice (Roberts, 2005). Yet, the use of competency profiles in assignment selection is fraught with difficulty, given the lack of common understanding and definition of competencies within human resource development circles (Le Deist and Winterton, 2005) and between different cultures (Gertsen, 1990) and because specific competencies are not directly linked to assignment success (Jordan and Cartwright, 1998). Indeed, Tungli and Peiperl (2009) suggest that there has been little change in expatriate selection methods and criteria since the 1990s; in the UK, structured interviews and references predominate as methods used, with technical and professional skills cited as the main criteria (UMIST/CBI/CIB, 1995). Yet, there is no correlation between such traditional selection methods and expatriate performance (Hurn, 2006).

The implications of ineffective selection and gender bias leading to potential discrimination are recognised by women and organisations in both domestic and international contexts (Colgan and Ledwith, 1996a; Hareli *et al.*, 2008; Hutchings *et al.*, 2010; Insch *et al.*, 2008; Shen *et al.*, 2009; Tharenou, 2010; UMIST/CBI/CIB, 1995). Closed and informal expatriate selection processes unintentionally favour the selection of men whereas, when open, transparent and formal selection processes are used, women are not disadvantaged (Harris, 1999, 2001, 2002). Hence, women are less likely to be offered expatriate roles under the ‘chat by the coffee-machine’ informal expatriate selection system (Harris and Brewster, 1999).

Yet, there seems to be a shortfall between idealised procedures and practical implementation; the human resource function appears powerless to institute recommended actions and selection processes remain “mysterious” (O’Sullivan *et al.*, 2002: 92). This suggests little progress towards the structured and transparent processes that support

women's selection as expatriates. This may be explained by inherent bias against women candidates in relation to position and location descriptors influencing decision-making (Hill and Tillery, 1992; Vance *et al.*, 2006). In addition, expatriate selection decisions generally involve a wide range of company representatives (potentially in both the home and host locations). This is of particular significance in oil and gas exploration and production where job roles are sex-stereotyped as male and remote and sometimes hostile areas of operation suggest women as unsuitable due to lack of 'fit' (Heilman, 1995, 1997, 2001).

Taking forward the notion of isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) as discussed in chapter 6, it is helpful to draw upon Oliver's (1997) institutional insights to explain how heterogeneity in the resource base – even if desired and actively pursued – can be restricted, resulting in homogeneity at the individual, firm and inter-firm levels. She suggests that, at the individual level, economic rationality promotes optimising resource choices, so maximising value, efficiency and inimitability. In contrast, normative rationality promotes justification of resource choices via a habitual, unreflective decision process embedded in norms and traditions constrained by historical context. Thus, while organisational culture regarding promoting diversity may influence decision-making in respect of expatriate selection, norms and values concerning managerial choice in relation to an individual's potential success are likely to be gendered and heterogeneity is mediated by regulatory pressures and industry-wide norms. This is of clear significance to the deployment of female international assignees. For example, Ando (2011) notes that in uncertain conditions, such as in staffing foreign subsidiaries, organisations use normatively rational staffing policies; Harris's (2002) research into selection highlights women's restricted entry into expatriate roles.

Assignment preparation and preparatory training

Preparation is crucial to a successful assignment (Micciche, 2009) and is an important factor in willingness to expatriate a second time (vanEmmerick and Euwema, 2009). Relevant pre-departure training helps to set accurate expectations (Caligiuri *et al.*, 2001) and aims to underpin successful adjustment, without which the most likely outcome is premature return (Takeuchi *et al.*, 2005b). Preparatory training should address a range of

factors including the family, language, cross-cultural and business orientation, career management, mentoring and repatriation (Webb and Wright, 1996).

Realistic pre-assignment visits aid adjustment (Templer *et al.*, 2006). Adjusting to local living conditions is particularly important to the happiness of female expatriates (Brivins and Beck, 1992). The provision of destination services promotes interaction with locals and assists with settling-in, with such social interaction and support creating a sense of belonging (Caligiuri and Lazarova, 2002). Female expatriates place greater emphasis on a pre-assignment visit as a means of gaining first-hand experience of their new location and on the integration of their spouse and family into the new environment than do men (Mayrhofer and Scullion, 2002).

Provision of language training is considered relevant by expatriates to their participation decision (Warneke and Schneider, 2011). Language competence is crucial to successful adjustment (Peltokorpi, 2008) and that of the family (Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998); it gives expatriates competitive advantage (Puck *et al.*, 2008) and is associated with career success (Traavik and Richardsen, 2010).

Cultural training is also considered as a relevant element in the international assignment package by expatriates in their decision-making to take up a posting (Warneke and Schneider, 2011). Assignees are reported as being positive about its outcomes, together with those of country briefing (Bonache and Zárraga-Oberty, 2008). Thomas (1996) notes that training interventions should aim to develop bicultural and multicultural identities, rather than reinforcing ethnocentrism; thus cultural awareness training aims to create a global mindset (Mendenhall and Stahl, 2000). Selmer (2007) suggests that the degree of cultural similarity/ dissimilarity experienced may be irrelevant to how easily expatriates adjust, indicating that cultural training is relevant to transfers between similar as well as dissimilar cultures. Adjusting to unique cultural environments is of particular importance to women's happiness (Brivins and Beck, 1992); it might therefore be suggested that cultural training should be gender specific (Gruys *et al.*, 2010).

Cultural training helps to overcome communications challenges (Holtbrugge and Schillo, 2008) and assists with cognitive restructuring and developing new frames of reference (Selmer *et al.*, 1998). Family adjustment is also supported when cross-cultural issues are addressed (Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998). Cultural training helps to improve expatriates' work-life balance (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010; Shortland and Cummins, 2007). While job performance is strongly related to the employee's intercultural adjustment (Tucker *et al.*, 2004), perhaps surprisingly, cross-cultural training participation and its comprehensiveness do not increase expatriate adjustment (Puck *et al.*, 2008); nor is cultural training linked to job satisfaction and turnover intention (Bozionelos, 2009). Potentially cultural training is insufficient by itself; the individual must make an effort to become adjusted to an expatriate life (Selmer, 1998). This effort can be assisted through practical support by organisations and the family (Caligiuri *et al.*, 1999); as well as through social interaction with host national colleagues (Caligiuri and Lazarova, 2002).

The literature makes a strong case for the value of preparation and training for expatriation, with such support differentially assisting women (Mayrhofer and Scullion, 2002). Pre-assignment visits, language and cultural training do generally feature within international assignment policies (Brookfield, 2011a; Cartus, 2010; ORC Worldwide, 2007, 2008b), and these forms of support are usually offered to expatriate spouses (ORC 2002, 2005; ORC Worldwide, 2008a). While the importance of training for repatriation is stressed within the academic literature (Insch *et al.*, 2008), this is less frequently available in practice.

Job-related training

In the oil and gas exploration and production sector, men have traditionally held expatriate roles and are thus advantaged by having (collectively) greater expatriate familiarity (Browne, 2004). Women's lower international experience can be addressed through training (Mendenhall *et al.*, 2002). However, women have lower participation rates in training programmes, presenting obstacles to their career development (Shen *et al.*, 2009). Training as a promotional mobility tactic may only have limited effect unless top level

backing is given and there is active involvement by human resource personnel and managers across major divisions (Rusaw, 1994; Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Organisational policy on training interventions developed at headquarters may not be applied abroad to expatriates due to local isomorphic pressures (Kostova and Roth, 2002). For example, expatriates themselves point out the constraints they face in being required to be seen to be present in leadership roles while on assignment so precluding take-up of training interventions. In addition, cognisant of their high cost to their employers, the expense of undertaking training courses when based so far from home affects both provision and take-up of such interventions (IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007). Given these access issues, coaching might provide a potential solution. While only briefly mentioned as an infrequently provided form of support in the expatriate practitioner literature (ORC Worldwide, 2008a), it involves an assessment of a person's skills and attitudes with a task-oriented focus and aims to develop strategies to resolve specific current problems, rather than developing competencies that may be relevant in the future. It could therefore be used as a highly personalised form of training (Mendenhall and Stahl, 2000).

Female expatriates potentially face a double bind – while their relative lack of international experience can be addressed through training, they are less likely to participate in training interventions than men. On expatriation, women's access to training is limited yet further, potentially reinforcing their reduced career progression.

Dual careers, partner assistance and co-working

Expatriates and their partners consider dual career support as hugely important, yet employers have historically viewed this as a 'soft' relocation policy element (Forster, 1997). Indeed, Handler (1997) states that organisations fail to provide effective policies for managing expatriate dual career couples. Perhaps, not surprisingly, expatriates and their partners are particularly critical of the advice given by, and policy provision available from, their employers (Forster, 1997). The position has changed little over the decades: partner support features in the top five 'make or break' elements ('knockout criteria') in

assignment acceptance (Warneke and Schneider, 2011); yet Cole (2011) reports only 18% of spouses receiving employer-provided career assistance, even though 34% of organisations have formal dual career policies (Permits Foundation 2011).

Although the emphasis within dual career policy has shifted from supporting spouses to addressing their career concerns (Forster and Johnsen, 1996; ORC/CBI, 1996; ORC 2002, 2005; ORC Worldwide, 2008a; Permits Foundation 2011), the immediate usefulness of any job-related assistance depends upon the work permit/ visa regime of the host country. Thus, there appears to be a move towards active lobbying of governments by employers so that spouses/ partners can work, and to offer cultural and language training to enable them to compete in the job market (Permits Foundation, 2009, 2011; ORC, 2005). This may potentially indicate an employer response to a higher number of ‘trailing male spouses’ pursuing paid employment (ORC, 2005).

Perceptions of spousal job assistance and the assignment length affect willingness to accept global mobility with the provision of corporate spousal support being particularly important for long-term assignments (Konopaske and Werner, 2005). Given the length of time needed to effect change in work permit regimes, organisations appear to be adopting different mobility strategies (such as using more short-term assignments) to address this problem (Anon., 2000, 2006a). A further aspect concerns ‘co-working’ – where couples work for the same corporation. Although not as widespread as the phenomenon of dual career couples employed by separate employers, policy initiatives are also required to address co-working couples either seeking ‘tied moves’ or, where one partner (typically the woman) has to adjust career plans, to favour that of the other (Moen and Sweet, 2002).

As international assignment policies are insufficiently rich to reimburse lost income and the practical interventions that employers can take to support a dual career/ income partner are limited, it is clear that this is a genuine problem for both sexes. This is of relevance to women’s expatriate participation as their ability to take up an assignment may hinge on any postings offered to them being linked to similar or complementary assignments (for instance, in terms of deployment pattern, location and duration) being offered to their partners, either by their own organisation or by their partner’s employer.

Assignment support

As discussed in chapter 5, mentors, role models, networks and sponsors are considered by women to be important in supporting their entry into – and successful participation in – international roles (Linehan, 2000). For example, mentoring has been found to have positive effects on expatriates' organisational knowledge, the sharing of such knowledge and work performance (Carragher *et al.*, 2008) with organisational support contributing significantly to female expatriates' job satisfaction (Culpan and Wright, 2002). Yet, women do not perceive being treated equally to men in receiving support while on international assignment (Hutchings *et al.*, 2008).

Although employers are urged to provide support interventions (Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998), other than their brief mention as policy components within dual career practitioner surveys (ORC, 2002, 2005), detail of organisational expatriate policy and practice on mentors, networks and sponsors and the effects that these have on women's assignment participation is very limited. Given the male-dominated nature of oil and gas exploration and production, such support initiatives would be expected to be particularly important to women's expatriation.

Development and career management

International experience is important for women because it provides career growth (Dickmann and Doherty, 2010; Jokinen *et al.*, 2008) and is viewed a prerequisite for leadership roles (Caligiuri and Colakoglu, 2007; Mendenhall *et al.*, 2002; Orser and Leck, 2010). Expatriation is a strategic human resource development activity. Thus, using international assignments for career development requires planning of career paths and promotions at an organisational strategic level (Walton, 1999) as well as management at an individual level (Crowley-Henry and Weir, 2007) with employee input via self-evaluation and self-development planning (Kreng and Huang, 2009). International career paths are subject to potential tension in that, while home country supervisors regard professional development as an assignment goal, those in the host country are more concerned with short-term in-country outcomes (Benson and Pattie, 2009).

Recently the concept of ‘talent management’ has gained prominence. This is important to female expatriation as it aims to align human resource deployment with business strategy and objectives (Odell and Spielman, 2009). Talent management draws a distinction between high potential *versus* high performance working but, as Collings *et al.* (2009) note, the concept lacks definition, theoretical development and empirical research, particularly in the global context. Organisations routinely capture specialist skills within career systems, creating career tracks and pathways for them, leading to differential opportunities for those with special skills (Hendry, 2003). Long-term, graduate and mobile *cadre* style assignments are typically used as part of the management development process (Perkins and Shortland, 2006). To date there is little empirical evidence on short-term assignments (Collings *et al.*, 2009), although these are assumed to have career-enhancing outcomes (Starr, 2009).

International assignment policies that address career concerns are better able to encourage employees to accept an international posting (Wan *et al.*, 2003). Yet, Selmer and Leung (2003c) find that corporate career development activities, such as fast track programmes, individual career counselling and career planning workshops, are less available to female than to male expatriates. The organisational human resource context is thus of particular significance to women if their development interventions are not to be fragmented activities (Mabey, 2002), their career paths are to be strategically directed (O’Neil *et al.*, 2004), and organisational and individual career *foci* are to be aligned (Dickmann and Doherty, 2008). While the literature makes clear that career management requires organisational interventions, Insch *et al.* (2008) recommend that women play an active part, planning their careers and taking responsibility for their own career management.

Repatriation

If expatriation no longer provides a predictable route through organisations (Dany *et al.*, 2003; Woodd, 2000), assignments present career risk (Harzing and Christensen, 2004; Stahl and Cerdin, 2004; Stahl *et al.*, 2002). Indeed, the impact on careers may be negative: skills acquisition may be context-specific and non-transferable, contacts and links may be

lost back home and lack of career continuity on repatriation may damage organisational commitment (Dickmann and Harris, 2005). How repatriation is managed therefore has a number of important implications for employers (Dowling *et al.*, 1994; Forster, 1992). These include: knowledge transfer (Lazarova and Tarique, 2005); achieving return on investment via retention of skills and competencies (Harvey, 1997b); and reducing turnover (Kraimer *et al.*, 2009; Stahl *et al.*, 2009).

Organisational support for repatriation increases employee commitment and reduces turnover (Lazarova and Caligiuri, 2001). Indeed, failure to cope with repatriation “can derail the global career experience” (Herman and Tetrick, 2009: 69). Lengthy expatriation is associated with lower repatriation intentions and greater readjustment and reintegration difficulties (De Cieri *et al.*, 2009). It might therefore be predicted that short-term assignments improve repatriation outcomes. However, this hinges on repatriation pre-planning by organisations; *ad hoc* procedures applied to short-term assignments reduce repatriate effectiveness (Starr, 2009).

Support for repatriation typically comprises initiatives delivered prior to or on return (such as pre-departure briefings, repatriation discussions, company re-orientations and adjustment training) and those that continue throughout the assignment (such as mentoring and communications support) (Brookfield, 2010; Lazarova and Caligiuri, 2001; University of Westminster/CBI, 1993). Yet, while the majority of organisations have a written repatriation policy, only a small percentage gives clear statements on post-assignment duties (Brookfield, 2010). Due to organisational uncertainty, commitment to re-employment on return is less a feature of repatriation policy today than in the early 1990s (Brookfield, 2010, 2011a; University of Westminster/CBI, 1993).

Although the issues expatriates face on repatriation (lack of recognition of achievements abroad; loss of autonomy; *ad hoc* organisational planning) appear similar for men and women, these are potentially more problematic for women, linked to their lack of role models and greater career uncertainty (Mayrhofer and Scullion, 2002). Knowledge of repatriation employment has a positive effect on women’s assignment success while abroad (Linehan, 2000; Linehan and Scullion, 2002a). Where systems of career and succession

planning are less developed and where the role of the corporate human resource function is weaker, repatriation can prove particularly difficult (Linehan and Scullion, 2002c). Hence, mentoring, networks and role models can help by providing career contacts, support and assisting with work adjustment on return (Linehan and Scullion, 2002b; Shortland, 2011).

Remuneration and benefits

The academic and practitioner international assignment policy literature does not address the views of female expatriates directly. It therefore provides few clues as to the impact of financial policy and practice on women's expatriation. Indeed, Harvey and Moeller (2009) report overall paucity in theory and empirical research in relation to expatriate compensation. Nonetheless, rewards and benefits are integral to assignment acceptance and are therefore likely to be of relevance to female expatriate participation.

Expatriate packages typically comprise three main categories: fixed or flexible pay; benefits and insurances; and allowances (IDS, 2002; Tornikoski, 2011a). While extrinsic issues such as monetary satisfaction (Fish and Wood, 1996), applicable benefits packages (Konopaske and Werner, 2005), and tax, pensions and social security concerns being addressed (Suutari and Tornikoski, 2001) are important to assignment take-up, financial rewards are not a major motivator for expatriation (Pate and Scullion, 2010) and are insufficient to "satisfy and commit expatriates to the organisation" (Tornikoski, 2011b: 61). Also there seems to be no correlation between higher pay and improved performance (Pollitt, 2007). Yet, the most frequently mentioned elements of relevance to the assignment participation decision are financial in nature (salary, housing, location bonus, flights home and children's education), with salary and housing frequently mentioned as 'knockout' factors (Warneke and Schneider, 2011). Cost of living payments and healthcare are also cited as crucial (Sims and Schraeder, 2005).

The practitioner literature suggests that cost control is resulting in trimming back expatriate packages (Brookfield, 2009b, 2010, 2011a; Cartus, 2010; Erten *et al.*, 2006; GMAC, 2008; Shortland, 2002). Deteriorating corporate compensation packages and expatriate policies, dual career concerns and career uncertainty potentially make

international assignments less attractive (Selmer, 2001), suggesting growing resistance to accepting them (Hauser, 1999; Wan *et al.*, 2003). Yet, the monetary rewards (Andersen and Scheuer, 2004; Bonache, 2005; Suutari and Tornikoski, 2001) and job satisfaction offered, relating to role autonomy and career prospects (Bonache, 2005), continue to make international assignments worthwhile. Expatriate satisfaction appears to be more closely linked to the nature of assignment policy implementation than to levels of monetary reward (Suutari and Brewster, 2001), trusting relationships between expatriates and their supervisors (Tornikoski, 2011a) and equitable treatment (Sims and Schraeder, 2005).

If expatriate reward is used as a means of attaining strategic goals, it would be predicted that there would be differentiation between and among the packages offered by multinationals, with clear differences in how they remunerate their expatriates integrated with their selection and training strategies (Bonache and Fernández, 1997). However, policies are benchmarked using organisational surveys to provide a degree of comparability (Brookfield, 2009a, 2010; ORC Worldwide, 2007, 2008b, 2009). Data are supplied by employers for consideration by other employers, encouraging an isomorphic approach (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), and thus reducing unfavourable comparisons that might result in turnover on compensation and benefits grounds (Perkins, 2006). In addition, oil and gas organisations' membership of peer groups, consultancy forums and benchmarking clubs to share information on policies and practices in respect of international assignees provide examples of convergence rather than heterogeneity (IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; ORC Worldwide, 2007; Permits Foundation, 2007).

Nonetheless, as Greenwood and Mayer (2008) note, it is simplistic and erroneous to suggest that organisations are becoming identical; rather, complex contexts result in various organisational responses such that firms can be diverse in some aspects of their policy and practice while exhibiting homogeneity in others. Thus, within a benchmarked approach, there is some evidence of tailoring policy provision to provide flexibility (Brookfield, 2009c), reflecting individual and family requirements (Anon., 2006d; Haines and Saba, 1999b), changing expatriate profiles (Forster and Johnsen, 1996) and assignment types (Perkins and Shortland, 2006).

The international assignment policies that support alternative assignment types, such as short-term and commuter assignments, are noticeably less 'rich' in content, with limited allowances and benefits. They are generally unaccompanied forms of mobility and do not require provision for such elements as family housing and children's education (Brookfield, 2009a, 2010, 2011b; CBI/ Deloitte and Touche, 1996; ORC Worldwide, 2006, 2009). The trend to 'localise' expatriates, by phasing out expensive benefits if they remain in the host location after completion of their initial contract period, and to use shorter assignments or alternative mobility patterns is increasing, as is the use of policies tailored in content to underpin them (Brookfield, 2009a, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Cartus, 2010; GMAC, 2008; Ernst & Young/CBI, 1996; ORC Worldwide, 2006, 2007, 2008b, 2009).

Work-life balance

Women experience greater work-life conflict through the persistence of embedded, gendered norms relating to the division of labour and family responsibilities (Crompton and Lyonette, 2005). While managers with caring roles have obvious work-life conflicts, those without children may also experience conflict but are less able to legitimise it (Murphy and Doherty, 2011). Work-life balance policy is viewed favourably by employees (Retna and Varatharju, 2010). Flexible working (including flexitime, working from home and reduced hours) has a positive effect on work-life balance, job satisfaction and perceptions of job quality (Kelliher and Anderson, 2008). While work-life balance is not just a women's issue (CIPD, 2010), it is more likely that women will take advantage of working flexible hours than men, linked to gender role expectations (Burnett *et al.*, 2010; Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008).

Despite a positive employee reception, work-life balance programmes are seen as disruptive to work environments by managers, particularly if the request to work flexibly comes from someone who supervises others (den Dulk and de Ruijter, 2008). Thus, policies that support greater workplace flexibility, where they are in place, may receive only token support where untrained line managers have discretion over implementation (Hyman and Summers, 2004). Work-life balance is seen as an issue for an individual to manage, rather than an organisational responsibility (Toth, 2005) and there appears to be

little evidence to support a business case for flexible working (de Menezes and Kelliher, 2011). The unwritten rules of organisational culture discourage men and criticise women who make use of family-friendly benefits (Gatrell and Cooper, 2008; Ruhe and Allen, 1997). Added to this is the danger that such initiatives imply women are inadequate and unable to compete on equal terms with men (Liff and Ward, 2001).

Yet, requests made by women to take advantage of work-life balance and work flexibly (for example, to undertake childcare which is seen as a woman's responsibility) are judged more favourably than those made by men (den Dulk and de Ruijter, 2008). While they may be granted flexible hours, this creates lower visibility, resulting in disadvantage in performance and development reviews (Kelliher and Anderson, 2008); thus women's career advancement and credibility are more likely to be affected negatively (Straub, 2007). Legal and organisational interventions to support work-life balance appear to penalise women differentially (Peus and Traut-Mattausch, 2008).

Long working hours and managerial cultures are perceived to conflict with parenting (Liff and Ward, 2001), and work interference with the family is higher than family interference with work (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010; Hassan *et al.*, 2010). Male-dominated organisations and occupations are constrained by notions of standard working weeks and expectations of high and regular levels of overtime (Horrell and Rubery, 1991) and expatriation is typified by long hours of work (IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; Shortland and Cummins, 2007). Communication of organisational policy generally is found to be less satisfactory to expatriates than domestic employees (Bonache, 2005).

The rhetoric appears gloomy in respect of work-life balance within expatriation. For example, tension between global working and family life is generated through the need to work across time zones and communicate with remote colleagues. This requires flexibility in working hours (Cappellan and Janssens, 2010). High levels of international travel are also cited as contributing to lengthy hours of work and expatriates are required to be seen and to lead by example (IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; Shortland and Cummins, 2007). In a host country expatriate environment, there is greater overlap of private and public life (Hearn *et al.*, 2008). It is therefore not surprising that expatriates report taking little

advantage of work-life balance opportunities due to: pressures to perform and to deliver results in recognition of the high costs of their assignments; the need to respond to local organisational and cultural norms; and limited awareness of the policies themselves.

Expatriation presents clear and considerable work-life balance challenges with particular stresses experienced by female expatriates due to the combined effects of disruption to family roles, blurring of home and work boundaries and role and culture novelty (Harris, 2004). Women are more frequently 'overwhelmed' by their workloads than their male counterparts and thus work-life balance policy and practice are of particular relevance to women assignees (IRC, 2005; IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; Shortland and Cummins, 2007). Fischlmayr and Kollinger (2010) add that women's well-being is under particular pressure as expatriate roles and family obligations leave insufficient or no time for leisure, sport or relaxation.

Working time in expatriate roles in the oil and gas exploration and production sector is subject to long-established industry norms. Options available in home-based locations (such as part-time working and job sharing) are not considered feasible within expatriation with the costs of expatriate benefit provision and of matching skills availability to likely work partners cited to explain this (Inwood, 2007). Yet, it is not inconceivable that alternative working patterns could be accommodated such that individuals might perceive expatriation as a way of achieving a balance between work and personal/ family life (Cerdin and Le Pargneux, 2010). Despite the lack of organisational enthusiasm for working from home due to problems of co-ordination and control, highly educated professionals have more autonomy and are judged by their output rather than presence in the office (den Dulk and de Ruijter, 2008). Job design in overseas postings is known to be of particular significance to women's job satisfaction (Culpan and Wright, 2002). Women's participation in traditional assignments could be supported through a 'family-friendly' workplace culture (Mennino *et al.*, 2005) and enlightened managers (Burke, 1996).

Diversity and equal opportunities

The business case argument for diversity highlights an organisation's ethical stance (Kaler, 2001). It provides access to a wider talent pool, a workforce representative of its customers and harnesses multiple perspectives for competitive advantage (Cornelius *et al.*, 2001; Ferner *et al.*, 2005; Shen *et al.*, 2009). Yet, the business case argument stands on shaky grounds, even being just rhetoric (Liff and Wajcman, 1996). It can: preserve and legitimise a gendered *status quo* (Cassell, 1996); reinforce gender stereotypes (Robinson, 2007); justify unfair actions (Noon and Ogbonna, 2001); and overturn ethics (Kaler, 2001).

Employers have promoted gender diversity as a means of reducing skills shortages in expatriation from the mid-1990s (Adler, 1994a, 1994b, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Davison and Punnett, 1995; Miller, 2000). While this might suggest a strong 'business case' for increasing expatriate gender diversity (Linehan and Scullion, 2001b), detailed studies in an international context are lacking (Ferner *et al.*, 2005). The limited evidence appears to confirm its fragility rather than strength (ORC Worldwide, 2008a; Stone, 1991).

Integrating diversity approaches into a spectrum of human resource policies, as well as the structure and culture of subsidiary organisations, is hindered by actions resting largely on untested and potentially stereotypical assumptions (Wise and Tschirhart, 2000), for example as to how locals will view women expatriates (Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998). While the headquarters may highlight its economic benefits, subsidiaries may not see the reasons for transposing diversity policies internationally and/ or, given the "slipperiness of the concept", may use the diversity rhetoric to introduce local concepts rather than the headquarters' "corporate definition" (Ferner *et al.*, 2005: 315). Initiatives to reduce gender stereotyping and provide a more level playing field include: diversity training for selectors and networking and mentoring initiatives to provide access to contacts for minority groups (Kalev *et al.*, 2006; Shen *et al.*, 2009); and training local nationals and giving female expatriates high position power in the host country (Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998). However, there is a danger that such remedies represent best guesses. While diversity policy interventions are laudable, structures that embed accountability are needed to bring in real

change (Kalev *et al.*, 2006) and top level support is required (Linehan and Scullion, 2001b; Özbilgin *et al.*, 2007; Shen *et al.*, 2009).

The liberal approach to equal opportunities places emphasis on fairness and visibility; yet this has failed women as their success is invited on white, male terms. The radical approach, by contrast, involves challenge to existing structures, attitudes and cultures; involving positive action – but this is viewed with mistrust and is typically resisted (Colgan and Ledwith, 1996a). Although it might be argued that women's increasing involvement in the labour market, combined with their increased awareness of gender politics, is producing organisational change in relation to equal opportunities (Colgan and Ledwith, 1996b), evidence is limited. Equal opportunities are frequently seen as a burden rather than an investment even though acknowledged as being socially worthwhile (Rubery *et al.*, 2003). Thus, organisations typically adopt short agendas which do not require foresight and longer term investment (Cockburn, 1991).

The concept of meritocracy (referring to appointments based on demonstrated talent and ability), emphasises men's and women's similarities and suggests equality – that women can compete on the same basis as men (Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011). Women maintain faith in the idea of merit and the equality that it delivers through choice (Lewis and Simpson, 2010). Early in their careers women assume they will be treated similarly to men, receive equality of opportunity and be recognised for their achievements on merit. Yet, as their careers progress, they observe a lack of meritocracy highlighted by the absence of women in senior roles. This suggests that women's organisational careers are less viable than men's (Sealy, 2010). In effect, the 'neutral' criteria, upon which meritocracy and advancement are based, are gendered (Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011).

Equal opportunities and diversity policies are primarily dissected and examined under a domestic microscope. In terms of the promulgation of equal opportunities and diversity within international assignment policies and their impact on female assignee participation, both the expatriate literature and the international assignment policies themselves are silent; international assignment policies appear to remain separate from those of equal opportunities and diversity. This is very important: while international

assignment policies addressing the terms and conditions of expatriates fail to include specific reference to diversity and equal opportunities, with the policies remaining essentially divorced, there is a danger that minority groups will be overlooked and their participation as expatriates hindered.

Summary and implications

Albeit limited, the extant literature suggests that certain aspects of international assignment policies (selection, preparation and training, dual careers, partner support and co-working, assignment support and repatriation) are likely to have a differential effect on women's international assignment participation. In addition, work-life balance initiatives support women's international mobility and the role of underpinning diversity and equal opportunities policies are of relevance (Shortland, 2009). It is noticeable that the three policy groups are, on the whole, separate. This raises the issue as to whether a lack of 'communication' between these policies might affect women's expatriation.

Given that there are relatively few research databases concerning female expatriates (Shortland and Altman, 2011), it follows that there is little reported on the organisational effects of corporate expatriate policy and practice on women. The efficacy of corporate work-life balance, equal opportunities and diversity policies in the expatriate arena is virtually uncharted. Set against this backdrop, whether organisations' isomorphic behaviour in the design of policy and/ or its implementation at subsidiary level reinforces any potentially gendered outcomes, either positively or negatively, is unknown. This raises a number of questions in relation to female expatriation: to what extent does international assignment policy assist women to take up an expatriate assignment? How far do work-life balance, diversity and equal opportunities policies aid female expatriation? How are these policy considerations implemented, and what are their effects by assignment type?

In this literature review different but complementary facets of the academic and practitioner international assignment literature have been examined and implications drawn out for women's expatriation. In the next section the research framework is set out, the research questions articulated and the methodology for this thesis presented.

SECTION 3: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 9: THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND QUESTIONS

Introduction

The aim of this research, as set out in chapter 1, is to identify the organisational policies and practices that make a difference to increasing women's expatriate participation in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector. To fulfil this aim, five research objectives and a series of linked research questions were presented. Drawing upon the literature review, the research context and underpinning theoretical considerations are summarised in this chapter. The research framework within which this study will be conducted is set out, research implications highlighted and the research questions articulated in detail.

The research context

This research is positioned within the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production industry. One of the research objectives therefore set out to determine how the masculine nature of this sector – and expatriation within it – affects women's international assignment participation. To recap the implications from the literature review, while the sector has traditionally been viewed as masculine, effort is taking place to widen gender diversity. Progress is being made – annual reports indicate there are increasing proportions of women both in the workforce and in managerial positions. Oil and gas firms place particular emphasis on expatriation, typically employing higher volumes of international assignees than other multinational firms. Yet, expatriation is concentrated in upstream exploration and production operations where the work environment, and functions/ roles performed are portrayed as masculine. Women's share of expatriate opportunities is not keeping pace with their representation in the workforce more generally. A second research objective is therefore to determine whether, and if so how, expatriate gender diversity is being addressed at industry and organisational levels.

Drawing upon the literature and aligned to these two research objectives, it is proposed in the research framework that the industry's masculinity, its expatriate work environments, functions and roles, and diversity strategy create an 'industry effect' on

women's expatriate participation. These issues raise questions as to how the masculine ethos of the oil and gas exploration and production sector and the male-dominated nature of expatriation within this industry affect women's international assignment participation and the extent to which – and how – equal opportunities and diversity policy and practice support women's expatriation.

It is identified in the extant literature that expatriation can be undertaken through a variety of assignment types (purpose, location, length, pattern, un/accompanied status), although these factors are frequently inter-related (Brookfield, 2010, 2011a; Cartus, 2010). Aligned to this, the oil and gas exploration and production industry uses a range of expatriate assignment types to reflect business, location and employee imperatives including: purpose (strategic, operational and/ or developmental); geographical location (climate, health, security); length (long-term versus short-term); pattern ('flexpatriate' assignment alternatives: commuter, rotational); and status (accompanied or unaccompanied).

The literature tells us relatively little about the effect of different assignment types and their inter-relationships on female expatriation. Yet, assignment purpose, its length, any 'flexpatriate' assignment alternatives, un/accompanied status and geographical location all present themselves as being relevant. For example, assignment purpose as set out by the employing organisation is likely to influence career outcomes and un/accompanied status and to affect the stability of domestic and family life. A third research objective is therefore to explain how the different types of assignments used in this industry affect women's expatriate participation. To address this, the research framework proposes that purpose, location, length, pattern and assignment status create an 'assignment type effect' on women's expatriate participation and thus the following research question is addressed: what effect do the assignment purpose, location, length, pattern and status have on women's expatriate participation?

International assignments (of various types) are supported by organisational policy and practice. These address three main areas: expatriate careers (via access to assignments, development and support in post, and opportunities on repatriation); family life (as

expatriation involves family members, not just employees) and remuneration/ benefits (which act as compensation for, and/ or facilitators of, mobility). The oil and gas industry has well-developed and generous organisational expatriate policy provision. Although the literature tells us next to nothing about the role of organisational policy in facilitating women's assignment participation in the oil and gas exploration and production industry, it does suggest that certain policy elements (selection, preparation and training, dual careers, partner support and co-working, assignment support, repatriation, work-life balance, equal opportunities and diversity policies) are likely to have a differential effect on women's international assignment participation.

A fourth research objective is therefore to explain the extent to which – and how – international assignment and other relevant organisational policy and practice: assist women to access career enhancing expatriate opportunities; support them in managing their family commitments; and facilitate their take-up of – and deployment in – different types of international assignments. Thus, it is proposed in the research framework that organisational policy addressing expatriate careers, family life and remuneration/ benefits creates an 'organisational effect' on women's expatriate participation. This generates overarching research questions concerning the extent to which, and how, international assignment and other relevant organisational policy and practice support women's expatriation.

Theoretical considerations

The literature that can be used to frame our knowledge of women's expatriate participation highlights a wide range of theoretical considerations. While it is accepted that these are inextricably intertwined and separate analysis is somewhat simplistic, an examination of each in turn helps to identify its contribution to understanding women's expatriate participation (Shortland, 2009). Hence, a fifth research objective is to identify which explanations best account for women's current low share of expatriate assignments.

Within the literature review, theory is grouped in an attempt to explain four 'effects' on female expatriation (family, country, assignee and occupational segregation).

For example, the literature review discussed: rational choice; satisficing; family power; occupational gender stereotyping; compensating differentials; and preference in respect of a 'family effect' on women's expatriate participation. Turning next to the 'country effect', three key explanations of women's expatriation were examined: patriarchy; breadwinners; and national culture. In respect of an 'assignee effect', human and social capital was considered in relation to women's educational background, network of contacts and career paths. Finally, an 'occupational segregation effect' on women's expatriation was identified, with sex roles, queuing and statistical discrimination highlighted and isomorphism cementing these effects through repeated reinforcement of employer actions. This raises the question: which explanations best account for women's share of expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector? By identifying the most promising of these explanations, this research study aims to show where and how organisational policy and practice can be amended/ improved to support women's assignment participation.

The research framework

Drawing upon the literature review, the research framework shown in figure 9.1 (page 115) is proposed. The research areas are displayed within the Venn diagram. This shows the intertwined nature of the industry, assignment type and organisational effects on female expatriate participation. The context for the research is displayed in the four bordering panels depicting family, country, assignee and occupational segregation effects. This specific notion of inter-related industry, assignment type and organisational effects and their role in supporting women's expatriate participation has not hitherto been researched in the academic or practitioner literature. Hence, this research presents an original contribution to knowledge.

Research questions

This research sets out to address a series of 13 research questions that flow from the research objectives and framework. First, to explore and examine the 'industry effect' on female expatriate participation, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What is the nature of expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector?
2. What are and how do industry effects influence female expatriation?

The oil and gas exploration and production sector utilises a range of different but inter-related assignment types. To explore and examine the 'assignment type effect', the following research question is addressed:

3. What effect do the assignment purpose, location, length, pattern and status have on women's expatriate participation?

The research framework highlights that women's assignment participation is influenced by organisational policies addressing career, family and remuneration/ benefits issues. Research questions are thus presented to explore and examine each of these 'organisational effects'.

In relation to supporting women's careers, the following questions are addressed:

4. To what extent and how do equal opportunities and diversity policy and practice support women's expatriation?
5. To what extent and how do the following elements of international assignment policy and practice support women's expatriation: selection; preparation; training; development; support; career management; and repatriation?

In relation to supporting women's family commitments the following questions are addressed:

6. To what extent and how do dual careers, maternity, childcare and education policies and practice support women's expatriation?
7. To what extent and how do work-life balance policy and practice support women's expatriation?

Finally, two further research questions address issues relating to remuneration/ benefits policy and how such support facilitates women's expatriation:

8. To what extent and how do financial elements of international assignment policy and practice support women's expatriation?
9. How does the expatriation process operate in practice to support women's expatriation?

It is notable that the use of different assignment types is related to industry sector; for example, the extractive industries make frequent use of rotational assignments – an assignment deployment pattern rarely used in other sectors. Assignment type also governs the provision of remuneration, allowances and benefits under organisational international assignment policy (Brookfield, 2011a). As organisational policy and practice underpinning the use of different assignment types vary, the research addresses the effect of policy provision and implementation by assignment type on women's expatriate participation.

In the literature review four effects on women's expatriate participation (family, country, assignee and occupational segregation) are identified. These provide the context within which to discuss the research findings in respect of industry, assignment type and organisational policy effects. The following four questions are therefore included to underpin the three key research areas as follows:

10. Which family effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to expatriate participation?
11. Which country effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to expatriate participation?
12. Which assignee effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to expatriate participation?
13. Which occupational segregation effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to expatriate gender diversity?

Occupational segregation and country effects are identified as most closely aligned with the nature of the industry sector; the assignee effect is most closely linked to women's careers; and the family effect to family commitments. For illustrative purposes, enabling pictorial representation and alignment with the research framework, the research questions are displayed in figure 9.2 (page 116). However, it is important to remember that the nature

of these effects is intertwined. For example, while occupational gender stereotyping was included within the ‘family effect’ (aligned with the literature review), it is more closely linked in practice within the oil and gas exploration and production sector to sex role stereotyping which is included within the ‘occupational segregation effect’.

The following chapter sets out the methodology for the research study. Detail of the research method used to address the research questions is also presented.

Figure 9.1: The research framework – a model of female expatriate participation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector

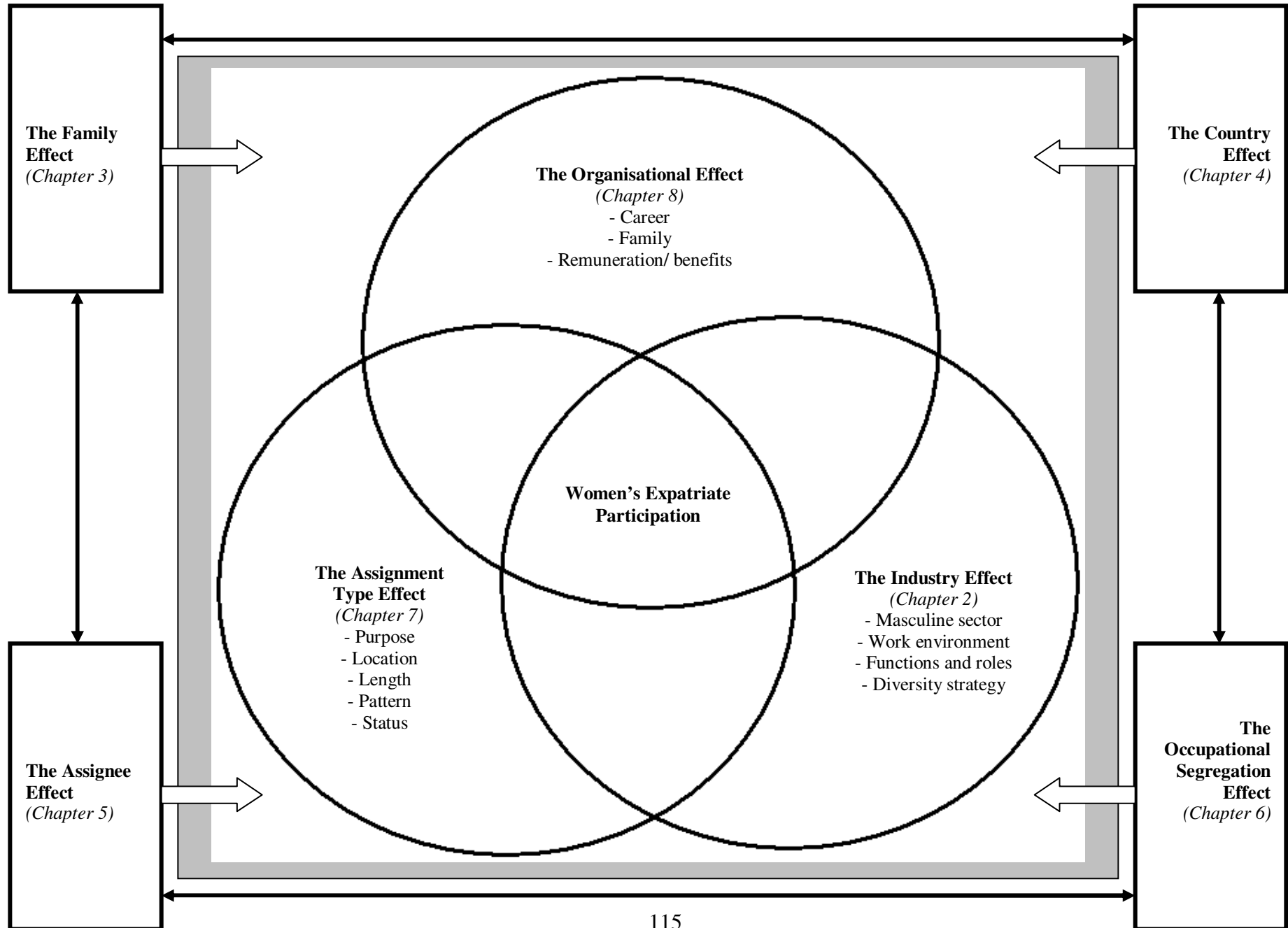
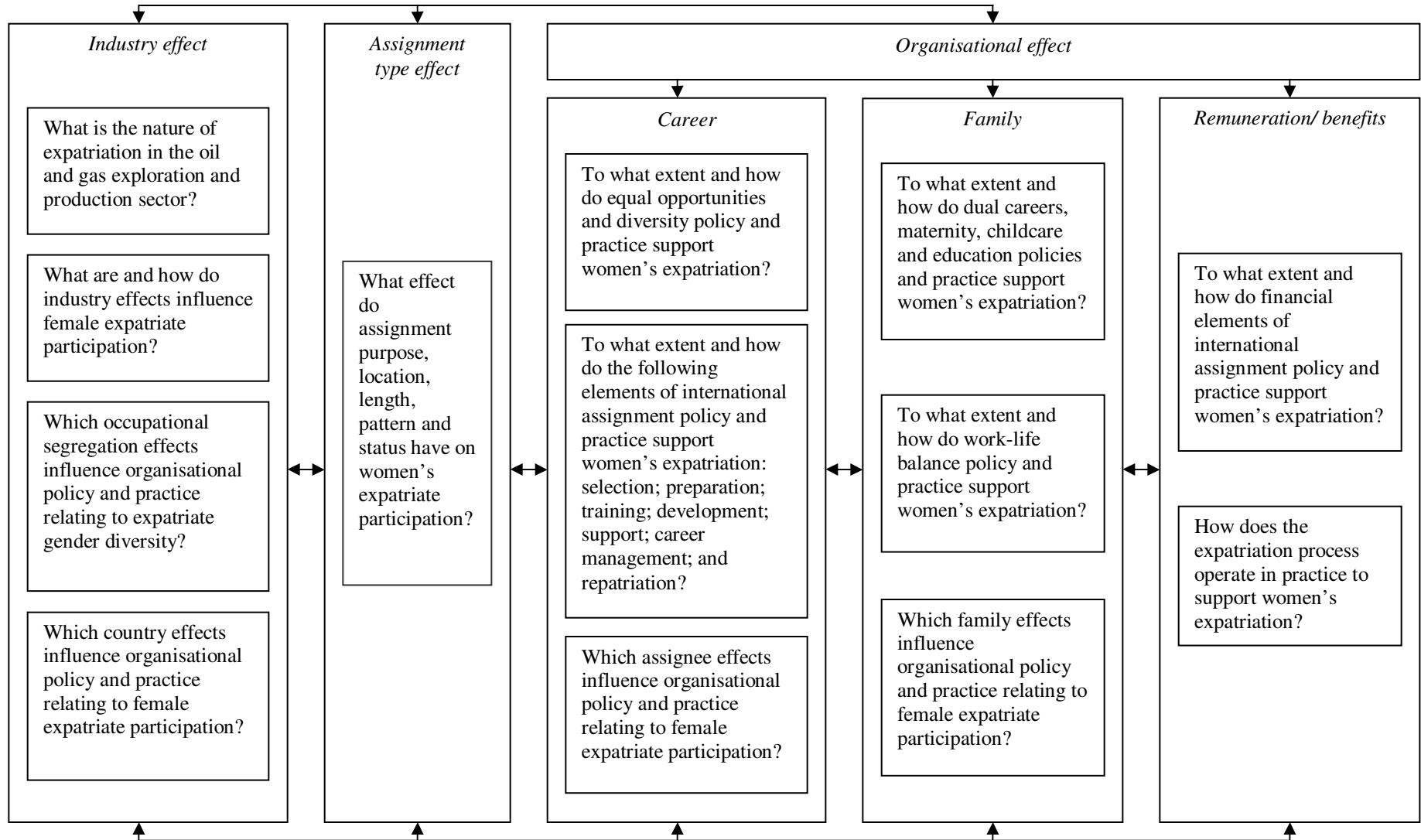


Figure 9.2: The research questions



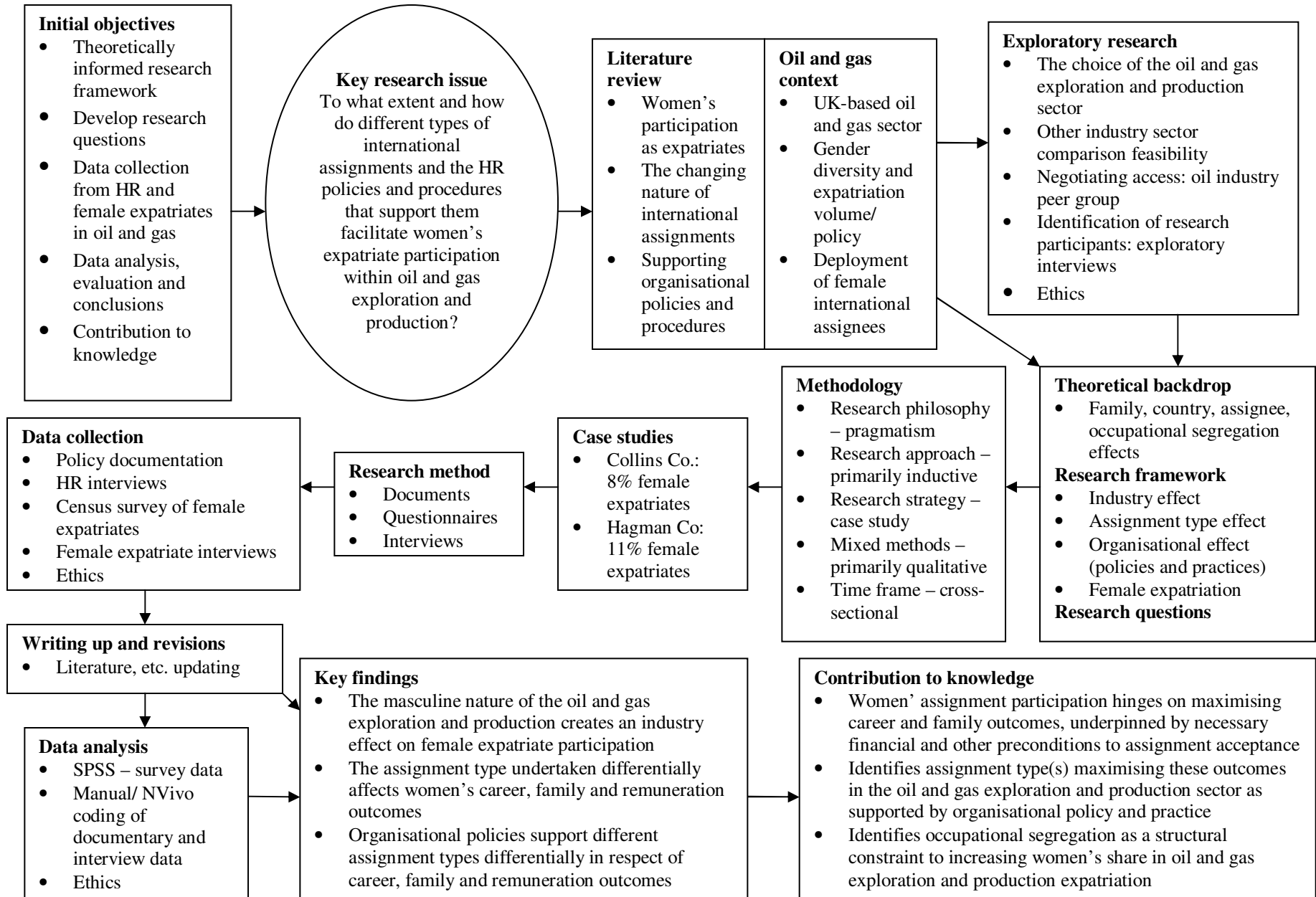
CHAPTER 10: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

In this chapter an account is given of the methodological issues and decision-making involved in conducting this thesis, addressing the research philosophy, approach and strategy adopted, together with the methods selected and time horizons. An account of the techniques and procedures used (research method) is presented, addressing three stages in the research process: exploratory research (supported by the literature review); data collection; and data analysis. The methodology is presented in sequence beginning with the broadest levels of methodological decision-making. Reflections on carrying out this research – the experience of ‘doing’ (staying with) a concentrated investigation over a sustained period; what has been gained, what might have been done differently – are then included.

In Figure 10.1 an overall picture of the stages in the researcher’s journey is presented. It begins with the identification of broad objectives and of the main research issue, through the literature review and initial exploratory research phases, leading to the development of the research framework and refining of the research questions as previously presented in chapters 1 to 9 of this thesis. Next, the methodology and research method steps, data collection and analysis are displayed, as presented here in this chapter. Finally, the main findings and contribution to knowledge are highlighted (to follow in chapters 11 to 20).

Figure 10.1: The research journey



Research philosophy, approach and strategy

The research framework and focus of the research questions, as discussed in chapter 9, concern the effect of assignment type and the application of supporting organisational policies and practice in facilitating women's expatriate participation within a male-dominated industry sector. Methodological decision-making involves making choices that reflect the research questions. No particular research approach can be argued to be 'correct' because a researcher's view of social phenomena affects how reality, knowledge and its value are perceived. This subsequently influences judgement of relevant themes and interactions (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Hence, methodology for research into the role of organisational policy and practice in supporting female expatriate participation must consider: questions of ontology (the nature of reality of social entities); epistemology (the nature of – and what is acceptable as – knowledge within a particular discipline); and axiology (value judgements) (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

Oil and gas exploration and production organisations expect policy conformance and implementation of standardised procedures in respect of expatriation. This implies that social phenomena are external facts independent of social actors, suggesting objectivism as an ontological perspective. Yet, individual managerial decision-making governs the interpretation and implementation of organisational policies and practices supporting expatriation. This indicates that social phenomena and meaning are continually reshaped through social interaction and suggests constructionism (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Rather than choosing between competing perspectives, a pragmatist approach is adopted here. It allows the researcher to position philosophical assumptions along a continuum with acceptable knowledge and research methods linked to the research questions (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

With respect to epistemology, the research questions call for analysis of organisational policies and personal interaction with company representatives and female expatriates. The requirement to understand the world of the human resource experts/specialists in implementing policy is crucial to this research. This suggests interpretivism as an appropriate perspective as this argues that social reality is not objective; rather it is

highly subjective, being shaped by our perceptions (*ibid.*). A further critical issue concerns the requirement for sensitivity to the views of female expatriates, allowing “women’s voices to be heard” (Bryman and Bell, 2003: 309), thereby ensuring that their contribution is not subsumed within analysis of organisational policy and practice.

While the researcher must adopt “an empathetic stance” and enter “the social world” of the research subjects (Saunders *et al.*, 2009: 116), her own values (axiology) are also interpretivist – they are likely to play a part in determining what are seen as facts and any interpretations drawn from them (Collis and Hussey, 2009). While complete objectivity is recognised as impossible, the researcher endeavoured to act in good faith and not colour the research with personal values (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

As shown in figure 9.1 (page 115) ‘family’, ‘country’, ‘assignee’ and ‘occupational segregation’ effects are highlighted as setting context for the research into women’s expatriate participation. In addition, ‘industry’, ‘assignment type’ and ‘organisational’ effects are identified as influencing female expatriate participation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector. These effects are operationalised via the nine articulated research questions which can be tested using a structured research method. This suggests a deductive research approach. Yet, the research also emphasises understanding organisational context, the meanings attached to events attributed by the research participants, the researcher’s involvement with the research process and the opportunity to collect qualitative data. This suggests an inductive research approach. An inductive approach also presents benefits of flexibility should changes in research emphasis be needed and enables inferences to be made from particular instances (Collins and Hussey, 2009). Given these considerations, it is advantageous to combine research approaches. For instance, while the deductive approach sensitises the researcher to existing theory and aids the operationalisation of issues, the use of an inductive approach enables meaning and context to be included and the researcher to have more direct involvement with a sample of the research subjects, the latter being of particular relevance.

The research questions concern industry and assignment type effects on women’s assignment participation and how organisational policies and practice might support female

expatriation in different assignment types in a male-dominated industrial sector. Yin (2009) states that the use of case studies as a research strategy is generally preferred when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are posed, the researcher has little control over events, there is an in-depth contemporary focus within a real life context and there are no clear boundaries between the phenomenon and context. He further notes that case study research enables numerous variables and multiple sources of evidence to be triangulated and may be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. Given this backdrop, a case study research strategy is appropriate here, with the use of archival research, drawing upon organisational policy documents acting as secondary data.

As with any research strategy, the requirement to maximise quality is paramount. Potential pitfalls concerned the identification and use of appropriate operational measures applicable to the concepts studied (*ibid.*). To address this, multiple sources of evidence were used (policy documents, survey and interview data to present, as far as possible, an objective view of the issues). In addition, an evidence chain was maintained, with explicit links among and between the questions asked within the data collection (to confirm, again as far as possible, issues raised). Given that the inferences based upon data sources used to make sense of women’s expatriation could not be directly observed, it was necessary to address rival explanations within the data analysis (for example, human resource *versus* expatriate viewpoints). In this way, the research claims could be shown to be based on evidence (Silverman, 2005). Research participants reviewed the draft case study report to provide confirmation of appropriate measures and the research findings were submitted to both the human resource and the expatriate participants, increasing the credibility of the study (Bryman and Bell, 2003; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

External validity refers to the extent of generalisation that can flow from the research study (Yin, 2009). Isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) suggests that organisations mimic each other and thus enhances generalisability of case context (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Silverman, 2005). In order to increase this further, use of replication logic within a multiple case study research design was considered more appropriate than a single case design (Yin, 2009). Thus, two case study firms were researched. In addition, rich description of the case context is helpful to establish generalisability (Guba and

Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and so an in-depth qualitative study was undertaken. In these ways, the research findings are generalisable to a certain extent.

The final test of research quality concerns reliability. Ideally, the process should be transferable to future research (Silverman, 2005). Of course, total replicability is unrealistic in a case study setting and a sole focus on constructs and their measurability generates the risk of missing the rich background and context of a case (Dyer and Wilkins, 1991). Nonetheless to improve reliability, a case study protocol and database can be used (Yin, 2009). As many steps as possible in the research process were operationalised, detailed records of the research method kept and a case study database was set up. In this way, the dependability of the research was maximised (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Research choices and time horizons

While quantitative methods enable the research context to be established, qualitative data emphasise people's experiences and help to understand meaning, providing richness with potential for vivid description set in context. Collection of qualitative data also enables flexibility during the research study to vary times and methods if necessary, giving confidence in understanding the implications (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This research study is primarily qualitative in design, but with some use of quantitative methods: the use of a survey conducted on an anonymous basis was considered helpful as a means of reducing participant bias; probing of the data using in-depth, semi-structured interviews then provided interpretation and rich data. The use of interviews alone was considered potentially to engender greater bias as participants might be more likely respond in line with company policy when speaking directly to the researcher. The survey data thus presented a complementary backdrop to check alignment of the interview data with the wider population.

Given the objective of researching women's participation in various assignment types while on assignment, a self-administered survey was considered as being most appropriate. It was decided that the survey constructs would be based on a number of

appropriate data sources (organisational policies and practices), aligned with the study's research framework. A census survey was considered the best option, given the low population of female expatriates (93 women) and because it did not require sampling (with its attendant problems). The census, conducted with organisational support, was predicted to achieve a high response rate. The sample resulting from a census is random, as all of the participants have an equal chance of self-selecting or deselecting themselves from the process. Given the low numbers in the sample (by default, given the low numbers in the total population), it was envisaged that descriptive statistics could be generated to describe the characteristics of the population, identify policy and practice issues of greatest importance, and form the basis of stratified sampling to identify participants for the interview research.

A further choice concerned the type of qualitative interviews to be employed. Unstructured interviews were considered appropriate in the early exploratory stages with the researcher using an *aide-mémoire* and an informal conversational interview style to determine the feasibility of the research project. Once potential case studies had been identified, in-depth unstructured interviews were needed to follow up and explore in considerable detail the support that might be given by the participants both in terms of access to data and potential contacts and to discuss and agree on ethical concerns. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were considered to be the most appropriate type to be employed in the data collection stage of the research, with a series of general questions being developed to form an interview schedule which allowed variation in order of delivery if necessary. This approach also enabled the researcher to ask further follow-up questions in response to replies of particular significance. This approach provided greater flexibility than a structured interview (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

The constructs used in the interview research were also based on similar appropriate data sources (organisational policies and practices) but the process of interview schedule design was highly iterative, drawing upon quantitative and qualitative findings as the research progressed. Once again the constructs were aligned with the research framework and questions. Where possible it was decided to pilot and/ or to pre-test the data collection instruments (quantitative and qualitative) to improve validity and reliability. It was

envisaged that there would be limited opportunities to carry out pilots on the case study sample populations and thus pre-testing on known contacts was used to refine the research instruments as far as possible before any pilots were conducted (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004).

In relation to sampling, the appropriate company representatives were selected by organisational gatekeepers. The survey conducted was carried out as a census with all 93 current female expatriates surveyed. Stratified sampling “takes account of identifiable strata of the population” (Collis and Hussey, 2009: 212), thereby having the advantage that it illustrates sub-groups (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Thus, a stratified approach to sampling for the female expatriate interviews was used.

A decision as to whether the research would present a snapshot in time or take a longitudinal design was required. Although it was originally envisaged that an analysis of the evolution of policies of support for women’s participation as expatriates would be conducted, with female participation data collected at points in time to reflect specific policy changes, this proved unworkable. One of the key problems concerned the lack of organisational documentary records that could be matched to corresponding female expatriate participation data. As a result, the time horizon for the research study was cross-sectional in its approach. This also meant that a short period for data collection was needed, lowering the chance of ‘mortality’ of the research study due to withdrawal of organisational approval/ support or significant organisational change/ external events having an unintended impact on the research issue and thus affecting validity.

Techniques and procedures (research method)

Given the iterative nature of this research study, data collection and analysis involved both strategic choices and empirical research practicalities. These are set out as operationalised steps within the context of necessary strategic decision-making in table 10.1.

Table 10.1: Research method and timeline

<i>Exploratory and background research</i> Original systematic literature search conducted	<i>January 2005 – January 2007</i> October 2005 – July 2006
<i>Data collection</i> Policy documentation Update on literature search (via alerts) Human resource interviews Census survey of female expatriates Female expatriate interviews	<i>May 2007 – October 2009</i> May 2007 – September 2009 August 2007 October 2008 – July 2009 December 2008 – May 2009 May 2009 – August 2009
<i>Data analysis</i> Data entry Production and distribution of company reports Dissemination of results to women’s network (Hagman Co.) Data analysis/ production of preliminary thesis findings Systematic literature update research conducted	<i>April 2009 – August 2011</i> April 2009 – November 2009 November 2009 June 2010 September 2010 – August 2011 January 2011 – April 2011
<i>Writing up</i>	<i>April 2011 – March 2012</i>

Detailed description of the three main research stages (exploratory research; data collection; and data analysis⁴) is presented here.

Exploratory and background research

The exploratory research was conducted between 2005 and 2007⁵. This involved systematic literature searches⁶, oil industry peer group participation, and unstructured interviews (undertaken to gain an understanding of a range of organisations operating in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector, of gender diversity within their expatriate workforces and typical international assignment policies). Discussions were also held with human resource representatives in a range of other industries, although it emerged from these that the feasibility of conducting research into female expatriate participation was severely limited by a number of factors: insufficient sample sizes; access (in relation to financial, geographical and other issues); and potential ‘mortality’/ withdrawal (the risk of contacts who would act as gatekeepers leaving their organisations).

⁴ To aid the reader in following the sequence of events, full details of each step of the outlined techniques and procedures shown in table 10.1 are presented as a series of detailed timelines in appendix 4, table 1. Appendix 5 presents the research diary. It provides full chronological description of the empirical research method tracing in detail the stages summarised in this chapter that were undertaken to develop this thesis.

⁵ Appendix 4, table 1, step 1.

⁶ Appendix 5.

The first oil and gas organisation identified as a potential research case study was considered to be a typical medium sized firm with viable numbers of female expatriates, but not a unique or extreme case (Yin, 2009). As the research rationale was not envisaged to be revelatory or longitudinal, a multiple-case rather than a single-case design was thought to be appropriate to pursue external validity (*ibid.*). Hence, a second oil and gas exploration and production company was identified through convenience sampling. Both companies agreed to act as research case studies. As these firms both had above average female expatriate participation rates for the oil and gas sector and well-developed organisational policies in respect of expatriation, this suggested that they were critical cases that might provide important and valuable data in answering the research questions relating to the effect of organisational policy and practice in supporting women's expatriation.

Two particularly important strategic issues emerged from exploratory discussions held with the two organisational gatekeepers: both were unwilling to involve line managers in their international locations due to time and cost constraints; they were however, willing to grant access to relevant human resource contacts (people on their teams with whom they had good working relationships). Although this was not a strategic 'choice' made by the researcher as such, the decision to progress with the study had to be based on this access limitation. In addition, the gatekeepers were also wary of extending the research to encompass male expatriates, once again due to time and cost issues, bearing in mind the significantly larger numbers of employees that would be involved if the entire expatriate populations took part. As the research questions concerned how women's participation within various assignment types was facilitated by organisational policy considerations, this did not present an issue of difficulty for the researcher as a comparative study of men and women had not been envisaged.

Ethical issues arise throughout the research process. At the research topic formulation stage, these include the sponsoring organisations', gatekeepers' and participants' right to useful and quality research and the researcher's right to be free from sponsor coercion (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The value of the research to each party was discussed at the exploratory stage and it was clearly understood and agreed by the two gatekeepers that, while their organisational interests might help shape the operationalisation

of some of the research objectives, company concerns could not act as research drivers. Ethical issues at the level of designing the research and gaining access relate to lack of gatekeeper coercion of the researcher and the rights of the gatekeepers and participants to be fully informed and for privacy (*ibid.*). These were also agreed by all parties.

Data collection

The data collection stage of the case study research, carried out between 2007 and 2009, comprised multiple methods to ensure triangulation: document analysis in respect of organisational policies relevant to expatriate assignments; semi-structured interviews with the two gatekeepers (HR – International Assignments) and other human resource professionals responsible for the implementation of these aforementioned policies; a census survey of the female expatriate populations; and semi-structured interviews with a stratified sample of the survey respondents to gain an understanding of how the policies were implemented in practice. The data collection stage thus employed multiple sources of evidence, complementary research techniques that dovetailed together and an evidence chain with links between questions asked. In effect, a ‘tracer study’ was carried out over time and across different stakeholder groups, using organisational documentation as the ‘tags’ to prompt discussion of process with organisational actors and to identify further sources of information (documents, interviews, questionnaires) (Hornby and Symon, 1994).

Both gatekeepers were cognisant of the ‘pure’ research nature of the project. Their buy-in to participating and seeking the agreement of others within their organisations to do likewise reflected the independence of the researcher and that the project was not commissioned (as would be the case, for instance, with a consultancy exercise). In return for their participation, facilitating access to appropriate organisational contacts on a confidential basis, the researcher agreed both to produce a report for each company, outlining the key messages from the research findings, to be made available to all participants (including the female assignees), and to present the findings in-company if requested to do so. This was also beneficial to the researcher in that it provided the opportunity for key subjects to review the case study.

With respect to ethics, the data collection stage involves: the researcher's right to safety and absence of coercion; the participants' right to giving informed consent, to withdraw and to confidentiality/ anonymity; the organisations' right to confidentiality/ anonymity; and the parties having the right to quality research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). It was agreed that the researcher would carry out the research as far as possible on company premises and thus under the stringent health and safety regulations that are in place within the oil and gas industry. Participants would be contacted in the first instance by the gatekeepers, thus preserving confidentiality of their contact details. None would be forced to participate and all parties would have the right to confidentiality/ anonymity. For example, it was agreed with the gatekeepers that that their organisations and personnel would not be identified within the research. As a result, pseudonyms are used throughout to ensure that the organisations' and human resource personnel's names, roles and job titles cannot be identified⁷. Any information received from female expatriates would be confidential between the researcher and the research subject; no real names, specific locations or personal data would be used by which individuals could be identified; pseudonyms would be used and locations generalised as far as possible to a regional level⁸. Permission would be sought and explicit agreement obtained from all parties before any interviews were taped. In addition, it was agreed that policy documentation would be held on a confidential basis and thus policy information is summarised briefly, not fully reproduced⁹.

The participants', as individuals, have rights as to the processing and storing of personal data (*ibid.*). The researcher made clear that all such data would be kept in a locked home filing cabinet and/ or on a secure computer file. Transcripts, if requested, would be sent to participants; audio tapes would be for the researcher's ears only and would be destroyed on completion of the research, if requested. Interview transcripts are, therefore, not reproduced and included here as this was expressly requested by the participants – only short illustrative excerpts are used. The company reports would be detailed and informative

⁷ Appendix 4, table 2.

⁸ Appendix 4, table 3.

⁹ Appendix 4, tables 4 and 5.

but would preserve individuals' anonymity. Full details of the data collection stage are presented in the research diary¹⁰ and thus only a brief overview is presented here.

The collection of policy documentation¹¹ generated a wealth of information which was accessed throughout the research study¹². Given the considerable volume of material, a process of data reduction was necessary (Miles and Huberman, 1994); hence descriptive commentaries comprising a document inventory of only those policies relevant to the female assignee research subjects were drawn up for reference purposes from which summary tables¹³ were constructed. During the policy documentation stage, the academic literature search was kept up-to-date via alerts.

The content of the interview schedule applicable to the two HR – International Assignments gatekeepers was derived from the research framework and questions and drew upon the policy documentation (the 'tag') abstracted as part of the data reduction process, following the principles of a 'tracer study' (Hornby and Symon, 1994). Prior to the interviews being conducted, the semi-structured questionnaire¹⁴ was subject to a 'pre-test' (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004). The interviews with the gatekeepers confirmed the anticipated need to seek further detailed explanation from other human resource functional specialists; their gatekeeper role was influential in identifying and securing access to 12 other relevant human resource personnel¹⁵ (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Although the human resource interviews¹⁶ were originally planned as a single stage, two-part process, in effect they comprised an unplanned three stage sequence of data collection¹⁷.

To carry out the interview transcriptions the researcher used speech recognition software (Dragon Naturally Speaking 9). To ensure accuracy, the researcher listened to a sentence of taped conversation and repeated it into the software before moving on to the

¹⁰ Appendix 5.

¹¹ Appendix 4, table 1, step 2.

¹² Appendix 4, table 4.

¹³ Appendix 4, table 5.

¹⁴ Appendix 6, schedule 1.

¹⁵ Appendix 4, table 6.

¹⁶ Appendix 6, schedule 2.

¹⁷ Appendix 4, table 1, step 3.

next sentence. This involved rewinding the tape several times to repeat and check each sentence, making corrections as necessary. The completed transcripts were also all checked back against the taped original conversation to ensure accuracy.

The policy documentation data reduction activity and the interviews held with the two gatekeepers did not appear to indicate major differences in policy design and implementation. The assumption was therefore made that a common approach could be taken to the questionnaire design for the expatriate research stage¹⁸ in both firms. To identify the survey participants, up-to-date female expatriate assignment spreadsheet data were supplied¹⁹ by both organisations, relating to a total of 93 female assignees: 27 in Collins Co. and 66 in Hagman Co. (representing approximately 8% and 11% of their respective expatriate populations).

The underlying aim of the survey design process was to achieve the production of one self-administered questionnaire to be distributed by e-mail by the gatekeepers that would be appropriate and applicable to the female assignees in both case study firms. The reason for this was to enable the possibility of a comparison of responses from the two expatriate populations and/ or the collapse of the two separate responding groups into one single dataset, as appropriate to the results obtained. The questionnaire design was subject to a series of pre-testing, piloting, redrafting, reviewing and finalisation stages, including coding for SPSS data entry²⁰. The covering letter explained the process and options for completing the questionnaire; it was one page in length and made clear the relevance, importance, independence and confidentiality of the research in an attempt to boost response rates (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004). Slight differences in wording were incorporated to reflect feasible response options agreed with the gatekeepers.

The data collection required a number of prompts by the gatekeepers to be sent to the female target population. The response rates, nonetheless, were high, thus reducing the risk of non-response bias (*ibid.*), and were certainly above that considered as averages in

¹⁸ Appendix 4, table 1, step 4.

¹⁹ Appendix 4, table 7.

²⁰ Appendix 7.

contemporary social science research (Baruch and Holtom, 2008): for Collins Co., 19 questionnaires out of a possible total of 27 were received (a 70% response rate); for Hagman Co., 52 were received out of the possible 66 (a 79% response rate).

The final part of the data triangulation exercise involved conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a stratified sample of the female expatriate survey respondents. The purpose was to gain a fuller explanation of the survey findings illustrated by descriptive statistics generated through SPSS analysis of the survey data and to explore issues raised in the questionnaire's open question sections²¹.

The first action was to select a sample of survey respondents for interview. Of the 19 respondents from Collins Co., 11 (58%) had stated that they were willing to be interviewed; in Hagman Co., 44 out of 52 (85%) respondents agreed to do so. This did not present a problem as the profile of those unwilling to be interviewed did not result in any factors (for example, age, grade, occupation, location, family circumstances and assignment type) being excluded from the interview sample and thus potentially skewing the data. A stratified sample was required as it had to ensure representation by assignment type; it also had to be drawn from those respondents willing to be interviewed. Following Collis and Hussey (2009), the calculation used drew upon: current assignment type (length and pattern); marital, accompanied and family status (married/ partnered and single; accompanied or unaccompanied; with and without children); sending and current location; functional area; grade (including graduate trainees in Hagman Co.); and previous assignments (having carried out multiple assignments of varying types). The actual sample interviewed is presented and shows that, as far as possible, the sampling endeavoured to match the proportions of assignees with the characteristics highlighted through theoretical calculation²². Of course, not all of these could be matched exactly and so precedence was given to current and previous assignment types (lengths and patterns), location of current assignment (with the focus on expatriation as opposed to inpatriation to the company headquarters) and personal/ family circumstances. In total 26 women were interviewed, eight in Collins Co. and 18 in Hagman Co.

²¹ Appendix 4, table 1, step 5.

²² Appendix 4, table 8.

A semi-structured interview questionnaire suitable for use within both case study organisations was devised, drawn from the research framework and questions. It also took into account key survey findings and comments that related to them, gleaned from preliminary SPSS data analysis. In addition, where issues raised by the human resource representatives in their semi-structured interviews and/ or the policy documentation received appeared to contradict the survey results, these were also noted. From these, a working document was constructed, listing all notable areas for discussion under five key headings: assignments and locations; careers; international assignment policies; hours and work-life balance; and gender diversity. The noted issues were then reviewed, consolidated or expanded as appropriate and developed into a series of semi-structured questions, estimated to take around 60-90 minutes of interview time²³.

The majority of the potential interviewees were based outside of the UK and there was no opportunity to carry out a pilot interview on the stratified sample. A pre-test was considered inappropriate as the questions were highly specific to the case study firms. Hence, the first semi-structured interview conducted served as a pilot and any amendments necessary to the interview schedule were to be incorporated as necessary. In the event, no amendments were needed after the first interview was conducted. Careful consideration was given to the media to be used for the overseas interviews. To ensure consistency in the approach taken, conference speaker telephones with excellent sound quality in private rooms on company premises were used, enabling taping of the interviews. Where the assignees were in the UK (on leave, off shift while on rotation, or having repatriated since completing the questionnaire), face-to-face interviews on company premises were arranged, conducted in private rooms to prevent interruptions, again enabling taping.

Before each interview was carried out each and every participant was asked if her conversation with the researcher could be taped, subject to confidentiality, for research purposes; all agreed to this. Each interview took between 60 and 90 minutes as predicted. After each interview any additional data gathered that was originally missing from the

²³ Appendix 6, schedule 3.

participants' survey return was added into the SPSS data file. On an ongoing basis, tapes were transcribed using speech recognition software, using the same process as for the human resource interview transcriptions. Copies of the transcriptions were not requested by any of the participants.

Data analysis

The data analysis took two years to complete, involving first data entry and the production of preliminary findings to produce reports and disseminate information to the case study firms and then more detailed analysis to generate the preliminary thesis findings²⁴.

A case study database was constructed. A single SPSS file was set up and the quantitative survey data entered into it and cleaned. Occasionally, some questions had not been fully completed by the survey respondents and missing information had to be collected by e-mail, telephone or in person as appropriate as far as was practicable. The majority of the missing data were obtained in this way. A separate Microsoft Word file was set up to store the comments received in response to the open survey questions, by question number and subject heading. The interview transcripts from the human resource and expatriate interviews and the document inventory were also included within the case study database.

In analysing and writing up, the researcher has the right to operate in the absence of sponsor/ gatekeeper coercion; the organisation and all participants have the right to confidentiality/ anonymity and all parties have the right to quality research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). It was agreed that the researcher would determine the format and content of any research reports based on the data collected and these would be written in such a manner to present quality findings while ensuring confidentiality/ anonymity to all parties.

Reports were written for each case study organisation based only on the data specific to the firm in question. Descriptive statistics drawn from the SPSS file were

²⁴ Appendix 4, table 1, step 6.

illustrated with anonymous quotations taken from the female expatriate survey and the expatriate and human resource interview data to highlight and explain particular findings while preserving anonymity. The company-specific reports were sent by e-mail in November 2009 to the gatekeepers for distribution to the female expatriates. The Collins Co. gatekeeper requested the researcher to distribute the report directly to the female expatriates; the Hagman Co. gatekeeper requested the researcher present the findings in person.

The researcher presented the findings to Hagman Co.'s expatriates via a video-conference presentation, held on company premises, which could be attended in person or viewed live using the intranet world-wide. The presentation, live question and answer session and panel discussion held with female expatriates and the gatekeeper were also recorded so that expatriates all over the world could download the recording and view it at convenient times.

Following the fieldwork, data entry and production and distribution of the company reports, qualitative data analysis was carried out using, in the first instance, Microsoft Word to identify themes and to code the data accordingly, in line with the research framework and questions. However, the volume of data was so great that problems of data retrieval were envisaged. Hence, the pros and cons of using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), NVivo 7 as available in the researcher's institution, were investigated. In favour were: the value of coding trees being used to link inter-related ideas; the ability to quantify the prevalence of an issue and thus ensure that any illustrative quotations were representative of the sample; and the transparency with which the coding process could be reported. Yet, set against these advantages, NVivo potentially raised the dangers of: repeating data entry to find that the retrieval outcomes were similar to Microsoft Word; overly quantifying qualitative research and losing its unique contribution; losing the context of the data through fragmentation in retrieval (Bryman and Bell, 2003); and creating codes "ad infinitum" (King, 2004: 263). Training course attendance to learn how to use the programme and a trial run with it using an interview transcript confirmed that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages and the qualitative data (interviews, survey open question responses and document inventory) were then coded in NVivo.

As King (2004) notes, codes are labels attached to text relating to the issues that the researcher has identified as important. Rather than apply the codes that had been devised and applied to the text in Microsoft Word, simply copying them over to sections of text in NVivo, the researcher coded afresh. This may not have been a foolproof method of eliminating coding drift but, in recognition of being a sole researcher, it did provide a second check on data. There was, in the event, a high degree of coding overlap between the two methods used, although the use of NVivo with its higher speed of data entry, did encourage and facilitate the use of further more detailed coding. Coding data based solely on *a priori* codes runs the danger of missing information (Crabtree and Miller, 1999); the researcher therefore considered it to be advantageous to look beyond the original Microsoft Word codes for new meanings and classifications of the data when coding using NVivo.

The coding of the qualitative data produced a multitude of hierarchical and parallel codes which were subsequently collapsed or expanded as appropriate in a second coding round. This formed the underpinning to a template analysis, with the coding trees representing themes within the qualitative data. Systematic identification of key themes could then be undertaken and the qualitative data analysed and evaluated within the context of the literature (King, 2004). Conducting a thematic analysis based on the coding template was considered to present the advantage of not being “wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework” (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 81) but enabling the researcher to identify, analyse and report on patterns within the data (*ibid.*). Issues identified in the first coding round (and the subsequent round as appropriate) were grouped into coding groups aligned to the research framework and questions. Emergent issues and second round coding were highlighted and definitions given to explain the backdrop to the coding²⁵.

As King (2004) suggests, the initial coding to create a template may result in inadequacies requiring amendment of the template and/ or deletion of redundant codes. As the researcher worked through the initial template and transcripts, discrepancies were found between the expected categorisation (as shown in the nomenclature of the coding) and its

²⁵ Appendix 8.

appropriateness to the research issue. Coding trees were therefore interrogated to group linked themes together. Qualitative data was extracted and frequency counts recorded by coding tree of the number of sources commenting on an issue and the number of references that they made to it. These data were tabulated, linked to the research questions and grouped for presentation aligned to the findings chapters for the thesis²⁶.

Analysis of the qualitative data drew out both consensus and difference between policy and its implementation and between organisational (HR) expectation and employee experience across a wide range of assignment types. As rival explanations emerged from the data analysis, this helped to support the internal validity of the research (Yin, 2009).

Questionnaire returns were analysed using SPSS to produce descriptive statistics that were used to set context for the qualitative data and subsequent evaluation of the research findings. The number of survey responses received was high (71 returns were received out of a possible 93); the 76% response rate suggested that the results were representative of the total population. In preparing and writing the company reports, little difference emerged between the responses received from female expatriates in the two organisations, affirming similar organisational approaches. In recognition of this and given the low numbers of expatriates, the researcher combined the survey responses from the two case study firms when conducting data analysis using SPSS.

The survey data provided a useful contextual backdrop to frame the qualitative data findings and to identify interviewees. However, the data precluded detailed statistical analysis because of low numbers of assignees in certain categories and the skewed nature of the volume of assignees undertaking certain types of assignment. The questionnaire design generated predominantly nominal data; for the majority of questions arbitrary codes had been attributed to the response categories, enabling modes to be calculated. For some questions, the coding labels produced nominal data but implied a sequence such that data generated potentially could be treated as ordinal (although recognising that strictly speaking no order is implied by arbitrary codes). For a limited number of questions, the

²⁶ Appendix 9.

respondents had been asked to rate the importance of particular issues in supporting their assignment participation, creating ordinal data on a three-point rating scale. From these data, medians could be calculated to demonstrate the level of importance attributed to various policy elements in assignment participation. As similar labelling of response categories had been used throughout the survey, the respondents may have treated questions requiring categorisation and rating similarly as the distinction between labelling and rating importance levels was not highlighted.

Although it was recognised that means and standard deviations are inappropriate for nominal data treated as ordinal and ordinal data, nonetheless these were calculated as a proxy because, at first glance, they could highlight possible differences for further investigation. The only question included in the survey that produced cardinal data related to hours of work; means and standard deviations were therefore calculated in respect of these data.

Analysis of the qualitative data in NVivo had already suggested that the assignment type was a particularly important factor in women's expatriate participation. Cross-tabs were therefore run to analyse the survey responses, as far as was possible, by assignment length and pattern and, where appropriate, un/accompanied status. Chi-square tests were performed but indicated insufficient cell counts, resulting in the assumptions of the test being violated (Pallant, 2007). Combining cells in order to raise the cell counts to a viable level was considered inappropriate for two reasons: the sensitivity of the test would be lost at the expense of conducting it; and, the tracer study's 'tag' (Hornby and Symon, 1994), flowing through the research concerning the underpinning policies of support would be compromised as each assignment type was underpinned by different policies. One of the main problems encountered related to the skewed nature and size of the population: there were 51 long-term assignees, but only five rotationals, 12 short-term and graduate placement assignees and three undertaking extended international transfers. Carrying out cross-tabs inevitably reduced cell counts to below the minimum expected count required for the chi-square test to be performed without violating the test's assumptions (20% or fewer cells with counts of 5) (Cochran, 1954). The skewed nature and size of the population prevented tests of association and strength of relationship. The tabulated data

from the SPSS analysis, including medians, means and standard deviations as used to highlight issues for further investigation are presented²⁷ but, as the assumptions of the Chi-square tests were violated, these have not been included.

During the period from January to April 2011, the advanced database search was re-run to update the literature searches²⁸. The qualitative and quantitative data evaluated within the literature findings are presented in section 4. To set the context for this, reflections on the research method are presented and the key points summarised.

Summary and reflections

The methodology adopts a pragmatist research philosophy with an interpretivist epistemology. The research approach is inductive and deductive, making use of a multiple case study design supported by archival research, using qualitative and limited quantitative methods, carried out within a cross-sectional time horizon. Techniques and procedures are operationalised as steps set within the context of necessary strategic decision-making.

The exploratory work followed by the design and implementation of the research techniques and procedures (involving data gathering, entry and analysis) took a period of six years to complete, beginning in 2005 and ending in 2011. While reflections on the effect that the experience of ‘doing’ and staying with a concentrated investigation over a sustained period has had on the author as an academic researcher could probably fill volumes, it is pertinent here only to comment upon what was gained that others might benefit from reading and what might have been done differently (or defending the ‘why’ and ‘how’ because practical considerations meant that the research could not have been done differently without completely changing the ‘what’, ‘who’, ‘where’ and ‘when’ as these are contingently related).

Looking back with the 20:20 vision that comes with hindsight, more value could potentially have been derived from the questionnaire research if the researcher were to have

²⁷ Appendix 10.

²⁸ Appendix 5.

had greater knowledge of how the data generated could have been processed via SPSS and had taken this into account during its formulation. That said, given the nature of the population was skewed so heavily towards long-term assignments, a different questionnaire design may still have resulted in challenges in analysis and interpretation.

Keeping a research diary was invaluable in tracing the research method timeline, the use of detailed note-keeping being critical to writing an account to facilitate transferability. However, all of the researcher's note-taking was in separate places and time and energy would have been saved had one central document been kept. With the benefit of hindsight, it also would have been helpful to have undertaken training in the use of CAQDAS software earlier in the research timetable.

The fear of mortality of one or more of the case studies presented the greatest concern to the researcher. To accommodate the gatekeepers' schedules and pressures of work, compromises had to be made and flexibility practised to keep the research on track. As a result, the ordering of data collection steps was perhaps not always ideal, but overall, the researcher had to operate within organisational boundaries set and be grateful for the time and effort given by all of the organisational representatives.

While certain aspects might have been done differently to greater effect, reflections on this lengthy and sustained research process support the actions taken. That is not to say that significant learning has not taken place – it has – and the researcher is aware of her own significant growth in terms of personal and professional development.

SECTION 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND EVALUATION

CHAPTER 11: THE INDUSTRY EFFECT

Introduction

In the research framework presented in figure 9.1 (page 115) it is suggested that women's low expatriate representation is associated with an industry effect. Four main research questions flow from this (figure 9.2, page 116) relating to the nature of the oil and gas exploration and production industry, how its characteristics influence female expatriate participation, and the role of occupational segregation and country effects on gender diversity and women's expatriation. In this chapter the findings²⁹ are set out in response to the primary research question: 'what is the nature of expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector?' The following issues are addressed: masculinity; work environments; functions and roles; and diversity strategy. For each element the findings are presented, linked to answering the second key research question: 'what are and how do industry effects influence female expatriate participation?' These findings are evaluated in the context of the extant literature and in so-doing address the following research questions: 'which occupational segregation effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to expatriate gender diversity?' and 'which country effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to female expatriate participation?'

A masculine sector: rhetoric or reality?

As discussed in chapter 2, despite the oil and gas exploration and production sector being stereotyped as male, women's share of the workforce and leadership positions is increasing. Yet, sex stereotyping of expatriation appears to have changed little over the decades (Izraeli *et al.*, 1980): working abroad in exploration is portrayed through images of deserts, oceans and remote locations, heavy or dirty work and a male-dominated environment; while men work in the field, women are shown as office workers. Such sex

²⁹ Chapters 11-18 draw upon the qualitative data, highlighting the volume of sources (denominated as S) with references (denominated as R) made to the issues identified. Where assignees provided interview and survey data, sources are de-duplicated (denominated with ») and total references reported. Full supporting NVivo frequency data for this chapter are presented in appendix 9, tables 1-3, with full participant profile data from the census survey presented in appendix 10.

stereotyping reduces sex integration and preserves the male *status quo* (Reskin and Padavic, 1988) and suggests prevalent sexism (Plakoyiannaki *et al.*, 2008). While not disqualifying women's entry to this industry (Anker, 2001), the assignees (10S, 20R) illustrated the challenges that sex role stereotyping brings:

“Early in my career I was always told ‘you don’t look like an engineer’ which is interesting because I’m not really sure what an engineer is supposed to look like. But I am very petite, with long blonde hair ... and so I was always seen more as a ‘lady’ versus an ‘engineer’ and it is very tough to get over.” (Babs, Engineering)

Although average female expatriate participation is reported as 7% in the oil and gas industry (ORC Worldwide, 2007), women comprised 8% and 11% of expatriates in the two case study firms in 2009. This suggests that these firms employed a higher proportion of female expatriates than the industry as a whole and/ or that female expatriate participation may have increased in this sector overall by 2009. That the reality might differ from perceptions of windswept rigs and men in hard hats (Browne, 2004; Werngren, 2007), is suggested by the following human resource (HR) specialist:

“There is a perception in people who don’t know the oil and gas industry that it is full of steel toe capped men on oil rigs...” (John Ross, HR – Function Head)

Yet one of the most common threads running through the assignee data (22S», 85R) concerned its male-dominated nature, with 12 HR experts (26R) also commenting on this. Nevertheless, 11 assignees (20R) and three HR sources (7R) reported gender balance; and 12 expatriates (15R) and five HR experts (9R) said that the sector was ‘female friendly’, encouraging women's entry. The male-dominated picture of expatriation appears to be changing – albeit slowly:

“...there are ... more opportunities for women. I do see more women coming in as leaders...” (Krystle, HR – Learning and Development)

Explanations for the male-dominated sector

Both the HR experts and assignees commented on the UK-based sector's historically male entry profile. Some 20-30 years ago, women with appropriate subject choices, such as geophysics degrees, were reported as rare and those who did have suitable educational backgrounds entered more generalist careers (for example, the Civil Service) rather than oil and gas:

“The people at the top of the function are 50 years old, and ... 30 years ago when they were choosing careers ... my mum wouldn’t have gone into the oil and gas industry...” (Polly, Commercial)

While women’s career decisions several decades ago might suggest that they had unsuitable educational qualifications or chose not to develop careers in this sector, these explanations are less applicable today given a female educational profile increasingly aligned to the demands of the UK-based oil and gas industry (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2010b).

One explanation given for women’s relatively low industry presence concerned the sector’s environmentally unfriendly image potentially discouraging their entry:

“...(we) rip up fields and ruin the environment and then try to put it back together again ... we’re not faultless ...” (Zara, HR)

Yet, this argument was typically negated. The HR sources and expatriates spoke of the excitement, challenges and opportunities that the industry offered. The female assignees reported being inspired by oil and gas as a career choice, that its environmental and corporate social responsibilities enabled them *“to make a difference”*.

Choice surely rests upon knowledge. The data analysis revealed that few assignees knew about oil and gas exploration and production as a potential career when at school and university. Both the HR experts and assignees said that the education system provided lack of clarity and depth of information on the sector: 11 expatriates specifically raised the issue of career advice and information, saying that schools and universities were poor in raising awareness of careers in oil and gas. The root of the problem was identified as lying within advice on subject options and career choices in schools; even women who undertook technical degrees at university said that career information on the oil and gas industry there was limited.

The assignees working in non-technical disciplines reported receiving little focus on science, engineering and mathematics; they expressed regret over their subject choices, missed opportunities and on being steered either towards less appropriate subjects for the oil and gas sector or away from it completely:

“...when I was at school I had a choice between physics and typing and I chose to do typing and somebody should have shook me up and said do physics but at the time, girls did typing.” (Olive, IT)

“...when I was at school my careers adviser advised me not to go into the oil industry, because it was a man’s job!” (Wanda, Exploration)

Gender stereotyping was raised by 15 assignees (22R) and five HR experts (6R). Their comments aligned with the extant literature. Early life career experiences and decisions were frequently unsuited to this male-dominated field (Melkas and Anker, 2001). For example, school experiences (Cubillo and Brown, 2003), career advisers (Whittock, 2000), subject choices linked to female occupations (CIPD, 2005) and university cultures not encouraging women to enter engineering careers (Powell *et al.*, 2004) all acted to discourage women from considering the oil and gas sector as an option. The assignees reported:

“It is an industry of engineers, and not a lot of women go into engineering schools.” (Karen, Commercial)

Despite HR representatives (3S, 3R) reporting an aging and retiring workforce and rapid industry growth creating skills shortages, there appeared to be little organisational appetite to promote oil and gas careers in schools to attract young women into exploration and production:

“We all compete in the same space. So how do you get competitors to collaborate? It’s a tough one ... How much time do we have ... to get into academic institutions, we just don’t have the time. So you end up picking those people who have already made that decision.” (John Ross, HR – Function Head)

Yet, due to lack of information and advice, those who have already made the decision are likely to be young men rather than women, and hence organisational inaction is likely to reinforce the historical picture of a man’s industry and reduce entry opportunities for women as was highlighted by 13 assignees (21R).

A further explanation concerned the inherent requirement for – and expectation of – mobility. The assignees (7S», 20R) and HR experts (2S, 7R) commented on requirements for fieldwork, particularly relating to engineering and exploration; while four expatriates (6R) and two HR experts (2R) noted demanding industry timescales related to exploration

operations. Yet, even in roles not typically associated with drilling and seismic operations, international mobility and/ or frequent travel were normal, suggesting implications for women's entry, careers and retention. Mobility requirements indirectly affect women to a greater extent than men (Shortland, 1987), particularly through their family responsibilities and relative lack of family power (Harvey, 1998). These may consequently influence women's decisions not to work in the sector or, if they do, not to remain within it, thus reinforcing the industry's masculinity.

Work environments: obstacles to women's expatriation?

In the research framework it is proposed that work environments in the oil and gas exploration and production sector contribute to a potential industry effect on women's expatriate participation. Of the expatriates (23S», 56R) who spoke about their work environment, over half of their comments referred to its masculine nature; seven» (16R) commented on geographical location and seven» (10R) on security. As the data in table 11.1 shows, it was not unusual for there to be just one female assignee, at most six in any single location, with the exception of the UK and the USA.

Even in expatriate locations where there was a greater gender balance in the office, assignees reported requirements to spend periods offshore or in compounds, either as part of their long- or short-term expatriate posting or through a commuter assignment, taking them into masculine work environments:

“International assignments would be attractive to women, but the locations would be a concern because ... you go to Africa or you go to Alaska ... I hardly see women at the jobsite.” (Gina, Engineering)

Table 11.1: Home and host locations of survey respondents

Country	Home country	Host country
	Number	Number
Algeria		1
Austria	1	
Australia	3	4
Azerbaijan		1
Brazil	3	
Canada	3	1
Denmark		1
Egypt	2	6
France	1	
Germany	1	
India	2	
Indonesia	1	1
Kazakhstan	2	5
Malaysia	2	6
Nigeria	1	3
Norway		3
Oman		1
Singapore		4
Thailand	2	
Trinidad	4	6
Tunisia		3
UK	38	14
USA	3	11
<i>n</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>71</i>

Camps, compounds and rigs

Many of the permanent work environments (typically in those in Central Asia and North Africa but also offshore locations in other parts of the world) were based in ‘upstream’ exploration locations. This involved living apart from their families in remote field-based camps, secure compounds or on offshore rigs, generally on rotation but occasionally on a long-term unaccompanied assignment. Life within such places was reported as having a masculine and confined ethos; women were less able to seek temporary respite outside due to cultural and security factors. Ten of the assignees interviewed commented on their experiences of living alone in male-dominated work environments. They reported: being unable to leave the camps by themselves (whereas it was acceptable for men to do so); social life revolving around men going to bars (and all that entailed); and lack of female company and male social acceptance. This created isolation and loneliness, sometimes self-

imposed (“*I just ignore them*”), sometimes through fear (“*it was a rough area*”), even sexual intimidation:

“...I lived on a construction camp ... and there were 300 men and two women, and you just can’t go anywhere without being stared at ...I carried my bag over my crotch, so I didn’t get grabbed. It was pretty grim, and in the evening, you don’t want to go in the bar in the camps because you just get hit on. ... It’s just harder work to be on your own in a macho environment in a macho company. It needs to be a more pleasant experience! And not be torture!” (Rhoda, CSR)

Camp environments or compound living result in work and social lives becoming inextricably intertwined and the creation of ‘in-groups’ becomes commonplace (Lauring and Selmer, 2009). Security concerns, location factors and cultural norms act to constrain female expatriates’ local mobility (external to the worksite), restricting them to on-site activities; yet male domination of the workplace and its social space reinforces female exclusion from internal social events and friendship groupings. While this can result in a negative effect on home and family life, the picture was not one-sided; two female assignees reported on their experiences of undertaking rotational assignments living in one of the camp work sites in North Africa, speaking of their *camaraderie* and enjoyment of both the work and living environment and how they created a sense of belonging (Gordon, 2008).

Engaging in expatriate duties within remote, offshore or culturally challenging locations can be a necessary requirement to gain expertise, training and development. This raises the potential obstacle of women being hindered by legal or cultural restrictions. The HR experts reported that all of their host countries were ‘open to women’ and that no country was considered inappropriate or insecure for female assignees, demonstrating considerable progress since Izraeli *et al.*’s (1980) findings when security presented a deterrent to female expatriation; the female expatriates agreed. However, there were some examples cited in North Africa where women were precluded by local management or law from working in the field or on rigs where this involved them staying overnight, limiting their ability to gain expatriate experience and disadvantaging them compared to male colleagues. Yet, not all such barriers proved insurmountable; one female expatriate spoke of her efforts to challenge the male norm with a successful outcome for herself and other women:

“...(North African) management did not allow women to work in the field. As I had ... a good relationship built up over the years with my (North African) counterparts ... (my Company) knew I was very keen ... and it was authorised ... I believe I was the ‘guinea pig’ and, as there have not been any issues, more women – both expats and nationals – worked in the field since then.” (Cara, Exploration)

This example may indicate the relatively high tolerance of ambiguity of the UK-based firm – as predicted by Hofstede’s (1991, 2001) cultural dimensions – in taking the risk to send a female assignee under such circumstances and/ or of the woman’s individual achievement being used as a proxy for potential success in the host country (Rodrigues and Blumberg, 2000). The assignees (30S», 108R) who reported on cultural issues relating to their assignments in the main said that these did not present obstacles to their participation, rather these were viewed as challenging but developmental. However, 17» (48R) commented specifically on the patriarchal societies in which they worked, with North Africa again identified as the most problematic region. The key obstacles related to women’s age and marital status; young female expatriates often found it difficult to command respect in the workplace and those who were single were occasionally propositioned. However, negative examples were counterbalanced by stories of local acceptance by married and single female expatriates of all ages.

The extant literature provides considerable evidence of female expatriates’ assignment success across a wide range of receiving cultures (Shortland and Altman, 2011). Yet, while the HR experts and the assignees themselves considered their expatriation successful, the data presented here offers a mixed message; the female assignees experienced both positive and negative repercussions from cultural factors impacting on both their working and personal lives. A patriarchal perspective, in particular, helps to explain the nature of social structures underlying the expatriate workplace where men dominate the environment and can oppress and exploit women (Walby, 1990), compounding the male-dominated industry effect upon women’s expatriate participation.

Functions and roles

In the research framework it is highlighted that functions and roles in oil and gas exploration and production potentially contribute to an industry effect on women's expatriate participation. While the sector as a whole – and expatriation within it – appears male-dominated and expatriate work environments are similarly masculine, the survey data suggest a disparity in expatriate gender diversity between functions. As table 11.2 shows, just over half of the assignees (54%) were in non-technical functions; for example, 27% were in commercial (covering such disciplines as contracts and procurement and business development). Of the 46% employed in technical disciplines, 25% were in engineering and 21% in exploration (geology and geophysics).

Table 11.2: Corporate functional area of survey respondents

Corporate functional area ³⁰	Number	%
Commercial	19	27
Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	2	3
Engineering	18	25
Exploration	15	21
Finance	3	4
Information technology (IT)	2	3
Human resource management (HR)	5	7
Legal	4	6
Other	3	4
<i>n</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>100</i>

Horizontal segregation

While the split between women's expatriate participation in non-technical and technical functions is not that dissimilar, at 54:46, it suggests occupational segregation, with female expatriates working mainly in the non-technical 'female-friendly' functions. Indeed, horizontal segregation was clearly evident with the expatriates interviewed describing:

³⁰ The survey respondents were asked to name their corporate function, but this led to a wide range of responses and inconsistent use of terminology. For example, in the functional area of exploration, the women reported that they worked in advanced geophysics, geophysics, geology, geology and geophysics, exploration, oil and gas exploration and global basins. The responses given by each respondent in relation to their corporate function, current occupation and current job title were therefore taken together to classify the roles held by the women within nine broad functional areas as displayed in table 11.2.

commercial and finance as “*more female-dominated*”; social performance and corporate social responsibility (CSR) as “*more attractive to women*”; and female lawyers having “*traditionally ... dominated the oil and gas industry*”. The technical disciplines were described as male-dominated. These views were supported by the HR specialists:

“...the people who are abroad now ... who are female ... tend to be the professional roles with the handful who are technical...” (Bobby, HR – Recruitment)

Yet, the functions from which the majority of international assignees are drawn were reported as technical; these disciplines provided the skills in greatest demand in the host countries. The assignees (9S», 20R) commented on the importance of being in a technical role to facilitate expatriation:

“...the vast majority of the jobs come from the more traditionally male-dominated functions, such as engineering, geology, geophysics...” (Susan, Commercial)

This suggests that expatriation is male-dominated because the largest volume of expatriate roles lies in male-dominated technical functions. Despite a relatively high percentage of technical female survey respondents, the qualitative data indicated that women comprised just a small proportion of expatriates, particularly in engineering:

“...I’m pretty used to working almost exclusively with men...” (Abby, Engineering)

“...there are only two of us in the whole group of men.” (Gina, Engineering)

However, the picture was not straightforward; although relatively few women were employed in engineering, they were better represented in the exploration function:

“...I have noticed quite a few, particularly in geology and geophysics.” (Pamela, HR – Graduate Scheme)

The interview data provided an explanation: roles within functions were gendered:

“...exploration is seen as far more sexy and all the men want to be in exploration ... it’s a bit more macho ... You are there drilling wells ... there is just more competition for the exploration roles. So there are quite a few women who are reservoir modellers who work in development ... development geology is better suited to females ... it’s all pretty much office-based.” (Izzy, Exploration)

The office-based developmental geology roles may not necessarily require expatriation; the roles in exploration involving field work do. Such occupational segregation within functions helps to explain why there are relatively few female expatriates in technical roles

which, on the surface, appear to offer opportunities for international mobility: women work in the less internationally mobile roles within an apparently mobile function. This finding aligns with the literature, which highlights more prestigious science roles held by men, while the less prestigious feminise (Melkas and Anker, 2001).

Vertical segregation

Table 11.3 presents seniority levels for the survey respondents with grades broadly aligned across the two organisations. The grade structures and expatriate profiles of the two firms are not that dissimilar; three-quarters or more of female expatriates are clustered in the middle grades in both firms, although at the time of the survey, Collins Co. did not have any graduates on international assignment whereas Hagman Co. did (graduates being in the lowest grades in both firms).

Table 11.3: Survey respondents by grade

Level of Seniority	Collins Co.		Hagman Co.	
	Grade ³¹	Number	Grade	Number
Low	1	-	E	13
	2	1		
	3	8	D	20
	4	9	C	18
	5	-	B	1
High	6	1	A	-
	<i>n</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>52</i>

While the data suggest a normal distribution in Collins Co., it is skewed more towards the lower grades in Hagman Co. (partly through the inclusion of nine graduate trainees). However, the interview data highlighted vertical segregation within both case study firms, within the industry sector generally and within expatriation, women being less well represented at higher levels of seniority:

“I look around and, and personally I do see some glass ceilings in terms of what are the opportunities out there at the very senior level.” (Xanthe, Commercial)

³¹ Collins Co. and Hagman Co. use different grading descriptors and hence the results for this demographic are presented here by case study firm. Collins Co. has a numeric system, with lower numbers representing lower grades, while Hagman Co. uses an alphabetic system from E to A, with E being the lowest grade. Graduate trainees are graded 1 in Collins Co. and E in Hagman Co; in Hagman Co. grade E also includes staff not on the graduate international placement programme.

In 'female friendly' occupations, women are more likely to reach the higher *echelons* of management (Blackburn and Jarman, 2005a). Yet, the female assignees pointed out that in non-technical functions (such as legal and HR) "*there are as many females as there are men*" but "*they don't become senior management*". Nine of the expatriate interviewees commented specifically on the need to have a technical background to gain senior positions:

"...the bosses are generally the engineers and the subsurface ... they are much more respected...a jack of all trades type background, because they are technical, they are commercial and they also financial, they can do everything theoretically. Their training lends itself to any of those." (Una, Legal)

Thus, while technical people could switch across into roles in other functions and take on senior management positions in these or in their own functions, non-technical staff could not compete for the technical jobs that led to greater promotion prospects:

"...if you've got the technical side and decide that management is something that you would really like to try ... it probably would be relatively easy to jump across." (Di, Exploration)

"I am competing with twice as many ... for the same role." (Trish, Commercial)

And the result:

"... functionally the finance or HR are going to be whatever. But the people actually running the oilfields and the production and the development ops would be engineers." (Babs, Engineering)

This evidence suggests that women within oil and gas exploration and production are less likely to reach more senior positions unless they are in the technical disciplines, but that there are relatively few of them there due to horizontal segregation:

"Well, if she wants to be vice president, she is going to have to have the technical skills ... without the technical skills, you don't go anywhere." (Harriet, IT)

In contrast to Siltanen *et al.*'s (1995) assertion that horizontal segregation does not disadvantage women, it is clear that functions within oil and gas exploration and production are not equal and that difference leads to detriment – both expatriate and senior management roles are mainly drawn from technical disciplines. Yet, even when they held the technical skills required, women were under-represented at senior management level.

This was explained in part by their lack of “*critical mass*”, aligned with the literature (Blackburn and Jarman, 2005c; Wirth, 2001).

The qualitative data revealed that vertical segregation was reinforced through patriarchy: women at senior levels experienced difficulties in performing their roles in certain patriarchal societies:

“...for instance (*Central Asia*) where it is more difficult for women to operate at a senior level...” (Ray, HR – Training and Development)

This limited their options in taking up senior expatriate positions:

“...I have been told (*North Africa*) ... in *West Africa*, and possibly places like (*Far East*), heading up the office there.” (Babs, Engineering)

The locations of exploration and production are theoretically all open to women expatriates (although the lack of female expatriates in the company may preclude assignment take-up in every one). This suggests that the ‘glass border’ as highlighted by Linehan and Walsh (1999a) is opening up. However, the career enhancing opportunities that flow particularly from senior expatriate positions appear to remain limited through intertwined patriarchal and location factors. Just as the glass ceiling is showing evidence of retrenching to the top (Altman *et al.*, 2005), so the data here suggest that the ‘glass border’ is shifting upwards too, reinforcing vertical segregation and thereby compounding women’s relatively few opportunities to take up senior positions. While the extant literature claims that glass ceilings and borders reinforce each other (Haines and Saba, 1999a), creating a ‘double glazed’ effect (Harris, 1992; Insch *et al.*, 2008), the thesis findings suggest glass structures weakening at lower levels of seniority while remaining reinforced at the top.

There were a few examples in the case study firms of women who had broken through the ‘double glazed’ ceiling to hold the very highest exploration and production positions (although not all were captured in the survey and interviews due to the timescale of data collection). These women held responsibility for either high profile regions or high producing assets. For example, the position offered to one provided very senior international experience but the assignee was reported as “*not enamoured*” with the Central Asian location and she “*took some convincing that it was a good move*”.

Potentially, the patriarchal nature of the region might have undermined her ability to perform effectively, although her success now provides an example to others.

Diversity strategy

Figure 9.1 (page 115) points to the sector's diversity strategy in contributing to an industry effect on female expatriate participation. Before considering the case study firms' gender diversity strategy, a fuller picture is helpful to understand diversity within the female assignee population, in respect of their ages, nationalities and ethnicities.

Age profile

The majority of assignees were in their early to mid-career life stages. As shown in table 11.4, 61 women were between the ages of 25 and 44, with just five under 25 or aged 45 plus. The youngest assignees were typically graduate trainees.

Table 11.4: Age of survey respondents

Age range	Number
24 and under	5
25-29	13
30-34	16
35-39	16
40-44	16
45-49	2
50 plus	3
<i>n</i>	<i>71</i>

Table 11.5 compares the age profile of the survey respondents with that of the all-industry male and female average aligned to the age ranges used by Brookfield (2011a). It is notable that, while the survey respondents' age profile is similar to the male and female all-industry average for the 30-49 age range, there is a considerably larger volume of young women expatriates in the case study firms under the age of 29 than might be expected compared with the all-industry figure (25% versus 9% respectively). The case study firms

also had a considerably lower volume of female expatriates aged 50 or over – only 4% compared with the all-industry male and female average of 19%.

Table 11.5: Age of survey respondents compared with male and female all-industry average

Age range	Case study firms (%)	Brookfield (2011a) (%)
29 and under	25	9
30-49	71	72
50 and over	4	19
	100	100

It is possible that the expatriate age profile in the case study firms reflects the increasing shift towards young women’s educational qualifications and subject choices preparing them for a career in the oil and gas industry (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2010b) and/ or organisations’ strategic action to increase women’s share of expatriate roles, potentially resulting in positive change in gender diversity in the future. Alternatively, it might simply reflect the inseparable nature of the organisation of work from occupational segregation (Rubery and Fagan, 1995a, 1995b) and ‘glass’ structures which prevent women from taking up roles in the functions that result in expatriate positions and reaching the top levels of seniority (Insch *et al.*, 2008).

Nationality and ethnicity

Although the interviews explored organisational diversity strategy, the female assignees and HR experts both indicated that this did not lie with gender, but rather with nationality and ethnicity; 15» assignees (29R) and six HR experts (12R) spoke of the focus on increasing the use of local nationals (‘nationalisation’ or ‘localisation’). While the organisations differed in their emphasis in their diversity policy statements – Collins Co. focused on valuing individual contributions while Hagman Co. linked diversity to the business case – the outcomes were similar. National oil companies and host governments wielded considerable power over the terms attached to exploration in their countries; to gain entry, both firms had to make commitments to training local people and localising workforces.

The value that expatriates could bring to a host location as part of a localisation strategy was considered time-bound by both the HR experts and women expatriates, in alignment with the literature (Fang *et al.*, 2010). Once sustainable value had been built, a higher cost/ benefit ratio could be achieved through moving on to transfer skills into new company locations. This had a knock-on effect on assignment lengths:

“I went out for a month to start with ... but managed to get to six months, and I was hoping to extend that to a long-term assignment, but cost and the strategy of expats and nationals changed ... so I only spent six months.” (Polly, Commercial)

The assignees also spoke of local management effort to meet stated company localisation objectives over riding (un-stated) policy on gender diversity. This suggests the business case may be used to justify unfair actions (Noon and Ogbonna, 2001) and preserve and legitimise the gendered *status quo* (Cassell, 1996), thus highlighting the rhetoric of the business case argument (Liff and Wajcamm, 1996).

A further area highlighted by assignees concerned the challenges of working within joint ventures (8S, 25R) and acquisition arrangements (3S, 6R) across a range of countries. The main thrust was that diversity and equal opportunity policies enforced in company offices were weakened or undermined by that of local national partner organisations, some of which were *“incredibly dismissive of working women”*:

“I was in a joint venture ... and I was the only technical female working there and I was not accepted by the local male staff ... The (company) office is very much (company) culture and the local staff working there ... are expected to abide by (company’s) standards but that is not the same in (joint venture)... the (company) office... it is only 10 minutes down the road, it might as well have been in a different country.” (Wanda, Exploration)

Acquisitions and joint ventures thus presented additional challenges to the female assignees stationed on partner organisations’ premises over and above those experienced by female assignees generally. While diversity values difference and harnessing multiple perspectives for competitive advantage (Cornelius *et al.*, 2001; Ferner *et al.*, 2005; Shen *et al.*, 2009), partner organisations did not appear to embrace the value of women’s contributions to the same extent as the case study firms. For diversity strategy to be implemented effectively in partner organisations, the shared responsibility for its implementation required bolstering with specific accountability (Kalev *et al.*, 2006).

The interview data also provided evidence of organisational effort to offer expatriation opportunities as an integral part of the localisation strategy and in this way develop host nationals so that they could return to their own countries in senior roles to run local operations. In line with the extant literature, the assignees involved spoke of gaining expertise abroad which they wanted to bring back to be leveraged locally to help their countries develop and also so that they could gain the sense of ‘giving back’ (Thite *et al.*, 2009). This suggests that nationalisation has implications for diversity in expatriate participation by facilitating opportunities for employees based in non-traditional sending locations, while reducing the volume of traditional Western-outbound, long-term expatriate posts available. Nonetheless, as shown in table 11.6, 33 assignees (46%) were British, reflecting the case study research being centred on firms with UK bases of operation and a predominantly ethnocentric approach to expatriation (Perlmutter, 1969), although a wide range of other nationalities were represented.

Table 11.6: Nationality of survey respondents

Nationality	Number
British	33
American	3
Brazilian	3
Australian	2
Danish	1
Canadian	6
Irish	4
Egyptian	2
French	2
German	1
Indian	2
Indonesian	1
Kazak	2
Malaysian	2
Nigerian	2
Portuguese	1
Thai	2
Trinidadian	2
<i>n</i>	<i>71</i>

Ethnicity is presented in table 11.7. Two-thirds of the assignees were white; the remainder represented a range of ethnicities. The limited extant literature suggests that, where a female assignee’s ethnicity is similar to that of local women in the host country,

she is likely to experience greater difficulty in performing her expatriate role as she is treated in line with local female norms (Napier and Taylor, 2002; Tzeng, 2006), rather than as an expatriate emissary of her sending firm (Adler, 1987). Evidence from the thesis findings is too limited to confirm this; however, there was one example of an assignee who was expatriated to a location where she was of similar ethnicity to her hosts and she did report this as an obstacle to her initial acceptance:

“I am (ethnic group) and I am female, not your docile typical female that they were used to, so it was quite difficult to do the first three or four months...” (Esther, HR)

Table 11.7: Ethnicity of survey respondents

Ethnicity³²	Number
White	47
Mixed	8
Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	5
Other Asian	5
Black African	2
Black Caribbean	1
Chinese	1
Other	3
<i>n</i>	<i>71</i>

A meritocracy: rhetoric and reality

No positive action in respect of gender diversity was included in policy. The HR experts spoke of a “*meritocratic environment*” and that any “*overt*” measures in support of gender diversity would be viewed as “*patronising*” by women. The female assignees did not expect or want different treatment from their male colleagues; they spoke of wishing to compete on their merits and to be recognised for their achievements. Meritocracy emphasises the similarity between men and women (Lewis and Simpson, 2010); the assignees welcomed this:

“On a personal note, I don’t believe in positive discrimination (sic) for any reason. I do believe in fair, talent based selection/ promotion.” (Di, Exploration)

³² Ethnicity was classified using the categories in the UK 2001 Census (Office for National Statistics, 2001).

While fair treatment, based solely on merit may be laudable, an environment that is heavily male-dominated presents more obstacles to women. For example, female expatriates were so few in number that they found themselves in the spotlight:

"I was the only female expat at all in the whole company office..." (Fiona, Exploration)

One of the consequences of their high visibility was increased pressure to succeed. Three assignees spoke at length of the competitive nature of the industry and how this had sharpened their efforts to win what they described as a 'male game':

"...ultimately I am competing with guys ... you want to be an Olympic swimmer, you have got to learn how to swim ... I am not out there to change the rules for the style that you have to swim ... I am saying those are the rules so I fit within it and it is my decision if I want to compete in that race or not ... But I think having more women in there that helps change the rules of the race ... is very helpful." (Milly, Commercial)

As Lewis and Simpson (2010) argue, this notion of choice allows women to maintain faith in merit and equality while helping them to make sense of contradictions experienced.

Yet, despite espoused appointment and promotion on merit, both the male and female HR experts at middle management levels identified what they described as unchanging attitudes of existing senior (male) management who operated "*a boy's club*" with "*an underlying male chauvinism and a cronyism*" and who had little of understanding of women's potential difficulties in competing on equal terms:

"...they have all got wives and are supported by them." (Fallon, HR – Far East)

Aligned with the expatriate literature (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a, Linehan, 2000), women appeared to have to do more than men to be accepted and promoted:

"...it's that classic thing, to be a successful woman you have to be umpteen times more efficient and effective than an equivalent man." (Sue Ellen, HR – International Assignments)

This reality of 'meritocracy' was confirmed in particular by the middle graded and more senior female assignees who spoke of their experiences of starting at the same level but watching their male colleagues achieve promotions and pay rises more quickly:

“...you have got to fight for your seat, and you have got to prove yourself. And with a guy ... you don’t have to prove as much to do that role.” (Esther, HR)

“I know companies will tell you everybody has got equal opportunity and you nod your head ... but you know, that is not true ... from grade (high) and up, you are going to see a bunch of people who all look the same ... white males!” (Babs, Engineering)

Perhaps not surprisingly, the following comment encapsulated the reality of the meritocratic environment:

“It is almost a cause of celebration ... when someone like (female, highest grade) is appointed.” (Ray – HR, Training and Development)

Nonetheless, despite this gloomy picture, both the HR experts and the female assignees reported on women’s success in the male-dominated expatriate environment; indeed, the two HR – International Assignments representatives could not name a ‘failed’ female expatriate. They reported that *“success breeds success”* and that this *“sends out a positive message”*. This was confirmed by the assignees:

“...I am unusual ... I see that as my competitive advantage ... that I can say I have shown you that I can do it in the harshest environment, I am giving you that. So you can send me anywhere, I can do anything...” (Yvonne, Commercial)

Thus, while organisations continue to support meritocracy, believing forms of positive action to be *“patronising”*, women’s disadvantaged position is in danger of becoming cemented through institutional factors preserving the *status quo* (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and so women will continue to hold mere ‘token’ status (Kanter, 1977). Nonetheless, the alternative view would indicate that women who enter expatriate roles compete in a (male) corporate game (Altman and Shortland, 2008), albeit within the espoused climate of ‘meritocracy’. As such, their successes (no failures) become highly visible. This implies that, while the masculinity underpinning meritocracy in oil and gas exploration and production does act to reduce women’s expatriate opportunities, as more women complete their expatriate assignments successfully, so their expatriate capability is likely to become more widely known. Potentially the gender stereotyped male expatriate norm, gendered functions and roles and patriarchal prejudice will begin to erode, moving forward institutional change as organisations follow each other by example (Brito, 2001;

DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and progress away from Izraeli *et al.*'s (1980) stereotyped world of male expatriation may finally happen.

Summary and implications

Sex role stereotyping combines with gender stereotyping of careers within the oil and gas exploration and production sector to present a highly masculine image; this is reinforced by organisational inaction to re-brand itself as more attractive to women. Work and home lives overlap inextricably in the remote exploration and production work environments; women find themselves excluded from any external social scene through safety and security concerns and from the all-male in-groups in compound life. Patriarchal local cultures can present obstacles to women gaining career growth and creating an enjoyable personal life while on-site. While not all expatriate destinations are field-based, city locations also host few female expatriates (with the exception of the main headquarters UK/ USA bases). Nonetheless, work locations do not preclude women's expatriation – rather the lifestyle engendered potentially appeals to relatively few women.

There is evidence of horizontal segregation in that women are concentrated in professional functions that are low-volume in terms of expatriation. Even when they are employed in technical functions with high volumes of expatriates, they experience very strong male competition for the more exciting, high profile and career enhancing posts involving international assignments and so women become segregated into the less mobile job roles within these functions. Senior management are drawn from technical functions, most usually those involving international mobility; these disciplines provide opportunity for the specialist technical, general and international experience necessary for top management roles; the professional functions do not. It is difficult for those in professional functions to cross over to gain technical experience. There is also evidence of vertical segregation; women are concentrated in the lower *echelons* of both non-technical and technical functions. Occupational segregation is reinforced through patriarchy and stereotyping of roles and functions, with 'glass' structures, in particular, affecting women's access to the more senior expatriate positions.

Finally, there is evidence of organisational emphasis on increasing ethnic rather than gender diversity linked to the business case for nationalisation/ localisation. While focusing primarily on nationality, diversity strategy ignores the gendered *status quo* in the expatriate workforce, legitimising rather than challenging it. Yet positive action on gender is neither expected nor welcomed. The pursuit of a meritocracy is supported by female expatriates, even though this results in them competing in a male expatriate environment without recognition of any gendered difficulties that they might encounter. Women expatriates are highly visible, leading to increased pressure on them to succeed. Yet, this factor may be to their advantage as institutional isomorphic behaviour predicts mimicking of successful action.

CHAPTER 12: THE ASSIGNMENT TYPE EFFECT – PURPOSE AND LOCATION

Introduction

In figure 9.1 (page 115) it is suggested that the kind of assignment offered – in relation to its purpose, geographical location, length (long-term or short-term), pattern (rotational or commuter) and status (accompanied or not) – has a bearing on women's expatriation. From this, the research question 'what effect does the assignment type have on women's expatriate participation?' was formulated. To consider the implications fully, five sub-questions were devised relating to the effect of the assignment purpose, location, length, pattern and status and how these affected female expatriate participation, taking into consideration the industry context in which the assignment types are used (figure 9.2, page 116). In this chapter the first two of these questions are addressed in relation to the *purpose and location* of expatriation: why the women in the two case study firms engaged in assignments and location issues affecting their expatriation decisions, with the findings³³ evaluated in the context of the extant literature.

Contrasting understandings of assignment purpose

Each international assignment presents a combination of uniqueness and value to the organisation and the individual (Novicevic and Harvey, 2004). As discussed in chapter 7, the purpose of expatriation is usually linked to business applications (Hocking *et al.*, 2004), the transfer of power and control (Delios and Björkman, 2000) and knowledge exchange (Lazarova and Tarique, 2005). Yet, little is known about how assignees view the purpose of their assignments or the reasons why they engage in expatriation (Collings *et al.*, 2009).

³³ The volume of sources (denominated as S) with references (denominated as R) made to the issues identified are presented. Where assignees provided interview and survey data, sources are de-duplicated (denominated with ») and total references reported. Full supporting NVivo frequency data are presented in appendix 9, tables 4-6. Descriptive statistics, drawn from the census survey (analysed using SPSS) are presented in appendix 10, tables 1-2.

The HR experts indicated that expatriate assignments were used for: functional (day-to-day) working roles (4S, 8R); project-based roles (3S, 4R); strategic development of business operations in line with organisational goals (3S, 1R); and/ or for employee development (3S, 4R). By way of explanation they reported that: expatriates filled functional roles usually when there were no local employees trained and available; project-based roles met the demands of new operations and/ or filled skills gaps; strategic assignments applied only at the highest levels (1S, 1R); and developmental assignments were primarily offered to graduate trainees. The stated organisational purpose aligns with the extant literature in relation to the use of expatriates to fill positions and to develop the organisation and individuals (Hocking *et al.*, 2004). Given the emphasis on the use of expatriates to train locals, as discussed in the previous chapter, a further purpose concerned knowledge transfer.

The HR experts highlighted that there was a link between the purpose of the assignment and its length: functional and strategic roles were typically serviced via long-term assignments; projects and developmental assignments were usually short-term. This concurs with the literature (Cartus, 2007, 2010; ORC Worldwide, 2006; PWC/Cranfield, 2006). Rotational assignments were used for functional roles (usually technical) (Inwood, 2007); commuter assignments serviced projects or addressed dual career issues (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996).

Despite the HR experts suggesting a clearly defined purpose underlying the use of an expatriate assignment, the assignees reported considerable overlap as identified by Hocking *et al.* (2004). For example, 20 (33R) noted a project-based nature to their assignment; 16 (24R) said it had a developmental purpose; 14 (15R) said they performed a functional role; while five (5R) reported performing a strategic role. As expected, the women undertaking graduate trainee assignments said they were developmental. Yet others, irrespective of seniority and whether they were undertaking functional, strategic and/ or project-based roles, recognised, appreciated and placed emphasis on the developmental nature of their assignments. Many also reported on intertwined and changing rationales during their expatriation:

“My move ... was under the guise of a project-based assignment but there was a large personal development and career development aspect to it ... It has kind of morphed itself ... I am now no longer working in the role or the project that I was brought over to work on.” (Di, Far East)

Besides viewing their assignments as having a mix of business justifications, some women reported their assignment being driven by the expatriation of their spouses/ partners. For example, four (6R) said their assignment resulted from co-working; four (9R) said they were trailing spouses (following their husbands’ assignments); two (2R) said they held the lead career (and their spouses followed them). The women spoke of couples’ strong bargaining power, particularly in respect of co-working:

“He was offered a role out here, and he said he wasn’t going unless I also got a role.” (Rhoda, Australasia)

These data were supported by the two HR – International Assignments experts in both firms who reported their companies’ *“guiding principles”* were to keep couples/ families together – *“we have got to work around accommodating that”* – and that this could mean creating an assignment for one partner if necessary.

The data suggest a mismatch between expatriates’ understanding of assignment purpose and the business reasons given by HR, reflecting Thomas *et al.*’s (2005) view that individuals may see the purpose of expatriation differently from their employers. In effect, the business drivers underlying expatriation, as articulated by HR, appear not to be implemented clearly in practice. Women assignees therefore interpret the purpose of their assignments as partly linked to business goals but, given that these may lack clarity, they also place emphasis on their own career development and their spousal and family relationships. These findings suggest a potential contribution to knowledge: female expatriates view their assignment participation purpose as linked both to career contribution opportunities and aspects of home/ family life. To examine this in more depth, the qualitative and survey data were interrogated to explore the female expatriates’ reasons for current assignment acceptance.

Career contribution: the value of undertaking expatriation

Career development was the most frequently cited reason for assignment participation. Sixteen NVivo codes related to this, generating a total of 387 assignee references. For example, 29» assignees (43R) commented on the professional development gained through expatriation. Indeed, 82% of the 71 survey respondents recorded gaining professional experience as ‘very important’ (median 3) to their current assignment participation. They highlighted a range of issues including: the technical challenges offered in international locations that would not be experienced at home; gaining experiences at regional/operational level outside of headquarters; and the opportunity to gain exposure to new ideas and operations. The outcome was encapsulated as follows:

“Gaining professional experience ... will increase my knowledge and my employability everywhere.” (Joyce, Western Europe)

Similarly, 82 % said that being able to gain international experience was ‘very important’ (median 3) and 31» assignees (45R) commented on this. The key theme concerned the global nature of their industry and the requirement to understand different business approaches across the world:

“...the industry is a globally based one, with constraints, regulatory regimes, cultural norms and challenges being very different in the places I have worked.” (Cynthia, Far East)

The ability to gain personal experience through expatriation was deemed ‘very important’ (median 3) by 77% of the survey respondents. The assignees (28S», 34R) said that gaining personal development was a key reason for assignment take-up:

“...it is important that people get out of their comfort zone ... because this is how you learn who you really are.” (Sejal, Western Europe)

“To live and work in another country is mind-expanding and a rich experience ... I do not believe that I would be the same person today if I had not undertaken these assignments.” (Lauren, North Africa)

Although only 44% said that gaining cultural understanding was ‘very important’ (median 2) to their assignment participation decision, the assignees (20S», 28R) highlighted the career benefits that flowed from gaining societal and organisational cultural understanding:

“...I don’t think the management necessarily always understand exactly how things are done ... out here, because of the culture. So I think coming into the region and actually spending some time in it is incredibly beneficial.” (Di, Far East)

Indeed, in respect of geographical location factors, cultural restrictions were regarded as a disincentive to taking up the current assignment by just 4% of the survey respondents; only two women reported turning down an assignment for this reason. Assignees (13S, 18R) commented on the culture of the host location creating assignment challenges although, on the whole, the culture in the destination locations was considered part of the attraction of undertaking expatriation. Indeed, 14 (21R) explained the importance of gaining local understanding of business dealings:

“...you can’t sit in head office and talk to (North Africa) or (Indian sub-continent), without having been immersed in their issues and understanding what it’s like from their point of view.” (Polly, Western Europe)

They also noted that such local understanding was a necessary prerequisite for promotion:

“...if you are ... taking leadership positions ... it is not just the skills that the people have and the working style, it is understanding government relations, politics and ... everything that you have to deal with in your home country, you’ve got to learn that in another country.” (Fiona, Far East)

In addition to gaining professional, international, personal and cultural experiences, the expatriates gave a number of other career development-related reasons for undertaking their assignments. These included the learning opportunities, skills development, challenge, autonomy and variety that they presented – all factors that they believed helped them along their career track:

“The resources are a lot more stretched ... so at a lower level you have got much more opportunity ... to pick up responsibility and take on a variety of different things...” (Trish, Far East)

The assignees (27S», 63R) indicated that expatriation was “*absolutely crucial*” for career progression, particularly “*...if you aspire to reach a ... fairly senior level*”:

“...it is a key factor in many career opportunities and recruitment criteria as we are a very internationally focussed company.” (Sally, Australasia)

“...you might find yourself ... managing people who are out in the trenches in different countries, and ... I think that becomes more difficult to do, and ... to earn

the respect of the people who work for you if you don't know what it's like." (Susan, North Africa)

These findings align with the extant literature that indicates international experience as a prerequisite for leadership (Caligiuri and Colakoglu, 2007; Mendenhall *et al.*, 2002; Orser and Leck, 2010). Yet, given the exhortation in the literature of the necessity of international experience and the assignees' emphasis (particularly by those interviewed) on the high importance given to career progression, it was surprising that only 35% of the survey respondents recorded the potential to enhance their careers through assignment acceptance as 'very important' (median 2) to their participation decision. Only 29% said that the potential to gain promotion in the host location was 'very important' (median 2). Similarly, only 28% said that the potential to be promoted on return home was 'very important' (median 2). These data suggest that career enhancement and promotion are by no means considered as automatically secured through assignment acceptance. This aligns with the literature relating to the long-standing uncertainty of career paths including expatriation (Feldman and Thomas, 1992; Forster, 1997; Tung, 1988).

However, the assignees did not envisage damaging their careers should they turn down an assignment – only four (8%) said that this was 'very important' (median 1) in their current assignment participation decision. Having a job to return to, however, was thought to be 'very important' by 36% of the survey respondents (median 2). These findings reaffirm the literature which identifies employees' concerns for employment continuity on repatriation (Forster, 1992, 1997), particularly given the lack of clear employer statements on potential positions and duties post-assignment (Brookfield, 2010).

Career contribution: the effect of asset profile and size

In the oil and gas exploration and production sector, the upstream physical operations (wells, platforms, pipelines, reserves and the back-up functions servicing them either on or off-site) based in, or linked to, a geographical location where oil and gas exploration and production takes place are described as 'assets'. An unexpected issue affecting career outcomes potentially flowing from undertaking expatriation emerged from the thematic

analysis of the qualitative data: namely, the profile (19S, 58R) and the size (8S, 18R) of the asset where the expatriate assignment took place. In short, the career contribution derived from an assignment depends upon the stage of – and revenue generated from – the oil and gas exploration and production asset. As such, this helps to explain why the survey findings suggest that career progression and promotion may not be viewed as an automatic conclusion of assignment acceptance: put simply, some assets had high potential for career contribution; others had less:

“Those countries that are ... just about to bring on value to the corporate are the ones that get the attention and ... will enhance your career, whereas the ones that are going to be delivering bad news because they have been in production a long time and therefore present ... damage limitation rather than bringing glory for the company ... will not enhance to the same extent.” (Una, North Africa)

The potentially positive (or negative) career outcomes linked to asset stage were recognised clearly by assignees who had undertaken several assignments (but also by those on their first posting):

“There are times when it is great to be in assets and there are times when not so much is happening and I think that really dictates it.” (Linda, Australasia)

Certain regions were identified as able to provide the most promising career prospects through their profile and/ or size:

“...some of the newer ventures like (Australasia), (South America) or some of the really core producing assets, like (North Africa) or (Caribbean) for example. (North America) for business development is also very good.” (Julie, North America)

However, the expatriates were mindful that asset profiles changed and that accepting an assignment in a declining asset could lead to considerable problems in gaining future roles. The following four quotations encapsulate the differences in the career contribution attainable through expatriation to assets at different stages in the exploration and production cycle, illustrating the value derived from:

❖ being part of new projects:

“...you ride the wave of the build up...” (Questa, Central Asia)

❖ exploration of a high profile discovery:

“...when I was there ... there was a new find but the downstream business wasn't making much money ... It was 'why are we in South America?' ... So if you come

back and say 'I've been to (South America)', they say 'oh yeah, great' (sarcasm) but now if you come back and you say 'I have been to the (South American) asset', they say 'oh wow! and what is that like, how interesting an asset, what project were you on?'" (Polly, Western Europe)

❖ a vast core producer:

"If you were to go out to (North Africa) now ... it is still a vast asset, producing a tremendous amount of value ... but still people wouldn't necessarily say 'ah, you are in the team that operated (North Africa)', because it is not as sexy." (Linda, Australasia)

❖ and a declining (or small) asset:

"...if you are in one of these sorts of outposts, where there are not many visitors from head office that can particularly be a problem. Like ... (West Africa), (East Africa) ... in a state of stagnation ... not kicking a lot of goals." (Karen, West Africa)

All in all, assets in exciting stages of development were considered to provide the greatest career contribution. Large assets and steady core producers were less high profile but, nonetheless, were viewed as offering a wider range of career experiences and also higher management visibility than smaller assets:

"...if you're going to the big ones, you will have visibility because where do senior management go if they can only go to two countries a year? They go to the big ones; they are not going to go to the tiny ones, are they? Unless there was a big, major problem ... So I have deliberately chosen big assets ... that was ... a strategic decision on my part..." (Susan, North Africa)

Finally, the high value derived from undertaking assignments in company headquarters' operations was highlighted, due to management visibility and range of opportunities:

"When you want a real career ... you would go to ... HQ." (Cara, North Africa)

Assignment contribution to home life and family stability

As discussed earlier, some assignees attributed the purpose of their expatriation to their spouses' careers. As table 12.1 shows, 63% of the assignees were either married or partnered. For comparison, Brookfield (2011a) reports 68% of expatriates being married, although this figure does not differentiate by gender and covers all industries. Nonetheless, there appears to be little difference between the marital status of the female expatriates employed by the case study firms and those of wider industry.

Table 12.1: Marital status

Marital status	Number	%
Married	35	49
Partnered	10	14
Single	24	34
Divorced/ widowed	2	3
<i>n</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 12.2: Accompanied status

Family status	Number	%
Accompanied	33	46
Unaccompanied	38	54
<i>n</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 12.2 shows that 46% of the women were accompanied on their assignments; 31 by their husband or partner. Of the 45 assignees who were married or partnered, 69% were accompanied on their assignments by their husbands/ partners. For comparison, Brookfield (2011a) reports a higher figure: 80% of married/ partnered assignees being accompanied (again an all-industry, non-gender specific figure). This suggests that female assignees are less likely to be accompanied than the overall assignee population, not accounting for gender.

Of the 26 assignees interviewed, 20 were married/ partnered. The extant literature suggests women's tied status reduces their international mobility (Ackers, 2004). In line with this, eight (16R) commented on their partners' influence in their participation decision, pointing out that they would have prioritised their relationships ahead of expatriation if it had not been possible for their partners to relocate and/ or work abroad with them, and would do so similarly in future. Indeed, the main location factor that acted as a disincentive to current assignment participation was related to concern over work opportunities for husbands/ partners. This was reported by 21% of the 71 survey respondents and 16 assignees (16R) commented on this. These findings in relation to spousal/ partner concerns concur with the literature which reports that the spouse's willingness to expatriate affects employees' intentions to go on assignment (Brett and Stroh, 1995; Dupuis *et al.*, 2008; Mäkelä *et al.*, 2011). Yet, only one woman reported turning down a previous assignment for this reason.

Nine assignees commented on the strategies they used to juggle their relationships with expatriate work citing: co-working (both partners working in the same firm) (4S, 6R); undertaking compatible roles (working in different firms) (4S, 7R); and trailing (with one partner working but with career detriment) (1S, 1R), with some creative outcomes:

“Being an expat works for me as my husband works offshore and so we have the opportunity to live and work anywhere. I accepted the job with (company) on condition it was an expat role...” (Miranda, Caribbean)

For co-working couples, the size of the asset was an important factor in the expatriation decision; larger assets provided a greater likelihood of both careers being accommodated beneficially. Co-working did not result in the female partners automatically undertaking less senior roles to their partners, in contradiction to Hakim’s (2000) predictions; greater career equivalency was supported and in evidence, particularly in larger assets with sufficient expatriate openings to accommodate couples with both partners in senior positions (Lakhani and Gade, 1992). Yet, although it was typically the case that their partners worked abroad (either through co-working or in compatible roles), managing two careers was not easy. Assignees spoke of difficulties in the timing and location of their assignments and couples agreeing to prioritise one career (not automatically to the woman’s detriment) or doing so on an alternate, negotiated basis as circumstances dictated (Hardill *et al.*, 1997). For example:

“...every opportunity that comes in ... especially if it requires moving location ... the two of us talk and we discuss the pros and cons and we ... go with that decision ... (my company) has come out very well but it doesn’t necessarily mean that my career will drive the next move.” (Di, Far East)

Spouses supported each other such that each assignment undertaken offered the best combination of career contribution to each partner as suggested by the extant literature (Gordon and Whelan-Berry, 2004; Välimäki *et al.*, 2009).

Table 12.3 provides a summary of how the 20 partnered assignees who were interviewed used a variety of assignment types to balance their careers. As can be seen, 16 women were on long-term assignments: nine of them had husbands or partners also on long-term assignment either co-working or in compatible roles in the same host location; one woman’s husband rotated and another’s commuted to join her in their respective host countries; three had non-working husbands in the host location; and two undertook their long-term assignments single status leaving their husbands behind. Four other women left their husbands/ partners in the home country; of these, one went on an unaccompanied short-term assignment and three undertook rotation.

Table 12.3: The use of different assignment types to address partner's assignment/ employment status

Current assignment of female expatriate	Assignment/ employment status of husband/ partner				
	Long-term assignment	Rotational assignment	Commuting to host location (working in home country)	Home country based (working in home country)	Host country based (not working)
Long-term	9	1	1	2	3
Short-term				1	
Rotational				3	

Table 12.4 shows that 24% of the assignees had children. Seven had one child; five each had two and three children. The 32 children ranged in age from babies under one year old to adults aged 18 or over. The age profile of the children indicated that the women were less likely to be undertaking expatriation during children's senior school years: 22 of the children were under 11 years; six were aged between 18 and 26; while only four were aged between 12 and 16. This aligns with the findings in the extant literature indicating that assignment participation declines to accommodate children's schooling at critical education stages (Dupuis *et al.*, 2008; Tharenou, 2009).

Table 12.4: Family status

Family status	Number	%
No children	54	76
Children	17	24
<i>n</i>	71	100

Fifteen of the 17 mothers (88%) were accompanied by their children while on assignment: 12 were accompanied by all of them; three by some (leaving the older children behind). Two left them in the home country (one had grown up children; the other left a teenage child behind while on a short-term assignment). While Brookfield (2011a) reports that 47% of expatriates (all-industries, non-gender specific data) have accompanying children, only 21% of the 71 women assignees in the two case study firms did. This suggests that women's expatriate participation may be affected negatively once they have children, possibly explained by the nature of exploration and production work environments in the oil and gas sector (challenging and remote locations). Indeed, with respect to location factors, potential education opportunities for children were reported as current assignment disincentives by 6% of the survey respondents; but only one woman

reported turning down a previous assignment for this reason. The following quote was typical:

“...whether you can go to these countries, you have to establish whether the schools are actually of a standard that you are prepared to accept...” (Izzy, Caribbean)

Unexpectedly, and in contrast to the extant literature which suggests having children reduces willingness to take up assignments or precludes expatriation (Dupuis *et al.*, 2008; Hutchings *et al.*, 2010; Tharenou, 2008; Tzeng, 2006; Zhu *et al.*, 2006), 11 assignees (14R) reported on family responsibilities influencing their assignment participation decision positively. They gave examples of how expatriate housing close to the workplace combined with low cost, high quality childcare (particularly in the Far East) enabled them to combine full-time work roles (in an expatriate capacity) with motherhood which they said they could not have done in their home countries where long commutes and hours of work could not easily be combined with childcare responsibilities. Examples were even given of women stating the underlying driver for taking up expatriation was having children:

“I was working part-time before I left, because we had three very young children ... so I was looking at either going part-time permanently and putting my career on hold really, which is effectively what you do in this type of job, and/ or changing so that we could make things work for us.” (Izzy, Caribbean)

Indeed, it was recognised that international schools were excellent and, as such, participation in expatriation by mothers could be facilitated through access to them:

“...some of the best education in the world for children is in these international schools ... there are many good reasons to be an expat.” (Fiona, Far East)

Thus, motherhood did not appear to have a detrimental effect on assignment participation *per se*, but any likely disruption to their children’s education or lives generally was taken into consideration.

Home and family life: the effect of location

The literature suggests that women are less willing to move to developing countries (Tharenou, 2009). A number of geographical factors were raised as potential disincentives

or deterrents to assignment participation. For example, primitive healthcare was cited as an assignment disincentive by 11% of the survey respondents; mothers, in particular, reported being less likely to accept future postings if the destination posed health risks to children. Yet, only one woman reported turning down a previous assignment on health grounds. A total of 17» (25R) commented on health. Related to this, road safety was raised by two (3R) and pollution by two (2R). Access to medical facilities was considered very important. While company-provided health care via local clinics was appreciated, there was considerable concern over emergency facilities in less developed and isolated locations. These concerns were raised by single women and those with families.

Poor security was also reported as an assignment disincentive by 11%, although again only one woman reported turning down a previous assignment for this reason. Security concerns attracted comments from 17» assignees (24R). Although assignees who had accepted postings to higher risk destinations commented that these were by no means as bad in practice as they were perceived to be, once again, women with children were less prepared to accept postings to high security risk regions:

“I certainly wouldn’t want to take my family to (West Africa). People do, but I probably wouldn’t feel too happy about that.” (Izzy, Caribbean)

Company security measures were generally, by and large, considered acceptable although these did impact on lifestyle. Limited facilities were reported as an assignment disincentive by 9% of the 71 survey respondents; two women turned down a previous assignment for this reason. Thirteen» assignees (26R) commented on their lifestyle being affected through location factors. Indeed, very few of the exploration and production locations where the organisations had operations were considered to provide lifestyle attraction – with the exception of Australasia. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, several of the women assignees spoke of their love of expatriate life:

“So just for the lifestyle ... with this kind of job you can have whatever you want to and I wanted the freedom.” (Cara, North Africa)

“We both enjoy travelling ... we got the ... expat bug and we really enjoyed living overseas ... you’re travellers, it... fits our lifestyle.” (Fiona, Far East)

Isolation was considered a major disincentive to assignment participation in remote locations: 15» assignees (25R) and two HR experts (10R) reported on this location factor. Loneliness resulted in boredom with little respite from work. Accessibility was also considered problematic as the time taken to get to and out of such locations was time consuming, eating into personal time. The long distance away from their home countries was also a disincentive:

“If you have to travel by boat ... and then find an airport to get out, this eats into your free time.” (Bella, West Africa)

The HR experts noted that, besides the geographical isolation within less developed locations and lack of direct flights out, some first world locations with a potentially attractive lifestyle, such as Australasia, were also considered remote, requiring long-haul flights to reach them. This could present a disincentive to assignment take-up.

Extreme climates were reported as an assignment disincentive by 9% of the survey respondents. Yet, in relation to turning down previous assignments, this emerged as the most cited location factor – four women had turned down an assignment for this reason. Nine (12R) said that if the weather in the host location was too hot or too cold, it could act as a disincentive/ deterrent to assignment take-up; for instance, if they and their families were unable to continue with preferred leisure and sporting activities.

Although the assignees highlighted and reported on many geographical factors that acted as disincentives, these did not appear, in the main, to block their assignment acceptance. The main exception related to women with children who were more likely to turn down assignments on health, medical, security and education grounds. A point to note concerned the assets where the women with accompanying children were employed. For example, seven of the interviewees had children with them and it was notable that the women worked in countries with very affordable and/ or high quality childcare (such as North Africa, the Caribbean and the Far East) and in other regions with a “*very pro-family*” culture (such as Scandinavia):

“...home help is affordable, good quality ... to a standard and level that we couldn’t have in the UK or even the US ... I have a live-in maid ... I am paying the equivalent that I was paying in the UK ... just one day a week into a child minder ... for my maid to work full-time, six days a week...” (Wanda, Far East)

However, their host operations were unlikely to provide the greatest career contribution as they were not new projects, high profile discoveries or regional/ central headquarters' locations offering exposure to senior management:

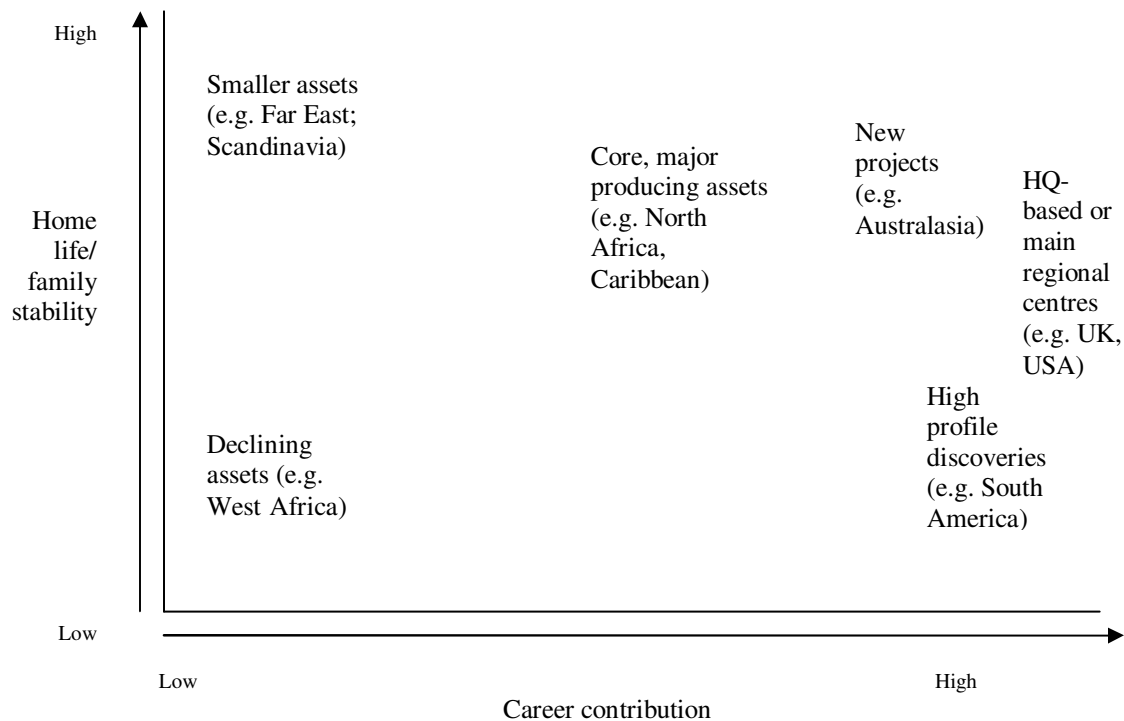
"We are a long way from the centre ... So for people in Asia ... you have your 30 minutes in the spotlight. But if you flunk it, it can take a year or two to get out of that." (Fallon, HR – Far East)

None of the interviewees in new projects (such as in Australasia) had children. Although Australasia offered an attractive climate, lifestyle and no health or security concerns, it was regarded as a remote location resulting in home country family separation. One South American asset was especially well-regarded for its career contribution but women with children refused assignments there for security reasons:

"I did turn down an opportunity to go to (South America) due to the safety and security issues for my family. My primary concern now ... is focused on suitability for my family and this comes before my career progression. A change from when I was in (North Africa) with no kids." (Wanda, Far East)

With the exception of those women with accompanying children who worked in the core producing assets (North Africa, Caribbean), it appeared that a compromise had been made in balancing paid and family work (Corby and Stanworth, 2009). The mothers had managed to strike a balance between gaining some career value (although not necessarily the highest) from expatriation while combining this with family responsibilities, suggesting their actions were in line with the principle of satisficing (Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b). This is depicted in figure 12.1.

Figure 12.1: The relationship between asset profile/ size and career/ family outcomes



Preconditions to assignment take-up

A final reason for assignment participation concerned remuneration and benefits: 21» assignees (54R) and three HR experts (7R) commented on this. Clear recognition of the earning potential and consequent financial attraction of assignment participation was evident:

“If I didn’t say money I would be lying, as I think everybody would.” (Di, Far East)

Less developed countries with security, cultural, health, access and other challenges attracted the highest levels of medical, healthcare and security provision as well as financial payments. The latter appeared to encourage women’s participation in particularly difficult locations:

“(Central Asia) had an extreme climate in winter but the uplift on the salary made up for that. It made up for a lot of things!” (Penny, Long-term, Caribbean)

“The international assignment package, it is better than most other places, so it did play a factor in terms of accepting the assignment.” (Xanthe, Long-term, West Africa)

However, while monetary compensation was appreciated by assignees, if they rejected a location on grounds of health, security, lifestyle, spouse employment and education being unsuitable for their families, additional incentive payments did not serve to change their minds.

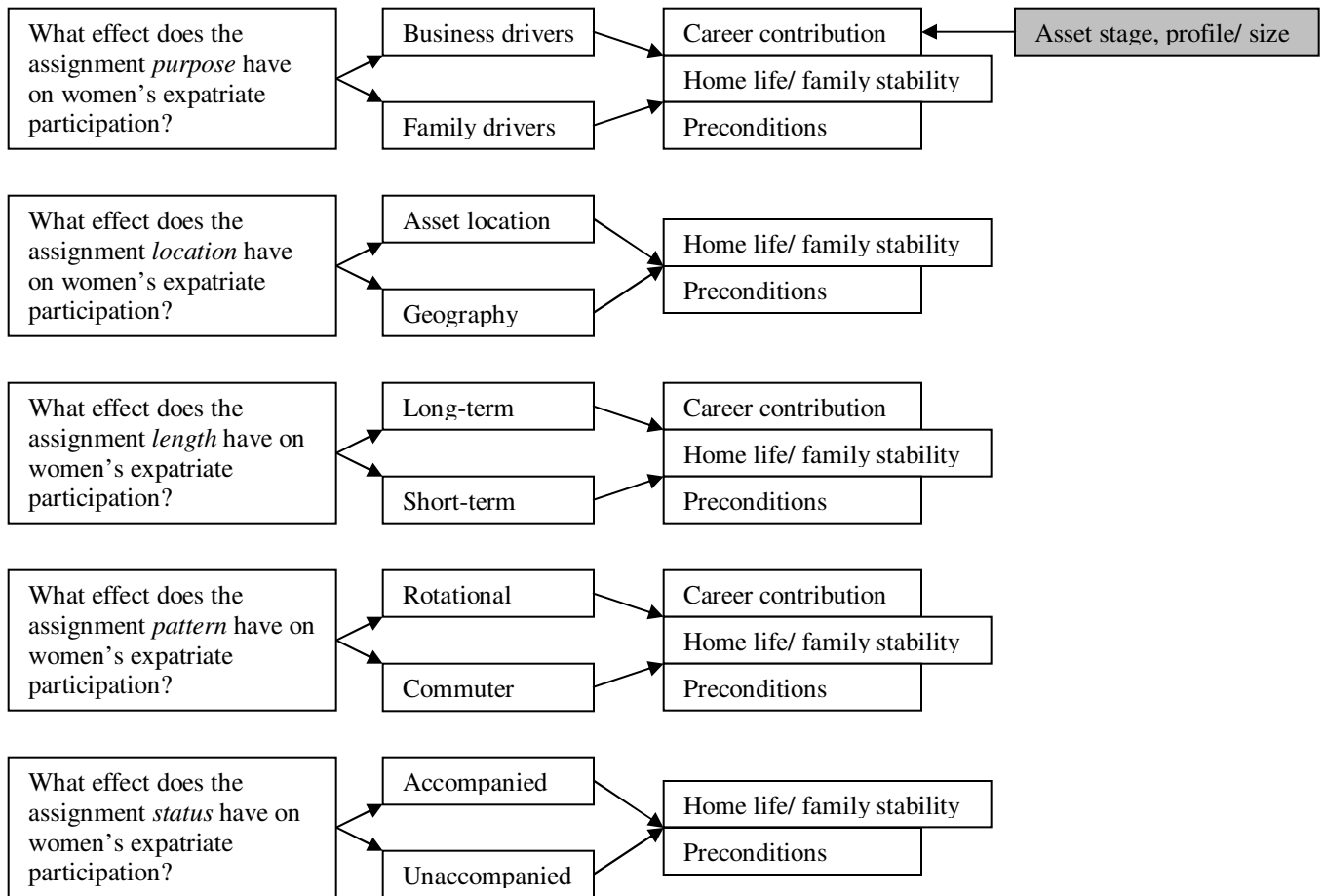
As the extant literature notes, monetary satisfaction and applicable benefits are necessary precursors of assignment take-up (Fish and Wood, 1996; Konopaske and Werner, 2005). Yet, detailed analysis of the qualitative data revealed that, while a suitably generous (or compensatory) financial package was expected as a precondition, it was not the main driver of women's expatriation. Hence, the findings align with the extant literature: money is not a major expatriation motivator (Pate and Scullion, 2010). However, although the female expatriates did not regard financial inducements as providing the primary purpose behind their assignment participation decision, the HR experts referred to *"the expat gravy train"* and those *"who ... play the expatriate game"* with *"two or three times the net salary"* that they could earn at home. This suggests that the HR experts' and female assignees' views on the importance of a financially rewarding package underpinning the assignment participation decision do not appear to be aligned, suggesting tensions between the custodians and recipients of policy (Perkins and Daste, 2007).

Summary and implications

As depicted in figure 12.2 (page 181), women's participation decisions are based upon an evaluation of the level of contribution that each assignment can make to their career, family life and financial potential, with the host asset's stage of development, profile and size and their effect on career contribution being of particular importance. New projects, high profile assets in exciting stages of development, large and steady core producers, and headquarters' operations provide the greatest career contribution through such factors as their visibility and exposure to senior management, their technical and operational challenges and the range of experiences available within them. Set against this are location factors which affect family life and influence the level of financial reward.

While these findings contribute to knowledge, career contribution, home life/ family stability and financial rewards vary by assignment length, pattern and by accompanied or unaccompanied status. Therefore in the following chapter research questions concerning the assignment type effect in relation to *length*, *pattern* and *status* are addressed. Following the representation in figure 12.2, the contribution that these types of assignment make to women's careers and their home life/ family stability will be discussed together with any preconditions. In so-doing the relevance and relative importance of an assignment type effect will be established.

Figure 12.2: The implications of assignment type for women's expatriate participation



CHAPTER 13: THE ASSIGNMENT TYPE EFFECT – LENGTH, PATTERN AND STATUS

Introduction

In figure 9.1 (page 115) it is suggested that the type of assignment influences women's expatriate participation. Evidence presented in chapter 12 on assignment *purpose* and *location* indicates that the female assignees sought career contribution and home life/family stability through expatriation, underpinned by necessary financial preconditions. In this chapter the research question 'what effect do assignment *length, pattern and status* have on women's expatriate participation?' is addressed. The career contribution, effects on home and family life and preconditions associated with the use of long-term, short-term, rotational, commuter and un/accompanied status assignments are considered, with recognition of the inter-relationships between these assignment types and the industry context in which they are used (figure 9.2, page 116). The findings³⁴ are evaluated within the extant literature and a model of the relationship between assignment type and the career, family and preconditions aspects of expatriation is proposed.

Policy definitions and volume of assignments undertaken

The case study firms' policies defined long-term assignments as over a year although, in practice, they averaged between two and three years (but could stretch to five). The HR experts reported that short-term assignments were defined as being at least 42 days in Collins Co. and three months in Hagman Co. with an upper limit of one year's duration in both firms. However, wherever possible, such assignments were limited to six months linked to taxation implications. Both firms used relatively few short-term assignments; these were applied, in the main, to temporary/ maternity cover or to meet urgent skills shortages/ project requirements. The literature notes that series of short-term international

³⁴ The volume of sources (denominated as S) with references (denominated as R) made to the issues identified are presented. Where assignees provided interview and survey data, sources are de-duplicated (denominated with ») and total references reported. Full supporting NVivo frequency data are presented in appendix 9, tables 7-8. Descriptive statistics, drawn from the census survey (analysed using SPSS) are presented in appendix 10, tables 3-8.

postings are often used for employee development (Harris and Dickman, 2005), for instance for graduate *cadres* (Perkins and Shortland, 2006). Aligned to this, both organisations operated graduate development international placement programmes, in which six month placements abroad were offered (classed as short-term assignments).

The oil and gas exploration and production sector also uses rotational assignments. As recorded in policy, these involved 28 days on shift (12 hours work per day; seven days a week); followed by 28 days off shift at home. A further pattern used was commuting. Commuter assignments involve frequent travel over lengthy durations and, as such, are distinguished from business trips in policy (Brookfield, 2011a; CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996). Yet, Collins Co. did not define this type of international mobility as expatriation and had no formal policy supporting it; Hagman Co.'s policy only came into effect in 2007 and applied practical limitations such as journey times limited to four hours and assignment length capped at one year. Although the literature suggests that use of commuter assignments is increasing (Brookfield, 2010; Cartus, 2010), this assignment type was rarely used by the case study firms.

As shown in table 13.1, the majority of assignees had experienced long-term expatriation. This aligns with the literature that states long-term assignments are the most frequently used assignment type (Brookfield, 2010). At the time of the survey, 51 women were on long-term assignments with three on extended international transfers; 12 were on short-term assignments (nine on the graduate scheme); and five were undertaking rotational assignments. Thirty-four of the 71 surveyed had undertaken one or more previous assignments; 12 had undertaken two; five had undertaken three; and one, four, with the majority experiencing both long-term and short-term mobility. The length, pattern and status of assignments generated a large volume of comments³⁵. These were analysed together with the survey data to find out which combinations of assignment lengths,

³⁵ 26» assignees (102R) and 5 HR experts (8R) commented on long-term assignments; 27» assignees (80R) and 5 HR experts (21R) on short-term assignments; 16» assignees (43R) and 7 HR experts (31R) on the graduate scheme; 31» assignees (146R) and 8 HR experts (26R) on rotational assignments; 7» assignees (20R) and 4 HR experts (17R) on commuter assignments; 14 assignees (23R) and 5 HR experts (8R) on accompanied assignments; 22 assignees (74R) and 6 HR experts (23R) on unaccompanied assignments.

patterns and un/accompanied status created the best outcomes for career contribution, home life and family stability and preconditions/ rewards and hence their effect on women's expatriate participation.

Table 13.1: Assignment lengths/ patterns undertaken

Assignment length	Current assignment	One previous assignment	Two previous assignments	Three previous assignments	Four previous assignments
Long-term	51	12	9	4	1
Extended international transfer	3	1	-	-	-
Short-term	12	18	3	3	-
Rotational	5	2	-	-	-
Commuter	-	1	-	-	-
<i>n</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>5*</i>	<i>1</i>

* Some women had both long-term and short-term previous assignments.

Career contribution: the effect of assignment length and pattern

Analysis of the survey data suggests that positive career outcomes were more frequently attributed to undertaking long-term assignments than any other type. While rotational assignments provided professional experience and short-term assignments were considered career enhancing, lengthy expatriation was particularly valued for gaining international, professional and personal experience. Extended transfers were 'very important' for gaining promotion. These findings align with the extant literature which highlights the value of long-term assignments to planned career development and leadership roles (PWC/Cranfield, 2006) and their likelihood of providing return on investment (McNulty and Tharenou, 2004, 2006; PWC/Cranfield, 2006).

Long-term assignments presented concerns over job availability and reintegration difficulties on repatriation, in line with the extant literature (De Cieri *et al.*, 2009; Konopaske and Werner, 2005; Starr and Currie, 2009; University of Westminster/CBI, 1993). Potential career damage was envisaged if short-term assignments were refused, although this was less of a concern for long-term assignment refusal. The graduate trainees undertook short-term assignments as part of their development programme, helping to

explain this finding. Both short-term and long-term assignments were considered to enhance cultural understanding.

The main themes identified from the qualitative data analysis concern how the assignment length/ pattern addressed career contribution through meeting organisational objectives and individual career goals. The data also revealed how assignment lengths and patterns best addressed the requirements of different occupations and functions.

Meeting organisational objectives

The assignees reported that undertaking long-term assignments enabled them to contribute effectively and meaningfully to the business. They were able to work through at least one or even several business cycles, gaining experience and knowledge, thereby “*adding value*” and becoming “*more entrenched in the way the business operates*”. Long-term assignments provided time to adapt to the host country business environment and this enabled them to build strong work relationships. In turn, this created stability, allowed them to plan better and facilitated their impact on the business:

“I like to be able to contribute value, rather than just have a toe dipped in and not be able to ... really make an impression on the position...” (Una, Long-term)

In addition, long-term assignments were reported as being well-recognised within their organisations as they enabled assignees to achieve involvement in a wide range of issues and to have a strong chance of delivering on projects with consequent career value.

Short-term assignments could potentially provide career contribution through meeting organisational objectives if used for clearly delineated project-based work:

“...it needs to be well defined and ... understood – why the person is doing it, how they are going to do it, what they are coming back to when they have finished it...” (Milly, Long-term)

However, the assignees identified a number of disadvantages in undertaking them. They suggested that the short time span would not provide sufficient time for assignees to learn fully, plan, build relationships, gain business understanding and deliver on goals. As a result, it was suggested there might be less organisational benefit derived from such an

assignment type due to time constraints precluding the assignee from adding value, with a consequent detrimental effect on meeting individual career goals:

“...you are not able to get into the specifics of a particular situation; you are just applying general knowledge to sort out a problem.” (Xanthe, Long-term)

The graduate trainees, however, reported that their short-term international placements achieved the stated organisational purpose of career development. They gained technical skills, first-hand experiences of the assets, and exposure to different working environments and learning opportunities, as well as making useful contacts.

The HR experts said that rotational assignments were used primarily to perform functional roles (*“doing a real job”*) and to transfer knowledge. Particular issues inherent in the rotational assignment pattern were identified by assignees as inhibitors to delivering organisational goals and, as a consequence, in providing career contribution. The ‘on/ off’ nature of rotation resulted in reduced ownership of a jointly held role. When assignments were shared with joint venture partners, this created the likelihood of even lower role ownership. While less problematic in some technical jobs, this was especially detrimental in roles where project goals and strategic objectives were paramount. Hence, having a good working relationship with – and complementary skills to – their back-to-back (the person who did the role during the assignee’s 28 day absence) was identified as being crucial to ensuring that assignment objectives were met and career contribution derived as a result:

“...what I can feasibly achieve ... is so much influenced by my back-to-back. So if we are constantly at odds, the chance of me being able to deliver something of value at the end of my assignment is reduced significantly, because I am absorbed with battling ... with this other person ... doing my job.” (Questa, Rotational)

Working just one month in two with little, if any, overlap of time together (a couple of hours at the airport when papers were handed over was cited as an example) meant that the shift changeover also affected work continuity. Not surprisingly, this style of working relationship could impact detrimentally on the value that a rotational assignee could bring to the role and, as a consequence, the career contribution that such a working pattern could provide (*“I only have six months to deliver”*).

Commuter assignments were used to service assets as needed but were not an encouraged form of mobility, being mainly unsupported via organisational policy. The career contribution presented through this assignment type was considered low by assignees because those undertaking them did not remain in the host location. As a result they experienced the danger of not being fully associated with the delivery and outcomes of the role.

Meeting individual career goals

Long-term expatriation was reported as deepening the assignees' professional and personal experiences. Multiple long-term assignments were considered to be particularly helpful in providing a broad base of experience, with positive career connotations:

"...I think I would struggle to see myself in this grade, if I had not got the international exposure." (Susan, Long-term)

With regard to short-term assignments, the expatriates noted that they could *"benefit from a developmental perspective"* and *"know there is a timeframe"* when undertaking them.

Short-term assignments were considered career-enhancing:

"...an individual can get a lot out of a short-term assignment ... in some cases it may be even easier to get lots of points effectively through ... short-term, because it is more specified and any of the issues that you might have in an international location are very short lived." (Milly, Long-term)

Yet, while recognising their career potential and acknowledging that several short-term postings over a sustained period might provide sufficient international experience and recognition of performance to be considered for promotion, the assignees did not consider short-term assignments to create as great an individual career contribution as long-term assignments:

"...they don't necessarily ... jump to the conclusion that because you have done a short-term assignment, unless they have had direct interaction with you and they see that you are a high calibre person, I don't think that necessarily you fit into the frame." (Linda, Long-term)

Limited assignment timescales were reported by the graduate trainees as hindering their access to the most useful developmental work experience and thereby reducing opportunities for gaining professional experience and cultural understanding:

“...you usually find some managers don’t give you the work or as much responsibility as if they knew you were going to be there longer term ... every time you get to the point where you understand how things work and can deliver things, you are changed and moved to a different place...” (Trish, Short-term)

The graduate trainees also spoke of restricted choice in the assignments they were offered, placements being compulsory and even being “rail-roaded” into taking some of them. This may help to explain why the quantitative data highlights potentially greater career damage from refusal of short-term assignments.

Short-term assignments were regarded by both the HR experts and the assignees as providing a useful ‘taster’ of international experience and helpful to making future long-term assignment participation decisions:

“...I was quite nervous about going, but once I had experienced it ... it gave me the confidence ... if I hadn’t had that early short-term assignment, I would probably ... have been more reluctant to undertake something longer.” (Wanda, Long-term)

While rotational assignments were not regarded as career-enhancing *per se*, it was acknowledged that career opportunities might flow from them:

“I have done a rotational assignment ... I think it’s ... career-enhancing to get very good experience in projects and in operations.” (Rhoda, Long-term)

However, the assignee interviewees also commented on rotational assignees’ lack of visibility to senior management within their organisations (“no one else sees you”) and the isolation that resulted from undertaking them (“typically you are not in the office on the other month”). To reduce their lack of visibility (and ensure their workload did not build up too much during their off shifts) most rotators did visit their offices and/ or review their e-mails while at home. Nonetheless, “the loss of visibility and isolation from the parent company” reported in the literature in respect of long-term assignment repatriation (Dowling *et al.*, 1999: 208) applied to rotational working:

“It’s not like I’m ... going into the office every off shift. So you are effectively forgotten about and then when you come back, you are seen as the same person that you were when you left for three years.” (Questa, Rotational)

Occupational implications

The assignees reported that an ‘ideal’ assignment length and/ or pattern reflecting business and operations cycles and addressing work relationships was needed to ensure that they could gain maximum career contribution. This was related to the types of occupations held within organisational functions. For example, in the commercial function, a two year long-term assignment was considered best to meet organisational goals, add value to the business and create career contribution for the assignee:

“...it takes a year to go through the whole business cycle, to be able to do a better job ... and improve that business cycle in the second year.” (Polly, Commercial)

The assignees employed in geology and geophysics reported that lengthy long-term assignments were required to address their functions’ operations cycles if they were to contribute effectively to the business and derive individual career benefits:

“...from a technical work perspective ... it is very difficult to achieve a huge amount in two years.” (Wanda, Exploration)

“...with an oil company ... the projects can be very, very lengthy so if you want to see something through from exploring for a block, to getting the block, to drilling a well, you can be five years in, and even longer ... to see something from cradle to grave.” (Fiona, Exploration)

Assignees in the legal, HR and CSR functions also reported on how lengthy long-term assignments were required to build the continuity and relationships necessary for effective performance:

“...so much of what we do is based on relationships. Also there is a corporate memory that needs to be captured ... It’s not like operational staff where you can just hand the keys to a plant to cover...” (Una, Legal)

Supporting this, the HR experts commented on the “*commercial payback*” flowing from long-term relationships, particularly in countries where business dealings rested on relationship building (for example, countries in South America, Middle East and North Africa) aligned with the literature (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997). It was therefore surprising to find that female assignees in HR had undertaken short-term and rotational assignments while those in CSR reported on working on rotational and commuter assignments.

In contrast, relatively short long-term and rotational assignments were typically used for technical roles, particularly in engineering; a function where overly lengthy assignments were noted to be detrimental to career contribution:

“I think the key is making sure that you don’t stay so long that you have only been doing the same thing...” (Abby, Engineering)

It was also notable that, in line with trends covering a range of industry sectors (Cartus, 2010; Collings *et al.*, 2007; Forster and Johnsen, 1996; Konopaske and Werner, 2005), the HR experts reported long-term assignments becoming shorter. As discussed previously, although considerable numbers of women are employed in functions such as exploration, their expatriate participation is relatively low; in the more ‘female friendly’ functions where expatriate numbers are low (such as legal and HR), women make up a good proportion of them. Reducing assignment lengths is particularly disadvantageous in the legal and HR functions where organisational and career successes rest on relationship building; and shorter assignments offer less potential career contribution in exploration, discouraging women from expatriating and thus potentially cementing their position in the non-mobile roles within this function. Reductions in assignment lengths appear to have less impact on the career contribution derived from expatriation in functions such as engineering, notable for its high male expatriate representation.

Thus, shortening assignment lengths within the oil and gas exploration and production sector in line with wider industry trends presents a likely differential and detrimental effect on women’s expatriate participation: organisational and career contribution value reduces as long-term assignments become shorter, potentially discouraging women from taking them up. This particularly affects the disciplines where women are most represented as expatriates or have the greatest potential to be. In summary, shortening assignment lengths may reinforce women’s low expatriate representation in a male-dominated industry or affect it negatively even further.

Home life and family stability

Besides career contribution, it was identified in the previous chapter that home life and family stability are important factors that female assignees take into consideration in their

expatriate participation decisions. Un/accompanied status is linked to assignment length and pattern aligned with wider industry norms (Brookfield, 2011a): long-term assignments are offered on accompanied status; short-term assignments are usually offered unaccompanied but in some instances, depending on length and family circumstances, may be accompanied; rotational and commuter assignments are unaccompanied under company policies. Thus, the effect of assignment length and pattern cannot be disentangled entirely to address the research question that relates to the effect of assignment status on women's assignment participation. Nonetheless, as highlighted in table 13.2, the assignees show greater willingness to undertake future accompanied than unaccompanied assignments, with accompanied long-term assignments clearly preferred over all other types.

Table 13.2: Definite future assignment intentions

Assignment type	No.	%
Accompanied long-term (n = 70)	52	74
Accompanied short-term (n = 70)	27	39
Unaccompanied long-term (n = 71)	14	20
Unaccompanied short-term (n = 70)	12	17
Rotational (n = 71)	18	25
Commuter (n = 70)	10	14

Long-term and short-term assignment lengths and accompanied status

From the assignees' perspective, long-term assignments were considered particularly attractive in relation to home life and social aspects. The length of the assignment enabled them to become familiar with cultural differences, be assimilated within local society, make friends and build a social life. Long-term assignments were reported as enabling the creation of a 'home' and 'home life' both for those with accompanying spouses/ partners and family as well as for singles:

“Personally I prefer long-term assignments to short-term because I find these much less disruptive. Although you go away for longer you have time to establish a life there and some semblance of normality. This is especially important as a single person where you don't take your stability and base with you and have to rebuild your support network in the new country. It also means you can establish a routine and make commitments to groups/ hobbies which are important for stability.”
(Matilda, Long-term)

The length of the assignment also provided stability for children, particularly for those of school age who would find frequent moves unsettling:

“...I think moving every two years and changing schools for the children is very unsettling ... longer periods of time ... are better in that respect.” (Wanda, Long-term)

It was notable that none of the women who were currently accompanied on their assignments by husbands, partners and/ or children would refuse a future accompanied long-term posting. This suggests that their expatriate experiences to date have been encouraging in terms of managing careers and family life.

The two HR – International Assignments experts in both organisations stressed that their unaccompanied assignments policies made no differentiation by gender, yet they noted a clear gender difference in willingness to take up unaccompanied long-term assignments:

“...we ... introduced an unaccompanied policy ... unfortunately, that tends to favour the male assignee rather than the female ... it is rare that you will get a stay-at-home husband.” (Alexis, HR – International Assignments)

While men could avail themselves of career opportunities through unaccompanied mobility, women were less able to do so as a result of their family responsibilities. This aligns with Linehan and Walsh’s (2000a) finding that a woman’s primary role is as a mother rather than an international manager:

“...a lot of males who go on assignment ... do not bring their family, because their wife is at home with their children...” (Amanda, HR – Resourcing)

Intuitively, it would be expected that those who were currently accompanied, married or partnered would be less keen to take up future unaccompanied long-term assignments. In particular, such assignments would be unlikely to be feasible for mothers with young, dependent children. Indeed, this was the case. While 84% of the 45 women who were married/ partnered would undertake a future accompanied long-term assignment, only 4% would do so unaccompanied. The views of the married assignees were encapsulated in the following comment:

“I have seen what happens to people ... you might have the strongest relationship in the world at the start of two years. But the end of two years away from each other, it is not the same.” (Olive, Long-term)

Three assignee interviewees who were undertaking unaccompanied long-term assignments spoke of loneliness and marital difficulties caused through frequent long periods of absence, in line with the literature on family separation through expatriation (UCL/CBI ERC, 1991):

“I go home and I am alone, and I am alone at the weekends, so I travel. So I go to museums, and I see as much as I can ... but ... I don’t have a relationship and ... I don’t have any friends here.” (Harriet, Long-term)

“...it is really, really difficult with my husband ... I’ve been away for eight weeks and I come home, the first two days are complete storming. It’s a nightmare! But we know now that it is going to happen ... and we have a couple of days of that. And then it’s okay but then I am dreading going back.” (Yvonne, Long-term)

Where single status, long-term assignments were taken up, the HR experts suggested that these might need to be shorter than an accompanied assignment. Yet, as discussed previously, any reduction in the length of long-term assignments to address home and family life stability might lower the career contribution derived from the assignment.

The unattractiveness of unaccompanied mobility was highlighted in that 52% of the assignees said that they would definitely not take up an unaccompanied long-term assignment:

“I would look at it but it would have to be something incredibly compelling for me to want to do a single status...” (Milly, Long-term)

Yet, Brookfield (2011a) reports 39% of single status assignments as being undertaken long-term (not accounting for gender or marital status). This suggests that women in the case study firms are more unwilling to undertake unaccompanied long-term mobility than the general expatriate industry-wide population. Perhaps surprisingly only 46% of the 26 single, divorced or widowed assignees reported in their survey returns that they would definitely undertake a future unaccompanied long-term assignment (for comparison, 61% said they would do this if it was accompanied). As the use of unaccompanied assignments is increasing (Brookfield, 2010), this presents negative implications for expatriate gender diversity.

Short-term assignments were typically offered on unaccompanied status under the organisations' international assignment policies, potentially providing a feasible international mobility option for married/ partnered women to gain career contribution while maintaining their family stability. However, the women who were married/ partnered, and who had taken up unaccompanied short-term assignments, spoke of the difficulties they experienced in their relationships:

"I found it more difficult than I thought I would in terms of returning back home, because you both change and you get used to your own ways and it takes a while to settle back into that." (Julie, Short-term)

Unaccompanied short-term assignments were considered unsuitable for women with children:

"...she would have to leave her child in the care of her husband ... it creates a single-parent situation." (Fallon, HR – Far East)

To address these issues, accompanied assignments or flights to reunite families were offered. However, even with policy provision to keep families together, the disruption that undertaking a short-term assignment caused, particularly for mothers, was recognised by the HR experts as likely to have a negative effect on women's participation in this assignment type:

"So although a short-term sounds as if it would be easier ... if you have got a young family you can't be away from them for that long, so you either take them with you in which case you'd equally be able to take them with you on a long-term or you would make that decision ... that you ... don't go ..." (Alexis, HR – International Assignments)

The potential for family disruption was corroborated by assignees with and without children:

"...I wouldn't force a six-month move on a toddler. I don't think it's fair." (Abby, Long-term)

"There is an option to take your partner abroad with you but there is no point in uprooting them..." (Trish, Short-term)

A further issue was highlighted as making short-term assignments unattractive: the assignees undertaking them reported on difficulties in establishing friendships as they were simply not staying long enough to build relationships locally. This was particularly difficult

when they undertook a series of short-term assignments in succession, affecting the graduate trainees in particular:

“...I guess you don’t really feel like you need to make too much effort in meeting people, because it’s such a short time and ... they also feel the same way that you’ll be gone in however many months.” (Julie, Short-term)

Given these comments, it is not surprising that only 39% of the 70 survey respondents said that they would definitely undertake a future accompanied short-term assignment and only 17% said that they would do so unaccompanied (table 13.2, page 191). Indeed, only four of the 12 assignees currently on unaccompanied short-term assignments said they would definitely go on another one.

While the literature suggests that short-term assignments may enable women to balance international mobility with family and domestic roles (Demel and Mayrhofer, 2010; Harris and Dickman, 2005; IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007) and Mayerhofer *et al.*’s (2004b) small-scale research in the oil industry suggests that flexible assignments are less disruptive than traditional long-term postings, the findings here indicate the opposite. Long-term assignments were preferred as they offered the opportunity to be accompanied and they provided high levels of home life and family stability. Unaccompanied short-term assignments presented few advantages with respect to home and family life. Women placed family ahead of such unaccompanied mobility and were less likely to engage in short-term assignments as a result. Even when organisational policy and practice did support keeping families together, the disruption to family and home life of undertaking accompanied short-term assignments meant that women were less likely to participate in them. Currently, the case study firms do not utilise short-term assignments very frequently. Yet, the literature suggests that their use across a spectrum of industries is increasing (Brookfield, 2010; Cartus, 2010). If the oil and gas exploration and production sector follows this wider trend, it will likely have consequent negative expatriate gender diversity implications.

Given that, as discussed earlier, short-term assignments were viewed as less career-enhancing than long-term mobility, any satisficing decisions (Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b) taken in rejecting short-term assignments in favour of family concerns were perhaps less disadvantageous compromises. Nonetheless, as short-term assignments did

provide career contribution and undertaking them gave international exposure and a ‘taster’ of long-term postings, women’s decisions to exclude themselves from them might address family responsibilities at the expense of career contribution.

Rotational and commuter assignment patterns and unaccompanied status

Those who had experience of unaccompanied mobility reported rotation as their preferred unaccompanied assignment type: 39% were definitely willing to engage in this. (For comparison, 30% would undertake unaccompanied short-term assignments and only 22% would commute.) These findings suggest that periods of unaccompanied status could be combined more preferably with family life by undertaking rotation than any other type of unaccompanied assignment.

Three main themes were identified relating to women’s participation in rotational assignments. These concerned lifestyle, dual careers and family issues. With respect to lifestyle, rotational working created “*two lives*”, giving “*the best of both worlds*” – one while on shift; then 28 days off enabling a stable home life and time to pursue leisure and study opportunities, typically with no requirements to work at all. The time off in-between shifts was viewed as one of the major attractions of rotational working; the assignees were unanimous in their sentiments of the enjoyment of the time spent at home.

“...When you are off you’re off, and you have a good, significant chunk of time. So, that is attractive.” (Questa, Rotational)

“...having the four weeks off when I got home ... I was working a little bit, but ... being home was great.” (Zara, Rotational)

The assignees had mixed views over life in camp. While some said: “*it was very lonely*”; “*socially, I kept myself to myself*”; others: “*loved it*”; “*it is like a family*”. Indeed, rotational assignments were considered to be less lonely than other assignment types particularly by single and single status assignees especially once they experienced inclusion within camp and compound in-groups (Lauring and Selmer, 2009) and on-site activities:

“...we organised all kinds of stuff among the expats, and there was a lot more social interaction.” (Harriet, Previous rotational)

For some assignees, rotation simply did not appeal as they did not want to be separated from their husbands for 28 days at a time. However, as mentioned previously, rotational assignments were viewed as being particularly helpful to women who were in dual career relationships. They reported being able to combine their careers (and earning potential) through rotational working with those of their husbands/ partners based in the home country or on their own assignments:

“I had one beforehand ... I could balance it with my partner ... (Now) my partner is working on rotation, so this is how we can balance it ... because he would not come with me on an assignment and just stop working. There are not many men doing that.” (Nina, Previous rotational)

Yet, rotational assignments were not considered a feasible option by the HR experts for female assignees with children:

“Women just choose not to become involved with it, especially not as mothers.” (Fallon, HR – Far East)

However, this was not necessarily an issue of ‘choice’ – but perhaps a reflection of constraint (Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b) as the following quote demonstrates:

“...I think the minute that you have kids you can’t do a four and four rotation ... unless you have someone at home, who full-time looks after the kids, which women don’t.” (Rhoda, Long-term)

The female assignees therefore, in the main, accepted that motherhood and rotational assignments were not compatible:

“...I would feel if I was spending 50% of my year rotating ... I miss 50% of her growing up...” (Susan, Long-term)

“I have worked rotational ... I wouldn’t consider it now ... with a young baby.” (Abby, Long-term)

Yet, not all agreed:

“I still want to ... see if it works with the baby ... there is no plan to change my kind of job.” (Cara, Rotational)

Commuter assignments were considered disruptive and unsustainable by both the HR experts and the female assignees. Yet, two assignees reported that they had carried them out for business reasons for periods of two years. They found that the lack of clear

business schedules and logistics prevented planning and enjoying a family and/ or social life in both the home and the host country:

“...we used to travel practically every two weeks back and forth to (West Africa) to do these negotiations and after a while it takes its toll ... your social life ... your life outside of work, you are not able to plan properly, you can’t make commitments...” (Xanthe, Previous commuter)

“But for me to have to go to (West Africa) for one week every month ... there was never enough time when you got there to get to know anyone ... to be able to do anything in the evenings.” (Rhoda, Previous commuter)

Two assignees spoke about how they had undertaken long-term and short-term assignments but commuted weekly to see their husbands who were posted to different countries. They reported *“being grateful”* for company support with this:

“...they conceded that I would move to (regional HQ) at the same time that (husband) did. But I would ... fly back to (previous location) on a weekly basis and they paid for my flight and my flat ...” (Di, Previous commuter)

The regular commuting, however, took its toll:

“I would leave on Friday, around three o’clock ... I would fly to (...) to get to where he was working by around 7 p.m. I would stay Saturday, and I would leave on Sunday and I would get home around midnight ... and so we would do this back and forth every weekend ... it was an hour and 25 minutes flight. But getting to the airport on both ends, it turns into a six-hour endeavour. So it is not an easy ... commitment to make and that I will never do again, across the equator in different countries...” (Fiona, Previous commuter)

Women with children (and those without) said that family life was challenging, if not impossible, on a commuter assignment:

“...you can’t commute to (West Africa) at two minutes’ notice...” (Rhoda, Previous commuter)

All those who had experienced commuter assignments highlighted the stressful and tiring nature of the frequent international travel associated with this type of expatriation reflecting the findings of the extant literature (UCL/CBI ERC, 1991; Welch *et al.*, 2007). Assignees also reported personal upheaval associated with continual mobility (Forster, 2000), commenting that frequent travel placed pressure on relationships with spouses and partners, in stark contrast to Meyskens *et al.*’s (2009) suggestion that commuter

assignments present high potential for family life. Given that frequent travel and periods away from home were also inherent in rotational working, it was surprising to find that this assignment type was considered to provide home life stability. Yet, aligned with the limited academic research concerning the outcomes of undertaking ‘flexpatriate’ style assignments, women would give up rotation when their family lives dictated this (Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004a).

Preconditions to assignment participation

Long-term assignments were regarded as having some of the strongest financial underpinning, enabling assignees “*the opportunity to accumulate wealth*”. Typical comments included:

“I think the financial incentives particularly kick in when you are on the longer term side so 12 months is ... a minimum really.” (Susan, Long-term)

“...I am really lucky to have what I have got ... and a shed load of money for doing it.” (Yvonne, Long-term)

When the women had children or their spouses were giving up work to accompany them on the assignment, greater emphasis was placed on the financial preconditions for assignment acceptance. Women with children saw the financial aspects as “*accruing a future for my family*” and those with partners looked to “*the package*” to provide some form of compensation for reduction in spousal careers/ income.

Support for partners was considered to be an important precondition for accompanied mobility, particularly when spousal networks in the host country were not tailored to men, aligned with the extant literature in relation to the difficulties faced by male spouses (Punnett *et al.*, 1992):

“...being an accompanied expat is a bigger issue for female expats because their spouses (men) ... view being a trailing spouse as unappealing. To make matters worse, the assignment location will tend to have support systems for trailing spouses, but these are geared to women (i.e. the British Women’s Club, the American Wives’ Club) ... you get the picture?” (Karen, Long-term)

The two married/ partnered assignees on unaccompanied long-term assignments who were interviewed raised a number of issues in relation to expatriation preconditions for

single status postings. They focused, in the main, on the importance of quarterly flights, business trips and holidays to maintain home-based relationships over large geographical distances:

“...if they took away the travel days, and the trips back home, I wouldn’t be able to take the assignment ... regardless of how financially they might reward you ...”
(Linda, Australasia)

However, although there was provision in policy for quarterly trips and flights to reunite families, the limited time that could be spent at home was insufficient to encourage many women to undertake this type of assignment. The economic downturn also reduced opportunities to be reunited with family:

“...when I went out there (they) said about four trips home and I said ‘God, that is only every three months I can ... stay with my husband’ ... and I was told ... ‘look ... you can get back to (home country) three or four times a year on business ... and see your husband’ ... and that was fantastic, but because of the cost cuts, I haven’t had a business trip since...” (Yvonne, Central Asia)

Short-term assignments were underpinned with financial support although this was less comprehensive than that given to long-term assignees in line with norms across a wide range of industries (Brookfield, 2009a, 2010; CBI/ Deloitte and Touche, 1996; ORC Worldwide, 2006, 2009). However, the overall financial package supporting short-term assignments did not appear to influence the assignees’ decision-making, with the exception of country allowances (percentage uplifts) which were thought to be ‘very important’ to assignment participation.

Although the rotational assignees interviewed said that they did not take up their assignments for the money, this type of expatriation was nonetheless financially very attractive, allowing those who undertook it to *“build up quite a nice little nest egg”* particularly in hardship locations given the uplift payable on top of base pay:

“...the money was excellent; it was really, really good with this kind of job.” (Cara, Rotational)

However, while the financial underpinning for rotational work provided an attractive reward, this was considered to have detrimental ramifications for career outcomes:

“Unfortunately, there is almost a bit of stigma and mistrust about it. I don’t think people see rotational assignments as assignments where people build credibility ...”

I think that people just associate them with ... wanting to earn money...” (Linda, Long-term)

There appeared to be few monetary or other incentives for undertaking commuter assignments and assignees did not report undertaking them as financially rewarding:

“...I didn’t get any support at all.” (Rhoda, Previous commuter)

Despite being viewed as an assignment type of last resort (CBI/Deloitte and Touche, 1996), commuter assignments are increasingly being used due to factors such as cost control (Cartus, 2010). Nonetheless, the following comment encapsulates women’s reluctance to participate in them:

“...we are in a global recession and there aren’t that many job opportunities but that would not be something that I would choose at the top of my list at all.” (Susan, Long-term)

The findings indicate that long-term assignments provide the greatest levels of financial reward. Rotational assignments are lucrative but short-term assignments and commuter assignments are less financially attractive. Although the assignees said that they did not engage in expatriation for the money, these differences nevertheless have implications for assignment participation, once again reinforcing the attractiveness of long-term assignments.

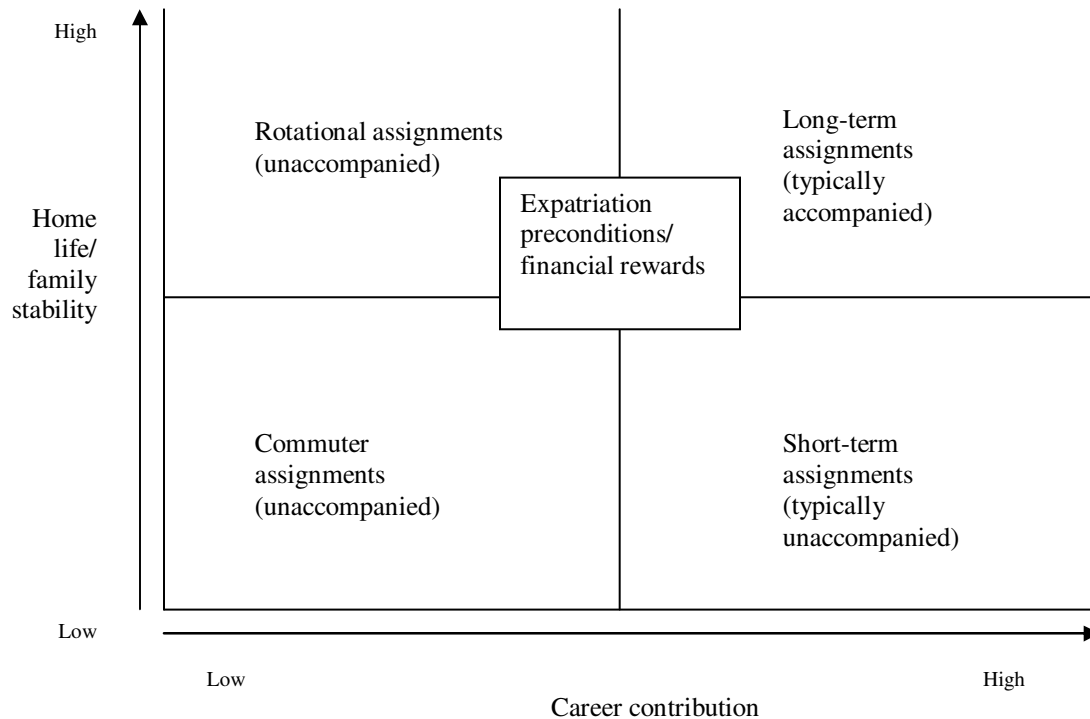
Summary and implications

The findings reveal a relationship between women’s willingness to undertake different types of assignments according to length, pattern and un/accompanied status, and their outcomes in terms of career contribution, home life/ family stability and financial preconditions/ rewards. This is depicted as a ‘two-by-two’ box grid in figure 13.1.

Long-term assignments are typically offered and undertaken on an accompanied basis and have the potential to generate high career contribution, family stability and financial wealth; other assignment types do not address all three of these assignment outcomes so favourably. Short-term assignments can provide high career contribution but do not provide home life/ family stability as they are typically unaccompanied; neither do

they provide generous monetary reward. Rotational assignments can provide home life stability for women without children (as they are unaccompanied) as well as monetary wealth but give lower career contribution. Unaccompanied commuter assignments do not give high career contribution, home life stability or financial reward.

Figure 13.1: The relationship between assignment type and career contribution, home/ family life and preconditions/ rewards



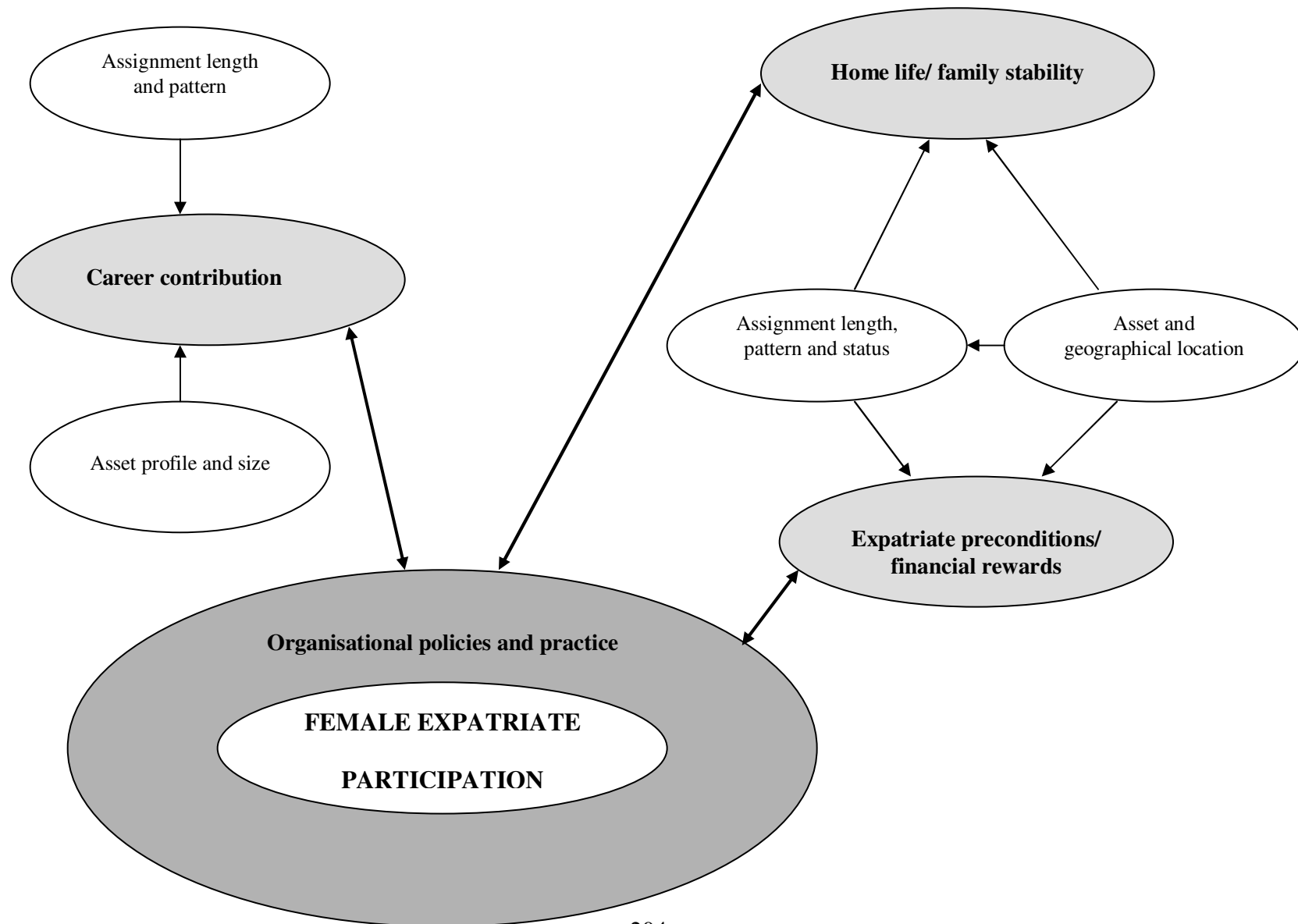
The female assignees appeared to make satisficing decisions, trying to balance career contribution with family life and in so-doing accepting long-term (accompanied) expatriation in preference to other assignment types. Given that the HR experts reported that shorter long-term assignments are becoming more commonplace (aligned with wider industry trends) and the literature suggests that short-term and commuter assignments are rising in use (although this has yet to take effect in the case study firms), this has negative implications for expatriate gender diversity.

The findings reported in this chapter and in the preceding one contribute to knowledge by demonstrating that there is an assignment type effect on women's expatriate

participation. Women evaluate the career contribution, home life/ family stability and expatriation preconditions/ financial rewards within their expatriation decision, with long-term assignments being the most likely to fulfil all of these participation criteria to best effect. Yet, a further issue must be considered – that of organisational policies and practices as these not only support the assignment type undertaken but also careers and family life more generally. Whether these act as a barrier or a facilitator of female expatriation (or have little or no effect at all) is unknown. As shown in figure 13.2, organisational policy and practice, linked to career contribution, home life/ family stability and expatriate preconditions/ financial rewards might either act as a supporting framework for female expatriation or as a ‘fence’ around it, creating an obstruction to their assignment take-up.

The effect of organisational policies and practice on career contribution, home life/ family stability and expatriation preconditions/ financial rewards and, as a consequence of these, women’s expatriate participation is examined in the following five chapters. The findings are set within the range of assignment types used within the oil and gas exploration and production sector.

Figure 13.2: Summary of assignment type effects on female expatriate participation



CHAPTER 14: THE ORGANISATIONAL EFFECT ON ACCESS TO CAREER CONTRIBUTION

Introduction

In figure 9.1 (page 115) it is suggested that organisational policies and practice affect women's assignment participation. This is linked to the type of assignment undertaken, set within a masculine industry context. Set against this backdrop, it was identified in chapter 12 that women seek career contribution, home life/ family stability and preconditions/ financial rewards when undertaking expatriation. How the first of these antecedents to assignment participation – career contribution – is facilitated through organisational policy and practice³⁶ is examined in this and the following chapter.

As highlighted in chapter 11, the oil and gas exploration and production sector is male-dominated with its key strategic focus resting on increasing the use of local nationals rather than widening expatriate gender diversity. The findings in response to the research question (figure 9.2, page 116): 'to what extent and how do diversity and equal opportunities policy and practice support women's expatriation?' are presented first in this chapter. Then women's access to career contribution via expatriation is addressed with the findings in response to the following research question presented: 'to what extent and how do international assignment policy and practice support women's selection and preparation for expatriation?' Assignment type implications are highlighted and the findings are evaluated in the context of the extant literature. The female assignees' qualifications and contacts are discussed to address the following research question: 'which assignee effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to female expatriate participation?' The organisational effect is then taken forward in the following chapter to examine the career contribution generated once on assignment –

³⁶ Chapters 14-18 draw upon organisational policies as summarised in appendix 4, table 5. The volume of sources (denominated as S) with references (denominated as R) made to the issues identified are presented. Where assignees provided interview and survey data, sources are de-duplicated (denominated with ») and total references reported. For this chapter, full supporting NVivo frequency data are presented in appendix 9, tables 9-12. Descriptive statistics, drawn from the census survey (analysed using SPSS) are presented in appendix 10, tables 9-19.

through job-related training, development, support, career management and repatriation organisational interventions.

Diversity and equal opportunities

In respect of policy statements in support of diversity, Collins Co.'s was brief, simply indicating its commitment and the value of individual opinions. Hagman Co. noted that the diverse needs of its workforce would be addressed and that it took a positive approach to diversity. Both organisations had detailed equal opportunities policies: Collins Co. focused on legal requirements; Hagman Co. on commitment to equal opportunities, the avoidance of discrimination and the non-tolerance of harassment. In both firms everyone was held responsible for policy implementation.

Five HR specialists (16R) commented on the importance of diversity policy, noting that diversity was enshrined within overall business principles (emphasising the business case) and was said to flow into various policy aspects. Ten HR specialists (21R) commented that equal opportunity policy was applied to expatriation:

“...you don't deviate from the standards, and it has in there ‘we are committed to equal opportunities and we will appoint and reward on merit’, and ... that it is what we do.” (Donna, HR – Resourcing)

Yet, there were no specific links between policies supporting international assignments and those championing diversity or equal opportunities. The ‘disconnect’ between these groups of policies potentially has negative implications for women's participation within expatriation as there were no clear statements of intent within international assignments supporting policy documentation to strive for any gender balance within its male-dominated environment. Although Hagman Co. had a diversity and inclusion committee, neither organisation employed named diversity managers with specific accountability (Kalev *et al.*, 2006), and this was acknowledged as a major drawback:

“...until you get ... somebody in place championing it ... and people are trained up and held accountable ... we are not going to really make any progress.” (Lucy, HR – Development)

In the main, the assignees viewed both diversity and equal opportunities policies as irrelevant to their assignment participation. For instance, while 10 (18R) said that the equal opportunities policy had been applied, 29 (30R) reported that it had no relevance; six (8R) said that the diversity policy was important but 25 (26R) reported it as irrelevant. Indeed, only 16% and 11% respectively of the survey respondents (all but one woman on long-term assignments) said that these policies were ‘very important’ to their assignment participation (median 1 in both instances). There were two main themes in explanation of this. The first related to faith in meritocracy (Lewis and Simpson, 2010); the second concerned ignorance of policy provision.

Eight HR experts (9R) and six assignees (15R) highlighted the lack of women at senior grades (within their organisations generally and expatriation). There was some indication that this ‘glass ceiling’ effect was due to there being relatively few women with lengthy industry experience. Yet, there were also reports from both the HR experts (3S, 3R) and assignees (3S, 9R) that practice favoured men:

“There (are) very, very different perceptions on ... what females need to do as opposed to what males need to do to get to the next level...” (Babs, Long-term)

The assignees commented on the male-dominated composition and power of senior and line management, giving examples that indicated that women were required to have greater experience than men to gain career progression (Linehan, 2000; Linehan and Walsh, 1999a), that they had been refused career-enhancing assignments due to their gender (Adler, 1984a) and that equal opportunities policies were not fully applied particularly in joint venture partner assets and host country companies. The line manager’s role (4S, 5R) was considered to be of particular relevance to equal opportunities policy implementation:

“It is not so much whether companies have policies that matter, but whether they have sensitive and aware line managers. The best policies in the world don’t (and in my view can’t) protect against poor line management...” (Cynthia, Long-term)

The HR experts (8S, 16R) reported no central initiatives on positive action to redress women’s under-representation in senior grades and as expatriates. In both organisations, they spoke of expatriates being treated as individuals, that meritocracy

prevailed and female assignees would feel patronised if positive action was applied; they wanted *“to be assigned or appointed on merit”*. Yet, the assignees (7S», 11R) said that, while the lack of women expatriates was not considered a problem by management, little would be done to remedy it, aligning with the literature critical of the business case argument within expatriation (Stone, 1991). They did report, however, on positive action initiatives to widen gender diversity at local level, for example, taken by regional managers in host assets (2S, 3R). These were welcomed. One region, Central Asia, was spotlighted as an example of good practice of where senior graded women were guaranteed interviews. However, the women stressed that they wanted fair, not special, treatment. They drew a distinction between undesirable and unwelcome positive discrimination and positive action:

“You don’t want special treatment because you are female. I don’t think any one of us wants that.” (Esther, Long-term)

A further issue related to policies not being widely known. For example, six HR experts (14R) reported that the diversity policy had been inadequately signposted and this might explain why it was unknown, viewed as irrelevant or as having only a neutral effect. Nine assignees (10R) confirmed that they did not know of this policy. With respect to equal opportunities, two HR experts (3R) said that the policy was not widely known and nine assignees (9R) said they had not heard of it. Given the emphasis HR placed on the embedded nature of equal opportunities and its high profile within organisational business principles, this was surprising. As such, equal opportunity could be seen merely as *“drawings rather than lived”* with *“no guardians of the organisation”*. Lack of knowledge of the policy might help to explain why three HR experts (8R) and four assignees (5R) said that ‘lip service’ was sometimes paid to it. The assignees recognised that any initiatives to widen diversity had to start at the highest levels in the organisation:

“...they have got to see the benefit of why do you need a diverse organisation.” (Esther, Long-term)

These data suggest that there was some discrepancy between the views of HR and assignees. While all welcomed meritocracy, the women assignees recognised that they competed in a male-dominated environment and initiatives that widened opportunities to

do so were welcomed. This suggests that asset head and line management initiatives to encourage gender diversity in expatriation require wider awareness and impetus. This might be achieved through diversity and equal opportunities principles being incorporated directly within international assignment policies, and through practical interventions with high level, specific accountability. Such steps might help to provide a more level playing field upon which desired meritocracy can take place.

Selection

Hagman Co. had detailed expatriate selection clauses and principles: annual development and performance reviews and other “*normal procedures*” were used to identify expatriates; and specialist advice was advocated to ensure fair and objective processes. Business principles applied standards aligned with its equal opportunities policy including: advertising of all vacancies as far as practicable; mandatory interview training; performance monitoring; and audit trails. Expatriate selection criteria (proven technical competence; adaptability in professional/ home life; and compatible family circumstances) were highlighted within the international assignment policies. In contrast, Collins Co. did not have a written policy on expatriate selection. Yet, similar selection practice was in evidence.

The assignees (16S», 32R) commented on their qualifications and their relevance to gaining access to expatriation. They were very well qualified, some holding several first and second degrees across a range of disciplines. There were examples of women furthering their educational qualifications while on assignment by taking MBAs and MScs in related or other subject disciplines (for instance, relating to environmental issues). They saw this as being critical to career advancement and to obtaining further assignments in growth areas such as sustainability and corporate social responsibility. The HR experts (4S, 13R) commented on women’s academic achievements noting that, although women were increasingly represented in the earth sciences, these degrees had lower *kudos* than engineering, potentially suggesting a disadvantage to women in selection for expatriation based on their educational background. It was notable that the female assignees from non-Western countries (such as in West Africa and the Caribbean)

pointed out that a higher proportion of young women did study engineering at university in their home countries than was the case in the West. However, relatively few expatriates were drawn from such locations because their organisations used a predominantly ethnocentric selection strategy (Perlmutter, 1969) and so this has done little to enhance the numbers of female expatriates.

External appointments

In both firms, the volume of internal appointments exceeded external hires: 82% of the assignees took up expatriation as existing employees; 18% were recruited. These figures demonstrate an even greater preference for known individuals than the extractive industries generally (Salt and Millar, 2006a):

“...you want to ... fill internally because it is a big thing going to another country ... to ... bring someone in and then immediately expat them to somewhere is quite a risky enterprise...” (Bobby, HR – Recruitment)

However, the HR specialists (7S, 26R) cited skills shortages in technical areas as primary reasons for external expatriate recruitment and that long-term and rotational assignees were more likely than other assignment types to be hired externally. This was because they typically undertook functional positions (not developmental roles, as associated with short-term assignments). The selection process was formalised and transparent for external candidates. They were screened using job and person specifications and competency-based profiling, structured interviews were applied before appointment and several interviews conducted for senior grades (1S, 1R). There was also a strong organisational desire to appear customer-focused with recognition of the need to compete effectively with other oil and gas players. This openness and transparency theoretically aids women’s expatriate selection (Harris, 2002) as external hires.

Yet, assignees hired externally (5S», 10R) reported on the range of methods (formal and informal) used to obtain their positions: using recruitment agencies; sending in speculative CVs; and receiving personal invitations from known industry contacts, being hired from other oil and gas companies in their home countries or while on other assignments. The emphasis on recruits transferring between oil and gas firms aligns with

the ‘professionalization’ of experience (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) reinforcing the (predominantly male) expatriate profile.

Internal advertising

The HR experts (9S, 16R) said that internal advertising via the intranet was used prior to any external recruitment, opening up expatriate roles to internal candidates throughout their organisations. Theoretically, all low- to mid-grade positions were advertised internally; all candidates for a particular role would see the same interviewers and be asked the same questions. Yet the HR – International Assignments experts in both firms said that “*quite often, they are not*” and this usually caused “*absolute uproar*”. At senior levels, and for key skills shortages, the HR experts said that their companies did not have “*the luxury of choice*”; appointments were often by personal invitation; open internal advertising being “*deemed unnecessary*”:

“They all called and told and if you don’t take it when you offered it you could be passed over.” (Alexis, HR – International Assignments)

“...if you (have) a favoured candidate ... I might give them a nudge and say well, I really think this would fit your development needs and have you thought about going to ...” (Donna, HR – Resourcing)

The assignees (15S», 27R) noted that while there was an aspiration in their organisations to advertise all jobs on the intranet, and that there had been greater evidence of standardisation of practice in this regard in recent years, this was not taking place universally:

“...that is not happening, particularly for the more senior jobs, whether it will get to 100% I’m not sure. But I doubt.” (Susan, Long-term)

They stated that jobs should be publicised across the entire organisational community and were in favour of open, transparent and formal processes. However, assignees at all levels reported on the use of personal invitations to fill expatriate roles (either as the sole method used or in conjunction with internal advertising and other means). There was little difference by assignment type:

“...when they are advertising on the (intranet), you can feel like, okay, that the job has been given already and you are just ticking the boxes.” (Polly, Long-term)

Indeed, 65% of those surveyed reported that they were invited personally and their post was not advertised at all, suggesting the importance of them having sufficient networks (Linehan and Walsh, 1999b; Tharenou, 2005). Extended international transfers and long-term assignments were more likely to be openly advertised than other assignment types. Yet, only 23% of assignees said that their position was posted on the intranet; 16% reported that it was openly advertised but they were also invited to apply.

Communicating availability

As expatriate vacancies were not always widely disseminated, the assignees made use of various forums to state their availability, including one-to-ones with their managers (77%), annual review processes linked to development (73%) and performance management (74%), and the graduate review process (24%). Long-term assignees made the most use of annual reviews, whereas short-term assignees and those on extended international transfers reported favouring one-to-ones. Annual reviews, however, were said to play only a limited role in the selection process by assignees (8S, 10R). Just 29% of the survey respondents reported hearing about their post through discussions such as development reviews, despite organisational policy highlighting these as playing a formal part in selection.

Informal networks and personal contacts were viewed as very important means of hearing about expatriation and stating availability, aligned with the literature (Linehan and Walsh, 1999b). The assignees said that knowing line managers (12S», 23R), line of business/ functional managers (15S», 25R) and others at asset level (5S», 8R) was critical to expatriate selection:

“I think that quite a lot of jobs aren’t advertised ... So you go for the ones on the (intranet), but you’d also talk to lots of people.” (Rhoda, Long-term)

Four assignees (5R) stressed the importance of communicating their desire to undertake expatriation continually, aligned with the literature that suggests women have to ask (sometimes repeatedly) for their next move (Linehan and Walsh, 1999b):

“I told anyone who would listen that I wanted to go on assignment.” (Jenny, Long-term)

These data suggest a contradiction between policy on formal methods such as advertising expatriate roles (implying equal opportunity) and informal practice where internal advertising was not carried out as frequently as policy suggested and/ or that preferred candidates were offered roles through personal invitation. Indeed, eight assignees (16R) said that their expatriate participation that could be attributed to whom they knew. They stressed the importance of keeping up their contacts and “*cultivating*” networks at senior levels.

The selection decision process

Four HR experts (representing both firms) commented on the roles of line managers (15R) and line of business managers (8R) in the selection decision. The survey data indicate that 75% of the assignees reported their host country manager had been involved in their selection decision, with 69% noting this host line contribution was ‘very important’ (median 3). Although assignees (12S», 23R) across a range of assignment types cited examples of host line managers requesting specific people to fill vacancies and of the need to communicate interest in any potential roles directly to these managers, host country line managers were recognised as being of particular relevance to long-term assignment selection:

“If you’re interested ... you make sure that the line manager knows, and anybody else who is strategic.” (Val, Long-term)

The importance of supervisory relationships to women’s appointment in expatriate roles aligns with the literature (Varma and Stroh, 2001).

The HR experts in both firms reported that occasionally “*selection is actually a misnomer*” and informal (3S, 3R) and closed processes sometimes applied (4S, 6R).

They said that line management needed to fill skills gaps and were less aware of formal process and, sometimes, HR was unaware of the rigour of line's selection decision-making:

"...it ... comes back to ... whoever ... has the skills that are needed in that location, and it doesn't matter how many nice selection processes we might have or wish to have, that is what it ends up being." (Alexis, HR – International Assignments)

"...if you are in the right place at the right time and you have the conversation and someone has seen you ... you have got the job." (Cally, HR – Learning and Development)

This aligns with the literature concerning the potential conflict between HR as policy guardian and line management's drive to achieve success, in so-doing potentially undermining organisational policy (Perkins and Daste, 2007).

In Hagman Co., there was also line of business/ functional manager involvement in selection, particularly affecting long-term assignment selection decisions for those at lower grade levels and graduate trainees on placements. Regional assets were semi-autonomous and were known to attempt to draw in and keep *"the best talent for themselves and re-site it within their own region"*. To counter this, and widen participation, the line of business managers performed a crucial function by taking an overview and having an input into the global resourcing process. Hagman's assignees (15S», 25R) reported it would be difficult to expatriate without their support.

The survey results indicate that across both firms, 73% of assignees said that their line of business manager was involved in their selection decision; 65% regarded their input as 'very important' (median 3). The line of business manager was the most important decision-maker for all rotational assignees, while 78% of those surveyed on short-term assignments also reported their importance in selection decision-making. This reflects the overarching role taken by senior management for employee development via expatriation, aligned with the literature that suggests development as a top level strategic responsibility (Walton, 1999).

Just over half of those surveyed (56%) said that their home country line manager participated in the selection decision, with 51% saying they were ‘very important’ (median 3). This can be explained by the employee being duty-bound in both organisations to inform their home-based line manager of their decision to apply for an expatriate post. While HR personnel were involved in the expatriate selection process, most usually on selection panels, they were not responsible for the selection decision; the HR – International Assignments personnel were not involved in selection at all. Only four assignees reported that the HR function played a ‘very important’ role in their selection.

Expatriates on all assignment types (15S, 18R) said that the selection process was male-dominated. Even though 29 assignees (30R) said that equal opportunities policy was irrelevant to their expatriate selection (it was not discussed; it had no bearing – selection was based on “*being good at what you do*”; that gender played neither a positive nor a negative role; and that it was testament to fairness and meritocracy that they were appointed), there were occasional examples cited of gender bias. This aligned with both early (Adler, 1984b) and later expatriate literature with examples given of line manager assumptions that women’s mobility was lower than that of their male colleagues (Moore, 2002). The assignees noted that very few (if any) women were involved in the interviews (and if they were, they most usually came from HR and did not make the selection decision directly); only one assignee commented on her selection resulting from a gender balanced process. The assignees called for greater female representation in expatriate selection. Given that the assignees reported lack of clarity in how selection decisions were made (with graduates on international placements in particular unclear as to how their positions were decided), clear structures that embed accountability might be needed if diversity in expatriate selection is to be enhanced (Kalev *et al.*, 2006).

Despite these various gendered issues, 55% of the survey respondents said that selection was openly and transparently conducted; only 24% said that it was a closed or not transparent process. The picture was less clear cut in terms of formality: 46% said selection was carried out informally while 40% said it was formal, according to process. As mentioned earlier, selection for long-term assignments was more likely to be conducted in a formal and transparent manner than for other assignment types. None of

the extended international transferees said their selection was conducted in an informal or closed manner, suggesting greater formality and openness with increasing assignment length. Assignment length therefore has implications for women's participation given that Harris (2002) notes that women's selection is facilitated when selection processes are formal and transparent. This indicates that there may be a greater likelihood of women being selected for long-term than other assignment types, with consequent positive career contribution implications.

Nonetheless, assignees in both firms commented on the selection decision being facilitated through informal conversations (14S», 19R) and closed (20S», 34R) processes. Examples were given of “*behind the scenes*” activities and “*arm twisting*” to facilitate their selection and being offered the posting “*based on a chat*”; even “*there was no particular role ... come and have a conversation*” and the post being created after they had shown interest in working in a particular asset:

“To be honest, I would suspect that that decision is made before any kind of interview.” (Rhoda, Long-term)

This evidence potentially aligns with ‘by the coffee machine selection’ (Harris and Brewster, 1999), a system that typically favours male expatriation through known contacts. Unsophisticated, haphazard and informal organisational processes create gender bias, negatively affecting women's selection (Hareli *et al.*, 2008; Hutchings *et al.*, 2010; Insch *et al.*, 2008; Shen *et al.*, 2009; Tharenou, 2010; UMIST/CBI/CIB, 1995). Such bias may be unintended but open and transparent selection processes (as opposed to closed and informal ones) are necessary if women's selection is not to be hindered (Harris, 2002). Hence, further organisational action is needed to strengthen the openness and formality of assignment selection across the range of assignment types if gender diversity in expatriation is to be increased.

Preparation: orientation, language and cultural training

Access to expatriation is typically supported through preparation interventions such as ‘look-see’ orientation trips and language and cultural training (Brookfield, 2011a). Both

organisations offered pre-assignment ‘look-see’ trips only to long-term assignees and their partners (and exceptionally, children): seven days in Collins Co.; five days in Hagman Co., mandatory if on accompanied status. The HR experts (4S, 10R) said the main purpose was to find homes/ schools but, if the assignee considered the destination unsuitable, the assignment offer would lapse. The use of pre-assignment trips therefore acted both as part of selection and training processes (Perkins and Shortland, 2006). The survey responses record 58% being offered the pre-assignment visit, 97% of whom undertook it, with 81% of them saying it was ‘very important’ to their current assignment participation (median 3). This aligns with the extant literature which finds the provision of pre-assignment trips and family integration assistance particularly helpful to women (Mayrhofer and Scullion, 2002).

Assignees (11S, 19R) said that the pre-assignment visit was important or essential to their assignment participation decision. Those on short-term assignments said that they would require a pre-assignment trip before accepting one long-term. Yet, policy was not always followed: when assignees moved directly from one assignment to another, the ‘look-see’ did not always take place; mandatory trips for accompanied status assignees were also not always received. Women with children reported that it was not possible to leave them behind when they undertook pre-assignment trips. They found having to negotiate to take their children was a negative factor in their assignment decision-making:

“I think there is a lack of recognition in the global environment today that the type of people who are mobile enough to undertake assignments are unlikely to have grandparents living around the corner, who can step in and take care of the kids for a week ... it sort of puts you off right at the start if ... the company doesn’t want to make any provision for it.” (Abby, Long-term)

The HR specialists (2S, 3R) said that local orientation was given to aid settling-in, either by host location office staff and/ or local destination service providers. The survey data indicate that 49% were offered a country briefing, 82% of them undertook it, but only 41% said it was ‘very important’ (median 2). The literature suggests that settling-in is of importance to female expatriates’ happiness particularly in culturally dissimilar locations (Brivins and Beck, 1992) and hence orientation support is of particular relevance to women (Caligiuri and Lazarova, 2002). Indeed, expatriates generally receive

country briefing positively (Bonache and Zárraga-Oberty, 2008). However, the female assignees reported that their orientation training on arrival was insufficient for their challenging host locations.

Both organisations' policies provided cultural awareness training for assignees and their families on long-term assignments. Training was optional in Collins Co. but mandatory for first time expatriates in Hagman Co. Collins Co. took a case-by case approach to short-term and rotational assignees but made no provision for extended international transfers; Hagman Co. offered cultural training to rotational and placement assignees but not to those on short-term or commuter assignments. Generic courses as well as bespoke tailored provision were available. While the literature suggests that cultural training is a relevant factor in expatriate participation decision-making (Warneke and Schneider, 2011), only 34% of the assignees said that they were offered it. The literature suggests that assignees frequently do not undertake cultural briefing when it is available (Shortland and Cummins, 2007), yet 70% of those offered this training undertook it. However, just 31% said it was 'very important' to their assignment participation decision (median 2), more closely aligned to the literature that questions its efficacy (e.g. Puck *et al.*, 2008) rather than that highlighting its importance (e.g. Selmer *et al.*, 1998). Twelve assignees (14R) commented on this aspect of policy. Although the majority found it helpful, improvements were suggested; for instance, relevance could be improved through the use of previous expatriates as tutors. Linked to the comments on local orientation, cultural training specific to women was required (particularly for challenging destinations such as North Africa). These findings aligned with the literature that suggests cultural training should be gender specific (Gruys *et al.*, 2010).

In Collins Co. language training was available to assignees and families prior to undertaking long-term assignments and on assignment at local management discretion. Rotationals were required to undertake this training in the host location. A case-by-case approach applied to short-term assignees. In Hagman Co. language training was encouraged for assignees and any accompanying family, delivered in the host country. It applied to all assignment types except commuters. Both firms provided English language training as necessary for assignees and accompanying family. The survey results record

just 31% being offered language training, 82% of whom took it up but with only 41% rating this as ‘very important’ to their assignment participation (median 2). Four assignees (8R) regarded it as irrelevant to their participation. These findings contrast with the literature which suggests this form of training is relevant to participation decision-making (Warneke and Schneider, 2011). Two assignees noted mistakes that could arise from misunderstanding colloquialisms, suggesting recognition of the importance of language competency for successful adjustment (Peltokorpi, 2008) and career success (Traavik and Richardsen, 2010). They suggested training in local use of English.

Both organisations provided security training under policy and in practice for all assignment types (except extended international transfers in Collins Co.). Collins Co. offered driving training if local laws required a local test for long-term assignees only; Hagman Co.’s policy provided defensive driving training for long-term and short-term assignees. The survey data record 48% receiving a security briefing, of whom 97% undertook it, with half saying it was ‘very important’ (median 2.5); 45% were offered driving training, of whom 83% undertook it, with 75% reporting this as ‘very important’ (median 3). Relevant training helps to set accurate expectations (Caligiuri *et al.*, 2001) and aligned to this five assignees (8R) confirmed that security training was very useful in high risk countries. However, they noted overly alarmist advice was not helpful and suggested that that security training be tailored to women (singles in particular), reflecting the literature (Gruys *et al.*, 2010). Five assignees (6R) welcomed driving training to address varied host location conditions. Defensive driving was especially welcomed; this was not offered universally – but the women said that it should be.

As the majority of the assignees in receipt of preparation support were on long-term assignments, the data do not provide helpful detail to distinguish between levels of importance attributed to preparation by women on other assignment types. However, it is notable that the preparation elements regarded as being of greatest value to women’s assignment participation decisions were the pre-assignment visit and driving training (particularly defensive driving). Yet the ‘look-see’ trip was offered only to long-term assignees and children were not encouraged to go on it; and driving training was primarily offered to long-term assignees, with defensive driving only included formally

in one organisation's policy. This suggests that the preparation support currently available that best informs women's expatriate participation decisions favours the take-up of long-term assignments but potentially might disadvantage mothers.

Summary and implications

Diversity and equal opportunities policies and principles appeared to have little effect on increasing women's access to career contribution through expatriation. Although these principles were considered to be embedded within all organisational policy and practice (aligned with overall business principles), they were, in effect, disconnected from international assignment policies which did not specifically articulate diversity and equal opportunities as issues of concern. With a strong emphasis on performance, the business case argument for diversity was supported but, as gender diversity was not identified as a 'problem' within a welcomed meritocratic environment, initiatives to widen access to expatriation (particularly at senior levels) for women were only sporadic.

Engineering qualifications were primarily sought for expatriate roles, with access to posts relying strongly on networking. Women were potentially in a disadvantaged position *vis-à-vis* their male colleagues as they held less appropriate qualifications and fewer contacts, and policy and practice did not take these issues into account. Selection policy and practice led to a mixed organisational effect on women's access to career contribution through assignment participation. The organisational preference for internal, known individuals should mean that women's access to expatriation was supported. However, despite an open, transparent approach to selection being used (in the main), the informality of the processes resulted in women's access to expatriate opportunities potentially being hindered. Selection appeared to rely quite heavily on candidates having links with the key decision-makers (most notably host line managers), particularly at senior levels. This suggests that women require a high (and global) volume and depth of networks and contacts and could be potentially disadvantaged as a result. The male-dominated nature of the oil and gas industry led to selection panels (and the decision makers on them) being gendered, resulting in further potential disadvantage to women's access to expatriate appointments.

Preparation policy and practice also provide access to career enhancing expatriate opportunities. Women appeared to be highly willing to participate in preparation interventions if, and when, they were offered. The findings suggested though that, despite preparation being a widespread feature of policy (particularly for long-term assignments), relatively few assignees were offered it. The exception lay with pre-assignment trips which were typically offered (but only to long-term assignees). These were of considerable benefit to women but policy discouraged children's participation and women reported this as detrimental to mothers' access to expatriation. Other preparatory training was less widespread. When it was offered, the content was generic. While useful to women's assignment participation decision-making, it failed to address the specific challenges women faced in their difficult, male-dominated expatriate environments, potentially hindering their assignment participation.

Finally, an assignment type effect was in evidence. Policy and practice on diversity, equal opportunities, selection and preparation appeared to support long-term assignments more strongly than any other assignment type. As identified in chapter 13, long-term was the assignment type of choice for the majority of female assignees. This suggests that women's access to career contribution can be aided through organisational policy and practice supporting this assignment type. However, it must be noted that access to other assignment types was not well supported through policy and practice, potentially limiting women to an assignment type that might become less frequently available in future due to economic pressures (as the policy components supporting it and its accompanied status raise costs). The networking required to gain access to long-term assignments also appeared to be greater than for other types of assignment (potentially again linked to cost implications concerning known individuals being more likely to be successful). Again this has negative participation implications for women assignees.

Having gained access to career contribution through selection and preparation for expatriation, women must develop their careers while on assignment. In the next chapter the research findings are presented in relation to the effect of organisational policy and practice on women's development of career contribution to establish the extent of this organisational effect on women's participation in international assignments.

CHAPTER 15: THE ORGANISATIONAL EFFECT ON DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER CONTRIBUTION

Introduction

The delivery of policy elements during expatriation, as applied to different assignment types, is examined in this chapter. Specifically, how organisational policy and practice affect the development and management of career contribution and thus act as antecedents of women's assignment participation are examined, set within the masculine oil and gas exploration and production sector (figure 9.1, page 115). The findings³⁷ are presented in response to the following research questions (figure 9.2, page 116): 'to what extent and how do international assignment policy and practice facilitate women's expatriation through job-related training, development, support, career management and repatriation?' and 'which assignee effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to female expatriate participation?' Assignment type implications are highlighted and the findings are evaluated in the context of the extant literature.

Job-related training

Hagman Co.'s policy for international placements included training opportunities and both organisations made reference to training for off shift rotational assignees. However, other international assignment policies were silent on training. Despite this, the HR experts (3S, 8R) reported that a variety of interventions were available to expatriates: technical, managerial, personal skills and coaching, being delivered experientially in role or via courses, as appropriate. Collins Co. emphasised experiential learning rather than formal course provision while Hagman Co. focused on training courses. The assignees (10S, 14R) reported experiential learning to be more valuable than short course attendance, although all said courses were beneficial.

³⁷ Organisational policies are summarised in appendix 4, table 5. The volume of sources (denominated as S) with references (denominated as R) made to the issues identified are presented. Where assignees provided interview and survey data, sources are de-duplicated (denominated with ») and total references reported. Full supporting NVivo frequency data are presented in appendix 9, tables 13-17. Descriptive statistics, drawn from the census survey (analysed using SPSS) are presented in appendix 10, tables 18-21.

The HR experts reported that training courses were usually delivered at headquarters or major regional offices (2S, 2R), but attendance was subject to management approval and budgetary constraints (2S, 2R). Graduate assignees were funded centrally but other expatriates were subject to locally set budgets and their line managers had to meet necessary expenditure. Required international travel, time off and costs of course attendance could be prohibitive. To address this, Hagman Co. had begun to roll out courses at local level (2S, 5R).

Assignees (15S», 21R) reported that training was important for: keeping up-to-date; obtaining qualifications; gaining offshore experience (in relevant disciplines); and understanding technical developments. Although 10 (12R) said that being on assignment did not limit their training, they had to make a good case for it and show that any undertaken was used to good effect given the cost. Fifteen (26R), however, reported that training was limited by expatriation and three (3R) said they needed more of it. They highlighted logistical challenges such as workloads building up and finding cover while away. Budget cuts (16S», 27R) and travel time/ costs (especially long haul) (13S, 18R) were also reported as constraints. As locally delivered courses were considered to be too limited in scope, training was usually undertaken at headquarters. The further away their host location, the lower the training opportunities available or the more disruptive attendance became.

As highlighted by Kostova and Roth (2002), training interventions developed at headquarters appear not to be applied abroad to expatriates due to local isomorphic budgetary pressures. The findings also align with the practitioner literature on expatriates' limited access to training (IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007). To address this, top level organisational backing is suggested to over-ride local constraints on cost and access (Rusaw, 1994; Shen *et al.*, 2009), although this did not appear to be in place.

Technical training was considered fundamental by the HR experts (4S, 4R). The survey results confirmed this. While just 44% reported being offered job-related skills training, 96% undertook it, and 70% reported this as 'very important' to their assignment

participation (median 3). There was little difference evident by assignment type – although a higher proportion of long-term assignees and extended international transferees rated job-related skills training as ‘very important’ compared with those on other assignment types. Ten assignees (14R) (in particular junior graded assignees and graduates) said that technical training was critical to understanding new tools and methods. Senior assignees reported that technical training was limited by location, cost and time constraints to a greater extent than did junior and graduate staff.

Four HR experts (7R) commented on managerial training. This included supervisory, presentation, team working, leadership and coaching skills as well as cultural awareness and behaviours. Such training would normally be given before employees entered managerial roles but was said to be less applicable to expatriates while on assignment. Five assignees (7R) commented on these interventions – some managers had received training for their role while others had not.

Five HR experts (12R) reported on personal development training. This addressed behavioural competencies, with training needs determined on an individual basis through the use of competency tools. Collins Co. addressed this within the workplace; Hagman Co. ran specific courses. The survey responses record 34% being offered personal skills training, 96% of whom undertook it, with half of them saying it was ‘very important’ to their current assignment participation (median 2.5). A greater proportion of those on short-term assignments said that personal skills training was ‘very important’ compared to those on other assignment types. Personal development and relational training were also addressed via coaching in both organisations, aligned with the literature that suggests this as a highly personalised form of training (Mendenhall and Stahl, 2000). The assignees (6S, 15R) found coaching very useful. Yet, cost cutting had affected coaching in particular, reflecting the literature that this was an infrequent expatriate training intervention (ORC Worldwide, 2008a).

Nine assignees (12R) commented on training within their current position and two (3R) reported on the effect of training in obtaining new roles. They confirmed that on-

the-job training was welcomed and valued, being of high quality and providing career development, particularly when off-site course attendance was precluded. However, a key finding was that any training given aimed to improve performance in role, rather than as preparation for a different one; indeed 14» assignees (19R) reported that there was no direct link between undertaking training and gaining an expatriate position:

“So it’s to put the cart before the horse really. It is probably better to be involved in a project ... and do the work and then ask for the training, because otherwise I think a response might be why should we give you approval for this training, because it has got nothing to do with what you are doing.” (Una, Long-term)

Although the literature suggests that women have lower participation rates in training programmes than men (Shen *et al.*, 2009), no evidence was found here to support this in respect of expatriate training. Although developing international experience can be addressed through training (Mendenhall *et al.*, 2002), expatriation was not cited as an objective and therefore training did not aim to redress women’s low share of expatriate roles. Not surprisingly, access to training courses was not considered a ‘make or break’ factor in respect of female expatriate participation.

Development

Aligned with the literature (Dickmann and Doherty, 2010; Jokinen *et al.*, 2008), the HR experts (9S, 28R) commented on the importance of international assignments as developmental interventions providing career growth to those who undertook them. This was echoed by 29 assignees (80R). However, the two HR – International Assignments experts representing both firms said that ‘stretch assignments’ (defined as long-term expatriation offered as a promotional step as part of career development) were rare. The female expatriates (9S, 20R) noted that career change could be particularly difficult if it was to involve expatriation. Any such ‘stretch’ was deemed risky, and their organisations would be less willing to “*take a chance*” on those “*who have not got the direct experience of doing it*”. This was the case regardless of the assignee’s gender.

The organisations’ international assignment policies were not primarily developmental in their focus. The exceptions concerned those policies specifically

supporting short-term developmental assignments and graduate placements. Six assignees (13R) and one HR expert (6R) highlighted the developmental opportunities arising from these, although the graduates were not always convinced that their developmental policy aspirations were achieved:

“...the standard of working at my level in an asset is quite low ... I can excel quicker than them. But that doesn’t mean that with regard to my peers ... I am excelling quicker ... I think that at a ... lower level in your career you really do need to be with people who are pushing you...” (Trish, Short-term)

Eight assignees (11R) said that having international experience was very important to gain credibility for re-grading within a grade band, particularly if this would result in working with asset-based personnel and 22» (69R) reported that expatriation could aid promotion to higher grades. However, while the HR experts (3S, 8R) said that the ‘career ladders’ (grades and sub-grades) were well-established and understood by employees and competency tools could be used to identify and address developmental needs (2S, 3R) to achieve grade increases, the assignees did not regard the re-grading/promotion processes (11S, 26R) or the competency tool (3S, 7R) as straightforward at all. They said that the grading structure was “*opaque*”; although it provided “*a theoretical process for advancement*”, achieving a grade rise was considered a “*matter of luck*” and that the competency tool was onerous to complete. Being able to demonstrate that they were carrying out tasks and roles that were suited to re-grading was considered to be “*a long, laborious process*” and the career ladders were considered “*arbitrary*” and “*disappointing*”. To counter this, the HR experts (6S, 12R) emphasised that assignees needed to maintain relationships if they were to gain promotion opportunities:

“...we are very relationship based and it is important that you are on the ‘radar screen’ of people making the decisions.” (Fallon, HR – Far East)

The HR experts (3S, 5R) representing both organisations stated that line managers could promote employees’ development or hinder it by ‘hanging on’ to good people. This was echoed by six assignees (15R), aligned with the literature that suggests that host country supervisors are more concerned with short-term in-country outcomes (Benson and Pattie, 2009).

These findings suggest that the organisations' international assignment policies as well as their development tools, processes and practices do not always fully support women's development and promotion potential through expatriation, reflecting the literature on career uncertainty and risk linked to international mobility (Harzing and Christensen, 2004; Stahl and Cerdin, 2004; Stahl *et al.*, 2002). Thus, even though the female assignees believed that expatriation should provide sufficient development to enable a fast route to promotion, they may not undertake it, given its associated career uncertainty. If policy and practice addressed career development more directly, this might encourage women's expatriate participation to a greater extent (Wan *et al.*, 2003).

Support: mentors, sponsors, networks and role models

The extant literature suggests that, while organisational support (including mentors, sponsors, networks and role models) is particularly critical to women expatriates' job satisfaction (Culpan and Wright, 2002), women's access to these interventions is poor (Linehan, 2001a; Linehan and Scullion, 2001b; Linehan, Scullion and Walsh, 2001). Yet, detail on mentoring arrangements for all assignment types was included in Hagman Co.'s international assignment policies. Each assignee had an allocated functional manager (not the host country manager) while on assignment whose role was to support their career development. In addition, employees were encouraged to identify a personal mentor. Collins Co.'s policies did not specifically mention mentoring, although it was offered along similar lines to Hagman Co.. Both firms offered little in the way of formal support via networks and role models in relation to expatriation.

In both organisations graduates were allocated a formal mentor who acted in a sponsor capacity, being appraised on their role. In Collins Co., mentoring a graduate was included as an objective in the annual performance review process for line managers and technical specialists; in Hagman Co., it was inherent in the line of business manager's role to mentor graduates and other assignees, with feedback given on their performance. Collins Co. had also set up a formal scheme operating from its exploration and production leadership team to mentor high potential non-graduates. The formality of

mentors being appraised on their role and thus being held accountable as a sponsor was considered to be beneficial for both the mentor who would be recognised for their role and for the assignee's career, aligned with the literature (Kumra, 2010; Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2010; O'Higgins, 2001):

"...because if you have a formalised mentor scheme, the mentors themselves know that they have to take a mentor role, and ... we would know our targets and our objectives..." (Gina, Long-term)

In contrast to the literature which suggests high levels of importance placed by women on mentoring (Linehan and Scullion, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Taylor and Napier, 1996b), the survey results indicate that only 31% regarded support from a mentor as 'very important' to their assignment participation (median 2), with little difference in the levels of importance attributed to mentoring by assignment type. This was explained by the infrequent success of formal mentoring and the slow progress of more effective, voluntary mentoring. For example, 13 assignees (32R) reported on formal interventions; and two (2R) on sponsor arrangements. Two assignees discussed the role of mentors in gaining skills development (3R) and promotion (5R). The key themes were that the assignees believed that effective mentoring happened naturally, not through formal allocation. They spoke about developing strong personal relationships with colleagues, previous bosses and technical experts, with benefits being derived from a two-way mutually helpful association. However, the HR experts (7S, 14R) and assignees (19S, 44R) considered that such informal, voluntary mentoring was making only slow progress in their organisations.

The graduates were part of a formal mentoring scheme but, in the main, regarded this as unsuccessful: they were wary of revealing information to people they did not know and certainly not to managers who had control over their working lives and careers. Also they reported no structures in place to provide another mentor if the first one left or the relationship did not work out. Mentors were often simply not "*the right fit*". The assignees were very much in favour of mentoring, but said that they found their own.

Two HR experts (2R) commented that gender was not usually considered when matching mentors with mentees. While assignees (13S», 26R) found it useful to have a female perspective, most preferred a male mentor as they considered this more beneficial in the male-dominated oil and gas world. Though recognising the value of male mentors in helping women to gain networks and contacts in a masculine environment, the literature suggests that mentors of a different gender may provide less support (Feldman *et al.*, 1999). Thus, women expatriates may experience potential disadvantage. That said, the women assignees did place greater emphasis on the degree of “*fit*” between themselves and their mentor than on gender, aligned with Linehan’s (2000) findings that women assignees find value in having mentors of either gender.

Women assignees did not appear to be as restricted in their access to support as the literature suggests (Linehan, 2001a; Linehan and Scullion, 2001b; Linehan, Scullion and Walsh, 2001). However, with emphasis on informal approaches, without accountability, such mentoring may not give the highest levels of assistance needed for women to gain maximum career contribution from assignment participation.

Neither organisation had a networking policy or formal networks in place at the time of the survey, and so it was unsurprising that only one woman found that support from a women’s network was ‘very important’ to her assignment decision-making (median 1). Hagman Co. had set up a women’s network under the auspices of its diversity and inclusion committee by the time the interview research was conducted (Shortland, 2011). Having access to women-only networks brought mixed responses from assignees (24S», 41R); while some welcomed a female perspective, others believed that a female-only remit might be disadvantageous if men reacted negatively to it.

Three HR experts (8R) commented on the value of women building career networks and working through them to enhance formal career management processes. Networks were considered to be invaluable by assignees for: career management (15S, 55R); increasing their visibility (9S, 15R); improving communications (8S, 11R); building contacts (5S, 7R); and enhancing their reputation (2S, 5R), aligned with the

literature that suggests their importance to women in achieving inclusion (Fish, 2005) and making work-based contacts (Terjesen, 2005; Tharenou, 2005).

In effect, networks helped the assignees to find out about forthcoming roles and pitch for them, especially at senior levels. Strategies to cultivate their networks included: keeping in touch with previous bosses; meeting visiting management teams when they visited the asset; keeping their profiles high through involvement in organisational activities; dropping by the headquarters to be seen, meet contacts and make known what they had done; use telecommunications where distance meant that face-to-face meetings were not feasible; and, for those in lower grades, to support senior personnel directly in project work.

Neither organisation had written policy provision on role models. There were very few women who acted in this capacity. Only two survey respondents cited their presence, three cited the views of current female assignees, and one the views of returned female expatriates as ‘very important’ to their expatriate participation decision (median 1 in each case). The assignees (21S», 40R) drew attention to the paucity of female senior leaders in their organisations, noting that this presented a challenge, aligned with the literature that suggests an absence of role models may affect women’s future entry (Miller *et al.*, 2000). One of the key themes concerned the lack of organisational support for female role models. The HR experts (6S, 9R) claimed that senior women were not given time or space within their duties to encourage other women:

“...the company would want her to do her day job ... if we were serious about it that would be a way to encourage a positive action type approach ... to give her the space to do that.” (Ray, HR – Training and Development)

This was confirmed by the assignees:

“...there are females who are in the more senior positions ... I wouldn’t have said they are ... styling themselves as role models ... who you could try and emulate ... I guess they are busy doing their day jobs.” (Harriet, Long-term)

Indeed, the majority of female assignees did not see themselves as role models for others. They commented that they were not sufficiently senior in their organisations to be

viewed in this light, potentially aligning with a gendered status (Murrell and Zagenczyk, 2006). However, they did report being used as “*sounding boards*” and being well-known as a result of expatriation. In-keeping with the literature concerning women expatriates’ pioneering roles (Adler, 1987, Linehan and Walsh, 2000b) and their ‘token’ status (Kanter, 1977), several described their experiences as “*trailblazing*”:

“(My) boss’s boss ... said, ‘Yvonne, what a great story you are, trailblazing out there ... and doing fantastically’ ... but nobody has ever said to me ‘Yvonne, you are a role model, and I could learn from what you have done...’” (Yvonne, Long-term)

Yet, female expatriates appeared to take on role model status through successful assignment completion:

“...once they’ve proven themselves ... well then everyone’s got confidence. And then they are a good role model, and then that mitigates the potential perception of, say, a male manager saying but ‘I’m not sure about this’.” (Sue Ellen, HR – International Assignments)

This suggests that there is pressure upon female expatriates to be successful in their assignments (without specific organisational support) and, by so-doing, to inspire other women: a pressure that potentially would not be inherent in male expatriation.

Career management

Both of the case study organisations had policy provision to address career management. HR experts in both firms (3S, 5R) noted its role in identifying high potential employees (“*emerging talent*”) and in employee development. However, they reported that their organisations were not “*process-burdened*”. As a result, decisions were made quickly, there were no long-term structured career paths and career uncertainty was the norm (3S, 3R). This was considered advantageous as “*no surprises*” career mapping was thought to lack excitement. Yet, the assignees (9S», 22R) reported on their dissatisfaction with career uncertainty. They sought a more structured and systematic approach to career management:

“I think if there was anything they could do more formally about ... managing the experience ... better through the policy and say ... this is how we will use your

experience and performance reviews ... and how that would feed into the next one, that might help.” (Rhoda, Long-term)

This suggests that in an environment of career uncertainty, tailored support is needed to enable women to achieve the career contribution that they seek through assignment participation. To address career management, both organisations used a variety of processes including an annual performance review (APR) and an annual development review (ADR). Collins Co. also operated a formal succession planning and talent review process although this was not documented in policy.

Annual performance review (APR)

Collins Co.’s APR was considered to be a business tool that increased employee performance, enabled skills development and assisted employees to advance their careers. In Hagman Co. the APR included defining and prioritising goals as well as feedback and coaching, managed via an on-line tool and carried out with line and functional management input. In both organisations the APR was linked to bonus payments and was mandatory.

The HR experts (11S, 37R) reported that the primary aim of the APR was to set targets and measure progress against them. The assignees (24S, 65R) considered the APR a dynamic process enabling recalibration of objectives throughout the year. Written objectives and good quality conversations with line/ functional managers were considered essential to help formulate their thinking and alert others to it. Both the HR experts and the assignees said that the APR was used to identify highly performing employees. However, while the HR sources said that its outcomes featured in succession planning discussions, the assignees believed that the APR was not critical to career advancement, seeing the talent management/ succession planning processes as separate. This suggests a mismatch between how assignees and their employers used the APR to provide career contribution.

The HR experts reported that any development objectives were typically short-term, relating specifically to current performance objectives. As such, development was immediate in its focus; there was no link with the annual development review (ADR):

“...the line is drawn between development ... to be able to perform in your existing role ... you might discuss in a performance review ... new roles, next jobs ... that is then more the development review discussion.” (Cliff, HR – Performance)

Nonetheless, the assignees reported using the APR to state their development objectives as part of their career rationales, acknowledging that the APR played a part in career management even it was *“probably only half the story”*. However, it was not, in the main, considered a suitable tool to identify international mobility potential; neither did it operate at a sufficiently high level in the organisation to secure expatriation:

“I think they are very good tools, but I just don’t hold much store in them in getting international assignments.” (Linda, Long-term)

Although the HR experts acknowledged that the APR provided an opportunity to state mobility intentions, they did not consider it an appropriate forum for signalling willingness to expatriate. Nonetheless, being mandatory, the assignees said that the APR presented an opportunity to discuss expatriation and highlight willingness to go:

“In some ways, it is kind of an excuse to get your ... manager’s attention, to ... discuss the next assignment...” (Trish, Short-term)

This suggests that women made use of tools and conversations as far as possible to signal their expatriate intentions, aligned with the literature that reports women need to persistently ask to be considered for their next career move (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a).

Annual development review (ADR)

Both organisations had policies on, and operated, three stage ADR processes to identify and address development needs. In Collins Co., the individual prepared her development plan; this was then reviewed by her line manager and training and development identified, followed by an end-of-year evaluation when implementation and timing were agreed. The ADR process was managed on-line, enabling regular updating but with the

three main steps carried out at fixed points. Under Hagman Co.'s ADR guide, the employee also prepared her development plan, discussed this with her line manager to set objectives with training and development identified. Finally, the employee wrote her development plan, listing actions to be taken. Copies were kept by the line manager and HR. At the time of the research, Hagman Co.'s process was not managed on-line, although this was being developed, mimicking Collins Co.'s approach.

The HR experts (9S, 34R) in both organisations viewed the ADR as a tool to identify mobility and any constraints around it. For example:

“We have a space on the form, which is ‘are you mobile?’ And you can put in there, not mobile, internationally mobile, and mobile with constraints, and if you put mobile with constraints ... you might say ... for six months, because I have a child ... and they are finishing school...” (Cally, HR – Learning and Development)

However, as the ADR was computerised in Collins Co., this enabled greater transparency, regular updating and easy access to information.

The survey did not specifically address the ADR policy. However, the assignees who were interviewed spoke at length and in depth on this (26S, 96R): it helped them to crystallise their career intentions, to *“formulate one’s own thinking about where next”* and it was a useful *“piece of paper to have in your arsenal”*. They used the ADR form, as intended, to state their availability for international mobility. In some cases it was used to highlight interest in specific international positions to demonstrate careful thought had been given to their applications:

“I told everybody that I said I was interested in it in my ADR so they don’t just think it is some random application...” (Yvonne, Long-term)

The ADR policy in both organisations highlighted employee, line manager and organisational roles and responsibilities but, because the ADR was not mandatory, there were differences in adherence to process timelines and outcomes. Nonetheless, the assignees recognised that accountability rested with them:

“There isn’t going to be anybody reading it going ‘wow! I must do something to help Karen.’ ... if I need certain opportunities I’ve got to ask for it...” (Karen, Long-term)

In both organisations, the assignees were unclear as to what happened to the ADR forms after completion. They believed it was therefore important to extend conversations about willingness to expatriate beyond the ADR process. They also pointed out that as the ADR took place only at set points, it was important to keep their aspirations regarding future mobility alive to ensure that they were placed in *“that talent management box”*. The value of maintaining conversations and the role of the line manager were stressed frequently, once again aligning with the literature on the importance of stating availability (Linehan and Walsh, 1999a) and building line manager relationships (Varma and Stroh, 2001; Varma *et al.*, 2001).

Succession planning

The HR experts commented on the role of the ADR within career planning (4S, 9R) and succession planning (7S, 30R). Having been accorded far greater prominence for longer in Collins Co., there was greater employee receptiveness to it as a career and succession planning tool:

“...people are starting to see that it is something that you control; it has got to be important to you, recognising the opportunities that are available...” (Krystle, HR – Learning and Development)

Collins Co.’s HR experts reported using ADR plans as part of the annual talent review. The executive vice presidents, vice presidents and function heads comprised an exploration and production leadership team which reviewed the performance and the development of all assignees in the different assets and functions as part of a structured, formal and rigorous process:

“We have ready now, which means ready to do the job today. Ready soon, which means ready to do the job within a couple of years. And ready forward, which means ready to do the job within five years.” (Fallon, HR – Far East)

The locations of all assignees were mapped out, their performance and development discussed and *“top talent, emerging talent, high potential and critical professionals”* identified. As the succession planning process had become more robust and formalised, it had resulted in widened expatriate and other career opportunities by *“raising awareness of who we have in the business”*.

By contrast, in Hagman Co., the career management process was described as *“unstructured”*. Indeed, three of the HR experts (10R) said it was haphazard, two (5R) opaque and one (1R) gendered; positions could be filled *“via patronage and sponsorship”* and, despite the introduction of career ladders and development reviews, there was still a culture of resistance to formal career management processes. As a result, career planning could be *“hit and miss”*:

“...because we don’t have this very structured systematic way of placing people in their next role, you do get black holes emerging. People go ‘oh dear, the music has stopped and I am left’, the musical chairs...” (Lucy, HR – Development)

Explanations given by HR included the *“patchy”* adherence to the ADR process across regions and functions leading to gaps in employee data and lack of credibility. There was, however, an understanding of the need to operate more objective and systematic career management processes. The HR experts spoke of the development of new guidelines and the introduction of computerisation taking place, with recognition that in time this would help to achieve more helpful outcomes:

“The culture will take time and ... will come when people see an output ... they will start to go with the process.” (Cally, HR – Learning and Development)

The assignees who were interviewed discussed the succession planning processes that operated in their organisations (19S, 44R); career planning (16S, 38R); the purpose of career management (7S, 9R); and the formal nature of the process (8S, 11R). There was greater awareness of succession planning amongst the assignees employed by Collins Co., reflecting the more formal, centralised and time-scaled nature of its talent management review, although high levels of awareness were by no means universal. In Hagman Co., the assignees reported the process to be informal, decentralised, unclear, unsystematic and lacking transparency:

“...you are rubbish at managing our careers. Your talent management is non-existent, so be more systematic, be more transparent.” (Zara, Rotational)

The assignees in both organisations relied upon their line managers for information, once again highlighting the women’s need to build strong supervisory relationships (Varma and Stroh, 2001; Varma *et al.*, 2001). They understood that their functional managers also played a role in the process but they did not know what this was or how their input was used as they did not see a clear link between the ADR and APR processes and succession planning. The “*black box*” succession planning process created frustration. With lack of communication and understanding of the processes, they regarded them as haphazard (8S», 17R) and opaque (7S, 17R). In line with Harris’s (2002) findings on female expatriate selection, informal and opaque processes were considered to generate a lack of opportunities (10S, 19R). Hence, the assignees placed emphasis on being known by the most senior managers, again emphasising their need for networking and relationship building:

“... discussions are rolled up to a relatively senior level ... and they talk about career development, and they talk about moving people around and ... I think there is definitely this advantage to being known to the guys sitting round the table when they are having this discussion...” (Di, Long-term)

Five assignees (7R) said that career management was a gendered (male) process as very few women at senior levels were involved in decision-making, reflecting (and potentially perpetuating) vertical segregation. However, the various inadequacies within the succession planning and career management processes were not seen as discriminatory, rather as just poor communication; hence the findings do not support the literature suggesting that women have less access to corporate career planning than men (Selmer and Leung, 2003c).

Key personnel

The HR experts reported that line (5S, 22R) and functional managers (12S, 37R) were of particular importance to women assignees’ career management. In both organisations, the line manager carried out assignees’ APR and ADR and the function heads held

responsibility for succession planning. In Hagman Co. functional managers were considered particularly “powerful”: they held an overview of the performance and development review processes for all in their function and carried out APR and ADR reviews for graduates on placement.

The assignees (26S, 79R) said that maintaining conversations with their line managers was critical to their career advancement as reviews were insufficient by themselves. As a consequence, reorganisations and changes in line management responsibilities could be detrimental to their career progression. The assignees (21S», 66R) recognised the importance of the functional leaders, executive vice presidents and discipline chiefs noting that, if they wanted to move on, they had to ensure that these individuals knew. They reported them to be very well networked and that without access to this network, obtaining expatriate positions as part of succession planning was difficult:

“He knows what jobs are coming up ... he is able to see ... where the opportunities are ... and discuss them with people.” (Wanda, Long-term)

As a result, they placed importance on ensuring that they were well known by their “boss’s boss”:

“I know the person up the line ... if I didn’t, what would I do? I’m not too sure that I would have confidence to phone somebody up in (regional HQ) or (HQ) and say ‘hey, I don’t really think I’m getting good airtime’...” (Di, Long-term)

However, even with contacts at high levels, the nature of organisational processes could reduce women’s ability to further their career contribution. For example, functional manager input into succession planning was not co-ordinated centrally in Hagman Co. and there was functional variation in levels of pro-active career management. Graduate assignees (2S, 5R) noted that, while career decisions were made by their functional head, it was their line manager who was more familiar with their work and capabilities. At the most senior levels, female assignees could fall outside of the functional manager structure:

“...when they come out of their functional home, geology, commercial, etc., and they become more general management ... they swim around a bit ... you become

... totally reliant on your network ... and that is why I think you find a lot of women getting ... up to (mid-grade) level but there are relatively few who manage to break through, beyond that...” (Lucy, HR – Development)

As a result, assignees (2S, 6R) noted that women at the most senior levels needed links with even more senior executive personnel to supersede the succession management process, once again highlighting women assignees’ need to develop their networks at the very highest organisational levels:

“You’ve got to be out there ... You’ve got to have a face on it; you’ve got to be willing to get your name out there.” (Milly, Long-term)

Repatriation

With the exception of the policy applying to graduates in Hagman Co., which required assignees to re-establish contact with home managers before undertaking further international placements, repatriation guidelines in both organisations focused solely on monetary assistance. Yet only one assignee (1R) spoke about the financial package. In contrast, career and logistical themes were of major importance, aspects not included in policy. The HR experts (5S, 8R) did refer to repatriation planning; for example, in Hagman Co. discussions were held with assignees three to six months before their return, aligned with suggested good repatriation practice (University of Westminster/CBI, 1993). The assignees (19S, 39R) highlighted the importance of repatriation planning and communication. All were pro-active in their efforts to find roles after their assignments, but expected support from their line and functional managers, noting that both sides needed to work together if repatriation was to be managed successfully.

The long-term assignees reported spending months prior to their return trying to identify suitable roles (some starting as long as year in advance of their assignment end date to explore opportunities) but frequently experiencing low levels of communication with home based managers who did not see this as a priority. They described their feelings as *“being in limbo”* and *“in this bit of a holding pattern”*, aligned with the literature that suggests concerns over repatriation can affect the expatriation experience negatively (Herman and Tetrick, 2009). Seven women (9R) who were due to repatriate to

the headquarters were concerned over few (or unsuitable) roles being available even though the headquarters should, theoretically, have had a wide range of openings. A high level of worry was evident:

“...I am leaving here on Friday and I still don’t know what role I’m going to.”
(Linda, Long-term)

Yet, the HR – Resourcing experts in both firms appeared unaware of these employee concerns. They considered that repatriation was handled relatively well and assignees would return to *“the company that they know”*, that their new skills could be used *“to challenge the way we do things”* and that quite often they might take on *“a more senior role”*. They highlighted organisational intention to ensure appropriate roles on return, noting that positions would be filled by contractors to begin with, or that expatriates would not be returned home if it was likely that there would be no role at the end of the assignment:

“...we never bring them back into location unless there is a good job there for them that will develop their career...” (Amanda, HR – Resourcing)

By contrast, the two HR – International Assignments experts (6R), responsible for the day-to-day implementation of international assignment policies were more aware of repatriation problems faced by assignees:

“I would like to say that we are absolutely brilliant at it, but I would be lying.”
(Alexis, HR – International Assignments)

“...occasionally people repatriate and there really isn’t a proper role for them which is frustrating for them and is a waste of money.” (Sue Ellen, HR – International Assignments)

They understood that repatriation roles would most likely be unknown as it was not possible to make promises or give clear statements on post-assignment duties especially when functions and jobs might be subject to reorganisation and restructuring (Brookfield, 2010). Indeed, this was confirmed by 15» assignees (35R) who commented on their experiences of having been given an unknown role upon previous repatriation. This was described as a *“big deal”* and a *“real problem”*. Five (7R) said that there was no link at all between their overseas roles and their jobs on return and that they received no recognition for the learning and development they had achieved while away. Two» (5R)

expressed concern over promotion potential on repatriation and the reality being quite different from their expectations:

“...no one really knew me back at the mother-ship. So you are basically an unknown quantity...” (Fiona, Long-term)

Poor links between succession planning and repatriation (19S, 39R) were noted. This suggests potential damage to organisational commitment, as highlighted in the literature (Dickmann and Harris, 2005) and illustrated by the typical advice to other assignees:

“I wouldn’t advise anyone to do this for a strategic reason.” (Val, Long-term)

The survey data revealed that only three assignees (4%) were offered repatriation preparation training; all took it up and said this was ‘very important’ (median 3). This, together with the qualitative data, suggests that repatriation training could be a valuable intervention, beneficial to women’s expatriate participation if it were offered more widely. Given that concerns over repatriation are an identified factor affecting willingness to relocate internationally (Perkins and Shortland, 2006), this adds weight to the inclusion of repatriation training within policy.

Summary and implications

While on assignment, expatriates found access to training restricted by distance from its delivery and budgets set locally. Training that was available was not devised with expatriation or future career roles as objectives; rather it was given to ensure performance in the current role. Complex grading and promotion structures/ processes inhibited any development gained on assignment from resulting in career growth and relatively few assignments were offered by the case study organisations specifically for developmental reasons (the exceptions being graduate placements and some short-term postings). There appeared to be no direct discriminatory practice related to the provision and outcomes of training and development, reflecting the meritocratic environment of the case study firms, but the requirement to develop the line and senior manager relationships required to underpin career growth as a result of expatriation might indirectly disadvantage female assignees.

The findings suggest that the organisations' international assignment policies and practices aim to provide expatriate support and career contribution, in particular via formal mentoring/ sponsorship arrangements. However, although women assignees valued these, they preferred to develop their own support systems, set within a framework of mutual trust. As a result, some turned their backs on the formal interventions which provided accountability within organisational career management processes, in favour of relying on their contacts and networks to develop informal arrangements. Yet, such action potentially lowered the career contribution that they could derive from their assignments. Female assignees found male mentors to be of greater relevance to developing career contribution. Although this appears advantageous to women working in masculine environments, such a gendered approach might have a negative effect on career contribution development through expatriation if male mentors provide less support to women than their male *protégés*. If policy and practice addressed women's networking in expatriation and gave greater support to encourage female expatriate role models, potentially this might help to widen women's access to a wider pool of mentors, including suitable women, although any such arrangements would need accountability to maximise career contribution.

Career management was supported via policy and practice in relation to annual performance and development reviews and succession planning/ career management interventions. In both firms, the mandatory APR, with line managers taking a key role in the process, focused on achievement of performance and monetary reward; any career development was short-term, linked to the requirement to achieve effective performance in role. Female assignees saw little relevance in the APR to developing career contribution through expatriation, even though management used this tool in succession planning (granted with little expatriate emphasis). The non-mandatory ADR was development-focused, aiming to increase potential for future roles. It played an important role in succession planning and expatriate identification. While career management was ultimately the responsibility of the assignee, the input of line managers was, once again, of importance, suggesting women's contacts and networks are of relevance to gaining career contribution. While one firm used a formal, transparent on-line approach to

conducting the ADR (which appeared to facilitate career contribution), the other used a less transparent, paper-based system which was less effective (although it was instituting an on-line system modelled on practice in other oil and gas firms). However, in both organisations assignees regarded the ADR as unclear, indicating any development of career contribution that might be derived from it rested on the need for more thorough communication.

The APR and ADR fed into succession planning processes. Where these were transparent and formal, career contribution through expatriation was better supported; where the process was opaque and informal, this was less the case, potentially disadvantaging women. Regardless of the clarity/ formality of the process, female assignees relied heavily on their network of contacts to raise (male) senior executives' awareness of their career objectives, set within a vertically segregated, gendered (but not viewed as discriminatory) career management structure/ process.

Repatriation policy had little effect on supporting the development of career contribution. Policy focused on financial aspects, whereas assignees required career support; links between repatriation and succession planning/ career management were weak and communication was poor. Repatriation training was rare but when given was highly regarded.

Finally, an assignment type effect was in evidence. Graduate international placements and short-term developmental assignments were best supported to provide development of career contribution through training, development, formal mentoring and repatriation policies/ interventions. Yet, short-term assignments are not favoured by women assignees, as discussed in chapter 13. Women prefer long-term assignments. Yet, the development of career contribution through this assignment type was not well supported by training, development or repatriation policy and practice. Perhaps not surprisingly, women undertaking long-term assignments placed the greatest emphasis on these aspects of support (most probably because they were least likely to receive them).

All assignees expected the development of career contribution through expatriation but there appeared to be little difference by assignment type with regard to the effect of organisational succession planning/ career management processes. Greater certainty of career contribution could be expected through improved clarity/ formality of career management processes, but this requires underpinning by open communications if female assignment participation is to be encouraged.

The findings suggest that, at the time of the survey, women expatriates' access to career enhancing training, development, support, career management and repatriation interventions was not administered any differently from men's within organisational policy. Yet, in practice, the strong emphasis on networking did disadvantage women as relationships were required at senior management levels to facilitate promotion and career growth and women had fewer contacts than their male colleagues in their male-dominated organisations. Women's lower access to support networks was recognised by the HR experts. The launch that took place during the research period of the women's network at Hagman Co. to assist women's career development within the organisation suggests that women's characteristics were being taken into account and were beginning to influence organisational policy and practice (although in this instance not specifically in relation to their expatriate careers).

In addition to career contribution, women need to consider their family situation and home life when taking up international assignments. In the following two chapters the effect of organisational policy and practice in supporting them to manage these responsibilities and the implications for their assignment participation are addressed.

CHAPTER 16: THE ORGANISATIONAL EFFECT ON FAMILY LIFE

Introduction

Figure 13.1 (page 202) indicated that women's assignment participation rests not only on the career contribution derived from expatriation but also upon home/ family life and its stability. The main policy elements and implementation practices that help to create and maintain family life identified by female expatriates as critical to their expatriation within the male-dominated oil and gas exploration and production sector are discussed in this chapter. Co-working, dual careers and local support for husbands and partners; family policy in relation to maternity, childcare and children's education; and how these act as antecedents of women's assignment participation (figure 9.1, page 115) are addressed, taking into account assignment types undertaken.

The chapter presents the findings³⁸ in response to the following research questions (figure 9.2, page 116): 'to what extent and how do dual careers, maternity, childcare and education policies and practice support women's expatriation?', 'which family effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to female expatriate participation?' and 'which assignee effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to female expatriate participation?' Assignment type implications are highlighted. The findings are evaluated in the context of the extant literature, drawing particularly on that relating to family power, satisficing and women's career paths.

³⁸ Organisational policies are summarised in appendix 4, table 5. The volume of sources (denominated as S) with references (denominated as R) made to the issues identified are presented. Where assignees provided interview and survey data, sources are de-duplicated (denominated with ») and total references reported. Full supporting NVivo frequency data are presented in appendix 9, tables 12 and 18-20. Descriptive statistics, drawn from the census survey (analysed using SPSS) are presented in appendix 10, tables 18-19, 22-25.

Dual careers and co-working

As discussed in chapter 13, dual careers (where both partners pursue their own career goals) and co-working (where they are employed within the same organisation) are important influences on women's take-up of expatriation. Both organisations had policy provision to address co-working and dual careers which applied to spouses and unmarried partners (although noting that visa restrictions might preclude accompanied status). The co-working policies in both firms focused on monetary issues, ensuring de-duplication of allowances and benefits for long-term assignees. De-duplication also applied to extended transfers in Collins Co. and to accompanied short-term assignees in Hagman Co. Collins Co. also de-duplicated allowances and benefits for dual career couples when the move was initiated by the spouse's company, with a prescriptive list of items affected.

The two HR – International Assignments experts from each organisation had managed dual career and co-working policy implementation across a range of situations and their experiences were supported by three other HR experts (58R). While noting organisational policies required them to respond to cost implications, the main organisational focus rested on finding ways to keep couples together, supporting accompanied status for long-term assignees. As such, HR effort was engaged in creative policy interpretation such as liaising with other oil and gas firms to assist partners to obtain local roles and supporting rotational working (and occasionally commuting) to service independent dual career assignments, working the international assignment policy around each situation to facilitate individual solutions. This approach was not specifically tailored to address women's tendency not to be independently mobile once in a partnered relationship (Ackers, 2004); rather it aimed to support both sexes in recognition of dual career barriers to long-term mobility.

Given the greater problems experienced by 'trailing' male spouses in host destinations (Punnett *et al.*, 1992; Selmer and Leung, 2003a), support for spousal employment is particularly welcomed by female expatriates (Yeoh and Khoo, 1998). While no gendered application of policy was evident, the survey data confirm, as

anticipated from the literature (ORC, 2008a), that organisational policy on co-working and dual careers was ‘very important’ to women’s assignment participation (median 3 in each case).

Nineteen» assignees (73R) commented on co-working while nine (24R) spoke about lead careers in this regard. They identified that, while organisational effort attempted to accommodate family life, career contribution drawbacks were often left unresolved. The literature notes that dual career assignees must prioritise which career leads (Linehan and Walsh, 2001). The findings here provided some assignee evidence of this as well as assignment choice restricted by the need to find appropriate roles for two people:

“...because there are two of us, we have to be quite flexible and (manager) said ... ‘I can offer you this, but I really don’t have anything else because I have to place two of you’.” (Izzy, Long-term)

It was acknowledged that it was easier for organisations to employ co-working couples as expatriates in the key functions where international mobility was more common (exploration and engineering). Examples were given of individuals undertaking a career change into different functions in the oil and gas industry to diversify and thereby increase a couple’s chances of being relocated together.

Assignees (16S», 46R) reported on policy implementation on gaining compatible roles abroad for dual career couples. The women whose husbands/ partners were employed by other oil and gas firms confirmed that their organisations frequently worked jointly to effect moves and implemented policies in support of different assignment types to keep couples together. Another theme concerned women with partners employed in other sectors but in compatible functions (such as engineering) having the potential to be employed within their companies at some point in the future, supported by organisational policy. This was appreciated. Some spoke of their spouses/ partners being employed in contractor positions by their host asset, this being very helpful in supporting their assignment participation.

Despite organisational support at headquarters for keeping co-working and dual career couples together, assignees (14S, 26R) reported difficulties in their timing of assignments. Partners were sometimes split up due to local implementation practices when the home and host country line managers were unable to agree and/ or synchronise arrival and departure times for couples. The majority were acceptant of this and tolerated short periods of unaccompanied status when their partners were either sent ahead or followed behind them. They reported this as simply part of the trials of moving two careers at the same time. However, for some women even short periods of separation generated an emotional response and they reported feelings of stress and anger (Harvey, 1997a, 1997b).

There was no doubt that HR used considerable discretion to facilitate dual career and co-working couples to undertake accompanied international mobility as far as was practicable. The assignees (9S, 14R) welcomed this support, acknowledging the organisational understanding of dual careers within the oil and gas industry and the efforts made on their behalf. Nonetheless, they believed that more practical support was needed to ensure both partners could work abroad, aligned with the literature (Permits Foundation, 2009). Co-working, in particular, was considered to present a significant advantage to their employers through its cost efficient, ‘two-for-one’ approach and hence in their firm’s interest to support:

“...if you have got two very highly functioning people out in an asset ... you will have to pay for one lot of housing for them ... and you are getting two expats for the price of one in many respects.” (Susan, Long-term)

There was extensive evidence of family power (Harvey, 1998) influencing dual career female assignment participation. The HR experts (5S, 9R) and assignees (29S», 99R) noted the male career usually took priority: men were less likely to follow their spouses’ career abroad and thus women’s assignments might simply not be viable if there was no work for their partners. Although it was not always the case that the women took a subsidiary role to their husbands (Yeoh and Willis, 2005), it was evident that they were prepared to take a sideways career move or a lower level expatriate role to accommodate their partners as lead earners and career holders:

“I have gone backwards ... because it was the only place we could both get jobs.” (Rhoda, Long-term)

Practical and financial support

Dual career support was contained within both firms’ partner assistance/ support policies. In Collins Co., spousal visa assistance was given for extended international transfers; in Hagman Co., briefings (for example, tax) and visa support for long-term, short-term and commuter assignments (as appropriate) were offered. With regard to work permit/ visa assistance, 31% of the survey respondents reported receiving this: 86% said it was ‘very important’ (median 3) to their assignment participation, aligned with the literature (Permits Foundation, 2009). The women were mainly on long-term assignments and extended transfers but one was expatriating short-term. Just three assignees reported receiving spouse/ partner employment assistance; all were on long-term assignments and said this was ‘very important’ (median 3). Nine» assignees (15R) commented on the critical nature of obtaining spouse work visas:

“The spousal work permit issue was THE deciding factor for my current role.”
(Rhoda, Long-term)

Despite visas being addressed in policy, the common theme was that dual career assignees received too little help with this and they called for more support.

An annual spouse/ partner allowance was available to long-term assignees in both firms. This was received by 17% of those surveyed (aligned with policy, all being on long-term assignments), but only half said this was ‘very important’ to their assignment participation (median 2.5). The assignees (12S, 18R) reported that their partners used this allowance for educational and cultural courses. It was seen as a welcome, but ‘token’ gesture; not as a ‘make or break’ factor resulting in assignment acceptance. The HR experts (3S, 7R) noted that partner support allowances were too low to compensate for the loss of a second income (2S, 5R), aligned with wider industry practice (ORC, 2008a). Six» assignees (9R) considered that, unless both partners could work abroad, expatriation represented a pay cut for the family. Organisational policy was criticised in this respect. They called for more support to mitigate the loss of the second income, ideally through

employment but otherwise via financial compensation. To facilitate spouse employment abroad, organisational policy did address spouse training, aligned with good organisational practice (ORC, 2008a): 21% of assignees (all were on long-term assignments) said that this was offered; 92% said their spouses undertook it and 58% reported it as ‘very important’ to their assignment participation (median 3).

Family power (Harvey, 1998) was again in evidence with respect to dual incomes. The majority of assignees noted their husbands/ partners were the main earners and this precluded their career from taking precedence:

“... we couldn’t go anywhere ... unless (husband’s) company would be able to transfer him because he made more money than me ... So, what I am I going to do? Say ‘see you later, honey’? ... Give up your job and come with me?’... There was no question of that.” (Milly, Long-term)

Interestingly, some spoke of relinquishing their family power to conform to societal expectations of male breadwinners (Crompton, 1999; Daly, 2000; Millar, 1999):

“Now women ... were traditionally groomed to be more willing to give up our jobs. So when I left ... and moved to (host location) ... and ... I was probably earning loads more than him but I was happy to go ... but it is less likely for a man to give up that stronger earning power, isn’t it?” (Val, Long-term)

The interviews and open survey questions generated a relatively high volume of comments on ‘trailing’ spouses: 23» assignees (69R) and five HR experts (16R) reported on this. The term ‘trailing’ spouse was considered derogatory and a negative reaction from accompanying men had prompted the organisations to change terminology in policy. Accompanying partners had taken career breaks or ‘fill-in’ roles while their wives worked as expatriates, but such role reversals were difficult to manage, compounded by lack of social support, aligned with the literature (Punnett *et al.*, 1992; Selmer and Leung, 2003a). While access to clubs was offered in policy, representing helpful practice (ORC, 2008a) and 51% of survey respondents received club membership, only 32% found this ‘very important’ to assignment participation (median 2).

Although company policy focused on financial issues, organisational practice majored on co-ordinating accompanied mobility to support family life as far as

practicable. Dual careers and co-working were facilitated so that couples could relocate together, but more support was needed for spouse/ partner employment and to ensure that the female assignees' career contribution was supported.

Pregnancy, maternity and childcare

There was a written policy applying to pregnancy support for long-term assignments in Collins Co. and long-term, short-term and rotational assignments in Hagman Co., although situations were managed on a case-by-case basis. The main focus of the policies in both organisations concerned payments made towards travel and medical costs. Medical care was expected to take place in the host Western destinations; or in the home country or one with acceptable medical facilities when assignments were based in less developed locations.

The survey data indicate that only four women (all on long-term assignments) received pregnancy support with three of them regarding this as 'very important' to their assignment participation (median 3). Two (2R) reported particularly helpful organisational responses: one on excellent host country support; the other on swift action to return her home from a remote location when she "*had a baby scare*". Two other assignees commented on medical insurance (2R) noting potentially low limits on medical cover given. However, one assignee reported that, when she was pregnant and found herself insufficiently covered for medical costs due to her expatriate circumstances, her organisation responded immediately by amending its policy to increase medical cover limits. Two assignees (3R) discussed pregnancy and rotational working, noting circumstances being treated on an individual basis in the absence of formal organisational policy.

For long-term assignees, maternity benefits were linked to the home country. While Hagman Co.'s policy specifically excluded maternity benefits being linked to those of the host location, Collins Co. made provision for international maternity benefits to apply if the woman gave birth there. Hagman Co.'s policy provided considerable detail

on expatriate allowances and benefits included or excluded in the calculation of maternity pay and any continuation of benefits. Its written policy also extended to short-term and commuter assignments. Policy for rotational assignees specifically excluded expatriate allowances in the calculation of maternity pay. The literature indicates pregnancy and maternity policies for expatriates are uncommon and that case-by-case action is often taken (Rosenzwaig, 2010). This suggests that, as the case study firms' have policy provision, they are leading organisational practice and their responsive action to individual cases is highly supportive of female assignees.

Fifteen assignees said that being able to take maternity leave was 'very important' to their assignment participation (median 3); nine recorded being able to take parental leave as 'very important' (median 2); and six noted their partner being able to take paternity leave as 'very important' (median 3). There was no clear picture to link the levels of importance placed on these aspects of policy provision with assignment type undertaken. Seven» assignees (29R) could elect to have their baby abroad or at home and also could choose where to spend their maternity leave, with maternity benefits linked to the country of payroll. The assignees took their maternity leave in a range of locations: host, home or partly in each location. These data suggest a flexible approach by the case study firms to support all their expatriate new mothers.

The HR experts (4S, 8R) reported on the importance of 'keeping in touch days' so that women could come into work to maintain continuity of contacts and understanding of projects. They considered these an important provision, particularly given the uncertainty of job roles post-maternity leave. The assignees welcomed and took up the 'keeping in touch days'. Organisational flexibility on the date of take-up of a new assignment after maternity leave was also appreciated. Difficulties of holding open expatriate roles were raised but assignees appeared satisfied with their return to work arrangements and the roles they were offered on return, with some using maternity leave as an impetus to change roles.

Parental leave was not made available in the host country while on expatriate terms but HR said (1S, 5R) this would be honoured on return to the home country. Three assignees (8R) with young children agreed that taking parental leave was impossible while on expatriate terms. One noted that all her benefits would stop (with the exception of visa support); another said that her organisation's investment in housing costs would preclude this. Two expressed a desire to take parental leave on return home to spend more time with their children, with recognition of career and financial implications.

Both of the case study firms had statements in their policies concerning the appropriateness of the location in terms of safety and security for children. Three HR experts (5R) commented on the high levels of support given to expatriates with young children. They pointed to policy provision varying by country, in line with local practice. For example, in Western Europe, there was provision of childcare vouchers and support with nursery fees. In Asia, high quality, low cost childcare and domestic help were highlighted. Two assignees (7R) commented on the case-by-case approach taken by their organisations in supporting childcare for young children. One took a nanny on two assignments, negotiating the costs to be met by her organisation for three months in one instance and for two months in the other to give her time to find local childcare. However, she reported that other women assignees had not received such support, suggesting an individual approach with implementation depending on agreement at local level.

Overall it appeared that women assignees were well-supported by their organisations in terms of policy and practice for pregnancy, maternity and childcare. Policy was implemented on a responsive, case-by-case basis. In contrast to the literature, the female assignees here did not seem to experience difficulties in balancing child rearing with their international careers (Linehan, 2002).

Children's education

Provision was made in policy for education assistance for legally dependent children in the host location or boarding in the home country and transport for children to visit parents, applicable to expatriates on long-term assignments. Hagman Co.'s written policy extended education assistance to expatriates who took their children with them on short-term assignments; expatriates on unaccompanied long-term or short-term assignments leaving children at home with their partners were entitled to travel costs for children to visit them abroad. Neither organisation made educational provision for children of assignees on rotational or commuter assignments. The HR experts (4S, 6R) understood the high importance placed on schooling for assignment participation. They highlighted provision of: school search; payment of school fees; and education assistance on repatriation. Examples of repatriation support included assimilation tutoring and the use of education consultants to identify schools upon early return.

The survey responses indicate that seven women received school search assistance and nine, the children's education allowance. Three women received education assistance on repatriation. All said the education allowance and repatriation assistance were 'very important' (median 3). Five assignees considered school search assistance as 'very important' (median 3). One assignee reported that she received support on repatriation with social and family issues, although she said that this was not important to her expatriate participation (median 1). All assignees were on long-term assignments.

The assignees (9S», 22R) were cognisant of the value of educational support in facilitating their international mobility:

"...the school fees get paid, which I think is a huge bonus." (Val, Long-term)

However, at critical stages of education, generous organisational policy did not always provide sufficient incentive to remain internationally mobile:

"...when kids get to the age of 11 ... you want them to be in ... one school for the entire period, so you might want to get based in the (home country) for those six or seven years..." (Susan, Long-term)

The timing of assignments also became an increasingly sensitive issue to women with children of school age:

“...you can't show up and put your kid in a school the next day.” (Abby, Long-term)

Overall though, the organisations' international assignment policies supported children's education well, facilitating the take-up of long-term assignments in particular. The findings indicate that women with pre-teenage school children were not obliged to 'choose' between a career and family life as the literature might imply (Linehan and Walsh, 2000a). Indeed, 15 assignees (52R) spoke about their decisions to work or focus on family life, hinting that they made rational choices (Becker, 1981). However, there was little evidence that such choices were based on co-operative exchange; the economic implications of caring for aged parents or wishing to spend time with young children as they grew up were recognised but not calculated; in short, family time was simply given priority. Twelve assignees (17R) made comments that implied 'preference' (Hakim, 2000). However, only one 'work-centred' assignee described taking time out for child rearing as “*career suicide*”. Another, 'home-centred', commented on her long period out of corporate life to raise her children until they reached teenage years, her concern being for “*beneficial family life*” rather than being “*very career minded*”. The majority though made 'adaptive' choices, varying their willingness to undertake various types of assignments based on a combination of family, home life and career consequences.

Assignees' comments suggested that their 'choices' were not real but were subject to constraint (Bruegel, 1996): 20» assignees (59R) had compromised or would do so (Corby and Stanworth, 2009) in making career satisficing decisions (Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b). Having children lay at their heart. They noted that assignments could not be undertaken if this jeopardised time spent with children or disrupted their stability, education, welfare, health or happiness. While the assignees wished to maintain their careers, these were viewed as secondary to family life and that expatriation locations, lengths, patterns and status would have to be appropriate to raising a family, with long-term, accompanied assignments most usually providing the most appropriate stability for families and potentially rotational assignments best supporting dual careers

for those without children. To strike the balance that they considered best suited to family life they were prepared to accept sub-optimal career choices. In the case of couples with equal family power, this might mean either themselves or their partners having to sacrifice their careers for the sake of their children:

“I seriously think the next move is probably where one or other of us will take a relatively big hit, a short-term hit in our careers. I really do, because of the family.” (Di, Long-term)

Such sacrificing might suggest that women’s expatriate careers do not align well with the typical linear (male) career (Linehan, 2001b; Mavin, 2000) but with those models that predict relational demands taking precedence once women have children (O’Neal and Bilimoria, 2005; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007). However, the assignees did engage in career contributing assignments as new mothers, mothers of young children, when teenage children were accommodated in boarding schools and when their children were grown up. These findings therefore do not totally align with theoretical models of women’s careers. These models also suggest that women might seek alternative careers that can give them ‘re-inventive contribution’ or ‘authenticity’ after taking time out from corporate life for family reasons (*ibid.*). The findings here potentially indicate the opposite. Indeed, the HR experts (4S, 9R) regarded late career expatriates as an important source of staff suited to expatriation:

“They are not ready to retire early ... and it makes them a very good source of talent to move around, so it does almost work in our favour and the female expats’ favour”. (Alexis, HR – International Assignments)

Assignees (17S, 31R) spoke of their career paths and putting them ‘on hold’ while children were in secondary education (unless they were willing to use boarding schools), being free to pursue them through expatriation once they had grown up:

“It (my career) may not be going into the stratosphere, but I am fulfilled by it and I would much rather have it as I do and have the daughter that I have than ... have done it the other way, definitely.” (Val, Long-term)

These findings suggest that stereotypical views on women’s career cycles do not necessarily apply in an expatriate environment, given appropriate career opportunities and practical support.

Summary and implications

Both firms exhibited a clear contrast between policy and practice with regard to dual careers and co-working. While policy focused heavily on cost reduction of the assignment package, organisational practice demonstrated a flexible and positive approach to facilitating accompanied mobility or the use of alternative assignment types to help dual career/ co-working couples. There appeared to be no direct equality implications in the implementation of policy: the organisational intention was clearly to support family life but more needed to be done to assist spouses/ partners to work (although this was acknowledged as difficult given visa regimes) and to ensure that women's career contribution was not sacrificed on the altar of male family power, reinforced by societal expectations of male breadwinners.

Policy supporting pregnancy, maternity and childcare focused on financial issues while practice was flexible and highly responsive to the needs of women assignees expecting or having children, supporting female assignment participation. With regard to children's education, financial provision was good, again supporting women with children to take up assignments. However, generosity of financial provision was not always viewed as sufficient and concerns over education did act as an inhibitor of female expatriation. The majority of women engaged in satisficing career decision-making during children's teenage years, aligned to female career path models which suggest that family/ relational demands take precedence over corporate careers mid-life. Yet, some women took advantage of boarding school provision offered by their firms and continued with their careers and it was notable that others had resumed their careers as expatriates in later life stages (or expressed considerable interest in doing so) rather than 'opting out' of corporate life altogether as might be predicted if female career models were universally applicable. This suggests that expatriation potentially presents a worthwhile career contribution to women, perhaps of greater interest than typical home-based organisational opportunities.

Finally, an assignment type effect was in evidence. Long-term assignments were best supported through organisational policy in providing expatriate family life. That

said, organisational practice diverged from policy and it was notable that effort was made in both firms to support family life as far as practicable for women on all types of assignments. Yet, as discussed in chapter 13, long-term assignments were preferred as they provided the necessary stability for those with children; alternative assignment types (rotational in particular) could be used to support dual careers if the couple had no children.

To sustain home and family life and create a stable environment, the implications of policy and practice on expatriate work-life balance also require consideration. Therefore in the following chapter organisational support for work-life balance needed to enable and maintain the home life stability required to manage family responsibilities is examined.

CHAPTER 17: THE ORGANISATIONAL EFFECT ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND HOME LIFE STABILITY

Introduction

The main policy elements and implementation practices that enable and maintain home life stability through work-life balance, identified by female expatriates as critical to their expatriation within the male-dominated oil and gas exploration and production sector, are discussed in this chapter. Working hours; time off and leave; flexible working time; and how these act as antecedents of women's assignment participation are addressed (figure 9.1, page 115), taking into account assignment types undertaken. The findings³⁹ are presented in response to the following research question: 'to what extent and how does work-life balance policy and practice support women's expatriation?' (figure 9.2, page 116). Assignment type implications are highlighted. The findings are evaluated in the context of the extant literature and address, in particular, satisficing aspects of the research question: 'which family effects influence organisational policy and practice relating to female expatriate participation?'

Hours of work

The case study firms' international assignment policies recorded that host location working hours applied to long-term and short-term assignments; Hagman Co.'s commuter assignments policy made similar provision. Rotational hours were 84 per week. The two HR – International Assignments experts confirmed that these policies were implemented (4R) but that non-standard hours to meet peaks and troughs in operations were undertaken (7R).

Assignees worked relatively long hours in both firms, aligned with the literature (IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007): around 50 a week (average 49.67). However, this figure

³⁹ Organisational policies are summarised in appendix 4, table 5. The volume of sources (denominated as S) with references (denominated as R) made to the issues identified are presented. Where assignees provided interview and survey data, sources are de-duplicated (denominated with ») and total references reported. Full supporting NVivo frequency data are presented in appendix 9, table 21. Descriptive statistics, drawn from the census survey (analysed using SPSS) are presented in appendix 10, tables 24-30.

masks a 51 hour range (from 39-90) partly because the 84-hour rotational working week distorts the overall average. Indeed, the five rotationals' weekly average was 83.8 hours (with a 13 hour range, from 77 to 90). The 50 long-term assignees averaged 46.86 hours, with a 21 hour range (39-60); the 11 short-term assignees averaged 46.82 hours, with a 15 hour range (40-55). The three USA-based extended international transferees typically worked the highest average hours, 50 a week, but had the lowest range of 12.5 hours (42.5-55). The survey data did not suggest that working either local or additional hours in the assignment location was of high importance to assignment participation decision-making: 72% said these were 'not important' to their participation (median 1 in each case). There was little variation by assignment type, with the exception of those on extended transfers who considered working local hours to be of higher importance in their assignment participation decision-making than those on other assignment types, potentially because their weekly hours were the longest.

Assignees (19S», 25R) commented on why their working time varied. Reasons given included: the nature of their roles (7S, 8R) and variable project demands (2S, 3R); the degree to which their manager delegated work to them and they were able to delegate (3S, 3R); time spent in the field rather than in the office (5S, 7R); and learning new aspects of their job (2S, 2R). Although rotational assignees' roster hours were 84 a week, assignees (9S», 57R) noted: shorter Sundays in particular assets; working fewer hours when work was based in town rather than at the normal jobsite; and working longer on shift to meet job demands or to fill up their spare time. Overtime might be undertaken while awaiting the delayed arrival of a back-to-back (1S, 4R).

Local culture and management expectations

The two HR – International Assignments experts (7R) reported on management behaviours and culture at local level as follows: Collins Co. had “...a good attitude towards working hours”; “in some of our cultures ... the family is very important ... you are positively encouraged to go home”. By contrast in Hagman Co., a high performance culture and the need to prove yourself was stressed: “the expats were often doing 10 or 12 hour days and

going in at the weekend ... phenomenal hours”; “sometimes it is the culture of the head management team and they can be really driving, driving, driving”.

The masculine environment of oil and gas exploration and production would be expected to require high and regular levels of overtime work (Horrell and Rubery, 1991). Indeed, there was no noticeable difference in views between the assignees in the case study firms, suggesting similar practice at local level. They reported that working hours were usually higher in assets often due to stretched local resources (12S, 16R). Country and regional cultures also affected working time abroad (15S», 35R): long hours were common in USA and the South East Asian countries, less so in Australia and the Caribbean; Norway had considerably less onerous working time requirements, aligned with local cultural norms (IRC, 2005). Local issues (for example, traffic) determined start/ finish times in West Africa. Assignees (6S», 9R) noted the influence of senior management on the working hours’ culture in their assets. They reported that if a positive approach to working time was fostered at the top, it flowed down through asset heads to locals and expatriates:

“Some regions have particularly obsessed executive vice presidents, and so it depends who is in charge.” (Questa, Rotational)

Yet, it was evident that change was taking place:

“There were a lot of workaholics in upper management positions, but I think that is changing now ... we have a new CEO, and it seems that his view of the culture is that there should be a positive work-life balance in place.” (Abby, Long-term)

Nevertheless, 17» assignees (34R) noted that it was their line manager (to whom they reported directly and who was responsible for their performance review) who set the expectations on working time. In both organisations, those line managers who were described as “*work addicts*” expected similar behaviours; those who valued work-life balance, enabled it:

“I have got a boss ... and he likes his life-work balance, which means that we all get told that we need really good life-work balance...” (Di, Long-term)

Recent changes in organisational policy on performance management had introduced recognition and reward for behaviours (not just delivery and safety targets) and pressure management training had been introduced for new line managers. These interventions

appeared to mediate line managers' expectations of working time, reflecting the literature (Hyman and Summers, 2004).

Expatriate norms, organisational pressure and personal choice

The volume of comments received from assignees on long hours of work and workloads was substantial: 23S», 107R and 21S, 30R respectively. The literature suggests that while both men and women report feelings of being overworked, women are more frequently overwhelmed by their workloads (IRC, 2005; Shortland and Cummins, 2007). The findings here did not support this. The assignees, however, gave a wide variety of reasons for their working hours exceeding local practice, applicable to both men and women; the female assignees with family responsibilities appeared willing to reduce their working time to accommodate these rather than becoming 'overwhelmed'.

Simply 'being an expat' affected working time. The key message from assignees in both organisations (24S», 43R) was that it "*comes with the territory*", being inherent within expatriation:

"I have found that the pace of work is faster and more demanding and that there are higher expectations of expatriate employees." (Sophie, Long-term)

The main explanation concerned costs: expatriates were an expensive but limited resource. They reported experiencing implicit organisational pressure to take on greater responsibility and deliver more to justify the allowances they received, in particular the high level foreign service premiums (even though these were known to compensate for hardship endured, not work volume). This resulted in an obligation to work longer hours and to be 'on call' thereby sending an "*appropriate message*" to local staff. Providing leadership to locals (3S, 3R) and being seen at work (4S, 10R) were also cited, aligned with the literature (IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; Shortland and Cummins, 2007):

"...nobody notices if people come in early, because they could have just been there five minutes before you but everybody notices what time people leave." (Julie, Short-term)

Unaccompanied assignments brought the prospect of little else to do but work: five unaccompanied assignees (10R) said that they chose to work longer hours to keep

themselves busy due to loneliness from lack of friendships and family in the assignment location. This was echoed in respect of short-term assignments (2S», 4R) and rotational working (9S», 57R), although rotationals pointed out that they needed to take care to ensure a balance between work and relaxation:

“...you are going to be there for 28 days, working 12 hour days so you have to pace yourself. You don’t want to fall apart after one week because you are working 15 hour days...” (Harriet, Previous rotational)

Aligned with the literature (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010; IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; Shortland and Cummins, 2007), the assignees worked long hours for a variety of reasons, including managing conference calls, meetings and information requests via the internet, working across time zones, and engaging in frequent business travel from the host location. Eight» assignees (18R) said they had to work across time zones, resulting in late night working to deal with conference calls and additional business travel time. Those working in Muslim countries pointed out that headquarters staff did not usually take into account that weekends were Fridays and Saturdays when scheduling conference calls falling late on Thursdays or on Fridays, eroding their weekends. While flexibility in working hours was reported as helping ameliorate this (Cappellan and Janssens, 2010), the assignees preferred a more considerate approach from colleagues across the world. Three assignees (9R) reported that their organisational culture demanded immediate responses to e-mails. All resented such blurring of home and work boundaries (Harris, 2004), particularly the impact on their holiday, weekend and family time, regardless of whether they had children and/ or were accompanied on their assignments:

“...my daughter is giving a wonderful presentation; I’m not going to sit there like checking e-mails because somebody thinks I should be on call.” (Val, Long-term)

Aligned with the literature (Hassan *et al.*, 2010; Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010), work interference with family life was higher than family interference with work. Business travel cut into family time for those who were accompanied on their assignments and was identified as a major drawback of undertaking commuter assignments (5S», 11R). The requirement to travel frequently as part of an expatriate role was subject to particular criticism by women with accompanying children as it was seen to jeopardise both family time and being able to gain career contribution from long-term expatriation:

“I guess it is a catch 22, isn’t it? ...if the role continues to be such that you are expected to ... travel excessively, then it ... precludes you if you have got those limitations.” (Abby, Long-term)

Yet, 68% of the survey respondents said that undertaking international business trips involving extra hours of work was ‘not important’ to their expatriate participation decision (median 1). There was some variation by assignment type; a slightly larger proportion of short-term assignees reported this as ‘not important’ compared with those on other assignment lengths and patterns, potentially reflecting unaccompanied status.

The need to work at weekends was raised by 15 assignees (23R). This was common in functions such as engineering, where job requirements required 24/7 production:

“...it is operational, and if there is something happening at the weekend you have to come in, but that’s the job ... you have the responsibility ... It is ... normal, I don’t really think about it.” (Nina, Engineering)

Weekend working was also carried out by assignees in other non-technical functions to manage workload peaks. They appeared acceptant of some level of weekend working:

“...if the week has been just so cramped ... then, heh, I don’t think it’s too big a price to pay to just come in ... at 10 o’clock on a Sunday morning ... and clear it up and then you know that your week goes back to normal...” (Val, Legal)

However, the general view was that they did not want this to become the norm:

“I am working on a particular deal ... and it requires me to work on the weekends, then I am fine with that ... But do I need to do this on a sustained basis? Personally, I don’t think so.” (Xanthe, Commercial)

As highlighted by the literature, long working hours conflicted with parenting (Liff and Ward, 2001), interfering with expatriate family life (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010). Demonstrating less acceptance of work intruding into their family time, the assignees with young children were unwilling to work weekends or in the evenings:

“Well I am pretty ruthless about leaving on time ... I have even just left meetings and said I have to go if the meeting has gone over. If you start staying later and later every night, you just get into an endless cycle. So I keep very disciplined about that and ... unless it is absolutely necessary I don’t work weekends.” (Abby, Long-term)

The potential damage to their careers of taking such actions was highlighted potentially affecting their performance reviews (Kelliher and Anderson, 2008) and career advancement

(Straub, 2007), suggesting that they were willing to make career compromises via satisficing decisions to balance family and career demands (Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b):

“I worked long hours before I had children, but when my children came along I made the point that I wouldn’t do it ... So I would come in at weekends when it was absolutely necessary ... otherwise I wouldn’t. That may have had a detrimental effect...” (Wanda, Long-term)

Personal choice was also a key driver of long hours working: eight assignees (15R) said they wanted to prove themselves to be seen as high performers and gain personal satisfaction; four (10R) said that working long hours furthered their careers and suggested the highly ambitious (expatriates and locals) would want to do this:

“...I wanted to but also ... I felt I needed to, to be at the level ... beyond the out-performers list ... the bar was raised. I was working with ... highly motivated professionals...” (Milly, Long-term)

It was notable that the mid-grade assignees had different perceptions of hours of work at senior level than those who had reached the highest grades (5S, 10R). Mid-grade assignees thought that their hours of work would become more onerous if they were promoted requiring unwelcome sacrifice to their personal lives, aligned with the literature (Corby and Stanworth, 2009; Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b):

“I had a line manager ... I look at where she is, based on what I have seen, do I want ... to forfeit my life balance, do I want to commit that much of my life working? ...I tell myself, it is not for me.” (Val, Long-term)

Yet, the assignees in the most senior grades said that working time was not that burdensome, being compensated by high levels of personal control. This suggests that female assignees might inadvertently set up self-induced career contribution barriers (Altman and Shortland, 2008) through false assumptions about organisational demands on senior expatriates’ working hours:

“...once I get to the level that I am, I work as I need to work ... I just don’t let people specify something like that for me.” (Babs, Long-term)

Time off and leave

For both long-term and short-term assignments, vacation entitlement amounted to the higher of local practice or 25/ 28 days respectively in Collins Co. and Hagman Co. for long-term and commuter assignments (pro-rated for short-term and international graduate assignments). Extended international transferees received local vacation entitlements. In both firms, assignees all took local public holidays; seven days' rest and recreation leave (R&R) applied to designated hardship long-term postings (either once or twice a year depending on location).

The survey data indicate that almost two-thirds of assignees said that home leave (64%) and R&R (63%) were 'very important' factors in their assignment participation decision-making (median 3 in each case). These were of the greatest importance to those on long-term assignments (70% said that this provision was 'very important'), although this is unsurprising given that extended international transfers and rotational assignments did not attract home leave or R&R under policy and only those on lengthy short-term assignments were entitled to these elements. Assignees (6S», 9R) said that R&R was crucial to assignment acceptance in challenging locations.

Air fares to and from the assignment location were met by both firms for long-term, short-term and rotational assignments; air fares applied every two weeks for commuter assignments in Hagman Co. Both organisations paid a vacation travel allowance for long-term assignments once a year; in Hagman Co. travel days applied. Employees on short-term assignments received one home leave trip if the assignment exceeded six months in Collins Co. and nine months in Hagman Co. Hagman Co. made provision for quarterly trips for unaccompanied long-term assignments, short-term assignees and those on international placements.

Policy provision in relation to transport to and from the host location, home leave travel costs, vacation and flights to reunite families was identified as being highly important to female expatriate participation. The survey revealed that: 90% received transport costs (91% said these were 'very important'); 79% received home leave travel

costs (86%: ‘very important’); 73% received vacation (94%: ‘very important’) and 32% received flights to be reunited with family (91%: ‘very important’) (median 3 in each case). There were no differences evident in levels of importance attributed to these policy components by assignment type.

Assignees particularly valued taking trips home (14S», 24R), quarterly flights (4S», 6R), flights back (6S, 8R) and travel days when based in remote locations (3S, 10R). The main theme concerned the significance of policy provision to enable unaccompanied assignees to return home regularly – those assignees with husbands/ partners at home said that this was a ‘make or break’ factor, without which they could not have undertaken their assignments. By incorporating this formally into policy, the significance of the challenges facing unaccompanied (as well as single) assignees was demonstrated to local management:

“...company paying for those trips ... it identifies it as an issue ... that it is a challenge ... that is very useful, more symbolic ... that is important.” (Linda, Long-term)

The two HR – International Assignments experts (17R) said that travel policy was applied flexibly as far as practicable. For example, cash might be given rather than tickets to facilitate more frequent trips home and/ or flying family members out if trips home were constrained by work duties. They took care to ensure equity of treatment. Assignees (9S, 14R) agreed that cash sums were useful to fund multiple tickets and/ or trips to reunite families separated through assignment take-up. However, they were keen to see even greater flexibility in policy application, suggesting public holidays could be worked abroad and thus be traded for longer home leave. Those who did not receive travel days requested these be applied to prevent erosion of home leave, especially when there were no direct flights home. Although flexible implementation of policy was welcomed, there were some concerns about equity of treatment: assignees in remote/ distant locations received no more assistance than those based nearer to home. As those based close to home could more easily and cheaply be able to travel back on a regular basis, additional company assistance was sought for those in distant destinations.

Rotational policy provided 28 days off shift inclusive of annual leave and public holidays; Collins Co. gave allowances for travel days while Hagman Co. noted that the off shift included travel time. The survey data indicate that 32% of all assignees (60% of those currently on rotational assignments) said that taking regular periods away from work through rotational working was ‘very important’ to their assignment participation; for comparison, only 13% reported similarly for commuter assignments (median 2 in each case).

Time off for family emergencies was covered in international assignment policy with evacuation costs met and paid emergency leave given for all assignment types in both firms. This was considered to be ‘very important’ to 63% of the survey respondents (median 3) in their assignment participation decision. Rotationals and long-term assignees valued this provision most, reflecting the single status nature of rotational working and lengthy periods away from home-based family members for long-term assignees. Yet, only 13 assignees reported that they had needed to take emergency leave.

Flexible working

Hagman Co.’s group flexible working statement covered: flexible work patterns and working away from the normal office location with options depending on business operations, the type of job and location. It also had a UK flexible working policy addressing part-time working and flexible hours. Its work-life balance policy statement highlighted: commitment to providing locally adapted frameworks to support staff well-being reviewed against external best practice. In contrast, Collins Co. had no written flexible working or work-life balance policies. Nonetheless, it applied similar practice.

Part-time work and job sharing

The HR experts (3S, 22R) said that working part-time, job sharing, working flexible hours (for instance, in relation to childcare) and working from home did not apply or were only very rarely available to expatriates. For example, job sharing was not considered feasible while on expatriation. Both organisations cited just one example of a lead expatriate (not a

co-working assignee) working part-time (one male, one female; four days a week), both of whom were on single status and commuted weekly to visit their partners. While salary and some benefits could be pro-rated to reflect 80% working time, housing was provided in full. In one organisation this part-time arrangement had been agreed centrally; in the other it was the result of local practice and further such arrangements were reported as being vetoed by the headquarters on cost grounds.

No assignees said that being able to work part-time or to take a job share arrangement were ‘very important’ to participation decision-making (median 1 in each case). Despite this, some assignees (10S», 38R) did express a desire to work part-time or return on this basis after maternity leave, aligned to the literature that suggests that flexible hours (including part-time work) are important to women returning to their careers after having children (Shaw *et al.*, 2000). The HR experts and some assignees reported that organisational policy could support part-time work for co-working expatriates as the expatriate benefits were applied to their husbands. Indeed, one co-working assignee reported having worked three days a week; another had asked to return to work four days a week. Yet, several women (including some in co-working couples) noted that they understood that company policy precluded them being an expatriate and working part-time:

“I would love to work part-time, because I still wish that I could spend more time with my children. But I know as an expat I wouldn’t be able to. There is no accommodation in the policy as far as I am aware for expats to work part-time.”
(Izzy, Long-term)

This suggests a discrepancy between policy which appeared to veto part-time work and practice which supported ad-hoc instances. However, occupational requirements did have an impact on this – women employed in engineering and exploration in particular noted that the nature of their roles made part-time work very difficult:

“...there has to be a day-to-day presence and if not then there has to be somebody else.” (Nina, Engineering)

Two assignees (2R) commented specifically on job sharing. They suggested that a job share with a local employee could help to reinforce company policy to promote localisation, although the uneconomic nature of this suggestion was acknowledged unless

the assignee was co-working. However, again functional roles impacted on co-working assignees:

“I would love the opportunity to take a job share arrangement but they don’t seem to be the norm in my functional area.” (Karen, Commercial)

Even if part-time working and job sharing could be accommodated, they were not considered to be career-contributing by HR or the assignees themselves:

“...if an overseas company has a piece of work taking 10 working days they want to give it to somebody who is working full-time, who will do it in two weeks. They do not want to give it to somebody who is working part-time, who will take five weeks. So ... part-timers then said ‘hang on, I’m not getting the sort of sexy, challenging, exciting project work’, and the line manager is saying ... ‘what do you want us to do? If there is a deadline it is very tricky.’” (Sue Ellen, HR – International Assignments)

Lack of part-time work opportunities was identified as a factor that might affect future take-up of expatriate roles when women became mothers, as well as a reason for current expatriates to give up their assignments and return home where they could work part-time more easily, facilitated by policy.

Working at home and in the home country

Just eight survey respondents said that being able to work from home was ‘very important’ to their participation decision (median 1). Yet, assignees (17S», 26R) reported working at home as popular, even though it was rarely possible. Many of the locations had poor infrastructure, with housing not suitably equipped with technology to facilitate home working; in addition, working from home was not considered (both by assignees and HR) as being appropriate to lead local staff. However, expatriate housing was usually close to the workplace, reducing commuting time, facilitating childcare and acting as some compensation for being unable to work part-time (6S», 13R). The assignees spoke frequently of working at home in the evenings, on activities such as reading and preparation, preferring this to late evening office work, particularly if they had children.

Assignees (those unaccompanied in particular) welcomed any opportunity to work in their home country (6S», 19R). For example, they appreciated being able to extend

quarterly trips/ home leave to spend more time with partners and families and suggested that provision for this be formalised in policy:

“...As long as it doesn’t cost money to the company ... if it doesn’t get in the way of business delivery you are entitled to two weeks working out of (home country). So if I could go back on the home leave and I could have an additional week or two weeks back ... to go into the ... office ... If they offered ... arrangements like that, it would be so important...” (Linda, Long-term)

Those unaccompanied in challenging locations (2S, 3R) reported that, as their host locations were not suited to lone females, with social activities geared more towards men, this added weight to their rationale for spending longer in the home country with family when returning on quarterly trips.

Working flexible hours

Very few assignees said that working flexitime or being able to vary their working time to address family/ personal needs was ‘very important’ to their assignment participation decisions (median 2 in each case); with no clear differences by assignment type. Although only six survey respondents reported being subject to formal flexible working hours arrangements in their host location, a range of informal practice took place depending on their line manager. Various personal and family issues were mentioned as drivers for working flexibly, including maternity, partner issues, co-working, family, childcare and social aspects (26S», 101R). The women reported that it was difficult to balance a demanding job with family life and having the ability to vary their hours of work unofficially when needed was highly valued. Flexible hours of work were popular with assignees on all types of assignments, but of greatest benefit to mothers and single women who had no one at home to deal with home-based issues.

Some offices (such as headquarters and a few assets) had formal policies on flexitime with core hours and flexible working around these or 9/80 arrangements (nine day fortnights of 80 hours) in which assignees could participate. Those who worked the nine day fortnights that operated in some of the US locations (13S, 19R) described these as “*fantastic*”. They noted that these acted as a recruitment and retention tool (2S, 2R). However, inequity was perceived as not all US-based assets officially applied this flexible

hours' system. Some offices in the Caribbean followed the US practice on an informal basis, with the expatriates ensuring cover to enable this work pattern.

The interviewees with experience of rotational working (6S, 43R) spoke of being able to 'flex' their on/ off shift periods occasionally via agreement with their back-to-backs and their line managers, for example by working five weeks on shift followed by three off shift to accommodate personal issues. The lack of flexible hours while on shift meant that the women had little time to maintain personal and family relationships. Although time off shift enabled them to "*recharge*" and "*refresh*", they reported that they needed to put extra effort into maintaining relationships and rebuilding family stability:

"We find that it is difficult ... but it is workable, provided you both know. He knows that when I am on shift and we can't ... discuss anything of any major importance really and there is that understanding, but when I am off shift ... we can ... but it is not easy." (Questa, Rotational)

Flexible working and work-life balance policies, in the main, applied at headquarters or to local employees in home country assets, seldom to expatriates on an official basis. As a result, relatively few women assignees reported benefiting from them. Unofficial arrangements, however, were widespread and welcomed suggesting that a 'family friendly' approach to working time could encourage female expatriation.

Summary and implications

The case study firms adopted a similar approach: policy supported transport, travel, vacation, home leave, quarterly flights and time off for family emergencies, promoting home life stability, work-life balance and assignment participation in relation to the ratio of time spent abroad *versus* time spent in home countries. However, work-life balance was only infrequently supported officially on a day-to-day basis while on assignment via flexible working. While local hours theoretically applied under policy, expatriates reported working considerably longer than local people, with perceptions of even greater working hours being required at senior expatriate levels. Assignees with children were not prepared to sacrifice their family and home life stability for this and made satisficing decisions to trade off some potential career contribution that might result from working long hours while on their assignments in favour of a more positive work-life balance.

Although assignees did not consider part-time work or job sharing in their assignment participation decision, this did not mean that these work patterns were irrelevant to them. There was clear evidence that being able to work part-time was of importance, particularly to mothers, and that by having no access to this working pattern, this could affect their future expatriation decisions. Given there was no official policy to support part-time work and job sharing in the expatriate environment and working from home was also difficult and not encouraged, these factors present potential barriers to female assignment participation. That said, some *ad hoc* arrangements to work part-time were in place for co-working couples, the proximity of expatriate housing to the worksite helped to offset the lack of policy in support of reduced working hours and unofficial flexible working was widely practised.

Finally, an assignment type effect could be seen. Rotational assignments resulted in long working hours but this was balanced by time off shift. There was also evidence of flexibility in shift patterns, enabling assignees to ‘flex’ what appeared to be fixed shift periods to balance them with their personal needs. Unaccompanied long-term assignments also resulted in long working hours; support via home leave and quarterly flights was given under policy and unofficial ‘flex’ in the work location enabled assignees to work in their home country for limited periods to extend their time with home-based partners and families. However, formal policy was sought to allow working in the home country on an officially recognised basis.

In summary, despite little policy provision supporting officially sanctioned flexible working, local practice was widespread and welcomed. Potentially, if publicity was given to the opportunities available to undertake flexible working through policy, organisational support for work-life balance and home life stability could be more widely recognised. Formal policy provision, providing a more transparent picture of expatriate life, might encourage more women to consider an expatriate career.

CHAPTER 18: THE ORGANISATIONAL EFFECT ON ASSIGNMENT PRECONDITIONS

Introduction

Even when career contribution and home life/ family stability are taken into account, figure 13.1 (page 202) indicated that women look for certain preconditions to be addressed before they take up expatriate assignments. In this chapter the following policy components are examined: housing; remuneration and allowances; medical, visas and tax. These elements, together with the expatriation process, are discussed in relation to the assignment type undertaken to establish their importance as antecedents of women's expatriate participation (figure 9.1, page 115). The findings⁴⁰ are presented in response to the following research questions (figure 9.2, page 116): 'to what extent and how do financial elements of international assignment policy and practice support women's expatriation?' and 'how does the expatriation process operate in practice to support women's expatriation?' Assignment type implications are highlighted. The findings are evaluated in the context of the extant literature.

Housing and associated issues

The international assignment policies in both case study firms provided for free rented accommodation in the host country for all assignment types (subject to budgets), with the exception of extended international transfers in Collins Co. where buying and selling costs were met. In line with the literature (Warneke and Schneider, 2011), the survey data suggest that housing was one of the most important factors underlying expatriate participation: 94% of the respondents received free rented accommodation and 96% said that this was 'very important' to their current expatriate assignment participation decision (median 3). The assignees' comments (25S», 56R) reinforced the importance of housing;

⁴⁰ Organisational policies are summarised in appendix 4, table 5. The volume of sources (denominated as S) with references (denominated as R) made to the issues identified are presented. Where assignees provided interview and survey data, sources are de-duplicated (denominated with ») and total references reported. Full supporting NVivo frequency data are presented in appendix 9, tables 22-25. Descriptive statistics, drawn from the census survey (analysed using SPSS) are presented in appendix 10, tables 31-36.

regardless of marital, family or un/accompanied status, it was one of the most frequently mentioned ‘make or break’ factors, without which they would not have gone on their assignments:

“...when you turn up somewhere, it’s the big things that count. It’s the housing ... It is worth putting the time and effort in getting your house sorted ... the problems arise when you’re not happy at home.” (Izzy, Long-term)

Assignees also placed high importance on housing quality:

“...it was almost deal-breaker ... I turned to my husband and said ‘if this is the quality of the housing, I’m not coming’.” (Milly, Long-term)

Rental limits, set locally in each host country, typically enabled assignees to live rent-free in the assignment location while covering their housing costs at home. The potential financial gains were noted as important benefits flowing from the expatriate package. Organisational support for housing appeared to be both financially motivating and an integral part of supporting expatriation. However, it did not necessarily always act as a ‘make or break’ factor by itself:

“...accommodation, security, depending on the location, and making it financially worthwhile. It is the balance isn’t it?” (Zara, Rotational)

The provision of housing was comprehensive for long-term and rotational assignments, reflecting lengthy and/ or single status living and, for long-term assignees, the value of creating a ‘home’ rather than a ‘house’. Housing provision for short-term and commuter assignments was less generous, reflecting the relative impermanence of this assignment type. The survey data indicate that a greater proportion of women on long-term assignments attribute high levels of importance to housing in their participation decision than do those on other assignment lengths/ patterns. Intuitively this might be expected, given that a long-term assignment requires several years of living abroad and, as a consequence, appropriate housing makes a valued contribution to long-term assignees’ home life.

Both organisations facilitated assignment participation through providing support with home search to find and lease property. The survey data indicate that 70% of the respondents received help with home search and 80% of them reported this as ‘very

important' to their assignment participation (median 3). A greater proportion of those on long-term assignments attached high levels of importance to home search than did those on short-term assignments. Home search was also of greater relevance to accompanied than unaccompanied assignees. Assignees (9S», 15R) reported that the logistical support given to organise and find accommodation abroad were highly valued, with those on long-term assignments being particularly satisfied with the implementation of housing policy:

"If it is giving you a bundle of money or finding a home for you, it is definitely that, nothing else." (Una, Long-term)

Short-term assignees (2S, 2R) also reported that logistical support was critical to their assignment participation, yet less support was given to them:

"I should have saw (sic) my accommodation beforehand." (Ayesha, Short-term)

Other elements within international assignment policy linked to housing included: household goods shipments (removals); temporary accommodation; utilities payments; and meals in compound accommodation. The survey data indicate that all of these were viewed as 'very important' to assignment participation (median 3 in each case). The payment of telephone expenses and security guard provision in high risk locations were less important policy elements (median 2.5 and 2 respectively).

A greater proportion of assignees on extended international transfers and long-term assignments placed high importance on household goods removals in their participation decisions than did those on other assignment types, although this would be expected given company policy provided more comprehensive support to these assignment types reflecting length of time away from home. A greater proportion of accompanied assignees placed high importance on household removals than those who were unaccompanied. Graduates on short-term placements and rotational assignees did not receive household goods shipments under policy, while short-term assignees typically received reasonable, limited costs and specified excess baggage. Short-term assignees, including graduates on placements, (8S, 10R) indicated dissatisfaction with policy:

"...graduates are treated slightly differently ... there are lots of hassles in terms of moving out your stuff and you accumulate things and you have to bring it back." (Julie, Short-term)

By contrast, the policy for long-term assignments (either a full packing service or the provision of furnished accommodation) was considered conducive to a smooth transfer:

“...you felt it was just a nightmare task and having ... people round to pack ... and it all gets delivered to your new house, things like that are just really helpful. I don’t have a wife at home to do that!” (Polly, Long-term)

These comments highlight less organisational support – and greater inconvenience and disruption to home life – for those undertaking short-term assignments, compared to a fully supported process for those on long-term postings.

Remuneration and allowances

The case study firms provided various elements of financial compensation under their international assignment policies. These included, in addition to salary, pension provision and stocks and shares, elements such as: foreign service premiums, paid as an uplift to salary; cost of living allowances; bonuses; relocation or disturbance allowances; mobility premiums; and allowances specific to certain assignment types such as rotational and graduate placements. In addition, the policies provided for employees to receive a car/ car allowance and, in certain locations, a driver. Hardship locations attracted higher uplifts to salary as compensation for difficult living conditions, as well as rest and recreation (R&R) allowances. The survey data indicate that all of these financial elements were considered ‘very important’ to assignment participation (median 3 in each case) aligned with the literature which suggests that monetary satisfaction and benefits packages are of importance to expatriates (Fish and Wood, 1996; Konopaske and Werner, 2005):

“The financial rewards are a big driver, people often forget that you are living away from your family ... It’s not quite the paradise everybody thinks it is. Take (these) away ...and there is little incentive.” (Izzy, Long-term)

Although a wide range of allowances were applicable to long-term, short-term and rotational assignments, with many linked to location and local conditions, allowances were considerably limited in the case of extended international transfers, commuter assignments and for graduates on international placements.

Despite the survey respondents reporting all financial elements as being ‘very important’, some appeared to be more critical to assignment acceptance. For example, the

foreign service premium (salary uplift) was received by 76% of the survey respondents and considered to be ‘very important’ by 87% of them. Under both organisations’ policies, the uplift was paid as a percentage of salary determined by the nature of the host location. Long-term, short-term and rotational assignees received it as applicable to their host country. The two HR – International Assignments experts (6R) reported that hardship locations attracted very high percentage increases to salary (50%-60% in certain West African and North African locations). Such payments were considered by assignees (17S», 40R) to provide compensation for tough living conditions, as well as a significant financial incentive to undertake long-term assignments in challenging countries:

“...it makes you feel a little bit better about being here ... I think it would be tough if they told me to come here and I didn’t have a good foreign service premium.”
(Babs, Central Asia)

Occasionally, even in locations where lower uplifts applied, the financial incentive was still regarded as important:

“...If that prize wasn’t out there ... I don’t think I would be doing expat assignments...” (Linda, Australasia)

Undertaking rotational assignments also provided additional compensation including salary uplift and/ or bonuses. Indeed, the uplift was the most frequently mentioned financial ‘make or break’ factor by assignees undertaking all assignment types, aligned with the literature which reports on the importance of location payments (Warneke and Schneider, 2011). However, although Hagman Co.’s commuter policy did provide an expatriate allowance, salary uplifts had not been applied when assignees undertook commuter assignments. This was considered unattractive and inequitable in comparison with the premiums paid to those undertaking other assignment types in the same country:

“I spent on average one week in four in ... sometimes a couple of weeks at a time ... I got no uplift or benefits for this arrangement ... for someone who spent a quarter to a third of their time out, it was a bit unreasonable to get no uplift or support at all, particularly when other individuals did.” (Rhoda, West Africa)

The cost of living allowance (COLA) applied to long-term, short-term and certain rotational assignments in a range of locations, based upon the cost of living differential between the sending and receiving country. It was received by 74% of the survey respondents and considered to be ‘very important’ to assignment participation by 79% of them; 10» assignees (15R) commented on its necessity to compensate for potential loss of

spending power in high cost of living countries. Concern was raised that the allowances were sufficient and reviewed regularly, such that assignees' standard of living was maintained:

"...I don't think that I could live ... without a certain allowance." (Gina, North America)

The COLA appeared to be a key factor underpinning assignment participation, aligned with the literature (Sims and Schraeder, 2005); women undertaking all assignment types who were relocating to high cost areas reported its importance.

The provision of a car was deemed critical to assignment participation by assignees on all assignment types: 89% received one and 82% said this was 'very important'. Issues relating to cars and drivers were raised by 10 (12R) and four (4R) assignees respectively. Cars – although standard in policy – were considered of greatest importance in “*car culture*” locations (North America, in particular). The provision of drivers was considered crucial in locations where safety and security were of prime concern.

The majority of assignees (97%) received their salary based on home country pay, although only 70% said that this link was 'very important' to their participation. Eight assignees (10R) commented on the need for currency recalculations when exchange rates moved quickly and for equity with host country peers where expatriation involved moving from lower to higher salary locations. Rotational assignments (with periods away from hardship) were used in particularly difficult locations; if these were to be replaced with long-term in-country postings, assignees said that very high salaries would be needed to encourage assignment participation:

"For expatriates to live there, you would have to pay them lots of money." (Questa, Central Asia)

Medical, visa and tax issues

The case study firms provided medical and other insurances as well as visa and tax assistance under their international assignment policies for all types of assignments. The survey respondents reported that all of these elements were 'very important' to their

assignment participation (median 3 in each case). Healthcare is cited in the literature as a key element in expatriate participation (Sims and Schraeder, 2005). Aligned to this, the survey data indicate that medical insurance was received by 94% of assignees and considered to be ‘very important’ by 88% of those who received it. A greater proportion of long-term assignees said that medical insurance was highly important to them than short-term assignees, reflecting increased concern over potential need for medical care when away from home for long periods. A higher proportion of accompanied assignees than those who were unaccompanied placed emphasis on medical insurance, although there was little difference between the views of women with and without children. Assignees commenting on medical insurance, vaccinations and health care (5S, 7R) noted that non-Western assignment locations were of the greatest concern and policy provision to address health issues was a ‘make or break’ factor in these locations:

“Healthcare, which financially isn’t the biggest of them, but it is certainly the most important in my view.” (Di, Far East)

Work permit/ visa assistance was received by 93% of the survey respondents and considered to be ‘very important’ by 80% of them. A higher proportion of those on lengthy assignments (extended international transfers and long-term) than on other assignment types considered this as ‘very important’. Ten assignees (15R) had experienced some problems with work permit/ visa delays; in the main this made no difference to assignment take-up, but it did create some uncertainty. However, for one woman, an assignment could not be undertaken for visa reasons:

“I wanted to go out to (Central Asia). But that didn’t work out with visas, and work permits...” (Julie, North America)

The literature suggests that tax concerns being addressed is integral to assignment acceptance (Suutari and Tornikoski, 2001). Tax preparation was received by 94% of the survey respondents and considered to be ‘very important’ to assignment participation by 71% of them. It was of particular relevance to the three extended international transferees, although three-quarters of the long-term and rotational assignees said that tax preparation assistance was ‘very important’. Tax preparation was of less value to short-term assignees (potentially because assignments were kept to a length to mitigate any tax issues). While recognising the importance of tax briefings, the assignees (5S, 10R) said that these were not ‘make or break’ issues in terms of assignment take-up.

Policy implementation: equity, access and process

The two HR – International Assignments experts (20R) reported that their organisations' international assignment policies had been subject only to minor amendments that would have affected the assignees in this research study, although Hagman Co.'s policy was under review and benefits were being trimmed back in response to cost control, aligned with wider industry practice (Brookfield, 2011a; Cartus, 2010). The assignees (16S, 37R) reported experiencing little change to policy, just some up-rating and some downgrading of elements of the package (such as rental limits and COLA calculations) which were considered to balance out financially. No major policy changes had been experienced by assignees in either firm. Hagman Co.'s assignees pointed out that they would be 'grandfathered' (their terms and conditions would be maintained for the length of their assignment contracts) in respect of the recent policy review. Those who were interviewed who had children were concerned over the forthcoming policy amendments which reduced children's education support. They said that these would lower their willingness to expatriate in the future.

While the policy content of the two case study firms was similar, the literature suggests that benchmarked approaches nevertheless lead to diverse practices (Greenwood and Mayer, 2008). Although differences in implementation and process were identified by assignees (28S», 87R), the underlying rationale for these was similar in both firms. The HR experts said that they aimed to manage exceptions to policy in a flexible way (5S, 16R) to address employees' needs, but being mindful of the need to control costs (5S, 11R) and preserve equity (2S, 4R). As suggested by the literature (Sims and Schraeder, 2005), fair treatment was considered paramount, but there was recognition that requests for unusual arrangements had to be managed, ideally within existing policies, as the creation of new ones to cater for every scenario would be unrealistic. To address issues of equity and flexibility required tailoring of provision without compromising the integrity of the international assignment policy. Both organisations used exceptions management tools and processes and ensured their policy components were benchmarked regularly, aligned with wider industry practice in this respect (Brookfield, 2009a, 2010; ORC Worldwide, 2007, 2008b, 2009).

The assignees (9S, 23R) reported on a range of issues that demonstrated organisational flexibility in managing their assignments. Some illustrative examples included providing temporary accommodation while visas were sought and allowing leave with minimal notice to pack up shipments. Although such a flexible approach by HR was considered helpful, assignees (8S», 16R) reported policy content to be ‘unclear’ as, by addressing individual circumstances, policy was not always implemented as written. Two assignees (3R) reported on local variation in the application of the centrally-determined policy resulting in inconsistent treatment, an issue highlighted by the literature (Perkins and Daste, 2007). However, this did not affect women’s assignment participation decisions.

The assignees (14S, 37R) revealed some perceived discrepancies in equity with regard to the provision of precondition policy elements. For instance, expatriates’ housing was related to unaccompanied status rather than their grade. This was considered inequitable as expatriates of similar grade who were accompanied with families received better accommodation. Assignees in dual career relationships (where either their husbands/partners worked for different companies or were their co-workers) noted that reduction of certain allowances (such as COLA) to account for duplication could sometimes be inequitable. Although these issues may have been causes of dissatisfaction, they were not ‘make or break’ factors in assignment acceptance.

The main difference in approach between the two organisations lay with employee access to policy documentation (7S», 19R). In Collins Co., assignees said that they were unable to access the full policy, only a short summary being available, and there was no protocol on assignment extensions. This was considered problematic in making assignment participation decisions and in understanding any local legal requirements needed for assignment extensions:

“...It is almost like you are expected to make it on trust, before finding out what the terms are...” (Fiona, Long-term)

In Hagman Co., the international assignment policy was available on the intranet and it was well-documented and transparent. Assignees said they were able to make their participation decision easily when they had access to policy contents. This reflects Harris’s (2002) finding in respect of open and transparent approaches to selection increasing women’s

assignment participation, suggesting that open access to policy content could potentially facilitate women's expatriation.

Both organisations had dedicated international assignments managers/ teams based in headquarters although Collins Co. used a relocation management company to organise housing, removals and home search, while Hagman Co. used local agents with respect to expatriate liaison issues. The assignees (4S, 8R) commented that international relocation processes were well-managed overall (despite occasional hitches with home search, housing, travel, co-ordination and local orientation). On the whole, the expatriation process worked smoothly, was considered supportive of women's expatriation and was well-regarded in both firms:

"I think (company) are very slick at it in terms of getting people overseas." (Olive, Long-term)

Summary and implications

The case study firms took a similar approach to policy content with that addressing housing, home search and removals supporting expatriates' home life. The financial rewards derived from free overseas accommodation also provided a financial incentive to undertake assignments. Support for housing was identified as the main 'make or break' factor in assignment acceptance. Assignees valued all of the financial elements of their firms' international assignment policies, in particular the salary uplift and COLA in high cost destinations, with the salary uplift identified as the main 'make or break' factor. Financial rewards encouraged assignment take-up. Organisational policy supported medical, visa and tax issues, with medical identified by assignees as an important precondition for assignment acceptance in non-Western destinations.

The organisations adopted a similar approach to policy implementation, 'grandfathering' policy change for existing assignees, and thereby protecting their terms and conditions from erosion resulting from cost cutting. Exception management tools were used to address individual needs within the framework of existing policy to facilitate assignment participation. Although effort was made to preserve equity, this occasionally

was sacrificed to facilitate individual mobility. Both firms provided supportive management of international mobility. The main difference in approach between them concerned employee access to policy documentation: where this was open and transparent, assignment participation was facilitated.

Finally, an assignment type effect was in evidence. A greater proportion of assignees undertaking long-term assignments viewed housing (and associated support such as home search and removals), medical, visas and tax issues as being of high importance to their assignment participation. Accompanied assignees also particularly valued housing and medical support. Long-term assignees were best supported through housing policy. The provision of free, good quality, housing abroad on a long-term basis not only addressed assignees' home life needs but also meant that they potentially had the most to gain financially from their assignments. This may serve to reinforce long-term assignments as the assignment type of choice for female assignees. Housing policy supported rotational working well but assignees believed that more help with housing was needed for short-term and commuter assignees. Policy provided financial incentives for all assignment types, although assignees derived the greatest financial rewards from being based in difficult locations which attracted higher premiums. Commuter assignments were the least well-rewarded, reinforcing them as the least preferred type of assignment.

In the following section the contribution to knowledge identified by the thesis findings is highlighted and discussed. The value of the research and implications for theory and practice are outlined, areas for further research identified and conclusions drawn.

SECTION 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 19: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This thesis sought to explain how organisational policies and practices can make a difference to increasing women's expatriate participation in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector. It has brought together established studies and new data to highlight where employer action is needed to widen expatriate gender diversity. The research findings, having been evaluated within the extant literature in the previous section, are taken forward in this chapter to be discussed in respect of the theoretical implications for female expatriation. As such, the contribution of this thesis to academic knowledge is highlighted. This study goes beyond traditional approaches taken to explain women's expatriate participation through their family choices/ constraints, their assignee characteristics, and societal/ country effects by also examining the influence of occupational segregation. This is set within the context of organisational policy and practice, a male-dominated industry sector and the use of a range of different assignment types (figure 9.1, page 115).

The findings in response to the research questions (figure 9.2, page 116) identify: the occupational segregation effects that influence organisational policy and practice relating to expatriate gender diversity; and the assignee, family and country effects that influence organisational policy and practice relating to female expatriate participation in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector. An assignment type effect is also identified linked to the purpose, location, length, pattern and un/accompanied status of expatriation and how assignment types are supported through organisational policy and practice. From these findings, explanations for female expatriation are presented and supporting organisational policy/ practice acknowledged. In addition, deficiencies in policy and practice are identified and, flowing from these, the implications for organisations as to how they might better support women's assignment participation. These issues are

summarised at the end of this chapter⁴¹. The value of this study is articulated and the call for further research made. Conclusions are presented in the final chapter.

Horizontal and vertical segregation as explanations for women's expatriation

The research findings indicate that expatriates are mainly drawn from technical functions such as engineering, geology and geophysics. Traditionally, these have been, and still are to a large extent, dominated by men; even where women are employed in technical disciplines, such as geology, they tend to be concentrated in non-mobile roles, and hence have limited access to expatriation. This horizontal segregation of women into occupations, functions and roles that are less required for expatriation is explained by sex role and gender stereotyping, and patriarchy.

The oil and gas exploration and production sector – and expatriates' roles and working environments within it – are masculine in ethos and sex stereotyped as male as highlighted within company annual reports. This image appears to be embedded in the education system where assignees report careers being gender stereotyped and young women discouraged from entering what is seen as a highly masculine sector, reducing prospects for female expatriation. This research also finds that gender stereotyping of oil and gas careers by young women themselves and in the career advice they receive from schools, influences their engagement with – and attainment of – the most appropriate educational subject qualifications required by the industry. This results in their educational background not being closely aligned to the oil and gas industry's requirements. In this way, horizontal segregation is reinforced. Nonetheless, female assignees report this sector, and expatriation within it, as exciting and attractive to women.

Female expatriates are concentrated in the functions and occupations that benefit most from lengthy assignments. For example, the legal and human resource functions require relationship building, and exploration (geology and geophysics) requires assignment lengths that reflect the long operations cycles involved in identifying, drilling

⁴¹ Tables 19.1-19.7 provide summaries of the findings, aligned to the 'effects' considered within this research and outcomes (for expatriation, career contribution, home/ family life and preconditions). Theoretical and practice implications are stated.

and extracting oil and gas. Industry practice to shorten assignment lengths in response to cost and other considerations is therefore likely to have a differentially detrimental effect upon female expatriates, reducing their career contribution outcomes if shorter assignments preclude them being able to meet business objectives effectively. Men comprise the bulk of expatriate engineering roles – a function that is less likely to be affected negatively by shortening assignment lengths. Once again, horizontal segregation is likely to be reinforced; in this case through the link to assignment lengths and industry trends to reduce them.

At industry level, whilst a diversity strategy indicating commitment to increase women's share of employment in the oil and gas sector is evident, the study shows that, with respect to international operations, the emphasis on diversity focuses primarily on widening participation by host country nationals rather than gender in expatriation. Devolved responsibility for diversity, without clearly defined accountability, affects female assignees' expatriation negatively, aligned with the literature (Kalev *et al.*, 2006). This is particularly so in host country partner organisations where patriarchal attitudes result in women experiencing difficulties in achieving their assignment objectives. Local laws and national cultural norms can also prevent access to certain work environments (such as offshore rigs). Given that offshore work primarily involves (male-dominated) engineering occupations, this reinforces horizontal segregation.

Regardless of business function, women are employed predominantly in lower-graded roles and hold, in the main, low and mid-grade expatriate positions. Senior level expatriate experience provides a high level of career contribution and hence women's potential exclusion from such opportunities is likely to affect their careers within the industry negatively, compounding vertical segregation. The oil and gas exploration and production sector prides itself on its adherence to meritocracy. This is welcomed by female assignees; they are keen to compete on equal terms with their male colleagues in what they describe as a gender stereotyped 'male game'. Yet, vertical segregation, explained by patriarchy (in which senior positions are subject to male norms), makes competition on equal terms difficult for women. Vertical segregation is therefore unlikely to be broken down by the sector's meritocratic ethos.

Horizontal and vertical segregation are also in evidence in relation to women's access to – and development of – career contribution through expatriation. Expatriate gender diversity is unrecognised as a problem (not being specifically mentioned in international assignment policies) and, as such, and with equal opportunity assumed through the support of meritocracy, organisational policy has little effect on widening women's access to career-enhancing expatriate assignments. In effect, organisational policy and practice with respect to diversity and equal opportunities do not address occupational segregation in expatriation.

With respect to selection, organisations' management prefer known individuals and make internal appointments where possible, rather than taking on new hires into expatriate positions. It might be argued that it is a rational economic choice (Becker, 1971) for employers to discriminate against selecting female expatriates as they are perceived to be more expensive to identify and employ because there are so few examples of them on assignment and due to their characteristics as a group. Yet, if the majority of expatriate posts are filled from known internal sources, it should be no more difficult (or costly) to identify women as suitable for expatriation and, as policy provision does not differentiate by gender, the potential take-up of assignee benefits (and thus the cost of relocating men and women) should be similar.

In this study, the selection of internal candidates is, in the main, carried out openly but with reliance on building informal networks whereas, in the limited instances where external appointments are sought, formal selection procedures are more likely to be used. As women's access to assignments is enhanced through a more open and transparent approach to selection (Harris, 2002), their entry into the bulk of available expatriate roles is potentially hindered through organisational informality. Aligned with the literature, expatriate selection decisions reflect managerial preference for security and conformity (Schwartz, 1992, 1999). Men are seen as 'typical expatriates' in the oil and gas exploration and production sector and, thus, a 'safer' option. Openness to change is viewed as being more risky (and potentially costly) affecting negatively the selection of women (*ibid.*). Indeed, women are keenly aware of their need to network with (predominantly male) host

country line managers to become known to them personally, if they wish to improve their chances of selection. While informal and gendered (male) succession planning processes do not intentionally discriminate against women once they become expatriates, they do potentially help to reinforce vertical segregation. In summary, male-dominated selection and succession processes and informal approaches to advertising expatriate vacancies, particularly at senior level, serve to maintain rather than challenge horizontal and vertical segregation.

The queuing model (Reskin and Roos, 1990) suggests that, as expatriates' terms and conditions become less attractive financially, more women are predicted to take up roles that men no longer desire; yet there is no evidence for this within this study. Expatriation within oil and gas exploration and production is thus unlikely to feminise, even if remuneration and benefits packages for traditional long-term assignments are reduced or if greater use is made of flexible, lower cost alternative assignment lengths and patterns in response to wider industry trends (Cartus, 2010).

Qualifications and networking as explanations for women's expatriation

Expatriate occupations are horizontally segregated: men hold the required engineering qualifications and engineers comprise the bulk of expatriate roles. Where women are appropriately qualified (for example, in geology) they are out-competed by men for the internationally mobile positions. As selection criteria for expatriate appointments focus on technical competence, women's qualifications may prove inappropriate. Though the female assignees in the case study firms are highly qualified, they are aware of the need to keep up-to-date with technical developments, even to pursue further academic qualifications to diversify into disciplines of growing importance to oil and gas expatriation (such as environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility), to improve their expatriation prospects and the career contribution that flows from these. Whilst they express desire (and are taking action) to qualify in disciplines that they see as providing them with more expatriate openings in the future, (for instance, by qualifying in subject disciplines that address current corporate environmental concerns), this potentially maintains horizontal segregation by introducing new expatriate disciplines seen as

‘women’s work’. Organisational policy has little effect on aligning women’s qualifications with industry requirements for engineering expatriate roles and, by implication, this is unlikely to help tackle embedded horizontal segregation.

Female assignees also recognise the importance of pursuing career development opportunities to improve their effectiveness in current – and for future – roles and welcome preparatory expatriation training. Although policy supports preparatory training (primarily for long-term assignments) and is taken up by women when offered, it is not universally available or tailored to gender. This potentially hinders the career value that women might derive from expatriation and their access to alternative assignment types. Job-related training is not emphasised in international assignment policy and, with the exception of graduate trainees on international placements, assignees report its receipt limited by access, time constraints and locally set budgets. Such training, even when given, does not have future expatriate positions as an objective, rather it aims to improve performance in current role.

The annual performance review does identify short-term training and development needs but again these focus on current role performance. With the exception of short-term assignments (which are not a commonly used assignment type in the industry currently), expatriation is not used specifically for employee development (although assignees do interpret its purpose as developmental). The findings indicate: ‘stretch’ assignments to be rare and promotion/ re-grading by no means secured on – or as a result of – expatriation; and repatriation training infrequent (although highly valued). Again, organisational policy (in this case with respect to training, development and repatriation) does not have the alignment of qualifications and experience with expatriate careers as a central tenet.

The annual development review, by contrast, provides an example of organisational policy which does aim to increase/ diversify capabilities, potentially to widen access to future expatriate roles. Implementation practice, however, is varied. Developing further Harris’s (2002) findings with respect to expatriate selection, it is suggested that, where formal, systematic and transparent processes are in operation in relation to employee development, this is more effective than when they are informal, haphazard and reliant

upon women's networks to gain access to developmental and expatriate opportunities. Yet, the organisational emphasis on self-career management and the non-mandatory nature of this intervention potentially make it more difficult for female assignees to secure opportunities, particularly given the prevailing meritocracy within the industry's male-dominated work environment.

This leads into consideration of the effect of women's networks on gaining access to – and development of – career contribution from expatriation and the influence this might have on changing the horizontally and vertically segregated nature of expatriation within the oil and gas industry. Expatriate selection is a male-dominated process, with reliance on personal invitations and known contacts, particularly for senior vacancies which are less likely to be advertised, hindering women's access to expatriate roles and the career contribution they bring. Women are therefore required to cultivate networks, building the necessary social capital to find out about expatriate opportunities, especially those at senior levels, if they are to advance through the organisational hierarchy (Tharenou, 2001, 2005). Although vacancies are more likely to be advertised when they involve long-term assignments, widening women's access to their preferred assignment type and the greatest career benefits, it is not such common practice to advertise alternative types of assignment. Non-transparent/ closed selection processes hinder women's expatriation, potentially obstructing their involvement in the 'flexpatriate' alternatives that are likely to represent an increasingly important 'slice' of future expatriate opportunities.

Yet, the position is far from straightforward: host country line managers have the greatest input into the assignment selection decision for long-term assignments. Women need to have built relationships with these line managers across the world, implying strong and wide-ranging networks. Without these, their access to their preferred assignment type is hindered. Functional heads are found to play a greater role in assignment selection decisions for flexpatriate assignment types (such as short-term and rotational); with their wider overview of the competencies held within their respective functions, women's potential access to these types of expatriation is increased. However, women are less keen to take up flexpatriate assignments. They also report requirements to build good relationships with their functional managers to be considered for all types of expatriation,

as the posting decision involves both home and host country management buy-in, indicating the requirement to develop networks at senior management functional levels.

Once on assignment, the requirement for women to build and maintain their social capital via networks of contacts globally and at senior levels remains critical to achieving career contribution. Women place importance on the role of career-based, informal networking and mentoring in their career development and in succession planning, despite the lack of accountability inherent in such approaches. Organisational policy to support formal systems of mentoring, sponsorship, networks and role models is frequently unsuccessful or non-existent. Support initiatives aimed specifically at women are rare (this is not surprising given the meritocratic environment) and, although the benefits of a female perspective are recognised, the female assignees treat these with some suspicion. They prefer the maintenance of meritocracy (wishing to compete on equal terms with their male colleagues but also to prevent male backlash if any female favouritism is perceived) and they believe that male mentors and inclusion in male networks are particularly helpful, given the male-dominated nature of the industry in which they work.

While graduate assignment repatriation is supported through organisational policy and practice, there is no formal policy addressing other repatriates' careers. This is of particular concern to long-term assignees; they experience limited repatriation planning, poor links to succession planning and career uncertainty. As a result, they rely on their networks and links with senior management to identify suitable roles on return. In the absence of formal and transparent career management and succession planning processes and, in an environment that relies on building networks throughout the expatriate cycle (from selection, in post, and through to repatriation), the *status quo* is likely to remain in respect of horizontal and vertical segregation.

Family power, satisficing and career paths as explanations for women's expatriation

The human resource experts interviewed indicate that pursuing a career in the oil and gas exploration and production industry is likely to involve domestic (home country based) or international requirements for mobility. It might be predicted that women are less able to

undertake mobile roles as they hold lower family power (Harvey, 1998) than their partners who, in the main, are likely to be the primary breadwinners. Thus, the industry's high mobility requirements are expected to affect women differentially as a result of the impact on their family responsibilities (potentially reinforcing horizontal segregation in discouraging them from entering the sector). With regard to expatriation, it might also be expected that married/ partnered women and those with children would be less able to take up international assignments. While the findings of this research cannot tell us very much about women who have rejected expatriation on family grounds, they do present some unexpected findings in relation to how current female assignees manage their expatriate careers and family lives. The key theoretical explanations concern women's satisficing decisions (Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b), made in the context of family power (Harvey, 1998), supported by organisational policy and practice addressing or providing compensation for home/ family outcomes.

In making decisions to take up expatriate assignments, it is indicated that women seek career contribution but this is set against the impact of the assignment type on their home life and family stability. Assignments based in high profile host country assets in exciting stages of development or in the headquarters most typically provide the highest perceived career contribution, due to their management visibility and the *kudos* of association with high profile projects and discoveries. Major core producers also provide the prospect of career contribution through their wide range of job opportunities and experiences. While assignments in certain assets are highly regarded for their career potential, women with children report turning these down if they deem the location unsuitable for their children (through poor security, health concerns or isolation). This could mean sacrificing career potential for their children's welfare. However, motherhood does not mean that women turn down assignments *per se*.

Unexpectedly, the research reveals that having children prompted long-term assignment take-up, as organisational policy supported mothers and their children very effectively in an expatriate context. Women's decisions to undertake particular assignment types in family-friendly locations are based upon providing stability for children, supported by suitable and appropriate childcare and high quality education. However, women are less

likely to accept expatriate assignments during teenage children's secondary school years, in alignment with the literature (Dupuis *et al.*, 2008; Tharenou, 2009). Limiting their assignment acceptance to certain locations, lengths and periods enables them to gain expatriate experience, although not necessarily that with the highest potential for career contribution. This study therefore identifies that women's expatriate participation involves satisficing decision-making.

Women juggle dual careers in taking up assignments, maintaining career equivalency where possible by making use of complementary assignment types or alternating the lead career with their husbands/ partners to achieve the best career outcome for the couple overall. This was not based necessarily on economic considerations (although current and future earning potential were considered by some), rather upon maintaining careers for both partners as far as possible but with priority given to personal relationships. Again, this indicates satisficing, as necessary, to meet these objectives.

Although organisational policy focuses on de-duplicating financial elements of the remuneration and benefits packages for dual career and co-working couples, practice supports keeping couples together and co-ordinating spousal careers as far as practicable. Nonetheless, female assignees report more is needed to support spouse employment and the provision of visas/ work permits as male breadwinners, who typically hold the highest family power, find international assignments particularly difficult if they are unable to work, often due to local cultural/ patriarchal norms. This may lead to women making career compromises (Corby and Stanworth, 2009), precluding expatriation (or accepting less career enhancing assignments) in support of their partner's financial and career outcomes.

Organisational policy and practice on working time for expatriates follows host country practice but, in effect, assignees work longer hours than local people or than they would have done in their home country. Although this has little effect on women's assignment take-up, the findings reveal perceived lengthy working time associated with expatriation at senior levels precluding many from seeking senior level expatriate posts (reinforcing vertical segregation). Mothers maintain their work-life balance to spend time with children, indicating a decision to satisfice in order to strike a balance between their

careers and their family commitment, although this might have detrimental career contribution effects and require career compromise.

Mothers also express a desire to work part-time but accept that this is incompatible with expatriation (save for those who are in co-working arrangements whereby their compensation can be reduced as the main expatriate package is paid to their partner). While being unable to work part-time or job share had not affected the assignees' decisions to undertake expatriation, some mothers note that this might affect their future participation decisions. They are thus prepared to engage in satisficing behaviour, accepting career compromises while raising young children. Although some women, report their choices as 'rational' and their 'preference' (Hakim, 2000, 2004) to put family life ahead of their careers, there is no evidence of full economic considerations and real choices being made, giving little credence to rational choice and preference theories as explanations for women's expatriate participation.

Women assignees are very well supported *via* organisational policy and practice during pregnancy and when they become mothers. They report continuing in their expatriate careers during pregnancy, after maternity and after raising their families. Some women began expatriate careers as a means of combining career and family outcomes or after raising their children. This is in contrast to women's career path models that predict that women's engagement with corporate careers is likely to dip during and after child-rearing years due to relational demands taking precedence over career concerns and later life career fulfilment being derived from experiences not linked to a corporate environment (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007). Of course, this study can only tell us about current female expatriates, not about other women who have rejected corporate careers and their reasons for so-doing, but it does bring into question the efficacy of women's career path models in respect of expatriation. Organisational policy supporting childbirth and raising families is instrumental to expatriate participation by mothers.

An assignment type effect is also clearly in evidence. Long-term assignments provide the greatest career contribution; their accompanied status also gives stability to home and family life for assignees, their partners and children. Rotational assignments

provide lower career contribution, but the regular work pattern and lengthy periods at home provide a stable home life, enabling dual careers to be maintained, although this assignment type is unsuited to women with children. Short-term assignments provide career contribution through their developmental focus but are disruptive to home and family life, being unaccompanied; commuter assignments provide neither home life/ family stability nor career contribution and are the least preferred assignment type (regardless of women's marital and family status).

The study's findings contradict Meyskens *et al.*'s (2009) model which predicts that commuter assignments potentially offer the highest potential for assignment success and work-life balance, short-term assignments offer the lowest on both aspects, while expatriate assignments offer low assignment success and medium levels of work-life balance. Although it is acknowledged that the relationship between career contribution and home life/ family stability proposed here is not directly comparable to Meyskens *et al.*'s (2009) model (as this considers goal congruence – the extent to which multinationals' and their subsidiaries' goals are aligned – as a measure of assignment success, and work-life balance), these findings do clearly show that women prefer traditional assignments over flexpatriate mobility. Women assignees thus consider the combination of career and family outcomes, selecting their assignments to gain maximum potential for both of these factors (subject to necessary financial and practical preconditions being addressed). Thus, satisficing provides a credible explanation of women's assignment participation as they attempt to achieve the best outcomes on both career and family grounds.

Compensating differentials as an explanation for women's expatriation

While the compensating differentials model (Anker, 2001) suggests women 'prefer' occupations with good working conditions and fringe benefits over high monetary rewards, this study finds the opposite. Although women assignees do not cite money as the main reason to undertake expatriation, they do place high emphasis on all financial aspects, particularly the salary uplift (the foreign service premium) which is cited as a critical 'make or break' factor in assignment acceptance. They report housing provision as the primary precondition to assignment take-up; it supports family life but, given that it is offered rent-

free in the host country, it also provides a significant financial inducement to go. High levels of importance are also attributed to medical issues such as insurance and healthcare as well as assistance to manage tax affairs (with consequent tax efficiency). In addition, elements of policy that facilitate spouse/ partner employment (such as visa assistance or employment support), enabling dual incomes to be maintained are highly welcome.

Assignees also expect: open access to transparent policy documentation so that they can see what the financial compensation/ rewards are up-front prior to assignment acceptance; organisational policy to be responsive to their individual needs; and equitable treatment. Any proposed reductions to financial policy elements are considered detrimental to future assignment take-up, particularly if these reduce contributions towards children's education. Long-term assignments are best supported financially (reinforcing these as women's preferred assignment type), with rotational working also generating considerable financial reward. Limited financial support applies to short-term assignments, with commuter assignments attracting minimal support. These assignment types are therefore less attractive on financial grounds, cementing their other disadvantages.

Even though working at home is not supported officially through policy, local practice and the proximity of expatriate housing to the workplace did support limited *ad hoc* arrangements (subject to requirements for leadership of local staff). Mothers value this to manage childcare and singles to manage domestic issues. There are few examples of official flexible hours' schemes that applied to expatriates, although again, unofficial arrangements are in place locally. Assignees report that, although flexible working arrangements are 'nice to have', they have little effect on their expatriate participation decision-making.

The main issues relating to women's requirements for 'good working conditions', considered critical to assignment acceptance, concern home leave, home leave travel, regular return home arrangements applying to unaccompanied assignees (on long-term assignments, in particular) and time off for family emergencies. These are addressed in organisational policy, facilitating women's assignment participation; official policy allowing unaccompanied assignees to work in the home country, by extending home leave

and business trips, is proposed as an intervention to support this further. Pregnancy and maternity are also well-supported via responsive policy and practice with a strong focus on financial underpinning. While location factors (such as primitive healthcare, poor security, isolation and extreme climates) do not, in the main, act as disincentives to women's assignment take-up (as such locations provide high levels of remuneration and compensatory benefits), women with children put their welfare first. They are therefore less likely to accept such postings, indicating the compensating differentials model as having some relevance to explaining mothers' expatriate participation.

Overall, however, there is only limited evidence in support of the compensating differentials model as an explanation of women's assignment participation. Women assignees expect high monetary rewards and factor these in when making career decisions that involve family disruption (particularly in respect of dual career/ income loss issues relating to their partners). The findings also show that female assignees hold high levels of family power and strive to maintain it.

Contribution to academic knowledge

This study goes beyond research carried out over the past three decades that attributes women's low share of expatriate roles to their personal choice, assignee characteristics and host country cultural issues, based on Adler's (1984a, 1984b, 1987) bedrock studies. It examines the effect of occupational segregation (horizontal and vertical), the use of different types of assignment and organisational policy and practice in supporting female expatriate participation.

With respect to occupational segregation, this study indicates embedded horizontal and vertical segregation in an industry where sex role stereotyping of expatriation is high. Organisational policy and practice to address this are limited, despite recognition of women's low share of expatriate roles and senior positions in particular. At industry level, male imagery is used to depict the engineering and exploration work environments where the majority of expatriate jobs lie. Expatriate roles (held mainly by men) primarily require engineering qualifications. Given this required academic backdrop, it is perhaps not

surprising that the industry's diversity strategy ignores gender in expatriation. Women's expatriate participation is not helped at organisational level by diversity policy supporting devolved responsibility without clear accountability. Equal opportunity is assumed, supported by policy, and a meritocratic environment prevails. However, organisational policy specifically related to expatriation does not contain specific references to diversity and equal opportunities.

The literature suggests apparent organisational unwillingness to send women on assignments results from bias (unintended and discriminatory) in selection and the effect of supervisor perceptions on women's suitability and willingness to go (Harris, 2002; Mathur-Helm, 2002; Stroh *et al.*, 2000a, 2000b). This study builds upon the literature related to assignee selection by examining the effect of organisational policy and practice on tackling occupational segregation; it shows that selection interventions result in limited attrition of occupational segregation and widening of female expatriate participation in the oil and gas exploration sector in two main ways. First, the selection and deployment of known existing employees, rather than unknown recruits, into expatriate positions suggests that women should have similar opportunity to gain expatriate roles as their male counterparts. Second, when external recruits are employed, formal and transparent processes should also facilitate women's selection, as predicted by Harris (2002). However, these interventions in support of expatriate gender diversity are offset by a male-dominated, often informal approach to internal candidate advertising and selection. This is particularly disadvantageous to women at senior levels who require high levels of networking to find out about vacancies and be 'known' to decision-makers.

With regard to the assignee effect, female expatriates are highly qualified but their academic qualifications are not closely aligned to those required for the bulk of expatriate roles in oil and gas exploration and production. Organisational policy and practice provide only limited support for diversifying and aligning women's qualifications and experience to that required to break down horizontal and vertical segregation in expatriation. The annual development review policy and process aim to widen development for future roles; however, the efficacy of the intervention hinges on it being carried out in a formal,

systematic and transparent manner and this is by no means universal, given its non-mandatory status.

The literature proclaims the value of support given to female expatriates, pre-assignment, in post and on repatriation, through networks and mentoring (Fish, 2005; Linehan, 2000; Linehan and Scullion, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c), although we know little about how organisational policy actually facilitates this. Yet, only limited organisational provision is evident supporting the development of networks to assist women to obtain initial expatriate posts, further assignments and to follow enhancing career paths on repatriation. Inadequate organisational action in support of women's networking is a major hindrance to women's expatriation given the emphasis on networks within selection and career development processes and the male-dominated, although meritocratic, environment. While formal mentoring arrangements are organisationally supported (potentially addressing both gaining experience and contacts), women assignees find these unhelpful and prefer their own informal arrangements, ideally with male mentors. The lack of accountability of such arrangements may, however, detract from their usefulness in widening women's expatriate participation.

The female expatriate literature has been engrossed for many years in debating whether or not women want expatriate careers at all (and their interest in them compared with men's), with contrasting findings (Hill and Tillery, 1992; Stroh et al., 2000a, 2000b; Tharenou, 2003, 2008; Tung, 1998; van der Velde *et al.*, 2005). Expatriation has been found to be attractive to women, but this study goes beyond existing literature by explaining why. While the findings confirm that women assignees recognise the career contribution that flows from expatriation, aligned with the literature that links international experience to future leadership roles (Caligiuri and Colakoglu, 2007; Mendenhall *et al.*, 2002; Orser and Leck, 2010), different types of assignments provide differential career contribution outcomes and have implications for home/ family life and remuneration. Women's international assignment participation is not therefore based simply on the pros and cons of expatriation *per se*, but upon the combination of length, pattern and status, linked to assignment purpose and location, and their combined effects on careers, home/ family life and financial reward.

Much has also been written on the difficulties women face in balancing their relationships and motherhood with an expatriate career (Linehan, 2000; Linehan and Walsh, 2000a). Although they do not specifically address expatriation, women's career path models (for example, Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007) suggest women would exit from internationally mobile careers when they become mothers and after raising their children. Yet, the opposite to a presupposed incompatibility of women maintaining a family life and undertaking expatriation has been found. Organisational policy and practice support women to engage in expatriate careers during pregnancy, maternity and after having children through highly responsive family provision. Support enabling women to follow career paths is aligned as far as possible with men's, so reflecting the prevailing meritocracy, and suggesting that a fresh look is needed at women's career paths in an expatriate context.

International assignment policies focus on financial issues. Implementation practice, however, does attempt to address the family effect more helpfully, through creative solutions to keep couples together. These include the use of complementary assignment patterns and, as far as practicable, employment support (assistance with obtaining visas, links with other employers and direct employment) for spouses. There is little formal policy to support flexible hours of work, work-life balance or part-time working, although informal arrangements at local level take place. While assignees recognise that organisational policy and practice might be improved (such as through co-ordination of assignments for dual career and co-working couples), they recognise the limitations. As such, women assignees engage in satisficing decision-making, taking into account family power and their personal relationships. Assignees do not prioritise working conditions over monetary reward, although their emphasis changes once they have children.

Finally, there is limited evidence of the country effect influencing organisational policy and practice in support of women's expatriation. Although pre-assignment trips, cultural and language training are addressed in policy (and some other interventions such as defensive driving training) and welcomed when made available, these are not widely

received. Cultural training in particular is not suitably gender specific or sufficiently tailored to patriarchal challenges of the host country environments.

Besides identifying occupational segregation, qualifications, networks and satisficing decision-making as the most appropriate explanations of women's low expatriate participation in the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production industry, the main contribution of this study is the identification of an assignment type effect. Women seek career contribution, and home life and family stability, underpinned by appropriate remuneration and benefits that act as preconditions to assignment acceptance. The sector makes use of a variety of assignment types, long-term and rotational and to a lesser extent short-term and commuter, linked to organisational purpose and geographical location. Long-term accompanied assignments are best supported by organisational policy and practice and provide the most favourable career, home/ family and remuneration outcomes; they are women's assignment type of choice. Yet, assignment lengths are shortening as oil and gas exploration and production organisations follow the cost-cutting trends of wider industry. While this appears not to be detrimental to men's engineering expatriate roles (where lengthy expatriation is not necessarily critical to career contribution), it does affect differentially those held by women who work in the more 'female-friendly' expatriate disciplines where relationship building is necessary to meet assignment objectives. This is potentially detrimental to increasing women's share of expatriation, particularly given that long-term assignments best support women to maintain their family responsibilities.

In summary, women's low share of expatriate positions in the oil and gas exploration and production sector can be explained primarily by embedded horizontal and vertical segregation, reinforced by a number of other explanations, in particular, poor alignment of their qualifications and their relatively restricted networks. Organisational policy and practice provide only limited interventions to address these issues and thereby increase expatriate gender diversity. Women's assignment participation is subject to satisficing decision-making, whereby they take up assignment types that maximise career and family outcomes, underpinned by necessary preconditions.

Implications for practice

The research findings identify a number of deficiencies in organisational strategy, policy and practice that, if addressed, could increase expatriate gender diversity. If undertaken at organisational level, this could result in institutional change at industry sector level. The following strategic initiatives and organisational policy and practice interventions are proposed:

- ❖ Diversity strategy specifically to address gender in expatriation and to articulate the requirement for responsibility with accountability. Inclusion of diversity/ equal opportunity principles within international assignment policy. Expatriate gender diversity to be championed at central and local senior management levels.
Consideration to be given to positive action;
- ❖ Use of non-stereotypical gendered imagery in corporate literature; organisational involvement in/ support for initiatives to widen awareness of oil and gas careers for women, encourage women's entry into technical disciplines and to sensitise (male) management to expatriate gender diversity;
- ❖ Use of appropriate assignment types that maximise organisational effectiveness but also take into account career contribution and family outcomes for assignees.
Development of organisational policy and practice to facilitate assignment acceptance in support of career and family considerations, underpinned by necessary remuneration and benefits to ensure assignment preconditions are met for all assignment types;
- ❖ Selection principles to be included within expatriation policy with greater communication, clarity in decision-making and female representation in the selection process put in place. Open, transparent and formal selection processes to be used for all assignment types;
- ❖ Wider provision of preparatory training, tailored to gender as appropriate, and offered as relevant to support all assignment types;
- ❖ Organisational support for mentoring and female role models (via training and time allocation), interventions to facilitate networking and address social and family support for unaccompanied assignees in remote locations;

- ❖ Formal links between training and competency development integrated within career management and succession planning processes. High levels of direct communication with assignees by career path decision-makers, ensuring clear understanding and transparency of re-grading, repatriation/ further assignment options and high visibility while on assignment. Structured, centralised and time-scaled succession planning carried out at top management level and addressing all assignment types;
- ❖ Repatriation training and family support, managed actively by line/ functional managers working jointly with assignees;
- ❖ Proactive and responsive support that facilitates both partners to work in roles that provide appropriate career contribution, with synchronisation of assignment start and finish dates, addressing all assignment types;
- ❖ Proactive and responsive support for pregnancy, maternity, employment on return, childcare and children's education, addressing all assignment types;
- ❖ Inclusion of statements on work-life balance and flexible work arrangements in international assignment policies, addressing all assignment types, with flexible working for expatriates aligned to host country practice and underpinned by top management support. Policy provision for unaccompanied assignees to work for periods in home country subject to demands for leadership of the local workforce;
- ❖ Detailed international assignment policy content to be made openly and readily available to aid expatriate participation decision-making. Clear communication of international assignment policy decisions in relation to employees' circumstances. All assignment types to be addressed within international assignment policy with an equitable approach applied to remuneration, allowances, benefits and support.

The value of the study and further research

This study was set within two UK-based oil and gas exploration and production firms, considered typical in terms of their size and scale of operations. They were not oil giants employing very large expatriate populations and, as such, their policies and practices in respect of supporting expatriation and women's assignment participation were considered

to be representative of other organisations within this sector and potentially within other sectors.

Human resource personnel are the developers and custodians of policy and have expectations that line managers will follow it; line managers, however, seek success through their management and use of expatriates and might therefore implement policy differently to that intended in order to achieve their objectives (Perkins and Daste, 2007). The two HR – International Assignments experts, who acted as organisational gatekeepers, did not grant the researcher access to their line managers in the home and host countries, only to human resource professionals responsible for policy design and implementation. This, therefore, might be considered to be a research limitation as it suggests that the headquarters-based and regional office human resource experts interviewed may have expressed viewpoints that were potentially unrepresentative of the actions taken by line managers. However, the human resource personnel interviewed spoke candidly on policy implementation, highlighting line management's actions both in alignment with policy and where practice differed from policy. The assignees, too, spoke freely and openly. As such, although this research limitation was recognised, it was not considered to have compromised the study's findings.

Notwithstanding some methodological limitations (as highlighted in chapter 10 and the research diary in appendix 5), representative data were obtained: the census survey achieved a very high response rate (76%) and the lengthy interviews carried out with 14 human resource experts and 26 female expatriates provided a wealth of candid data (some 400,000 words) which were subject to detailed analysis. Access to organisational policy enabled triangulation of written documentation and experiences of practical implementation. Besides addressing the research questions set out following analysis of the extant literature, the findings generated unexpected, emergent knowledge. The study goes beyond the extant literature in its investigation and findings creating a contribution to both academic and practitioner knowledge. To develop the findings, the following areas of further research are suggested:

- ❖ A larger sample of organisations and female assignees within the UK-based oil and gas exploration and production sector to examine the applicability of the research findings in support of increasing gender diversity in this masculine industry, particularly taking into account organisational size and scale of operations to identify any differences in – and effects of – policy and practice;
- ❖ Extension of the research into non-UK based oil and gas exploration and production sector organisations to examine any differences in policy formulation and practical implementation between UK and other countries in their deployment of – and support for – female expatriates;
- ❖ Extension of the research into other sectors (masculine in nature and, for comparison, those feminine in ethos) to examine the extent to which the findings are applicable across different industries;
- ❖ Inclusion of host and home country line and other senior managers involved in implementing human resource policies to investigate how their interpretation and actions on expatriate deployment decision-making affect female assignment participation;
- ❖ A longitudinal study to examine how changes in policy content and implementation, together with host country political and social developments, affect female assignment participation;
- ❖ A theoretical research focus that addresses occupational segregation, qualifications, networks and satisficing given that these issues suggest particular promise in explaining female expatriate participation in oil and gas exploration and production;
- ❖ Finally, the study did not address male expatriation at all. Further research might therefore examine how organisational deployment approaches, using different assignment types and supporting policies and implementation practices, affect male and female assignment participation differentially.

Table 19.1: The industry effect on women's expatriate participation

Industry effect	Research findings	Expatriation outcomes	Theoretical implications	Implications for practice
Masculine sector	Male-dominated; male imagery; male-stereotyped; historical male entry profile	Reduces women’s access to career contributing expatriation	Sex roles + gender stereotyping + horizontal segregation + human capital	Use of non-stereotypical imagery in corporate literature; organisational involvement in/ support for industry initiatives to widen awareness of oil and gas careers for women
	Women’s educational background not sufficiently closely aligned to that required for expatriation			
	High requirements for mobility	Differentially affects women; home life/ family stability negatively affected	Family power	
Work environment	Masculine; overlapping work and home life in remote and isolated locations; lack of female company; security/ safety restrictions on women’s external movements	Home life/ family stability negatively affected through unaccompanied mobility and reduced social life	Patriarchy	Organisational policy/ practice to address social support, women’s networks and family reunification
	Legal/ cultural restrictions on women’s workplaces	Limits expatriate careers		
Functions and roles	Women employed mainly in non-technical functions but expatriates sourced mainly from technical functions	Reduces women’s access to career contributing expatriation	Horizontal segregation	Organisational involvement in/ support for industry initiatives to widen awareness and encourage women’s entry into technical disciplines and to sensitise (male) management to gender diversity
	Women employed in technical functions are concentrated in less prestigious, non-mobile roles but expatriates sourced mainly from mobile technical roles			
	Women employed mainly in lower-graded roles, regardless of function	Career contribution negatively affected by reduced senior level expatriate experience	Vertical segregation + patriarchy	
	Senior expatriate roles subject to male norms; women hold mainly low and mid-grade expatriate positions			
Diversity strategy	Diversity strategy primarily linked to nationality/ ethnicity; expatriation extended to host country nationals	No effect		Diversity strategy to address gender specifically; organisational action to promote accountability for gender diversity; positive action to facilitate women’s career contribution
	Shared responsibility for diversity but accountability not clearly defined	Career contribution affected especially within partner organisations	Patriarchy	
	Meritocracy	Career contribution derived from women winning in a male game	Gender stereotyping + vertical segregation	

Table 19.2: The assignment type effect on women's expatriate participation

Assignment type effect	Research findings	Expatriation outcomes	Theoretical implications	Implications for practice
Purpose	Assignees focus on career contribution and home/ family life; organisational focus is on functional, project-based, strategic and developmental objectives	Asset profile and size influence take-up to gain highest career value from assignment; this is set against family concerns; relationships are prioritised	Family power + satisficing	Awareness of assignee objectives and consideration of how career contribution, home life/ family stability and remuneration factors can influence women's assignment decisions, with view to policy development in support of these
	Career contribution affected by asset profile and size: new projects/ high profile discoveries, vast core producers and HQ based assignments bring high career contribution; declining and small assets do not			
	Assignees juggle dual careers and maintain career equivalency where possible via use of complementary assignment types; marriage/ motherhood does not have a detrimental effect <i>per se</i> ; but if necessary, assignees prioritise family issues (spousal careers/ children's education/ welfare) over expatriation			
Location	Primitive health care, poor security, isolation and extreme climates act as assignment disincentives but do not, in the main, block take-up; such locations provide high levels of remuneration and benefits	Little effect for childless women, remuneration encourages mobility; women with accompanying children put children's welfare first	Satisficing + compensating differentials	
	Locations most suited to children's relocation are not those with highest career contribution			
Length, pattern and status	Long-term provide: greatest career contribution but concern over repatriation; accompanied status gives home life/ family stability; excellent financial support	Long-term, accompanied assignments preferred over all others; women's expatriation concentrated in functions/ roles which benefit most from lengthy assignments; shortening assignment lengths discourages take-up; women's careers differentially disadvantaged by shortening assignment lengths; alternative assignment patterns not conducive to mothers, in particular	Horizontal segregation + satisficing + compensating differentials + isomorphism	Use of long-term, accompanied assignments supports gender diversity. Hence, if wider industry trends (to shorten lengths, use short-term and commuter assignments and increase use of unaccompanied status) are followed this will have negative implications for gender diversity. Consideration needed for use of appropriate assignment lengths/ patterns to maximise organisational effectiveness and career contribution/ family outcomes
	Short-term provide: career development (but not as much as long-term through limited timescales) with concern over assignment refusal; unaccompanied status disrupting home/ family life; limited financial support			
	Length must reflect requirements of occupational functions/ roles to maximise organisational/ career outcomes; lengths are shortening			
	Rotational provide: reduced career contribution via shared work role/ lack of management visibility; home life stability/ accommodation of dual careers through shift patterns; excellent financial support			
	Commuter assignments provide low career contribution due to lack of full association with role delivery/ outcomes; disruptive home/ family life (but can support dual careers); poor financial support			

Table 19.3: The organisational effect on access to career contribution

Organisational effect	Research findings	Career contribution outcomes	Theoretical implications	Implications for practice
Diversity and equal opportunities policy and practice	Principles embedded but no specific articulation within international assignment policies creating a policy 'disconnect'	Little effect	Horizontal and vertical segregation	Articulation of diversity/ equal opportunity principles within international assignment policy; action championed at senior central and local level to widen expatriate gender diversity
	Business case argument; gender diversity not identified as a problem			
	Meritocracy welcomed, supported by faith; 'glass ceiling' not clearly identified as a problem; no central initiatives on positive action			
Selection policy and practice	Selection criteria focus on technical competence	Women pursue further qualifications	Human capital	Selection principles to be included within expatriation policy; greater communication, clarity in decision-making and female representation in process required
	Internal appointments preferred over external hires	Aids access	Statistical discrimination + cultural	
	Vacancies are not always advertised; reliance on personal invitations and contacts; senior positions less likely to be advertised	Hinders access, particularly at senior levels	Horizontal and vertical segregation + social capital	
	Male-dominated process; examples of gender bias			
Preparation policy and practice	Preparatory training in policy but offered to relatively few assignees; when offered, take up high; training insufficiently tailored to gender	Hinders access	Human capital	Wider provision of preparatory training, tailored to gender as appropriate
Assignment type effect	Advertising of vacancies more likely for long-term	Aids access to long-term; but does little to widen access into other types	Social capital	Open, transparent and formal selection processes required for all assignment types; preparatory training to be offered as relevant to support all assignment types
	Line manager input into selection of greatest relevance to long-term; implications for line manager networks	Hinders access to preferred type		
	Line of business/ functional manager input of greatest relevance to rotational and short-term	Widens access to alternative types		
	External appointments more likely for long-term/ rotational than for other types; formal procedures more likely for external appointments	Mixed effect: hinders access as expatriate competencies are less well known; but open/ formal selection aids access	Statistical discrimination	
	Preparatory training primarily supports long-term	Aids access to long-term; but does little to widen access into other types	Human capital	

Table 19.4: The organisational effect on development of career contribution

Organisational effect	Research findings	Career contribution outcomes	Theoretical implications	Implications for practice
Job-related training policy and practice	Not emphasised; local budgets limit access; patchy delivery; aims to raise performance in role not to access new roles; objectives not linked to expatriation	Little effect	Human capital	Formal links between training and competency development integrated within career management processes, greater grading clarity, and communication to maintain visibility required
Development policy and practice	Not emphasised; 'stretch' assignments rare; grading/ promotion structures/ processes complex/ opaque; line managers play key role; career uncertainty evident	Little effect	Human + social capital	
Support interventions policy and practice	Mentors/ sponsors emphasised; formal mentoring frequently unsuccessful; informal mentoring more successful; male mentors preferred	Supported by informal male mentors but potentially limited by lack of accountability	Social capital	Mentoring support (via training and time allocation) recommended; formal women's/ assignee networks provide a female perspective; support for women role models useful; but open, transparent and formal processes for expatriate selection/ succession planning could reduce women's reliance on informal networks
	Little emphasis on formal networks; meritocracy and masculine environment devalues women-only networks; high value derived from career networks	Women's networks of little value; career-based networking of high value		
	Few and little support for role models; women expatriates gain role model status but insufficient support given to develop others	Little effect		
Career management policy and practice	Mandatory, reward-focused APR identifies high performance; identified short-term development applies to current role; APR used in succession planning but not for expatriate identification	Little effect	Human capital	Clear links required between the level at which the APR and ADR are conducted and at which succession planning takes place. Structured, centralised and time-scaled succession planning carried out at the highest levels required to provide career paths; high levels of direct communication needed to ensure clear understanding and transparency
	Non-mandatory, development-focused ADR used in succession planning and for expatriate identification; emphasis on self-career management; line managers play key role; formal on-line approaches more successful than paper-based; communication required	Formal, transparent processes more effective than informal; appropriate level managerial involvement required	Human + social capital	
	Formal and informal succession planning; strong reliance on line/ functional manager communication; gendered (male) process potentially restricts (but does not discriminate against) women's career advancement	Formal, transparent process widens access; informal, opaque process hinders it	Social capital + vertical segregation	
Repatriation policy and practice	Graduate repatriation supported, otherwise no formal policy on repatriate careers; limited repatriation planning but poor links with succession planning/ poor communication; repatriation training highly valued	Little effect but supported where succession planning/ training/ communication in place	Human + social capital	Repatriation career planning and family support, managed actively by line/ functional managers working jointly with assignees
Assignment type effect from policy provision	Graduate placements best supported by training/ development/ mentor/ repatriation; short-term well-supported by development; formal/ transparent succession planning /career management sought by all assignees; training and repatriation least supported for long-term assignees	Short-term/ graduate placements best supported for developmental outcomes; career uncertainty greatest for long-term assignments	Human + social capital	Action to address career management/ succession planning for all assignment types; greater emphasis on support for training and repatriation for long-term assignments

Table 19.5: The organisational effect on family life

Organisational effect	Research findings	Family life outcomes	Theoretical implications	Implications for practice
Dual careers and co-working policy and practice	Focus on cost control through de-duplication of allowances/ benefits	No effect		More support required facilitating both partners to work e.g. assistance with visa acquisition/ lobbying host country governments; making links with other local employers or direct/ contract employment. Greater attention required at local level to find suitable roles for both partners providing appropriate career contribution and to synchronise assignment start and finish times
	Co-working/ dual career assignments co-ordinated but more support needed on timing and career contribution	Supported	Family power	
	Working visa assistance/ training for spouses and partner allowances given but more support needed for spouse employment	Supported	Family power + breadwinner models	
Pregnancy, maternity and childcare policy and practice	Focus on financial issues (travel, medical, pay, leave)	Little effect	Compensating differentials	Responsive, case-by-case pregnancy/ maternity/ children's education support helpful. Proactive approaches to employment post-maternity welcomed. A more proactive approach to childcare support at local level needed
	Flexible/ highly responsive to pregnancy, maternity and childcare/ child safety; parental leave impossible while on assignment due to costs of expatriation but can be taken on return home	Supported		
Children's education policy and practice	Supports school-aged children's education	Supported; women may refuse expatriation in children's teenage years	Career paths + satisficing	
Assignment type effect from policy provision	Facilitates accompanied long-term assignments through co-working/ dual career co-ordination; use of rotation to support dual career couples with no children; practical support (visas, allowances, spouse training) primarily supports dual career long-term assignments	Accompanied long-term best supported; rotational may support dual careers; women's career compromises may preclude expatriation	Family power + satisficing	Where applicable, spousal and family assistance to support all assignment types
	Pregnancy, maternity and childcare policy mainly supports long-term assignments but, in practice, all assignment types well-provisioned	Long-term best supported	Career paths	
	Children's education primarily supported for accompanied long-term but extended to support unaccompanied mobility via family travel as appropriate	Long-term best supported; secondary education concerns may preclude expatriation	Career paths + satisficing	
	Children's welfare acts as deciding factor in women's assignment type participation; policy/ practice best supports accompanied long-term	Accompanied long-term best supported	Satisficing	

Table 19.6: The organisational effect on work-life balance and home life stability

Organisational effect	Research findings	Work-life balance and home life outcomes	Theoretical implications	Implications for practice
Hours of work policy and practice	Local working time applies but longer hours typically worked; wide ranges of hours evident; women reduced their working hours to accommodate family responsibilities; mid-grade assignees had negative perceptions of working hours at senior grades	Little effect on assignment take-up; mothers preserve work-life balance but this potentially reduces career contribution	Satisficing	Promotion of a family-friendly approach to working time, underpinned by top management support
Time off and leave policy and practice	Transport, travel, vacation, home leave and quarterly flights supported	Supported	Compensating differentials	
	Time off for family emergencies supported	Supported as is assignment participation		
Flexible working policy and practice	Part-time work/ job sharing not supported on grounds of cost and work roles/ timescales; unofficial practice at local level supports limited, <i>ad hoc</i> part-time work for co-working couples	No effect on current assignment take-up; but mothers' assignment take-up not supported in this way; part-time work leads to negative career outcomes	Satisficing	Formalise ability to work for periods in home country subject to demands for leadership of the local workforce; application of flexible hours of work at local level aligned to host country practice
	Working at home or in home country not supported; unofficial practice at local level supports limited, <i>ad hoc</i> arrangements; proximity of expatriate housing to workplace aids balancing home/ work duties	Little effect on assignment take-up; home life stability/ work-life balance supported unofficially	Compensating differentials	
	Official flexible hours policies operate in HQ and some assets; 9/80 arrangements in some US assets; unofficial practice at local level supports <i>ad hoc</i> flexible hours' arrangements	Little effect on current assignment take-up; work-life balance supported unofficially		
Assignment type effect from policy provision	Longest weekly working hours undertaken by rotationals but balanced by time off shift; unaccompanied assignees work long hours through loneliness	Rotationals supported through being off shift; unaccompanied assignees not supported	Compensating differentials	Inclusion of statements on work-life balance and flexible work arrangements in international assignment policies recommended
	Home leave valued by long-term assignees; quarterly flights/ leave of critical importance to unaccompanied long-term assignees; all assignees value transport, travel and vacation	Home life/ family stability supported; but further support needed for unaccompanied assignees		
	Unaccompanied assignees request being able to work in home country to extend time with family and to reduce lengthy periods of loneliness abroad	Home life/ family stability not supported; further support needed for unaccompanied assignees		

Table 19.7: The organisational effect on assignment preconditions

Organisational effect	Research findings	Preconditions outcomes	Theoretical implications	Implications for practice
Housing and associated issues policy and practice	Host country housing supported, providing financial incentive; housing is main 'make or break' element; home search and removals supported; assignees place high importance on housing and associated issues	Supports home life; encourages assignment participation	Compensating differentials	Timely applications for visas needed
Remuneration and allowances policy and practice	Assignees place high importance on all financial elements; salary uplift is main 'make or break' element; COLA important in high cost destinations	Compensates for higher costs/ rewards difficult assignment conditions; encourages assignment participation		
Medical, visas and tax policy and practice	Medical insurance/ healthcare, visas and tax preparation supported; assignees place high importance on all elements	Supports assignment participation but visa regimes can block assignments		
The expatriation process	Grandfathering applies to policy change, protecting terms; cost control measures taken; implementation via exceptions management tools to address individual needs (occasionally at expense of equity); well-managed relocation processes; key difference between firms relates to employee access to policy	Policy change has little effect but future reduced terms may lower assignment participation; individual solutions, efficient process and access to policy supports participation	Compensating differentials + queuing	Detailed policy content openly and readily available to aid employee decision-making
Assignment type effect from policy provision	Long-term assignees in particular place emphasis on housing, home search and removals regardless of un/accompanied status and policy best supports them practically and financially; accompanied assignees value home search and removals; rotationals' housing well supported; limited support applies to short-term/ commuter assignees; un/accompanied status dictates housing, not grade creating perceived inequity	Home life best supported for long-term and rotation encouraging participation; further support needed for short-term/ commuter assignees	Compensating differentials	Requirement to consider equity set against assignee circumstances and to communicate decisions clearly; support for commuter assignees to be included in policy and applied in practice
	Allowances typically linked to assignment location; challenging destinations attract highest uplifts for long-term, short-term and rotationals; commuter assignments less well supported, even not recognised as expatriation in policy	Financial reward encourages long-term, short-term and rotation participation; support needed for commuters		
	Long-term/ accompanied assignees in particular place high emphasis on medical insurance and healthcare; long-term assignees value visa and tax assistance	Policy supports assignment participation		

CHAPTER 20: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis contributes new knowledge in respect of our understanding of women's participation in expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector. Through the use of a comprehensive survey and in-depth interviews addressing the concerns of female expatriates, it set out to explain why women hold such a low share of expatriate roles in an industry that places high emphasis on both international assignments and on promoting gender diversity generally within its workforce. The sector has long-established and well-developed organisational policies that support expatriation, from selection through to repatriation. International assignment and other human resource policies are critical to assignment acceptance and undertaking an expatriate role as they also address such issues as preparation, training and development, career management and assignment support for individuals and, as appropriate, their families. It was therefore envisaged that organisational policies relevant to expatriation and how they were implemented in practice would prove critical to understanding women's participation as expatriates. In order to research this, in addition to the female expatriate data, organisational policy documentation relevant to expatriation was analysed and its implementation investigated through in-depth interviews with human resource experts (the architects and custodians of the policies).

The study shows that the oil and gas exploration and production sector – and expatriation within it – is attractive to women, although greater organisational focus is needed to make the sector and international assignments more 'female friendly' and gender diverse. Gender diversity has primarily been investigated under a domestic lens in the extant literature and thus this study has gone further by examining the role of diversity strategy in an expatriate context. It reveals that, although oil and gas firms' annual reports highlight that the industry is tackling its masculine image through actions to increase gender diversity, and women's share of the workforce and managerial positions is rising gradually as a result, there is little organisational effort at the strategic level to increase their representation in the expatriate exploration and production workforce. This is an important and detrimental issue for women as career prospects in the sector are enhanced through undertaking international assignments.

The study also addresses another issue barely touched in the expatriate literature, namely that of occupational segregation. Hence, it takes a different approach to explaining women's expatriate participation from the extant literature's focus on women's choices, their assignee characteristics and host country societal and cultural effects. It finds that occupational segregation provides a convincing rationale for women's exclusion from the majority of expatriate roles in oil and gas and identifies that expatriate positions in this industry are horizontally segregated: the majority of them involve engineering or geo-science exploration. As relatively few women qualify as engineers, they do not hold qualifications aligned to industry needs in respect of expatriate work. However, the position is more complex in that, where they do hold suitable education and training (for example, in the geology/ geophysics disciplines), women face high levels of competition from men for the more exciting international geological field roles and find themselves segregated into the less mobile occupations. As such, their prospects of undertaking expatriation are reduced. This can partially explain why women's share of expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector is so low.

The use of various organisational deployment approaches involving different types of assignments (purpose, location, length, pattern, un/accompanied status), and the differential effects of the policies and implementation practices supporting these, were predicted to contribute to explaining women's share of expatriate roles. The study therefore investigated the effect of different assignment types on women's assignment participation, explaining why women find certain assignment types are more appealing and beneficial than others, and how organisational policy and practice might be targeted more closely and effectively to address wider gender participation within all types of international assignments. This research therefore has gone beyond the extant literature as the role of organisational policy and practice in supporting different assignment types has previously not been investigated in relation to gender diversity in expatriation.

The organisational purpose underlying expatriation reflects that of other industries: typically to fill skills gaps, carry out projects, transfer knowledge, provide strategic direction and develop employees' skills (Hocking *et al.*, 2004). While the

literature suggests that expatriates see the purpose of their assignments differently to their employers (Thomas *et al.*, 2005), this study has identified how female assignees view the purpose of their assignments and thus why they engage in expatriation. It has found that women see expatriation as primarily developmental and undertake assignments to gain career contribution. However, they balance this against their requirements for a stable home and family life, making compromises where necessary. They also seek appropriate recompense in the form of remuneration and benefits; without their preconditions being met (uplifts to salary, housing and so on), they do not undertake international assignments. It might, therefore, be expected that these factors, namely the potential for career contribution, a stable home and family life and sufficient financial reward, provide the underpinning for women's participation in expatriation more generally in other industries, not just in oil and gas.

The oil and gas exploration and production sector's use of a range of different types of assignments is similar in many ways to those used by other industries, suggesting potential generalisation of the study's findings. For example, the oil and gas sector uses long-term assignments which, aligned with practice in other industries, are showing signs of being shortened due to cost pressures and short-term strategic imperatives. The oil and gas sector's use of 'flexpatriate' (including short-term and commuter) assignments (Mayerhofer *et al.*, 2004a, 2004b) is also demonstrated, although currently these are not used as widely as appears to be the trend in other industries (Cartus, 2010; Forster, 2000; ORC Worldwide, 2004, 2006). Rotational working – a 'flexpatriate' variant – is also used in oil and gas exploration and production. Although less common across wider industry, it is used by other extractive industries, in particular, in remote and challenging locations (BP, 2010a; Brookfield, 2011a; Inwood, 2007). As with other industry groups, the oil and gas sector makes use of both unaccompanied and accompanied status assignments (linked to length, pattern and location) and deploys expatriates to a wide variety of geographical locations, albeit with some being particularly remote and challenging.

This study has shown how the type of assignment undertaken results in different levels of career contribution, family stability and remuneration/ benefits. In turn, these

influence women's participation in expatriation and also help to explain why this is not increasing. Women prefer accompanied long-term assignments, as these provide the best combination of career, family and financial outcomes. Short-term assignments provide career contribution but low levels of home life/ family stability and little financial incentive; rotational assignments provide home life/ family stability (but not for mothers) and good remuneration but are not considered to give high career contribution. Commuter assignments provide low career, home life/ family stability and remuneration outcomes and are the least preferred assignment type. Once again, horizontal segregation is of relevance. Disciplines that employ relatively high numbers of female expatriates (such as legal and human resource management) and those targeted by women as providing potential future expatriate openings for them (such as corporate social responsibility) require lengthy assignments to build relationships and deliver required organisational outcomes. In contrast, expatriate roles in functions such as engineering are less affected by reduced assignment lengths. As assignment lengths are being shortened in the sector (following wider industry trends), the assignments that are undertaken by women are affected disproportionately in terms of their potential to provide career enhancement. Also, as long-term assignment lengths reduce, disruption to family life increases and this type of assignment becomes less attractive to women. This helps to explain why women's participation in expatriation is falling across all industries (Brookfield, 2009a, 2010, 2011a; Cartus, 2010; Permits Foundation, 2011). If wider industry trends to use higher proportions of short-term and commuter assignments (Cartus, 2010) are followed in the oil and gas industry in the future, this is likely to have a further detrimental effect on women's expatriate participation in this sector.

The greatest career contribution flows from expatriate work in exploration and production operations that are in exciting stages of development (particularly in new projects and high profile discoveries), as well as in core oil and gas producers. Women's low share of expatriation can be explained further by the fact that assignments are frequently based in the more challenging, remote and insecure locations, potentially unsuitable for accompanied status and family life. As such they may be serviced by rotational or commuter patterns and unaccompanied long-term

assignments; even when accompanied long-term expatriation is possible, women may reject the geographical location on grounds of concern for their children's welfare.

The extant literature explores how women strike a balance between their careers and family lives through making satisficing decisions (Crompton and Harris, 1998a, 1998b) – they balance career outcomes and family life to maximise both as far as possible. However, this frequently results in compromise (Corby and Stanworth, 2009). This study extends the application of the concept of satisficing into expatriation, in finding that women do make satisficing expatriate participation decisions. For example, women with children undertake long-term expatriation in locations which provide excellent and affordable childcare. In this way they can gain expatriate career contribution (although not necessarily the maximum that they might have achieved had they taken up posts in higher profile locations) while maintaining family life. In so-doing, women make compromises in their expatriation participation decisions to strike the best trade-off between career and family outcomes; assignments that provide insufficient career potential, when set against home/ family and remuneration concerns, simply become not worthwhile, further reinforcing women's low expatriate share. The notion that women's participation incorporates trade-offs (between career and family outcomes) is also relevant to other industries in explaining female assignment participation.

Equal opportunity and diversity are supported within oil and gas organisations. Yet, policies and practices underpinning expatriation do not address increasing gender diversity specifically. A meritocracy operates and is welcomed. Expatriate selection, preparation and training, support in post, performance and career management, employee development, and repatriation are managed through a mix of formal and informal (but mostly open and transparent) approaches. There is strong reliance on individuals building networks of contacts to gain current and future expatriate roles, and other career progressing activities. This has negative implications for women as the necessity for high levels of networking potentially creates and reinforces vertical segregation. As such, women need to widen and deepen their social capital, building this by getting to know line managers in host countries where they might like to work

as well as functional and top managers in headquarters (where career succession is managed) to ensure their own development and career success.

In the main, expatriate roles have been found not to benefit from formal organisational policy in relation to work-life balance, in alignment with the literature (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010; IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007; Shortland and Cummins, 2007); long hours of work are the norm and any flexible working patterns are discretionary. However, organisations are very supportive of pregnancy, maternity, childcare, children's education and, as far as practicable, in assisting dual career couples – so much so that, contrary to expectations, women even use expatriation as a strategy to enable them to work, achieving career contribution (when otherwise they may not have been able to), and to maintain a stable home/ family life, underpinned by financially rewarding terms and conditions. Thus, this study finds that women's expatriate career paths may differ from their non-internationally mobile counterparts and this may well merit further investigation.

This thesis has highlighted occupational segregation, qualifications and networks, and satisficing as being of primary importance in explaining female expatriate participation. The oil and gas exploration and production sector is attractive to women through its expatriate career opportunities, financial rewards and meritocratic environment. However, more needs to be done if the sector, and its inherent requirements for mobility, including expatriation, is to become more 'female friendly'. Diversity strategy must specifically address gender in expatriation; with attention paid to the nature and causes of occupational segregation. Assignment types must maximise organisational effectiveness, taking into account career contribution and family outcomes, underpinned by appropriate remuneration and benefits. Organisational policy and practice must provide more formal and transparent approaches throughout the expatriate cycle, from selection through to repatriation. If such organisational actions are taken, these should increase women's expatriate participation in oil and gas exploration and production by enabling them to compete on a more level playing field, even if within 'a male game'.

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**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN EXPATRIATION:
THE CONTRIBUTION OF ORGANISATIONAL
POLICY & PRACTICE**

**A CASE STUDY OF THE OIL & GAS
EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION SECTOR**

SUSAN MARGARET SHORTLAND

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Westminster
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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VOLUME 2: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Women's participation as expatriates

Year	Female expatriate participation (%)	Source	Focus
1984	3	Adler, 1984a	Worldwide, academic article
1989	5	ORC/CBI, 1990	Employer survey on spouses/ partners: covers UK nationals outbound from UK
1989	7	ORC/CBI, 1990	Employer survey on spouses/ partners: covers non-UK nationals into UK
1992	5	ORC/CBI, 1992	Employer survey on dual careers: covers North American, European and Asian organisations
1995	9	UMIST/CBI/CIB, 1995	Employer survey on selection and preparation: covers UK expatriates
1996	10	ORC/CBI, 1996; Shortland, 2005	Employer survey on dual careers: covers North American, European and Asian organisations
1996	14	Frazee, 1997; Windham/NFTC, 1997	Employer survey on expatriate relocation policy: covers US and non-US expatriates world-wide
1999	14	Comeau-Kirschner, 1999	Loyola Marymount University study: covers American, German and Mexican employers and US female expatriates
2000	13	Moore, 2002	GMAC/Windham/NFTC (2000) employer survey on expatriate relocation policy: covers US and non-US expatriates worldwide
2000	14	Gardiner, 2001; Strout, 2001; Tyler, 2001	Catalyst survey of US women/ female expatriates in global business
2002	14	ORC, 2002	Employer survey on dual careers: worldwide focus
2003	15	Cooke, 2003	Worldwide, academic commentary
2004	11	ORC Worldwide, 2004	Employer survey on international assignment policies and practices: worldwide focus
2005	16.5	ORC, 2005	Employer survey on dual careers: worldwide focus
2005	23	Anon, 2006e	GMAC employer survey on expatriate relocation policy: covers US and non-US expatriates worldwide
2006	20	GMAC GRS/ NFTC, 2007	Employer survey on expatriate relocation policy: covers US and non-US expatriates worldwide
2007	11	ORC Worldwide, 2007	Employer survey on international assignment policies and practices: worldwide focus
2007	18	IRC/ORC Worldwide, 2007	Expatriate self-report survey on work-life balance: worldwide focus
2007	21	Cartus, 2007	Employer survey on expatriate relocation: worldwide focus
2008	13	ORC Worldwide, 2008a	Employer survey on dual careers: worldwide focus
2008	19	GMAC, 2008	Employer survey on expatriate relocation policy: covers US and non-US expatriates worldwide
2009	20	Brookfield, 2009a	Employer survey on expatriate relocation policy: covers US and non-US expatriates worldwide
2010	19	Cartus, 2010	Employer survey on expatriate relocation: worldwide focus
2010	17	Brookfield, 2010	Employer survey on expatriate relocation policy: covers US and non-US expatriates worldwide
2011	18	Brookfield, 2011a	Employer survey on expatriate relocation policy: covers US and non-US expatriates worldwide
2011	16	Permits Foundation, 2011	Employer survey on dual careers: worldwide focus

APPENDIX 2: The oil and gas industry sector – the research context

Size and scale of operations, expatriation and gender diversity within UK-based oil and gas exploration and production (E & P) organisations

Organisation	HQ location	Net profit	Nos. of countries of operation	Nos. employees	Nos. expatriates	% women employed	Women in senior/ leadership positions	Work-life balance/ flexible working	Gender diversity/ EO action	References
Anadarko	USA	\$2,796m (2006); -\$135m (2009)	8 (2006); 12 (2009)	4,000 (2006); 4,300 (2009)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2010a, 2010b
BG Group	UK	£3,103m (2006); £4,013m (2009)	25 (2006); 27 (2009)	4,665 (2006); 6,079 (2009)	529 (2007); 623 (2009)	23% (2006); 28% (2009)	9% (2006); 10% (2009)	Yes (also in 2007)	Annual report; statements; website; Permits Foundation sponsor	BG Group, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Permits Foundation, 2007
BP	UK	\$22,025m (2006); \$16,578m (2009)	Presence in over 100 countries; upstream operations 26 (2006); 30 (2009)	97,000 (2006); 80,300 (21,500 in E & P) (2009)	N/A	7% (drilling) (2007)	17% (2006); 14% (2009)	Yes	Annual report; code of conduct; diversity and inclusion council; Permits Foundation sponsor	BP, 2007, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e; Ciber, 2007; Permits Foundation, 2007; Werngren, 2007

Organisation	HQ location	Net profit	Nos. of countries of operation	Nos. employees	Nos. expatriates	% women employed	Women in senior/ leadership positions	Work-life balance/ flexible working	Gender diversity/ EO action	References
Chevron	USA	\$17,138m (2006); \$10,483m (2009)	Presence in 180 countries (2006); 31 main exploration locations (2009)	56,000 (2006); 59,963 (2009)	N/A	21.5%; 43% (new recruits) (2006); 28.9% (2009)	10.3% (mid-level and above) (2006), 11.7% (mid-level and above) (2009); 14.4% (executives), 27.4% (first line and mid-level managers) (2009)	N/A	Website; diversity council; employee networks	Chevron, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2007e, 2007f, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Texaco, 2007
Conoco Phillips	USA	\$15,550m (2006); \$4,858m (2009)	40 (2006); >30 (2009)	37,900 (2006); 30,000 (2009)	N/A	23.3% (2008)	12.4% (leadership); 15.1% (officials and managers) (2008)	Yes	Annual report, website; statements of intent; women's networks	ConocoPhillips, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2007e, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c
Encana	Canada	\$5,652m (2006); \$6,732 (2009)	7 (2006); unspecified (2009)	6,500 (2006); 3,900 (2010)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Website	EnCana, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d
ENI	Italy	€9,217m (2006); €4,367m (2009)	Presence in 70 countries (2006); presence in 77 with E & P in 39 (2009)	73,572 (2006); 78,417 (2009)	2,697 (ex-Italy) (2006)	19% in Italy, 14% outside Italy (2009)	13% (2006); 10% in Italy, 7% abroad senior managers, 19% in Italy, 14% abroad managers and supervisors (2009)	Yes	Website	ENI, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2007e, 2010a, 2010b; ENI Power, 2010

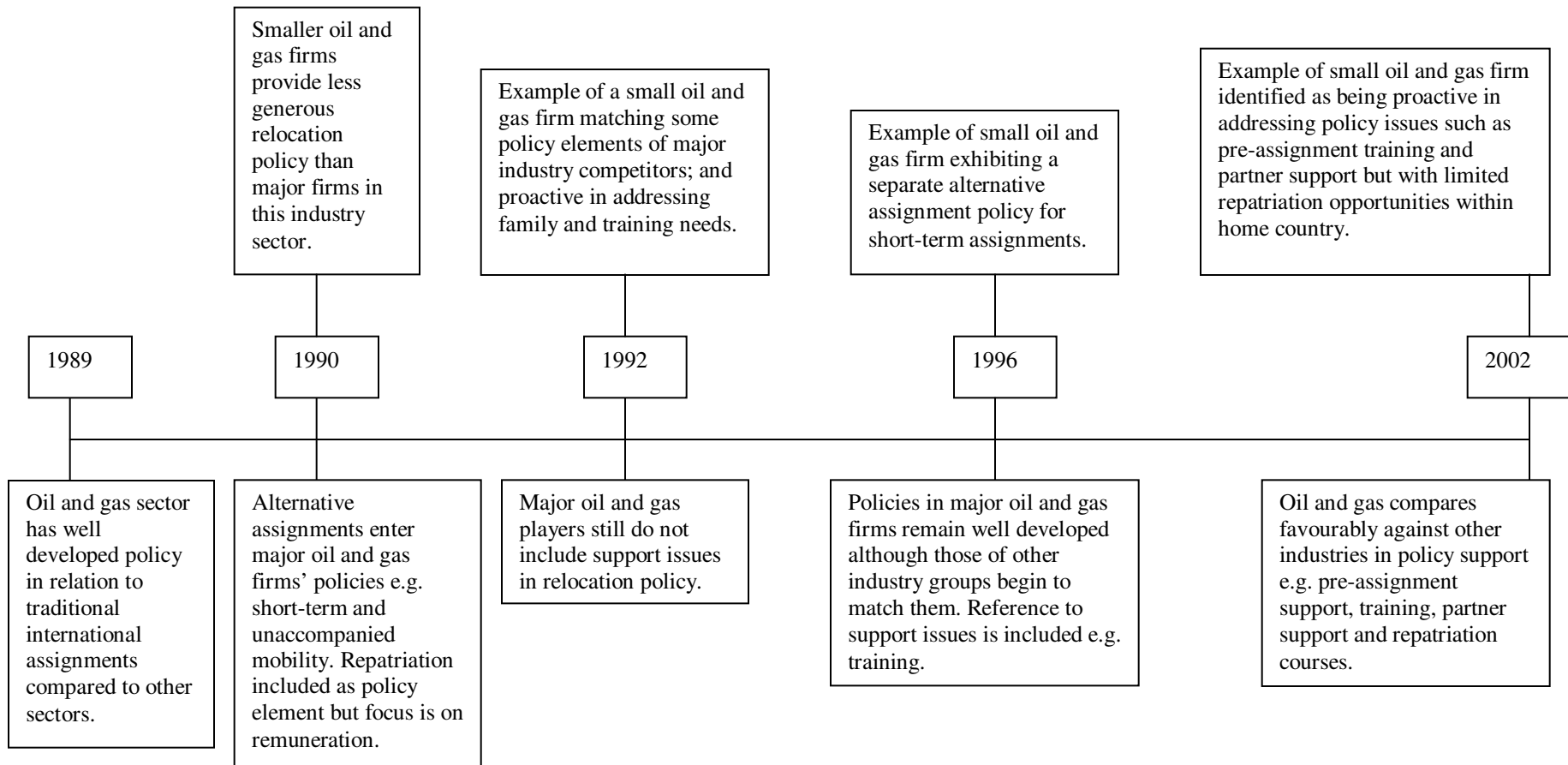
Organisation	HQ location	Net profit	Nos. of countries of operation	Nos. employees	Nos. expatriates	% women employed	Women in senior/ leadership positions	Work-life balance/ flexible working	Gender diversity/ EO action	References
ExxonMobil	USA	\$39,500m (2006); \$19,280m (2009)	Presence in 200 countries with upstream operations in around 40 (2006); 39 upstream (2009)	82,100 (2006); 80,700 (2009)	4% of total workforce (3,280 approx.) (2006)	24% (excluding retail) (2006); 26% (2009)	12% (2006); 13% (executives) (2009); 38% (management and professional) (2009)	Yes (also in 2007)	Policies; website; award; economic opportunity initiative	ExxonMobil, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2007e, 2007f, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d
Hess	USA	\$1,916m (2006); \$740m (2009)	14 (2006); 20 (2010)	12,432 (2008)	N/A	40% (globally); 43% (in USA) (2008)	7% executives/ senior officials; 42% first/ mid-level managers (in USA) (2008)	N/A	Website	Hess, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2008a, 2008b, 2010a, 2010b
Marathon	USA	\$5,234m (2006); \$1,463m (2009)	11 (2006); 9 (2009)	28,195 (2006); 28,855 (2009)	N/A	51.3% all operations (2006); N/A (2009)	N/A	N/A	Website	Marathon, 2007a, 2007b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d
Nexen	Canada	C\$601m (2006); C\$536m (2009)	13 (2006); 14 (2009)	3,200 (2007); 4,594 (2009)	N/A	33% (2007)	14.1% (2007)	Yes	Website, award	Nexen, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2010a, 2010b
Occidental	USA	\$4,182m (2006); \$2,900m (2009)	10 (2006/ 2010)	N/A (2006); 10,100 (2009)	N/A	38% women and minorities (2010)	N/A	Yes	Website	Occidental Petroleum Corporation, 2007a, 2007b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e

Organisation	HQ location	Net profit	Nos. of countries of operation	Nos. employees	Nos. expatriates	% women employed	Women in senior/ leadership positions	Work-life balance/ flexible working	Gender diversity/ EO action	References
Repsol	Spain	€3,124m (2006); €1,559m (2009)	>30 (2006; 2009)	36,931 (2006); 33,633 (2009)	755 (2009)	25% (2006); 26% (2009)	11% directors; 17% technical managers (2009)	Yes	Website	Repsol, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e
Royal Dutch Shell	Netherlands	\$26,311m (2006); \$12,718m (2009)	Presence in 130 countries with exploration in 32 (2006); in 100 countries with upstream operations in 55 (2009)	108,000 (2006); 101,000 (23,000 upstream) (2009)	7,400 (2005)	N/A	11.6% leadership (2006); 14% leadership, 16.1% management (2009)	Yes	Annual report; website; diversity standard; award; Permits Foundation sponsor; expat web-based resources	CNN Money, 2007; Mays <i>et al.</i> , 2005; Permits Foundation, 2007; Royal Dutch Shell, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e, 2010f, 2010g
Statoil	Norway	NOK51.8 bn (2006); NOK17.7 bn (2009)	40 (2006; 2009)	31,000 (2006); 29,000 (2009)	653 (E&P; Gas) (2006)	18% (E&P); 22% staff engineers (2006). 35.2% women employees after merger; 18.2% skilled workers (2009)	26% (management teams) (2006; 2009). 40% board members (2009)	N/A	Website	StatoilHydro, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Statoil, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d

Organisation	HQ location	Net profit	Nos. of countries of operation	Nos. employees	Nos. expatriates	% women employed	Women in senior/ leadership positions	Work-life balance/ flexible working	Gender diversity/ EO action	References
Talisman	Canada	C\$2,005m (2006); C\$437m (2009)	16 (2006); 15 (2009)	2,138 (2005); 2,944 (2009)	20 (2005)	N/A	1 in executive management (2005)	Yes (also in 2006)	Website	Talisman, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Talisman Energy, 2011
Total	France	€12,585m (2006); €7,784m (2009)	Presence in 130 countries; with exploration in 42 (2006); over 40 (2009)	95,000 (2006); 96,387 (2009)	3,594 (2006); 3,600 (2010)	26% (new hires), 17% high potentials (2006); 28% (new hires), 18% high potentials (2008)	20% (managers), 7% (execs), 7% (senior execs) (2006); 21% (managers), 10% (execs), 10% (senior execs) (2008)	Yes (also in 2007)	Annual report; website; diversity council; diversity charter; Permits Foundation sponsor	Permits Foundation, 2007; Total, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d; Total, Diversity and Accountability Department, 2007
Tullow Oil	UK	£157m (2006); £19m (2009)	23 (2006); 25 (2009)	274 (2006); 669 (2009)	4 (2006); 172 (2009)	24% (2006); 32% (2009)	22 managers (2009)	N/A	N/A	Tullow Oil, 2007a, 2007b, 2010a, 2010b

Sources: Data taken from publicly available company annual reports and websites (see References in main thesis).

APPENDIX 3: International assignment policy evolution in oil and gas



Sources: CBI ERC, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1996; IDS, 2002.

APPENDIX 4: Research process

TABLE 1: The fieldwork timeline

Step 1: The exploratory research stage

Activity	General	Collins Co.	Hagman Co.
General discussion of proposed research to gauge interest and feasibility	2005-2006 (One organisation in each of: healthcare; engineering; voluntary/non-profit; relocation; consultancy; accountancy; oil and gas)		
Discussion and agreement to participate in research		November 2006	February 2005
Collection of preliminary expatriate assignment data and policy documents			April 2005
Publicity for the research published in company magazine			October 2005
Presentation of proposed research to HR managers with expatriate responsibility at oil and gas industry peer group	15 November 2006 (18 oil and gas organisations with UK bases of operations)		
Correspondence and exploratory discussions with HR specialists/managers in 3 major oil and gas companies	November 2006-May 2007 (3 oil and gas organisations with UK bases of operations – not subsequently selected as case studies)		
HR functional manager exploratory interview conducted	May 2007 (1 oil and gas organisation not subsequently selected as a case study)	January 2007	January 2007
Interview transcription		April 2007	June 2007

Step 2: The policy documentation stage

Activity	Collins Co.	Hagman Co.
Policy documents received	May 2007	July 2007
Review of policy documentation and data reduction	May 2007-May 2008	July 2007-May 2008
Identification of requirement for additional documentation	July 2009	June-July 2009
Collection of additional policy documentation	September 2009	June-August 2009

Step 3: The qualitative data (HR function) interview research stage

Activity	Collins Co.	Hagman Co.
Design of semi-structured HR - International Assignment manager interview questionnaire	October 2008	October 2008
International Assignment manager interview conducted	29 October 2008	15 October 2008
Interview transcription	November 2008	October-November 2008
Identification of HR functional specialists/ managers for interview	December 2008	December 2008
Design and finalisation of semi-structured HR interview questionnaires	January 2009	December 2008
HR interview requests made	February-March 2009	December 2008
HR interviews conducted	19 & 27 March 2009 (2 cases in person); 22 April 2009 (1 case by telephone)	9 December 2008 (6 cases in person)
Interview transcriptions completed	March-April 2009	December 2008-January 2009
Identification of need for additional HR functional interviews and interview requests made		June 2009
Additional HR interviews conducted		30 June; 6 & 7 July 2009 (3 cases in person)
Additional interview transcriptions completed		September-October 2009

Step 4: The quantitative data (female expatriate) survey stage

Activity	General	Collins Co.	Hagman Co.
Preliminary assignment data received		May 2007 October 2007 October 2008	June 2007 October 2008
Target female expatriate population identified		22 December 2008 (27 cases)	26 January 2009 (66 cases)
Drafting of expatriate questionnaire; pilot 1; redrafting and pilot 2	November-December 2008		
Piloting questionnaire in case company			9 December 2008
Redrafting; pilot 3; redrafting and pilot 4	December 2008		
Process agreed for questionnaire distribution		22 December 2008	22 January 2009
Minor amendments made; pilot 5; coding checked for SPSS input; questionnaires and cover letters finalised	January 2009		
Questionnaire and cover letter forwarded for company approval		26 January 2009	23 January 2009
Questionnaire and cover letter approved by company		26 January 2009	26 January 2009
Questionnaires and cover letters distributed by company		23 February 2009 (27 cases)	3 February 2009 (66 cases)
Questionnaire receipt deadline		18 March 2009 (12 responses received)	28 February 2009 (32 responses received)
Company advised of non-respondents		20 March 2009 (15 missing cases)	7 March 2009 (34 missing cases)
Company chased non-respondents		27 March 2009	12 March 2009
Revised questionnaire receipt deadline		31 March 2009 (6 further responses received)	20 March (2009) (7 further responses received)
Company advised of non-respondents		1 April 2009 (9 missing cases)	20 March 2009 (27 missing cases)
Company chased non-respondents		2 April 2009 (1 further response received)	27 March 2009 (10 further responses received)
Company advised of non-respondents			3 April 2009 (17 missing cases)
Company chased non-respondents			20 April 2009 (3 further responses received)
SPSS data entry; selection of potential interview cases; e-mail follow up to fill gaps/clarify questionnaire responses (cases not selected for interview)		April-May 2009	April 2009
Questionnaire data collection closed		5 May 2009 (19 received; 8 missing cases = 70% response rate)	29 April 2009 (52 received; 14 missing cases = 79% response rate)
SPSS data entry gaps completed (post-interview stage)		July-August 2009	July-August 2009

SPSS final data cleaning/ amendments; production of descriptive statistics (frequencies) for company report		October 2009	October-November 2009
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Collins Co.: all 19 questionnaires returned by e-mail. Sixteen respondents replied directly to the researcher as had been requested but three replied to HR - International Assignments who forwarded their survey returns to the researcher.

Hagman Co.: 47 questionnaires returned by e-mail; one questionnaire returned by post; one returned by fax; three completed by telephone. All respondents replied directly to the researcher as had been requested.

Step 5: The qualitative data (female expatriate) semi-structured interview stage

Activity	Collins Co.	Hagman Co.
Drafting and finalisation of semi-structured interview questionnaire	May-June 2009	May-June 2009
Selection of interview cases	April-May 2009	April 2009
Approach discussed and agreed with company	8 June 2009	10 June 2009
Teleconference interview requests made	11 June 2009 (7 case requests made directly)	10 June 2009 (14 case requests made via company)
Follow up to fill gaps in questionnaire responses (interview cases); interview administration (scheduling, rescheduling and rooming on company premises)	June-August 2009	June-July 2009
Expatriate interviews conducted; SPSS data entry additions and amendments as necessary completed	2 July-10 August 2009: 2 July 2009 (1 case in person; 1 case by telephone); 3 July 2009 (1 case by telephone); 14 July 2009 (1 case by telephone); 17 July 2009 (1 case in person); 4 August (1 case by telephone); 10 August (1 case by telephone)	16 June-8 July 2009: 16 June (2 cases in person, 2 cases by telephone); 30 June (2 cases by telephone); 6 July (1 case in person, 3 cases by telephone); 7 July 2009 (2 cases by telephone); 8 July (1 case in person); 1 case withdrew
Expatriate interview data review	8 July 2009 Decision to extend interview sample to widen geographical coverage (discussed and agreed with company)	7 July 2009 Decision to extend interview sample to widen geographical and grade coverage (discussed and agreed with company)
Additional expatriate interview requests made	9 July 2009 (direct to 1 case); 14 July 2009 (chased up by company)	9 July 2009 (to 5 cases made via company)
Further interview administration (scheduling, rescheduling and rooming on company premises)	July 2009	July-August 2009
Additional expatriate interviews conducted; SPSS data entry additions and amendments completed	17 July 2009 (1 case by telephone)	28 July-7 August 2009: 28 July (4 cases by telephone); 7 August (1 case in person)
Interview transcriptions completed	September-October 2009	June-October 2009

Step 6: Data analysis stage

Activity	Date
Production and distribution of company reports	November 2009
Presentation of findings to Hagman Co.'s women's network	8 June 2010
Manual coding of interview transcripts in Word	September-October 2010
Coding of interview transcripts and documentary evidence in NVivo 7	October 2010-February 2011
Analysis of SPSS data and qualitative data using NVivo 7 (supported by Word coded transcripts and documents) to generate preliminary thesis findings	February-August 2011

TABLE 2: Human resource personnel, roles and responsibilities' pseudonyms

<i>Collins Co.</i>
Alexis, HR – International Assignments
Krystle, HR – Learning and Development
Amanda, HR – Resourcing
Fallon, HR – Far East
<i>Hagman Co.</i>
Sue Ellen, HR – International Assignments
Pamela, HR – Graduate Scheme
John Ross, HR – Function Head
Donna, HR – Resourcing
Lucy, HR – Development
Bobby, HR – Recruitment
April, HR – Training
Cliff, HR – Performance
Cally, HR – Learning and Development
Ray, HR – Training and Development
<i>Source:</i>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dallas_(TV_series)#Cast_of_characters Accessed 12 September 2011.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Dynasty_characters#Main_characters Accessed 12 September 2011.

TABLE 3: Female expatriates' pseudonyms, current assignment type, current region and previous assignment experience

<p>Survey participants who were interviewed</p> <p><i>Collins Co.</i></p> <p>Abby, Long-term assignee, Far East Babs, Long-term assignee, Central Asia, with previous long-term assignment experience Cara, Rotational assignee, North Africa Di, Long-term assignee, Far East, with previous long-term assignment experience Esther, Long-term assignee, Western Europe Fiona, Long-term assignee, Far East, with previous long-term assignment experience Gina, Long-term assignee, North America, with previous long-term assignment experience Harriet, Long-term assignee, Western Europe, with previous rotational assignment experience</p> <p><i>Hagman Co.</i></p> <p>Izzy, Long-term assignee, Caribbean, with previous long-term assignment experience Julie, Short-term assignee, North America Karen, Long-term assignee, West Africa Linda, Long-term assignee, Australasia, with previous long- and short-term assignment experience Milly, Long-term assignee, Central Asia with previous long-term assignment experience Nina, Long-term assignee, Middle East, with previous rotational assignment experience Olive, Long-term assignee, Australasia Polly, Long-term assignee, Western Europe, with previous short-term assignment experience Questa, Rotational assignee, Central Asia Rhoda, Long-term assignee, Australasia, with previous commuter assignment experience Susan, Long-term assignee, North Africa, with previous long-term assignment experience Trish, Short-term assignee, Far East, with previous short-term assignment experience Una, Long-term assignee, North Africa, with previous long-term assignment experience Val, Long-term assignee, North America Wanda, Long-term assignee, Far East, with previous long- and short-term assignment experience Xanthe, Long-term assignee, West Africa, with previous long-term assignment experience Yvonne, Long-term assignee, Central Asia Zara, Rotational assignee, Central Asia, with previous short-term assignment experience</p>
--

Survey participants who were not interviewed

Collins Co.

Alison, Long-term assignee, Far East
Bea, Long-term assignee, North America, with previous short-term assignment experience
Cynthia, Long-term assignee, Far East
Dana, Long-term assignee, Western Europe
Ginny, Extended international transfer, North America
Kim, Extended international transfer, North America
Leva, Short-term assignee, Far East
Lin, Long-term assignee, North America, with previous short-term assignment experience
Sian, Long-term assignee, Western Europe
Tammy, Extended international transfer, North America, with previous extended international experience
Zanna, Long-term assignee, Far East

Hagman Co.

Ayesha, Short-term assignee, Far East
Bella, Long-term assignee, West Africa
Claudia, Long-term assignee, North Africa
Chris, Long-term assignee, North Africa, with previous short-term assignment experience
Elsie, Short-term assignee, Western Europe
Emily, Long-term assignee, Western Europe
Fatima, Long-term assignee, North America
Jenny, Long-term assignee, North America, with previous short-term assignment experience
Jess, Short-term assignee, North Africa, with previous short-term assignment experience
Joyce, Long-term assignee, Western Europe
Lauren, Short-term assignee, North Africa, with previous long-term assignment experience
Lena, Long-term assignee, Western Europe, with previous short-term assignment experience
Marilyn, Rotational assignee, North Africa, with previous short-term assignment experience
Mary, Long-term assignee, Caribbean
Matilda, Long-term assignee, North Africa, with previous long- and short-term assignment experience
May, Long-term assignee, Far East, with previous short-term assignment experience
Miranda, Long-term assignee, Caribbean
Myra, Long-term assignee, Western Europe
Myrtle, Short-term assignee, North Africa, with previous short-term assignment experience
Naomi, Short-term assignee, Caribbean
Nikita, Short-term assignee, Western Europe
Nora, Short-term assignee, Western Europe
Penny, Long-term assignee, Caribbean, with previous rotational assignment experience
Phyllis, Long-term assignee, Western Europe, with previous long- and short-term assignment experience
Ria, Long-term assignee, Western Europe, with previous short-term assignment experience
Ruth, Long-term assignee, Western Europe
Sally, Short-term assignee, Australasia, with previous long-term assignment experience
Sejal, Long-term assignee, Western Europe
Shalini, Long-term assignee, Western Europe
Sharon, Long-term assignee, Caribbean
Sophie, Long-term assignee, Middle East
Tina, Long-term assignee, Western Europe
Vera, Long-term assignee, Far East, with previous short-term assignment experience
Yvette, Long-term assignee, North America, with previous long-term assignment experience

TABLE 4: Documents accessed during fieldwork

Collins Co.	
Item	Effective date
International Assignments (Relocation) Documents	
Terms and Conditions for International Assignees on Assignment to (North Africa)*	July 2003
Terms and Conditions for International Assignees on Assignment to (West Africa)*	August 2004
Expatriate Policy Long-Term Assignment Category B Countries	February 2005
Expatriate Policy International Assignments USA Category A	March 2005
Expatriate Policy Extended International Transfer USA Category A	March 2005
Terms and Conditions for Assignees on Short-term International Development Assignments	September 2006
Expatriate Policy International Assignments Europe & US Category A	October 2006
Addendum to Expatriate Policy – Dual Career Couples Being Assigned Where Both are Collins Co. employees	undated
Collins Co. Initiation Form	undated
Human Resource Documents	
Equal Opportunities Policy	May 2002
Performance Management: An Overview	2006
Professional Development Planner	2006
My Development: 2009 Employee Edition (slide presentation)	2009
General Company Documents	
Our Corporate Values	undated
Annual Report	2006 2008

* Name of country removed to preserve confidentiality.

Hagman Co.	
Item	Effective date
International Assignments (Relocation) Documents	
International Assignments and Extended Business Trips Policy	June 1994 June 1996
International Assignment Review Group (memo)	July 1998
Long Term International Assignments Policy	April 1999, revised September 1999
Long Term International Assignments Policy	July 2000
International Assignments Policy Review (recommendation summary)	July 2002
International Placements Policy	January 2003
International Assignment Pre-departure and Tax Briefings	April 2003
International Assignments Policy (summary list)	April 2003
International Assignments Policy	April 2004
A Guide to International Relocation	2004
International Assignments Policy (e-mail of changes)	July 2006
International Assignments Policy (summary list)	February 2007
International Assignments Policy	May 2007
International Placements Policy	July 2007, revised November 2007
International Rotational Assignments Policy	December 2007
Long Term International Assignments Policy	August 2009
Major Policy Changes Summary	August 2009
Human Resource Documents	
Group Policy on Human Resources	September 2005
Statement on Equality and Diversity	September 2005
UK: Work-Life Balance Statement	September 2005
UK: Flexible Working Policy	September 2005
UK: Flexible Working Policy Statement	September 2005
Recruitment and Selection: End to End Guidelines	April 2008
Performance Scorecards: User Guide	October 2008
Managing Performance: Summary Guide	October 2008
Business Principles	December 2008
Annual Development Review (ADR)	undated
ADR Guidelines	July 2009
General Company Documents	
Quarterly Magazine	April 2005, October 2005, December/January 2007, October/November 2008
Annual Report	2006 2008
Databook	2008

TABLE 5: Tabulated summaries of policy documentation**Collins Co.*****Summary 1: Policy components with gendered implications***

Policy element	Long term (Europe & US) Category A	Long term Category B	Extended transfers (USA) Category A	Short-term (STIDA)	Rotational North Africa
Definitions included	√	√	√	√	
Co-working	√	√	√		
Dual careers	√	√	√		
Partner assistance	√	√	Limited		
Cultural training	√	√		Case	Case
Language training	√	√		Case	√
Security briefing	√	√		√	√
Driving training	√	√			
Pre-assignment trip	√	√			
Pregnancy support	EC	√			
Maternity/ paternity	√	√			
Working hours	Local	Local	Local	Local	√
Repatriation	√	√	√	√	√
Career management				√	√
Office attendance/ training					√

√ = provided in policy.

Case = case-by-case basis.

EC = exceptional circumstances.

Local = local conditions apply.

Summary 2: Remuneration, allowances and support applicable to international relocation

Policy element	Long term (Europe & US) Category A	Long term Category B	Extended transfers (USA) Category A	Short-term (STIDA)	Rotational North Africa
Remuneration	Home	Home	Notional home	Notional home	Home
Pension	Home	Home	Home	Home	Home
Incentives	√	√	√		√
Vacation	Home	Home	Local	Home	N/A
COLA	√	√			
Per diems	√	√	Limited	√	
Foreign service premium		√		√	
Disturbance	√	√		√	
Other premiums					√
Relocation allowance			√		
Club membership		√		√	
Education	√	√			
Medical	√	√	Limited	√	√
Emergencies	√	√	Local	√	√
Home purchase/ sale help			√		
Accommodation	√	√		√	√
Utilities	√	√			√
Meals					√
Insurances	√	√	√	√	
Transport	√	√			√
Car/local transport	√	√		√	√
Driver		√			
Driving tuition	√	√			
Shipment	√	√	√	√	
Telephone	√	√		√	
Temporary living	√	√	√		
Travel	√	√	√	√	√
Home leave	√	√		√	
R & R (hardship)		√			
Work permits/visas	√	√	√	√	√

√ = provided in policy.

EC = exceptional circumstances.

Home = home based.

Limited = limited provision e.g. by time.

Local = local conditions apply.

N/A = not applicable.

Off = offshore.

On = onshore.

Summary 3: Equal opportunity/ diversity policies

Policy element	Equal opportunities	Diversity
Statement of intent	√	√
Scope	√	
Unfair conditions	√	
Grievances	√	
Breaches of policy	√	

√ = mentioned in policy.

Summary 4: Performance management policy

Policy issue/ element	Performance management
Rationale	√
Performance objectives	√
Review process	√
Performance measurement/ rating	√
Personal development planning	√

√ = mentioned in policy.

Hagman Co.***Summary 5: Policy components with gendered implications***

Policy element	Long term	Short-term	Commuter	Rotational equal time	Placements
Selection	√	√	√	√	√
Definitions included	√	√	√	√	√
Accompanying family	√	√			
Co-working	√	√			
Partner assistance	√	√	√		√
Partner support	√				
Cultural training	√			√	√
Language training	√	√		√	√
Security briefing	√	√	√	√	√
Defensive driving training	√	√			
Pre-assignment trip	√			BOA	
Sponsor/ mentor	√	√	√	√	√
Pregnancy support	√	√		√	
Maternity	√	√	√	√	
Working hours	√	√	√	√	Local
Repatriation	√	√		√	√
Office attendance/ training				√	
Training & development					√

√ = included in policy.

BOA = briefing on arrival.

Local = local practice applies.

Summary 6: Remuneration, allowances and support applicable to international relocation

Policy element	Long term (LTA)	Short-term (STA)	Single status	Commuter	Rotational equal time	Placements
Remuneration	Home	Home	Home	Home	Home	Home
Pension	Home	Home	Home		Home	Home
Incentives	√	√	√		√	√
Vacation	√	√	√	√	√	Home
C & S	√	√		Com		√
Peer equity	*	*		*	*	
Relocation allowance	√	√		Com		
Expatriate allowance		√		√		√
Home leave allowances	√	√	√	√		√
Change of scenery allowance	√					
Rotator allowance					√	
Overseas allowance						√
Club membership	√	√				
Education	√	√				
Medical	√	√		√	√	√
Emergencies	√	√			√	√
Home purchase/ sale help						
Accommodation	√	√		√	√	√
Utilities	√	√				√
Car/ cash allowance	√	√		Home	Home	√
Driver**	√	√				√
Security guard**	√	√				
Shipment	√	√				√
Temporary living	√	√				
Temporary accommodation	√	√				√
Travel	√	√			√	√
Travel brief	√	√	√	√	√	
Home leave			√			
R & R (hardship)	√		√			
Other trips	√					
EAP	√	√	√	√	√	√
Work permits/ visas				Com	√	

√ = included in policy.

* = considered.

** = certain locations.

C & S = commodities and services.

Com = commuter only.

EAP = employee assistance programme.

Home = home based approach.

R & R = rest and recreation.

Summary 7: Human resource and equal opportunity/ diversity policies

Policy element	Human resource	Equality and diversity
Statement of intent	√	√
Recruitment & selection	√	√
Performance & development	√	√
Reward		√
Work-life balance	√	√

√ = included in policy.

Summary 8: Flexible working and work-life balance policies

Policy element	Flexible working (Group)	Flexible working (UK)	Work-life balance (UK)
Statement of intent	√	√	√
Work-life balance		√	√
Hours of work		√	√
Procedures		√	
Career development		√	
Maternity/ paternity			√
Parental leave			√
Emergency leave			√

√ = included in policy.

TABLE 6: Schedule of human resource (HR) respondents interviewed

Name and job title of respondent	Case study	When interviewed	Nature of interview	Additional communications
Sue Ellen, HR – International Assignments	Hagman Co.	February 2005	Unstructured, conversational; face-to-face; no field notes*	Telephone and e-mails throughout research period
		April 2005	Unstructured; face-to-face; field notes taken	
		January 2007	Unstructured; face-to-face	
		October 2008	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
Alexis, HR – International Assignments	Collins Co.	January 2007	Unstructured; face-to-face	Telephone and e-mails throughout research period
		October 2008	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
Pamela, HR – Graduate Scheme	Hagman Co.	December 2008	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
Donna, HR – Resourcing	Hagman Co.	December 2008	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
Bobby, HR – Recruitment	Hagman Co.	December 2008	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
April, HR – Training	Hagman Co.	December 2008	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
Ray, HR – Training and Development	Hagman Co.	December 2008	Unstructured; face-to-face	
Lucy, HR – Development	Hagman Co.	December 2008	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
Krystle, HR – Learning and Development	Collins Co.	March 2009	Semi-structured; face-to-face	Plus e-mail communication
Amanda, HR – Resourcing	Collins Co.	March 2009	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
Fallon, HR – Far East	Collins Co.	April 2009	Semi-structured; by telephone; field notes taken*	
Cliff, HR – Performance	Hagman Co.	June 2009	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
Cally, HR – Learning and Development	Hagman Co.	July 2009	Semi-structured; face-to-face	
John Ross, HR – Function Head	Hagman Co.	July 2009	Semi-structured; face-to-face	

*Not held on company premises.

TABLE 7: Female expatriate participation data available from the case study firms

	Collins Co.	Hagman Co.	
Data available and date supplied	May 2007; October 2007; October 2008	June 2007	October 2008
First and last name of assignee	√	√	√
Grade	√	√	√
Age	In age band only	√	
Nationality		√	
Length of service		√	
Point of origin/home location	√	√	√
Assignment location	√	√	√
Type of assignment	√	√	√
Purpose of assignment	√		
Corporate function		√	√
Job title	√		√
Assignment status	√		
Assignment start date	√	√	
Assignment end date	√	√	
Applicable International Assignment policy	√		

TABLE 8: Stratified sample of female expatriates interviewed

Characteristic	Collins Co.				Hagman Co.			
	Population (Total: 11)		Sample size: (Total: 8)	Number interviewed	Population (Total: 44)		Sample size: (Total: 18)	Number interviewed
Current assignment type:								
- Long-term	91%	10	8 x 91% = 7	7	73%	32	18 x 73% = 13	13
- Short-term	0	-	-	-	18%	8	18 x 18% = 3	2
- Rotational	9%	1	8 x 9% = 1	1	9%	4	18 x 9% = 2	3
- Commuter	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
Marital, accompanied and family status:								
- Married/partnered	45%	5	8 x 45% = 4	4	73%	32	18 x 73% = 13	16
- Single/divorced/widowed	55%	6	8 x 55% = 4	4	27%	12	18 x 27% = 5	2
- Accompanied	36%	4	8 x 36% = 3	3	50%	22	18 x 50% = 9	10
- Unaccompanied	64%	7	8 x 64% = 5	5	50%	22	18 x 50% = 9	8
- Have children	36%	4	8 x 36% = 3	3	23%	10	18 x 23% = 4	6
- Have no children	64%	7	8 x 64% = 5	5	77%	34	18 x 77% = 14	12
Sending location:								
- UK	45%	5	8 x 45% = 4	2	68%	30	18 x 68% = 12	13
- Other	55%	6	8 x 55% = 4	6	32%	14	18 x 32% = 6	5
Current location:								
- UK	18%	2	8 x 18% = 1	2	16%	7	18 x 16% = 3	0
- Other Europe	9%	1	8 x 9% = 1	0	5%	2	18 x 5% = 1	1
- North America	9%	1	8 x 9% = 1	1	9%	4	18 x 9% = 2	2
- Caribbean/South America	0	-	-	0	9%	4	18 x 9% = 2	1
- Far East	45%	5	8 x 45% = 4	3	11%	5	18 x 11% = 2	2
- Central Asia	9%	1	8 x 9% = 1	1	11%	5	18 x 11% = 2	5
- Middle East	0	-	-	-	2%	1	18 x 2% = 0	0
- Australasia	0	-	-	-	9%	4	18 x 9% = 2	3
- North Africa	9%	1	8 x 9% = 1	1	18%	8	18 x 18% = 3	2
- West Africa	0	-	-	-	9%	4	18 x 9% = 2	2
Functional area:								
- Geology	18%	2	8 x 18% = 1	2	7%	3	18 x 7% = 1	2
- Engineering	36%	4	8 x 36% = 3	2	23%	10	18 x 23% = 4	1
- Geophysics/ other science	18%	2	8 x 18% = 1	2	7%	3	18 x 7% = 1	0
- HR	18%	2	8 x 18% = 1	1	2%	1	18 x 2% = 0	1
- Information services/IT	9%	1	8 x 9% = 1	1	7%	3	18 x 7% = 1	1
- Legal	0	-	-	-	9%	4	18 x 9% = 2	2
- Commercial	0	-	-	-	25%	11	18 x 25% = 5	8
- Contracts and procurement	0	-	-	-	7%	3	18 x 7% = 1	1
- Other non-science	0	-	-	-	14%	6	18 x 14% = 3	2
Grade:								
- Senior management: > 5; A/B	9%	1	8 x 9% = 1	1	2%	1	18 x 2% = 0	1
- Middle management: 4; C	36%	4	8 x 36% = 3	3	39%	17	18 x 39% = 7	9
- Junior management: 2-3; D	55%	6	8 x 55% = 4	4	36%	16	18 x 36% = 6	6
- Graduates and juniors: 1; E	0	-	-	-	23%	10	18 x 23% = 4	2
Previous assignments:								
- Yes	45%	5	8 x 45% = 4	5	48%	21	18 x 48% = 9	10
- No	55%	6	8 x 55% = 4	3	52%	23	18 x 52% = 9	8
Previous assignment types*:								
- Long-term	36%	4	8 x 36% = 3	4	25%	11	18 x 25% = 5	7
- Short-term	0	-	-	-	30%	13	18 x 30% = 5	5
- Rotational	9%	1	8 x 9% = 1	1	0	-	-	-
- Commuter	0	-	-	-	2%	1	18 x 2% = 0	1
(* Multiple undertaken)								

(Reference: Collis and Hussey, 2009: 212)

APPENDIX 5: Research diary

This appendix addresses the chronology of the research. It provides a research diary, tracing the stages undertaken to develop this thesis.

The literature review

During the period from October 2005 through to July 2006, an advanced search of the literature (in English only) was conducted within the following databases, going back as far as was possible to 1980: *Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)* (01/1987 to 07/2006), *Business Source Premier* (01/1980 to 06/2006), *Emerald Fulltext* (01/1989 to 07/2006), *IngentaConnect* (01/1991 to 06/2006), *International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBISS)* (01/1980 to 07/2006), *Sage Journals Online* (01/1980 to 07/2006), *ScienceDirect* (01/1980 to 06/2006), *Social Sciences Citations Index* (01/1981 to 07/2006) and *ZETOC* (the British Library's Electronic Table of Contents) (01/1993 to 07/2006). The search terms are given in Table 1; these were run in combination as far as was possible within the periods indicated as permitted by the database:

Table 1: Keywords for electronic database searches

Women, gender, sex, female	International assignment Expatriate International mobility Cross border work Cross cultural work Comparative approach International commuter International dual careers International career
International assignment, expatriate	Dual careers Glass ceiling Glass border Management Relocation policy
Flexpatriate	

(Source: Altman and Shortland, 2008: 201).

The exploratory research

The decision to set the research in the oil and gas E & P sector

The literature review in respect of industry context suggested the potential to access sufficient samples of women assignees to undertake the research. Given this, links were made with a known human resource (HR) contact within a UK-based oil and gas exploration and production firm, followed up by an unstructured, conversational interview in February 2005. It emerged that there were a variety of assignment types in operation and a viable potential sample of female assignees in this organisation – 30 female expatriates on long-term assignments and two female rotators, representing an approximate overall 9% female participation rate. In addition, the contact displayed considerable enthusiasm not only to participate in the research study but also to encourage other oil and gas exploration and production organisations to do likewise. Gender diversity was identified as a major area of interest within the oil and gas exploration and production sector, primarily due to skills shortages, and thus wider interest in participating in the research study was likely to be forthcoming.

Having identified a potential source for access to female expatriates within what could be a case study setting, a formal meeting was set up in April 2005 on company premises with the known HR contact responsible for managing international assignments. An unstructured interview was carried out to investigate female expatriate participation, the types of assignments undertaken and supporting policies, with field notes taken. Statistical data on female participation, and a range of policy documentation dating from 2003 and 2004 were collected to provide context. This organisational ‘champion’ subsequently sought permission for the research to proceed and it was publicised in the in-house magazine later in 2005, following official company sanction.

From this exercise, the organisation identified (given the pseudonym Hagman Co.) was not considered to be unique. Hence, the next action involved seeking access to comparator organisations.

Feasibility of comparisons with other industry sectors

The first step was to approach six known HR contacts in the UK, who had responsibility for (and experience of) managing expatriates in sectors other than oil and gas.

Organisations represented: engineering; health care; relocation management; consultancy; accountancy; and voluntary/ not-for-profit. It emerged from these initial unstructured interviews that the feasibility of conducting research into female expatriate participation in each of these industries was severely limited by a number of factors: insufficient sample sizes; access (in relation to financial, geographical and other issues); and potential mortality (the risk of contacts who would act as gatekeepers leaving their organisations). In effect, this exploratory work justified the choice of the oil and gas exploration and production as the research base.

Negotiating access: the oil and gas industry peer group

The HR champion in Hagman Co. facilitated the presentation of a paper outlining the proposed research to HR colleagues with expatriate responsibility at a meeting of the UK oil and gas industry peer group late in 2006. The peer group comprised 18 oil and gas organisations with UK bases of operation. The paper was presented in person by the researcher and was circulated to all of the group's HR members. This document set out to explain the research focus and goals, its aims and objectives, and research questions, together with the proposed stages of the project (the establishment of a research framework; the preparation of working papers as a literature review; the identification of case studies from female participation data and supporting policy documents; HR interviews; survey and interviews of female expatriates; and data analysis).

The subject of this research presentation was considered by one of the company representatives in attendance to be of particular interest as the issue of gender diversity within its expatriate exploration and production population was currently an area of importance and one that was being targeted as part of personal development objectives. Following e-mail correspondence with this HR manager with responsibility for

international assignments, the company (given the pseudonym Collins Co.) agreed access to the researcher. Three other oil and gas firms entered into correspondence with the researcher and an exploratory unstructured interview was later conducted (and taped) with an HR functional manager in one of these firms. However, none were able to commit to the anticipated lengthy timescale of a PhD research project.

The identification of the research participants

Exploratory unstructured interviews were conducted separately with the two HR gatekeepers with responsibility for international assignments in Collins Co. and Hagman Co. at the beginning of 2007. These were held on company premises, lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, were taped and transcribed. A two-way exchange of ideas took place, with the research rationale and design being outlined and its feasibility and any limitations being discussed. The interviews also set out to establish: the availability of statistical data on female participation (by type of assignment and location); assignment types and career planning processes used; the policies of support applicable to international assignments (copies of which were requested and some information received on the spot); practice in respect of flexible hours working and work-life balance; details of suitable contacts within the organisation to discuss HR policies and how these were implemented; and potential research timescales.

Two particularly important strategic issues emerged from these discussions. Both gatekeepers were unwilling to involve line managers in their international locations in the research due to time and cost constraints; they were however, willing to grant access to the researcher to relevant HR contacts (people on their teams with whom they had good working relationships). In addition, the gatekeepers were also wary of extending the research to encompass male expatriates, once again due to time and cost issues, bearing in mind the significantly larger numbers of employees that would be involved if the entire expatriate populations were involved. As the research objectives concerned how women's participation within various assignment types was facilitated by organisational policy considerations, this did not present an issue of difficulty for the researcher as a

comparative study of men and women had not been envisaged as it was not appropriate to the research questions.

Both Collins Co.'s and Hagman Co.'s representatives were cognisant of the 'pure' research nature of the project. Their buy-in to participating and seeking the agreement of others within their organisations to do likewise reflected the independence of the researcher and that the project was not commissioned (as would be the case, for instance, with a consultancy exercise). In return for their participation and acting as gatekeepers to facilitate access to appropriate organisational contacts on a confidential basis, the researcher agreed to produce a report for each company to be made available to all participants (including the female assignees) outlining the key messages from the research findings.

Ethics

The value of the research to each party was discussed at the exploratory stage and it was clearly understood and agreed by the gatekeepers that while their organisational interests might help shape the operationalisation of some of the research objectives, company concerns could not act as research drivers. Ethical issues at the level of designing the research and gaining access related to lack of gatekeeper coercion of the researcher and the rights of the gatekeepers and participants to be fully informed and for privacy.

It was agreed that the researcher would carry out the research as far as possible on company premises and thus under the stringent health and safety regulations that are in place within the oil and gas industry. Participants would be contacted in the first instance by the gatekeepers, thus preserving confidentiality of their contact details; none would be forced to participate; all parties would have the right to confidentiality/ anonymity. For example, it was agreed with the gatekeepers that policy documentation would be held on a confidential basis and that their organisations would not be identified within the research. Any information received from female expatriates would be confidential between the researcher and the research subject; no names, specific locations or personal

data would be used by which individuals could be identified. Permission would be sought and explicit agreement obtained from all parties before any interviews were taped.

The participants, as individuals, have rights as to the processing and storing of personal data. The researcher made clear that all data would be kept in a locked home filing cabinet and/or on a secure computer file. Transcripts, if requested, would be sent to participants; audio tapes would be for the researcher's ears only and would be destroyed on completion of the research if this was requested. It was agreed that interview transcripts would not be reproduced and included within the thesis. It was also agreed that the researcher would determine the format and content of any research reports based on the data collected and these would be written in such a manner to present quality findings while ensuring confidentiality/ anonymity to all parties.

In summary, by early 2007, two years after the initial tentative contacts were made, two broadly comparable potential case studies with viable numbers of female expatriates undertaking a variety of assignment types had been identified, permission received to conduct research on a confidential basis within them and ethics confirmed, some relevant contacts identified and illustrative assignment participation data and some preliminary policy documentation received.

The data collection process

The policy documentation research

In order to frame both the quantitative and qualitative research stages and to provide triangulation of data, it was necessary to review the organisational policies that supported expatriation in both of the case study firms. The main policy data collection point was mid-2007 although policy identification and collection proved to be an iterative process particularly as further issues were identified during the interviews and as new policies came into play. Thus, additional materials, refinements and new documentation continued to be obtained throughout the duration of the fieldwork. In August 2007, the literature

review was also updated via the addition of additional sources derived from the use of alerts.

The gatekeepers in both firms were asked to supply copies of their various currently applicable international assignment policies, relating to all the types of assignments used and locations of operation, together with any supporting procedural forms and assignment support information. If available, previous versions of any policy documents were also sought to provide context in relation to any policy development. In addition, if these were separate to the international assignment policies, documentation relating to recruitment and selection, performance management, flexible working and work-life balance, and equal opportunities and diversity were requested. Such information was provided either in hard or soft copy for the researcher to analyse outside of company premises. These data were supported by the collection of general company information (such as annual reports, company magazines and values statements) during company visits (being on display in reception) and via the internet.

Spreadsheets of female assignee data were also requested and supplied by the case study firms at this time so that the policy documents could be viewed within the context of current female expatriate participation by assignment type and location. In these preliminary assignment data documents received in mid-2007, Collins Co. and Hagman Co. both recorded each female assignee by: first and last name; grade; point of origin or home location; assignment location; type of assignment (long-term, short-term, rotational, etc.) and assignment start and end dates. In addition, Collins Co. recorded: assignees by age range; assignment purpose (head up operation; management skills transfer; technical skills transfer); job title; assignment status (accompanied, with husband/ children; unaccompanied); and the applicable policy type (Category A/B long-term; short-term; rotational; extended international transfer). By contrast, Hagman Co. recorded: actual age; nationality; corporate function; and length of service. Thus, although there were some similarities in data held by the two case studies, these data were not directly comparable on all measures held.

The policy documentation data collection stage generated a wealth of written policy documents and other information which were able to be accessed throughout the research study. The volume of material was considerable and thus these policies and documents were subjected to data reduction. First, for each of the two case study companies, the international assignment policies that supported the various assignment types ('flexpatriate' and expatriate) and locations used were identified and listed. Next, for each assignment type/ location, key elements within these policies that were considered to affect most significantly the deployment of women as international assignees were summarised to provide a full descriptor of the support available to international assignees. These related to: selection; dual career support/ co-working and partner assistance; training (e.g. culture, language, security, familiarisation); sponsor/ mentor arrangements; international management development/ career management; pregnancy support/ maternity provision; working hours; and repatriation. Provision in respect of remuneration, allowances and relocation support as detailed within the suites of international assignment policies (base pay, provision of financial allowances such as cost of living, cars, pensions, housing, utilities, shipping and the like) which were considered as non-gendered relocation policy issues were separately descriptively summarised. Summary tables were then constructed for each company to present an overview of the elements included within their various international assignment policies addressing separately those considered to have gendered and non-gendered implications.

Both organisations also supplied their equal opportunities and diversity policy statements, with Hagman Co. also supplying an underpinning group policy statement on human resources. These were also subjected to data reduction in the form of descriptive summaries and main elements tabulated. In addition, Collins Co. supplied its performance management policy and Hagman Co. its flexible working and work-life balance statements together with its UK flexible working policy. This process was also carried out in respect of this documentation. The summary tables were to be used as the basis of the design of the semi-structured HR interviews and the female expatriate survey and semi-structured interview schedules in the later steps in the fieldwork.

The second phase of policy documentation collection took place during and after the final stages of the fieldwork in mid-2009. Issues raised by the female interviewees indicated that particular policies that had not been envisaged originally as having a major impact on female expatriate participation (such as the annual development review) required in-depth study. As a result copies of the annual development review policies were subsequently requested from each gatekeeper. In addition, new policies were launched by Hagman Co. during the fieldwork period and this development required attention to make sense of the women's experiences and comments. This new documentation (relating to recruitment and selection guidelines and performance review processes) were also subjected to data reduction to create policy summaries from which summary tables were constructed.

During the final stages of the semi-structured expatriate interviews, some changes were announced by Hagman Co. that affected the long-term international assignment policy. The assignee research subjects were not directly affected by these in their current assignments as transition arrangements in place for existing assignees ensured protection until assignment end. Nonetheless, these changes were reviewed in order to understand the women's comments. In addition, a different approach to undertaking the annual development review, with greater emphasis on roles and responsibilities, timescales, training, accountability and resources, together with an on-line process to enable greater visibility of data was in the process of being launched. This, however, had not been experienced by the research participants and thus was not included in the summaries.

The HR function interview research

Written policy documentation is interpreted and implemented in practice by a number of organisational actors. To gain an understanding of how the case study firms' written organisational policy documents were applied specifically to women's participation as expatriates, the research approach called, in the first instance, for the views of appropriate HR functional specialists. The intention was to use semi-structured interviews as a means to begin the process of data triangulation.

In effect, the HR functional interviews aimed to corroborate the first set of data – the policy documentation – by examining expatriate management practice. In addition, the findings of this HR interview stage of the research were to provide context for the development of the final two-part stage of triangulation, the female expatriate research (comprising a census survey and semi-structured interviews conducted on a stratified sample of survey respondents).

International assignment policy implementation

The first part of the planned HR interview stage involved semi-structured interviews being carried out with the relevant HR personnel holding responsibility for international assignment policy design and/ or review and its implementation. (These were the two HR – International Assignments managers in both case study firms; but to preserve anonymity, their actual job titles and those of other HR representatives have been replaced with broad HR role descriptors and pseudonyms).

Prior to these interviews being conducted, the semi-structured questionnaire was subject to a ‘pre-test’ on an ex-company HR director in the energy sector who had responsibility for expatriate management, resulting in refinements to the wording and ordering of some questions. The interviews were held on the participants’ respective company premises in October 2008. Both lasted approximately 90 minutes, were taped and transcribed. The semi-structured format of the interviews enabled shifts of emphasis and ordering of questions on the spot by the researcher, and the provision of fuller explanations of questions where needed, as appropriate, in response to replies given.

The interview schedule comprised four sections: job and location factors applicable to female assignees; assignment types and deployment options; how women were selected for assignments; and international assignment policy development and implementation (including how policies are applied to the various assignment types; training and skills preparation; dual careers and co-working; career development, mentors and sponsors; repatriation). The content of the interview schedule was derived from the

research framework and questions for the study and drew upon the policy documentation abstracted as part of the earlier data reduction process.

These two HR – International Assignments functional specialists were also the organisational ‘champions’, the gatekeepers who had granted access to the researcher and had achieved company permission for the research study to be conducted. As such their relationship with the researcher was instrumental to the project, and their gatekeeper role was influential in securing access to others. The interviews with these particular individuals confirmed the anticipated need to seek further detailed explanation from other HR functional specialists. The particular issues that emerged related to the policy areas of: graduate and executive recruitment; equality; assignee selection; and training, development and career management. The researcher relied on identification of appropriate HR professionals by the gatekeepers to secure access to these specifics of policy implementation.

Other relevant HR policy implementation

Both of the case study firms’ gatekeepers identified the additional HR functional specialists in December 2008 for the second planned part of the HR interview research stage. The Hagman Co. gatekeeper was the first to facilitate the set up of face-to-face interviews with them. Five HR personnel (HR – Graduate Scheme; HR – Resourcing; HR – Recruitment; HR – Training; HR – Development) were identified as being the most appropriate to provide the additional background explanations of company practice identified in the earlier HR – International Assignments’ interviews. Drawing upon the interview transcriptions and the research framework and questions, further semi-structured interview schedules were devised to address the identified gaps in explanation of policy implementation. The interviews were held on the participants’ company premises in December 2008. All lasted between 30-60 minutes, were taped and transcribed. During these interviews, it emerged that for further information on coaching and mentoring, an additional unscheduled interview would be helpful. An unstructured face-to-face interview was therefore also carried out (HR – Training and Development). This interview was also taped but lasted only around 15 minutes.

Although three appropriate functional specialists had been identified in Collins Co. in December 2008, access to them was delayed by the gatekeeper who was unable to facilitate gaining their agreement to participate due to work pressures. At one point mortality was potentially an issue and fears over withdrawal of the case study altogether meant that the researcher took the decision to move forward with some of the activities required for the third part of the triangulation process (the questionnaire design of the expatriate research stage) without the input of Collins Co.'s three identified HR functional specialists. This course of action was crucial to ensuring that the relationship with the gatekeeper was sustained.

The data reduction activity in respect of policy documentation and the interviews held to date with the two gatekeepers in respect of their organisations' international assignment policies, did not appear to indicate major differences in policy design and implementation. Thus, the assumption was made that the information gathered from the gatekeepers in both case study firms (supported by the six HR functional specialists in Hagman Co.) was sufficiently similar to warrant a common approach being taken to the questionnaire design for expatriate research stage in both firms.

Access to the three HR functional specialists in Collins Co. (HR – Learning and Development; HR – Resourcing; and HR – Far East) was finally facilitated in February and March 2009 and appointments set up to meet the two UK-based personnel in March. Each face-to-face semi-structured interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, was carried out on company premises, and was taped and transcribed. The semi-structured international interview was carried out a month later using home telephones for both the interviewer and interviewee. Taping was impossible due to poor quality sound reception. Detailed field notes were taken but this caused the loss of opportunities to probe more deeply. Owing to time zone differences (it was late at night in the Far East) the interview was restricted to approximately 30 minutes. The drawbacks encountered in conducting this interview led to the decision by the researcher to ensure all future international interviews were conducted on company premises, in the participants' normal working

time (as far as practicable) and using more sophisticated telephone technology with good quality speakers to enable tape recording to take place.

Outcomes

Although the HR interviews were originally planned as a single stage, two-part process, in effect they comprised an unplanned three stage sequence of data collection. The transcripts from the first round of gatekeeper and specialist HR functional interviews (held in 2008) were subject to data reduction with key themes and issues highlighted to be considered and potentially incorporated in the female expatriate survey design and follow-up semi-structured interviews. The additional specialist HR functional interviews in Collins Co. were conducted in the spring of 2009, after the design and launch of the expatriate survey, and thus these transcripts and field notes were used only to inform the design of the semi-structured expatriate interview questionnaires.

The need for further HR specialist functional interviews was identified in June 2009 during the semi-structured expatriate interview stage of the research with Hagman Co.'s female expatriates. Issues were raised concerning the annual performance review, the annual development review and the newly launched women's network which had not been anticipated and thus had not been previously examined as part of the earlier research actions. To understand more fully the context of these initiatives, and to obtain policy documentation where available on them, the gatekeeper in Hagman Co. was asked to identify appropriate HR functional specialists and facilitate the setting up of additional HR face-to-face interviews. These semi-structured interviews were conducted with HR – Performance in June 2009 and with HR – Learning and Development and HR – Function Head in July 2009. All lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, were held on company premises, were taped and transcribed.

Overall, data collection via the 18 HR functional manager interviews was a lengthy affair, considering time taken in corresponding with the gatekeepers, devising the interview schedules, in travelling to and from company premises and undertaking the interviews themselves, and in interview transcription. For example, 16 of the interviews

were transcribed (the initial exploratory interviews were not taped) and each hour of transcription of taped conversation took around one (long) day to complete, even with the use of voice recognition software to help speed up the process. To ensure accuracy, the researcher listened to a sentence of taped conversation and repeated it into the software (Dragon Naturally Speaking 9) before moving on to the next sentence. This involved rewinding the tape several times to repeat and check each sentence, making corrections as necessary. The completed transcripts were also all checked back against the taped original conversation to ensure accuracy.

This research stage unexpectedly became an iterative process that had to take into account and build upon a number of unplanned eventualities. Nevertheless, it served its twin purpose of providing information on – and explanations of – policy implementation as well as underpinning the development of the final two-step stage of the primary research process – that of female expatriate data collection.

The female expatriate research – part 1 the survey

This section traces the fieldwork journey involved in preparing for and conducting the female expatriate survey which comprised the first step in the expatriate research. In effect, this required several discrete types of activity by the researcher which took place over a period of one year starting in October 2008. To begin with, statistical data were obtained from the gatekeepers in both case study organisations to identify the target female expatriates, being completed by the end of 2008. The questionnaire design, pre-testing, piloting, redrafting, reviewing and finalisation also took place over this two month period. Agreement with the gatekeepers on the mechanics of the questionnaire distribution and data collection had to be obtained before the self-administered questionnaires could be distributed. Over a three-month period, following the launch of the survey in February 2009, the responses were collected by the researcher with several follow-ups carried out by the gatekeepers to ensure high response rates and by the researcher to complete gaps in data supplied. Data entry and data cleaning within SPSS formed the final part of the survey process. Each of these five discrete activities is detailed below.

Identifying the target population

Up-to-date female expatriate assignment spreadsheet data were supplied by both case study firms in October 2008 from which the total potential female expatriate population was identified. This amounted to 27 cases out of an expatriate headcount of 331 (approximately 8%) in Collins Co. and 61 cases out of an expatriate headcount of 542 (approximately 11%) in Hagman Co. No changes took place in Collins Co.'s female assignee population between this point and the target female expatriate population being ready to be contacted in late January 2009. However, in Hagman Co., the total number of female assignees rose by five to 66 over the same period. Thus, the total female expatriate population which was to be the subject of the census self-administered questionnaire survey totalled 93 individuals.

Questionnaire design

The underlying aim of the design process was to achieve the production of one self-administered questionnaire that would be appropriate and applicable to the female assignees in both case study firms. The reason for this was to enable the possibility of a comparison of responses from the two expatriate populations and/ or the collapse of the two separate responding groups into one single dataset, as appropriate to the results obtained.

The first action was to consider the participant profile data available from the case study firms. While there were commonalities between some of records kept, there were a number of discrepancies and gaps. It was originally thought that where similar personal data were held by both companies, there would be no need to ask the expatriates to supply this, hence reducing the time required for questionnaire completion (and possibly as a result, increasing the response rate). A schedule of questions relating to personal data and expatriate history was drawn up and sent to the gatekeeper of Hagman Co. to establish whether this could be completed by the organisation. (Collins Co. at this point was not consulted due to the threat of mortality.) The Hagman Co. gatekeeper advised

that much of the data required were not held and due to the ever-changing nature of expatriates' personal circumstances it was not possible to vouch for the accuracy of the data that were held. Hence, it was decided that to ensure accuracy, personal data supplied could not be assumed to be correct and/ or up-to-date and thus the questionnaires for Hagman Co. could not be personalised prior to distribution. When the threat of mortality had passed, the gatekeeper of Collins Co. was consulted and it was assured that the personal data held on its expatriates were current and accurate and thus the questionnaires distributed to Collins Co.'s expatriates were to be completed as far as possible prior to distribution to save the participants' time.

The second action taken was to draw up a list of 30 imprecise 'rough' questions (a mix of open, closed and seven point rating scale formats) under the following broad headings: personal data and expatriate history; decisions to undertake expatriation; and company policies and processes supporting expatriation, with a draft covering letter of explanation of the project and a request to participate in it. The aim was to capture issues of potential relevance and presentation options for the proposed survey and to outline possible methods of conducting it (by post, fax, e-mail) in the covering letter. This served as the basis of a one hour 'brainstorm' discussion meeting held with the ex-company HR director in the energy sector who had previously advised on the semi-structured HR – International Assignments' interview questionnaire design. During this meeting field notes were taken.

The discussion proved invaluable on two levels. At the macro level, it aided understanding of the likely reactions of the potential recipients (both the gatekeepers and the expatriates) on receipt of the questionnaire. The discussion also helped to review, explain and prioritise the issues included, the format and layout of the document and alternative methods by which it might be completed (by telephone). On a micro level, such factors as how the subject areas might be better combined, the use of less complex rating scales, together with revisions to emphasis and wording to enhance clarity were also suggested.

The third action related to the construction of the first draft questionnaire. This draft included only a very brief introductory personal data and expatriation history section as, at this time, the consultation with the Hagman Co. gatekeeper over the possibility of company data being used was still in progress. The research framework and questions together with the two HR – International Assignments experts' interview data were used as the underpinning for the main sections of the survey's design. In addition, this exercise drew upon the 'brainstorm' discussion. The issue of the changing nature of international assignment types was taken as the starting point. Participants were asked to rate the impact of various assignment types (length, pattern, status and location factors) and dual career and partner considerations on a five point scale (from 1 being a very negative impact; 3 being no impact; 5 being a very positive impact; 9 being not applicable). Next the organisational factors in the research framework formed the basis of four blocks of similarly designed questions requiring an impact rating: career management and assignment support; working time, leave and flexible working hours; selection, training and skills preparation, and equal opportunities and diversity policies; and the international relocation and repatriation policy. Finally, an open comments question was included.

The first draft was e-mailed to the ex-company HR director in the energy sector as the first pre-test. The individual who had volunteered to help with this was neither an expatriate nor a woman, although he did have considerable experience of managing expatriates and had undertaken numerous international business trips for lengthy periods in his previous role. As a result, he did not complete the questionnaire but annotated it with comments and questions seeking clarity or demonstrating potential areas of misunderstanding, together with suggested edits, before returning the hard copy to the researcher for consideration of the suggested amendments. These were mostly incorporated before a second pre-test was conducted.

For this pre-test, the questionnaire was e-mailed to a returned, single, female expatriate who had undertaken a short-term assignment in the pharmaceuticals sector. A pre-test was used rather than a pilot on the actual intended survey population as the survey was at this stage still in draft and the opportunities to pilot within one of the case

companies were known to be limited (due to the threat of mortality). A pre-test was considered as being useful to help to identify potential problems with the survey from a female expatriate's perspective but without wasting a valuable pilot opportunity. A mutually convenient time was agreed for the researcher to ring her to complete the questionnaire by telephone. In the main, the questionnaire proved to be relatively straightforward, although it took longer than expected to complete (45 minutes as opposed to the expected 30 minutes). However, a number of questions in every section were interpreted differently to expectations. For example, 'climate' was interpreted as organisational rather than the weather; 'health' was interpreted as healthcare, rather than the prevalence of diseases (such as malaria) in the assignment location; and the difference between 'equal opportunities' and 'diversity' was unknown with diversity interpreted as gender only.

Corrections and clarifications were made in response to this in order to pilot the questionnaire within Hagman Co. The researcher sought assistance from the gatekeeper to trial the survey on a returned company expatriate. First, the revised questionnaire was e-mailed to the gatekeeper for approval. This was given rapidly and a very senior Hagman Co. female repatriate (married, with children, having undertaken several international assignments, some in challenging locations) was contacted by the gatekeeper and asked to support this pilot. She agreed immediately and the researcher e-mailed her the revised questionnaire. The Hagman Co. repatriate not only agreed to complete the survey at the weekend but asked to meet the researcher to go through it and discuss the project face-to-face. An early morning appointment was set up by the gatekeeper for just two days later.

The returned expatriate completed the questionnaire and also made notes and comments on it, returning it to the researcher. The one-hour discussion meeting held, during which field notes were taken, provided a different perspective from the previous two pre-tests, requiring revision of the format and some of the content of the document. Suggested amendments included: more detailed explanation of the research and why it was being conducted in the covering letter; a rethinking of the five point rating scale linked to the impact of different assignment factors, as it was considered cumbersome

causing difficulties in evaluating the items listed; restructuring to avoid repetition; rewording of imprecise questions; and deletion of issues considered inappropriate or unnecessary.

Redrafting of the questionnaire took on board the need to include a full personal data section applicable to both case studies. The responses to the pilot given by the Hagman Co. repatriate were considered, aligned with the research framework and questions and a revised questionnaire constructed in eight sections. This drew upon the tabulated summaries of policy provision and the interviews which had now been held with the specialist HR managers in Hagman Co. and, once again, the HR – International Assignments experts' interviews held previously in both case study firms. The eight sections comprised a total of 34 questions (with sub-questions) set within the following areas: personal data; type of assignment and location; expatriation and careers; flexible working, working time and leave; recruitment and selection; training; and the international assignment policy. A mix of open and closed questions was included. A three point scale linked to importance (not important; important; and very important; and not applicable or no opinion) was used where rating was appropriate. By this stage, the questionnaire resembled fairly closely the final version used.

The revised document was subject to a further expatriate pre-test. It was distributed by e-mail and then conducted by telephone with the female returned expatriate from the pharmaceuticals sector. This revealed that the revised structure, wording and, in particular, the rating by level of importance made the questionnaire much easier to understand, complete and to be able to link to personal experience. This pre-test also focused on the introduction of the new personal data section which had been introduced in its fuller form for the first time at this stage. Various refinements were needed as a result. To give two examples, actual age was initially included rather than age bands. However, the expatriate was sensitive to this and, as the gatekeeper of Collins Co. had previously expressed concern over potential age discrimination if precise age data were sought, the use of age bands was considered to be more appropriate. The ethnic groups included in the personal data section were questioned by the pharmaceuticals expatriate. She regarded the very broad 'home-grown' classifications as being unable to distinguish

between Asian ethnicities in particular. The decision was therefore taken to base the categories on the classification of ethnicity used by the UK Office for National Statistics in the UK 2001 Census (Office for National Statistics, 2001).

The final part of the questionnaire design involved coding for SPSS data entry. It was sent to undergo scrutiny with codes in place to an SPSS trainer. The aim was to establish any need for formatting and re-coding prior to distribution. Only very minor changes were suggested in laying out some tabulated questions (primarily in the section relating to being accompanied by family members) and these were incorporated. The questionnaires sent to Collins Co. and Hagman Co. had only very slight differences in their final state: company names were included (in appendix 7 these are combined) and the expatriation history table reflected typical grades and job titles for each company (again in appendix 7, these are combined).

The research process next involved drawing up the covering letters explaining the process and options for completing the questionnaire. The length of time needed was highlighted to forewarn respondents that the questionnaire was detailed and lengthy. However, it was ensured that the covering letter was kept to one page in length and that the relevance, importance, independence and confidentiality of the research were made clear in an attempt to boost response rates.

Gaining gatekeeper agreement

The gatekeepers distributed the questionnaires by e-mail to all of the target female expatriates listed in the excel spreadsheets supplied to the researcher. This ensured that confidentiality of contact details was preserved. If the female expatriates consented to take part in the research, only then were their e-mail addresses (and only other contact details such as telephone numbers if they were deemed absolutely necessary) revealed to the researcher. While Collins Co.'s gatekeeper preferred the respondents to reply by e-mail (with fax, post or telephone as alternatives), Hagman Co.'s gatekeeper was keen to encourage telephone responses and wanted to make clear in the covering letter that the organisation would pay for telephone calls. The covering letters were drafted accordingly.

In both cases, the respondents were asked to reply directly to the researcher in confidence.

The covering letter and final questionnaires were forwarded to each gatekeeper and were approved, with no requirements for any amendments, by the end of January 2009. The Hagman Co. gatekeeper sent a general e-mail to all of the 66 target female expatriates at the beginning of February, explaining the purpose of the research and encouraging them to participate. The attached questionnaire was uncompleted in respect of personal data. The Collins Co. gatekeeper received questionnaires from the researcher that had been completed as far as possible with personal data, as requested, which she forwarded individually with a personal e-mail to each of the target 27 female expatriates, again explaining the purpose of the research and encouraging completion, around three weeks after the distribution of questionnaires by Hagman Co.

Data collection and follow-up

The data collection required a number of prompts to be sent to the female target population. By the stated deadline, in each case around three to four weeks after the initial mailing dates, one third of Collins Co.'s expatriates and around one half of Hagman Co.'s had responded. The researcher notified each gatekeeper of the missing respondents from the excel spreadsheets and each e-mailed these women with a reminder and a revised deadline. (The researcher asked that the gatekeeper set this to a date that each felt appropriate.) This brought in another flurry of responses. Again when the deadlines were reached within each company, the gatekeepers were advised of the missing cases. Each gatekeeper sent out a second chaser e-mail. Collins Co.'s gatekeeper believed that this was sufficient and that she would be unable to chase further, however, Hagman Co.'s gatekeeper decided to carry out a third and final chase-up. The data collection period for each company amounted to around three months, with data collection closing by late April/ early May 2009.

The gatekeepers did contact all of the target population in each case study firm. For Collins Co., 19 questionnaires out of a possible total of 27 were received; a 70%

response rate. All were returned by e-mail. Of these, 16 respondents replied directly to the researcher as had been requested but three replied to the gatekeeper who forwarded their survey returns to the researcher. In Collins Co., two further respondents replied to the gatekeeper but refused to participate on grounds of pressure of work. The researcher was informed of this. It was accepted that company duties must come ahead of a voluntary survey. For Hagman Co., 52 were received out of the possible 66; a 79% response rate: 47 questionnaires were returned by e-mail; one was returned by post; one was returned by fax; and three were completed by telephone. All respondents replied directly to the researcher as had been requested. After each questionnaire was received, the researcher wrote an e-mail to thank the respondent personally for their participation. Where there were gaps in responses, the researcher sent the missing sections (not the whole questionnaire) back to the respondent and asked that these be completed. This generated a flurry of correspondence over a period of a month while the additional data were collected. The remaining individuals in the case study companies did not reply either to the researcher or, as far as is known, to the gatekeeper. The response rates, nonetheless, were high.

The female expatriate research – part 2 the semi-structured interviews

The final part of the data triangulation exercise involved conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a stratified sample of the female expatriate survey respondents. The purpose was to gain a fuller explanation of the survey findings illustrated by descriptive statistics generated through SPSS analysis and to explore issues raised in the open questions. The first action was to select a sample of survey respondents for interview. Of the 19 respondents from Collins Co., 11 (58%) had stated that they were willing to be interviewed; in Hagman Co., 44 out of 52 (85%) respondents had agreed to do so. The stratified sample therefore had to be drawn from these respondents. The stratified sample in each case study firm ensured that there was representation by current assignment type, marital, accompanied and family status (married/ partnered and single; accompanied or unaccompanied; with and without children); sending and current location; functional area; grade (including graduate trainees in Hagman Co.); previous assignments (having carried out multiple assignments of varying types). Seven

respondents were originally selected from Collins Co. and 14 from Hagman Co. to reflect the fact that Hagman Co.'s number of female assignees was approximately twice that of Collins Co.'s.

The next action was to design a semi-structured interview questionnaire suitable for use within both case study organisations. This was carried out by setting out the research framework and questions and noting the key survey results and comments that related to them. In addition, where issues raised by the HR representatives in their semi-structured interviews and/ or the policy documentation received appeared to contradict the survey results, these were also noted. From these, a working document was constructed listing all notable areas for discussion under five key headings: assignments and locations; careers; international assignment policies; hours and work-life balance; and gender diversity. The noted issues were then reviewed, consolidated or expanded as appropriate and developed into a series of questions, estimated to take around 60-90 minutes of interview time. It was decided that the first semi-structured interview conducted would serve as a pilot and any amendments necessary to the interview schedule would be incorporated as necessary. A pre-test was considered inappropriate as the questions were highly specific to the case study firms.

The majority of the potential interviewees were based outside of the UK and hence careful consideration had to be given to the media to be used to conduct the interviews. Discussions were held with the gatekeepers who both agreed that teleconferencing using video links or high quality conference speaker telephones could potentially be made available on company premises. Where the assignees were in the UK (on leave, off shift while on rotation, or having repatriated since completing the questionnaire), it was agreed that face-to-face interviews on company premises could be arranged. Working through the gatekeepers and their administrative support within both firms, a schedule of interviews was arranged, taking account of time differences across the world. The logistics of scheduling conference calls proved to be taxing for all concerned as it was necessary to try to avoid asking participants to undertake early starts and/ or late finishes. With interviewees in locations as far apart as Australasia and the Far East as well as the Americas, several visits to company premises were needed to

accommodate personal and business schedules, unexpected commitments and work pressures, and the various time zones. It emerged that senior executives had pre-booked video-conference facilities and some company offices did not have these media at all, so it was decided to use only one form of media for the overseas interviews to ensure consistency in the approach taken, namely conference speaker telephones with excellent sound quality in private rooms. This enabled taping of the interviews.

The selection of the cases for interview and the design of the questionnaire took around three months to complete, with the scheduling of the telephone calls and the interviews themselves taking place over a further three months, ending in August 2009. E-mails were sent to the participants to gather, as far as was possible, any missing questionnaire data prior to the interviews being conducted to save interview time. Each interview took between 60 and 90 minutes as predicted. No amendments were needed after the first interview was conducted as a pilot. Before each interview was carried out every participant was asked if her conversation with the researcher could be taped, subject to confidentiality, for research purposes; all agreed to this. All but one of the interviews scheduled took place (only one participant who had agreed to be interviewed cancelled due to work pressures). After each interview any additional data gathered that was originally missing from the participants' survey return was added into the SPSS data file. On an ongoing basis, tapes were transcribed using speech recognition software. Copies of the transcriptions were not requested by any of the participants.

The first 20 interviews conducted revealed unexpected gaps in the stratified sample coverage by current assignment location with issues emerging that were pertinent to two specific locations – North America (for both case study firms) and West Africa (for Hagman Co.). The researcher therefore decided that five further interviews were necessary (one in Collins Co. and four in Hagman Co.) to ensure that a proportion of the survey respondents currently based in these locations was included. (Although some interviews with assignees in these locations were originally included, these were mainly based on previous assignment experience; and it turned out that those women currently based in these regions at the time of questionnaire completion had moved on by the time the interviews were conducted.) In addition, although one very senior graded woman had

agreed to participate in Collins Co., no similarly graded employee was represented in Hagman Co. This omission was addressed and hence one further interview was conducted in Hagman Co. to ensure that the interviews covered the full range of grades. In total 26 women were interviewed (eight in Collins Co., two in person; and 18 in Hagman Co., five in person) with all interviews transcribed. The summary of the stratified sample calculations used and actual sample interviewed shows that, as far as possible, the sampling endeavoured to match the proportions of assignees with the characteristics highlighted during the research choices (see appendix 4, table 8). Of course, not all of these could be matched exactly and so precedence was given to type of assignment (current and previous), location of current assignment (with the focus on expatriation as opposed to inpatriation to the company headquarters) and personal/ family circumstances.

Data analysis

The data analysis stage of the research took place over a two year period from April 2009 through to August 2011. It comprised data entry which took place concurrently with data collection as far as was possible; the production of company reports and the dissemination of findings to the female expatriates; and finally the data analysis for production of preliminary thesis findings.

Data entry

A case study database was constructed. An SPSS file was set up and survey data were entered into it for analysis on an on-going basis as questionnaire returns were received and additional missing information was gathered by e-mail from survey participants or by e-mail, telephone or in person from the interview participants. This took place between April and May 2009.

Any gaps in the data or potential errors were identified and followed up by e-mail with the survey participants with final data entry taking place in July/ August 2009. Care was taken to clean data where required (for instance, if an assignee had rated the

importance of a benefit that she had not actually received, such ratings were discounted). In the first instance descriptive statistics were generated to provide a 'picture' of each case study organisation. This process revealed some data entry errors which were addressed by returning to the original survey responses and any correspondence in relation to them such that the data was finally cleaned by November 2009. Comments received in response to the open survey questions were copied into a Word document to provide illustrative quotations by question number and subject heading.

Production and distribution of company reports

Reports were produced for each case study organisation. Descriptive statistics were generated from SPSS based on data specific to each case study firm. These were illustrated with anonymous quotations taken from the female expatriate survey and the expatriate and HR interview data to highlight and explain particular findings. The data were presented such that anonymity of the participants was preserved. The company-specific reports were sent by e-mail in November 2009 to the gatekeepers in each case study firm. By this time the Hagman Co. gatekeeper had left the organisation and thus a copy of the report was also sent to her successor for distribution to the participants.

Dissemination of results to assignees

The Collins Co. gatekeeper requested that the researcher send the report directly to each participant by e-mail. The researcher received e-mails of support from the interview and survey participants in response to this. The researcher was contacted by telephone by the new Hagman Co. representative on receiving the report to discuss the findings and it was agreed that the researcher would present them in-company to the female expatriate audience. The presentation took place in June 2010. It was publicised via Hagman's recently launched women's network via the intranet and was subject to a video-conference whereby interested parties (past and present female expatriates and their partners as well as potential women expatriates) could attend either in person or watch the presentation via the conference link live (and participate in the questions and discussion session) or, to cope with time zone issues, download it for later viewing. A

panel of female expatriates and repatriates who were in the UK and the newly appointed HR – International Assignments representative took part in a question and answer session on expatriation once the research findings had been presented and questions to the researcher answered.

Data analysis and production of thesis findings

After a period of thesis writing up (literature review, methodology and research method), the researcher returned to the data analysis of the 43 interviews in September 2010 (26 assignee interview transcripts and 17 HR expert interviews that were either recorded or from which field notes were taken). These produced a wealth of qualitative data (almost 400,000 words). To begin with these were analysed manually with themes identified and codes attached to them being recorded using Microsoft Word. To do this, key subject themes were colour coded with sub-themes highlighted and key words identified to produce a series of sidebar notations to identify emerging themes as codes. Illustrative quotations in each subject area were highlighted and copied into separate documents using Microsoft Word. The female expatriate interview transcribed data, in the main, followed a common order and thus it was relatively straightforward to locate responses relating to the different aspects of expatriation discussed. A similar process of colour coding of main themes, highlighting of sub-themes within them and identification of key words was carried out to create sidebar comments boxes to identify coding of text. Again illustrative quotations in each subject area were copied into separate documents using Microsoft Word. The open survey comments copied across into Microsoft Word documents were similarly coded.

This preliminary review of the interview data using manual techniques took around six weeks to complete and was particularly valuable as it provided a high degree of familiarisation with the qualitative materials to facilitate further detailed analysis. However, it readily became apparent that the sheer volume of material was likely to present considerable difficulty in relation to the time it would take to locate and retrieve data in response to each research question. As a result, the researcher had to weigh up the pros and cons of using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).

The most obvious advantage of using CAQDAS appeared to be the speed of data retrieval but set against this was the requirement to learn how to use NVivo 7 and to re-enter codes into it. Given the time and cost considerations of undertaking this, the advantages had to clearly outweigh the disadvantages.

The researcher held discussions with a number of research colleagues in various institutions and the picture was by no means clear cut. The majority reported conducting qualitative research and had not used CAQDAS; but they commented on the length of time taken to analyse their data using Microsoft Word and that 20 lengthy interviews (of similar length to those in this study) appeared to represent the limit of what was manageable using this approach. Academics who had used NVivo reported that it would only be worth the time and cost involved in learning to use it if the researcher planned to use the data for journal articles or other purposes beyond the PhD writing up. The researcher then examined literature in relation to the uses of CAQDAS. Research into the advantages of using NVivo suggested: the value of coding trees being used to link inter-related ideas; the ability to quantify the prevalence of an issue and thus ensure that any illustrative quotations were representative of the sample rather than simply the most noticeable or outspoken; and the transparency with which the coding process could be reported aiding reader understanding (Bryman and Bell, 2007). These did appear to present compelling reasons for using NVivo. Yet, set against these advantages, the use of CAQDAS potentially raised the dangers of: wasting precious time repeating data entry to find that the outcomes in terms of retrieval were no better than had Microsoft Word continued to be used; overly quantifying qualitative research and losing its unique contribution; and, perhaps the most worrying, that the nested context of the data would be lost through fragmentation of the data in retrieval (*ibid.*). The researcher remained undecided.

To learn more, the researcher decided to attend a one-day university based course on using NVivo. This enabled learning how to enter, code and retrieve data but the researcher remained unconvinced as to whether this would be the best approach to use. Discussion with others on the course suggested a trial: to code and enter one interview into NVivo and explore the outcomes. This was carried out and it confirmed the speed of

data retrieval; that the software enabled data retrieval without loss of context; and that inter-related codes could easily be retrieved and data presented. The researcher decided to go ahead: the transcripts from the female expatriates and the HR experts, as well as the SPSS open comments data and the descriptive summaries of the policy documents used to create the policy summary tables, were imported into the CAQDAS software NVivo 7. All qualitative data were coded into coding trees with themes linked to the research framework and questions – a process that took just over six weeks to complete. Thus, in total, the process of qualitative data entry and preliminary analysis took from October 2010 to February 2011.

When several researchers are engaged in coding data, there is a concern that they will code the materials differently; with a sole researcher the problem concerns identification and interpretation of issues and how these relate to the research questions and coding drift with the lack of checking or supervision by another researcher to reduce this. Rather than apply the codes that had been devised and applied to the text in Microsoft Word, simply copying them over to sections of text in NVivo, the researcher decided to code afresh in an attempt to reduce potential coding drift. Thus, the codes used in Microsoft Word were applied with a fresh eye to the transcripts using NVivo. In this way it was possible afterwards to compare coding trees in text sections coded via NVivo with those previously applied in Microsoft Word, recorded as sidebar comments boxes. This may not have been a foolproof method of eliminating coding drift but at least it was possible to provide a second check on data coding. Overall, there was a high degree of overlap in the application of codes, although the use of NVivo with its higher speed of data entry once the main coding trees were established, did encourage and facilitate the use of further more detailed coding, looking beyond the original codes used in Microsoft Word, which could be used if needed (or collapsed if not).

Beginning with the female expatriate transcripts, followed by those from the HR experts, the open survey comments and finally the descriptive policy document summaries, all of the qualitative data were subjected to coding on a thematic basis following the various identified theoretical and organisational policy and practice aspects as detailed in the research framework and questions. In addition, emergent issues

identified through the preliminary manual data analysis were included. This created a large volume of hierarchical and parallel codes recorded as NVivo coding trees. After the completion of the first coding round, it was possible to collapse some of the hierarchical codes but others required expansion and thus a second coding round was carried out to refine the outcomes from the categorisation and grouping of themes.

This two part stage of coding and categorising the qualitative data formed the underpinning to a template analysis with the list of codes representing themes within the qualitative data. Systematic identification of key themes could then be undertaken and the qualitative data analysed and evaluated. Appendix 8 presents the summary of the NVivo coding process; it shows the issues identified in the first coding round (and the subsequent round as appropriate) grouped into coding groups and aligned to the research framework and questions. Emergent issues and second round coding are highlighted and definitions given to explain the backdrop to the coding. The coding trees were used to construct a template which was based on the research framework and questions and coding groups linked to these.

As the researcher worked through the initial template and transcripts, discrepancies were found between the expected categorisation (as shown in the nomenclature of the coding) and its appropriateness to the research issue. Although the research framework suggested that certain explanations would underpin certain research questions, when analysing the data this was not always found to be the most appropriate categorisation. For example, the overlap that was found between gender role stereotyping (originally discussed under the family effect) and sex role stereotyping (originally discussed under the occupational segregation effect) within the qualitative data meant that these were best taken together in analysing data to present the research findings and were most applicable in explaining the industry effect on women's expatriate participation.

The final stage of data analysis took place between February and August 2011. Coding trees were interrogated to group linked themes. These were recorded by theme with qualitative data extracted and produced as print outs. Frequency counts were recorded by coding tree of the number of sources commenting on an issue and the

number of references that they made to it. These data were tabulated linked to the research questions and grouped for presentation aligned to the findings chapters for the thesis. Appendix 9 provides a summary of the volume of NVivo data by coding tree.

During the period between February and August 2011, the SPSS database was also interrogated to produce descriptive statistics that could be used to set context for the qualitative data and subsequent evaluation of the research findings. The number of survey responses received was relatively low (71 returns were received out of a possible 93); although the response rate (76%) suggested that the results could be considered representative of the total population. The production of the company reports had indicated little difference between the responses of the female expatriates in the two case studies. In consideration of this and, given the low volume of female expatriates, the researcher combined the data from the two case study firms when conducting data analysis using SPSS.

Although the nature of the data obtained via the survey provided a useful contextual backdrop to frame the qualitative data findings, it precluded detailed statistical analysis. The questionnaire design led to the generation of predominantly nominal data; for the majority of questions arbitrary codes had been attributed to the response categories. For example, participants were asked to record whether they would undertake a particular assignment type in future with the response categories being: not at all = 1; maybe = 2; definitely = 3; no opinion = 9. From these data, modes could be calculated.

The survey also contained questions asking the participants to record the level of importance that they attached to particular items as being: not important = 1; important = 2; or very important = 3; not applicable = 9. Again these labels produce nominal data but imply a sequence and potentially could be treated as ordinal data (although recognising that strictly speaking no order is implied by arbitrary codes). For a limited number of questions, the respondents had been asked to rate the importance of particular issues in supporting their assignment participation, creating ordinal data on a three-point rating scale (not important = 1; important = 2; or very important = 3; no opinion = 9). From these data (excluding 9 codes), medians could be calculated to demonstrate the level of

importance attributed to various policy elements in assignment participation. As similar labelling of response categories had been used throughout the survey, the respondents may have treated questions requiring categorisation and rating similarly as the distinction between labelling and rating importance levels became unclear.

It was recognised that calculating means and standard deviations would be inappropriate for nominal data treated as ordinal and ordinal data. Nonetheless, means and standard deviations were calculated as a proxy recognising that, as a first glance, they could highlight differences for further investigation. The only question included in the survey that produced cardinal (scale data) related to hours of work. Here, the respondents frequently did not state a single figure to represent their normal hours of work but gave a range; the mid-point was taken for data entry. Means and standard deviations were calculated by assignment type.

Analysis of the qualitative data in NVivo had already suggested that the assignment type was a particularly important factor in women's expatriate participation. Cross-tabs were therefore run to analyse the survey responses, as far as was possible, by length and pattern and, where appropriate, un/accompanied status. Chi-square tests were performed but indicated that insufficient cell counts resulted in the assumptions of the test being violated (Pallant, 2007). Combining cells in order to raise the cell counts to a viable level was considered inappropriate for two reasons: the sensitivity of the test would be lost at the expense of conducting it; and, the tracer study's 'tag' (Hornby and Symon, 1994), flowing through the research concerning the underpinning policies of support would be compromised. For example, the three extended international transferees' responses could not be combined with those of the 51 long-term assignees as their assignments were underpinned by very different policies. Clearly the policies supporting short-term and rotational assignees were also tailored to assignment length and pattern, so again no combinations of these assignment types were possible. The policy components applicable to graduates on short-term placements and those applicable to other short-term assignees were similar, enabling data from the nine graduate and three short-term assignees to be combined. However, even if the data from the three extended international transferees had been excluded, there were just 12 short-term assignees and

five rotationals. Carrying out cross-tabs inevitably reduced cell counts to below the minimum expected count required for the chi-square test to be performed with a suitable outcome (20% or fewer cells with counts of 5). In essence, the skewed nature and size of the population prevented tests of association and strength of relationship.

Updating the literature review

During the period from January to April 2011, the advanced database search was re-run (again in the English language only) using the same search terms as before to update the literature review to cover the period from 2006 (when the previous systematic search had been conducted) to the writing up stage of the thesis. The databases now available to the researcher in her academic institution were as follows; dates searched are given in parentheses: *Business Source Premier* (01/2006 to 04/2011), *Emerald Fulltext* (01/2006 to 04/2011), *IngentaConnect* (01/2006 to 04/2011), *Sage Journals Online* (01/2006 to 04/2011).

Writing up

The final stage of the research involved the writing up of the findings, final literature review updates and preparation of the thesis (including necessary revisions) for submission. This stage began in April 2011 and took a year to complete.

APPENDIX 6: Semi-structured interview schedules

Schedule 1: HR – International Assignments specialist functional interviews

Sue Ellen, HR – International Assignments, Hagman Co., 15 October, 2008.

Alexis, HR – International Assignments, Collins Co., 29 October 2008.

Interview checklist: Gender diversity in international assignments

These questions are intended for HQ company representatives. Not all questions may apply to the person interviewed. Role of interviewee _____

Part A: Women international assignees – job and location factors

1. Size of E & P: number of employees ____; % women ____; change over 5 years?
2. Number of international assignees ____; % women ____; change over 5 years?
3. Location and classification (e.g. risk/health/isolation) of international assignees? Changes in operational locations?
4. Location of women assignees? Changes over the past 5 years?
5. Relationship between assignment location and women's participation? Explain.
6. Functions/occupations/job roles of women expats? Examples? Is this profile changing? How/why?
7. Relationship between type of occupation/job role and women's participation? Explain.
8. Job levels/grades of women expats? Examples? Is this profile changing? How/why?
9. Action taken by oil and gas E & P sector as a whole (e.g. via oil and gas peer group) to encourage women to take up expat roles? E.g. Working spouse visa lobbying? Please explain.
10. How do you make women's participation as assignees a priority in your company? Specific policies/initiatives to increase the % of women expats? E.g. new graduate development programmes? Examples?

Part B: Assignment types/deployment options

11. Your company uses various assignment types (short-term, commuter, rotational, long-term, variable working patterns). What determines which of these are used? Explain each in turn.
12. Is the mix changing? Why? Examples?
13. What % of women undertake: short-term ____%; commuter ____%; rotational ____%; long-term ____%; other ____% assignment types? How has this changed over the past 5 years? Explain.
14. Relationship between the assignment type and women's participation? Examples?

15. Average length of assignments (short-term, commuter, rotational, long-term, variable working patterns)? Have assignment lengths changed over the past 5 years? Why? Explain each in turn.
16. Relationship between the assignment length and women's participation? Examples?
17. What do you see as the main hallmarks/features/characteristics of your company's diversity/EO policy? How is it applied to short-term assignments; to commuter assignments; to rotationals; to long-term; to variable working patterns? Examples of each?
18. Do you receive requests to work non-standard hours within your various international assignments? How many? Who makes them? How are these managed? Examples: who has benefited and how?
19. Is there a work-life balance policy applied to expats? What do you see as its main hallmarks/features/characteristics? How is the policy applied? Examples: who has benefited and how?

Part C: Assignment selection

21. Stages in the selection process? Who is involved at each stage? How does the selection process operate? Problems/difficulties? How are these managed? Examples?
22. Any pre-selection training? Training/preparation if potential expats do not have the full skills sets sought?
23. Which elements of the selection process facilitate women's expatriation? Which impede it?

Part D: International assignment policy development/implementation

24. Key changes/developments in your international relocation policy within the last 5 years? When were they? Why were they implemented?
25. Are your policies strictly applied to your various assignment types? If applied loosely, who has benefited and how? Examples.

Training/skills preparation – post-selection

26. Training/skills preparation offered to expats? Anything of particular benefit to/taken up by women? Explain. Who has benefited and how?
27. Changes to the training/skills preparation policy over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Explain: who has benefited and how?

Dual careers/co-working

28. Elements of your dual career/partner policies that facilitate women's participation? Explain: who has benefited and how? And the co-working policy? Explain: who has benefited and how?
29. How do the various assignment types (short-term, commuter, rotational, long-term, variable working patterns) facilitate dual career/co-working women assignees? Explain each in turn: who has benefited and how?

30. Changes to the dual careers/co-working policies over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?

Career development/parenting/sponsors/mentors/networks

31. What career development initiatives do you have? Explain.
32. What parenting/sponsor/mentor arrangements do you have? Explain.
33. What networking opportunities are there for women expats? Explain.
34. How do the various assignment types (short-term, commuter, rotational, long-term, variable working patterns) facilitate career development? Explain each in turn with examples of your female assignees.
35. Changes to the career development policy over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
36. Changes to policies on parenting, sponsors, mentors and networks over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?

Repatriation

37. Repatriation support? Redeployment? Training? Social? Family?
38. Changes to repatriation policy over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Who has benefited and how?
39. Has repatriation support encouraged other women to become expats? Examples?

Other

40. Other policies/initiatives that support women's participation as expats? Describe/give examples?
41. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation?

Schedule 2: Human resource (HR) specialist functional interviews

Collins Co.

Krystle, HR – Learning and Development, March 2009

Training

1. Any pre-selection training? Training/preparation if potential expats do not have the full skills sets sought?
2. Training/skills preparation offered to expats post-selection? Anything of particular benefit to/taken up by women? Explain: who has benefited and how?
3. Changes to the training/skills preparation policy over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women expats? Figures (numbers; %)? Explain: who has benefited and how?
4. What do you see as the main hallmarks/features/characteristics of your company's diversity/EO policy?
5. How is Collins Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the expatriate training programme?

Development

6. What career development policies/initiatives do you have? Explain.
7. Changes to the career development policy/initiatives over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
8. Coaching initiatives? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
9. How is Collins Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the expatriate career development programme?

Career paths, management and tracking

10. How are expatriates' careers planned, managed and tracked?
11. What changes have been made to this process over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
12. What sponsor/mentor arrangements do you have? Explain how these work in practice. Changes to policies on sponsors/mentors over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
13. How do the various assignment types (short-term, commuter, rotational, long-term) facilitate assignees' career paths and the management of expatriate careers? Explain each in turn with examples of your female assignees?
14. How is Collins Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the international assignment career path and career management programmes?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

Amanda, HR – Resourcing, March 2009

1. Please describe how the graduate recruitment intake process works. What do you do to make/help Collins Co. appeal to women?
2. How many graduates do you take each year? Is this number increasing? If so why? Can you comment on trends over the past five years?
3. In which countries do you recruit? Is this mix changing? If so, why? If not, why not? Again, can you comment on trends over the past five years?
4. Qualifications: earth sciences; engineering; others?
5. Please comment on the diversity of the graduate intake – gender, ethnicity, age, marital status, etc. Is this changing at all – any explanations for this?
6. What is the length of the graduate training programme?
7. Please run through the graduate deployment programme in terms of international assignments. How are these determined? When in their programme are they undertaken? How many countries are involved? Do the graduates get a say in where they go? Any gender diversity implications?
8. What roles do the new graduates take up where international mobility is involved? Any gender diversity implications?
9. If external recruitment is required, other than at graduate intake level, how does the process work?
10. How do you make women's participation as expatriates a priority in your company? Any specific policies/initiatives to increase the % of women expats? Examples?
11. What action is taken by oil and gas E & P sector as a whole to encourage women to take up expat roles? Please explain.
12. What do you see as the main hallmarks/features/characteristics of your company's diversity/EO policy?
13. How is Collins Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the graduate recruitment programme and the deployment of graduates on international assignments? Also in respect of other recruits to the company who are sent on assignment?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

Fallon, HR – Far East, April 2009

1. Stages in the selection process for expatriation? Who is involved at each stage? How is available internal talent matched to roles? Problems/difficulties? How are these managed? Examples?
2. How do the various assignment types (short-term, commuter, rotational, long-term) affect selection decisions? Explain each in turn with examples of your female assignees.
3. Changes to the selection policy and practices over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
4. Which elements of the selection process do you think facilitate women's expatriation? Which impede it?

5. What sponsor/mentor/coaching arrangements do you have? Explain how these work in practice. Changes to policies on sponsors, etc over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
6. What do you see as the main hallmarks/features/characteristics of your company's diversity/EO policy?
7. How is Collins Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the expatriate assignment selection processes?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

Hagman Co.

Pamela, HR – Graduate Scheme, December 2008

1. Please describe how the graduate recruitment intake process works. What do you do to make/help Hagman Co. appeal to women?
2. How many graduates do you take each year? Is this number increasing? If so why? Can you comment on trends over the past five years?
3. In which countries do you recruit? Is this mix changing? If so, why? If not, why not? Again, can you comment on trends over the past five years?
4. Qualifications: earth sciences; engineering; others?
5. Please comment on the diversity of the graduate intake – gender, ethnicity, age, marital status, etc. Is this changing at all – any explanations for this?
6. What is the length of the graduate training programme?
7. Please run through the graduate deployment programme in terms of international assignments. How are these determined? When in their programme are they undertaken? How many countries are involved? Do the graduates get a say in where they go? Any gender diversity implications?
8. What roles do the new graduates take up where international mobility is involved? Any gender diversity implications?
9. How do you make women's participation as expatriates a priority in your company? Any specific policies/initiatives to increase the % of women expats? Examples?
10. How is Hagman Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the graduate recruitment programme and the deployment of graduates on international assignments?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

Donna, HR – Resourcing, December 2008

1. What do you see as the main hallmarks/features/characteristics of your company's diversity/EO policy?
2. How do you make women's participation as expatriates a priority in your company? Specific policies/initiatives to increase the % of women expats? Examples?

3. How is the EO/diversity policy embedded within the approaches taken to managing international assignments: recruitment, selection and deployment (e.g. with regard to short-term assignments; to commuter assignments; to rotationals; to long-term).
4. How is the EO/diversity policy embedded within the international assignment policies used to support international mobility?
5. What action is taken by oil and gas E & P sector as a whole to encourage women to take up expat roles? Please explain.
6. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

Bobby, HR – Recruitment, December 2008

1. Stages in the selection process for expatriation? Who is involved at each stage? How is available internal talent matched to roles? Problems/difficulties? How are these managed? Examples?
2. If external recruitment is required, how does the process work?
3. How do the various assignment types (short-term, commuter, rotational, long-term) affect selection decisions? Explain each in turn with examples of your female assignees.
4. Changes to the selection policy and practices over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
5. Which elements of the selection process do you think facilitate women's expatriation? Which impede it?
6. What parenting/sponsor arrangements do you have? Explain how these work in practice. Changes to policies on parenting/ sponsors over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
7. How is Hagman Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the expatriate assignment recruitment and selection programmes?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

April, HR - Training, December 2008 and Lucy, HR – Development, December 2008

Training

1. Any pre-selection training? Training/preparation if potential expats do not have the full skills sets sought?
2. Training/skills preparation offered to expats post-selection? Anything of particular benefit to/taken up by women? Explain: who has benefited and how?
3. Changes to the training/skills preparation policy over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women expats? Figures (numbers; %)? Explain: who has benefited and how?
4. How is Hagman Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the expatriate training programme?

Development

5. What career development policies/initiatives do you have? Explain.
6. Changes to the career development policy/initiatives over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
7. Coaching initiatives? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
8. How is Hagman Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the expatriate career development programme?

Career paths, management and tracking

9. How are expatriates' careers planned, managed and tracked?
10. What changes have been made to this process over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
11. What parenting/sponsor arrangements do you have? Explain how these work in practice. Changes to policies on parenting/ sponsors over the past 5 years? Has this resulted in increased numbers of women assignees? Figures (numbers; %)? Examples: who has benefited and how?
12. How do the various assignment types (short-term, commuter, rotational, long-term) facilitate assignees' career paths and the management of expatriate careers? Explain each in turn with examples of your female assignees?
13. How is Hagman Co.'s EO/diversity policy embedded within the international assignment career path and career management programmes?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

Cliff, HR – Performance, June 2009

1. How does the APR process work for expatriates? Who is involved in it? When does it take place (annually)? Who owns the process?
2. What are links between the line and the parent managers? And what about the very senior levels B and above – how are they reviewed?
3. How is it linked to employee's ability or potential to state their international mobility?
4. What happens to the paperwork and the discussions? How are they actioned?
5. How is the EO/diversity policy embedded within the APR?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

Cally, HR - Learning and Development, July 2009

1. How does the ADR process work for expatriates? Who is involved in it? When does it take place (annually)? Who owns the process?
2. What are links between the line and the parent managers? And what about the very senior levels B and above – how are they reviewed?

3. How is it linked to employee's ability or potential to state their international mobility?
4. What happens to the paperwork and the discussions? How are they actioned?
5. How is the EO/diversity policy embedded within the ADR?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

John Ross, Function Head, July 2009

1. What do you see as the main hallmarks/features/characteristics of your company's diversity/EO policy?
2. The women's network? How is this taking shape? How will it work? Will it encompass expatriation and how?
3. How do you make women's participation as expatriates a priority in your company? Specific policies/initiatives to increase the % of women expats? Examples?
4. How is the EO/diversity policy embedded within the approaches taken to managing international assignments: recruitment, selection and deployment (e.g. with regard to short-term assignments; to commuter assignments; to rotationals; to long-term).
5. How is the EO/diversity policy embedded within the international assignment policies used to support international mobility?
6. What action is taken by oil and gas E & P sector as a whole to encourage women to take up expat roles? Please explain.
7. Is there anything else you would like to add in respect of women's participation as expatriates?

Schedule 3: Female expatriate interviews

Section 1: Your assignment

1. How would you describe the purpose of your international assignment (IA):
 - Developmental?
 - Functional/project-based?
 - Strategic?
2. What do you see as the main advantages of undertaking:
 - A short term assignment (STA)? If you have been on one has it acted as a taster for further IAs?
 - A rotational assignment?
 - A long-term assignment (LTA)?
 - A commuter assignment?
 - Single status assignments?
 - And the disadvantages of each?
3. What effect would it have on your IA participation if your current assignment is:
 - Extended?
 - Shortened?
 - Your personal circumstances change?
4. When you decided to take your current IA what priority did you give to the following:
 - The money?
 - The IA benefits package?
 - Your career within Collins Co./Hagman Co.?
 - Other factors (e.g. location/lifestyle/family)?

Section 2: Your career development

5. To what extent do you believe that going on IA in Collins Co./ Hagman Co. is crucial to:
 - Your development?
 - Your career progression?
6. Do you see any particular IAs as being more career enhancing than others:
 - LTA/STA/rotational/commuter? Explain.
 - Location? Explain.
 - Are all locations accessible to women? Explain.
7. How will you make it known:
 - That you would like another IA?
 - Where you would like to go (or not to go)?
 - What role/job you would like?

8. To get your next IA, how instrumental do you feel the following company processes are:
- The annual development review?
 - The annual performance review?
 - The company's talent management and succession planning process?
 - The training interventions/opportunities?
 - The repatriation process in terms of career management?
 - Others?
9. You are now in grade _____.
- How do you get up to the next grade?
 - How long do you think this will take?
 - How far do you feel obstructed in moving up?

Section 3: The International Assignment Process and Policy

10. Did the expatriation process work well for you? Explain.
- What role did the IA team play?
11. What do you see as the key elements in the IA package – the 'make or break' factors without which you would not go?
12. If applicable, how have the following helped you to undertake your IA(s):
- Spouse/partner support?
 - Support for children?
 - Pregnancy/maternity/parental leave support?
 - Social/family support on repatriation?
13. Which aspects of the IA policy have been particularly helpful in supporting your participation? Explain.
- Have there been any changes to it that have been helpful? If yes, explain.

Section 4: Hours of Work and Work-Life Balance

14. Does Collins Co./ Hagman Co. have a 'long hours' culture'? Explain.
15. How do your hours of work differ as an expat from those you worked at home?
16. How is work-life balance (WLB) viewed in your office/asset location?
17. Do you believe you have a WLB?
- If yes, how do you achieve this?
 - If no, what prevents you from achieving this?
18. What forms of flexible hours of work would you find most helpful as an expatriate? Explain.

19. To what extent has your employer been willing to accommodate any request you have made to work flexible hours in your expatriate role? Explain.

Section 5: Equal Opportunities and Diversity

20. If applicable, would you describe the graduate recruitment process as 'female-friendly'? Explain.

21. During the selection process for your IA, were any women involved in interviewing you? Explain.

22. Are any female company staff involved in your:

- Annual development review? Explain.
- Annual performance review? Explain.

23. How does your mentor support you in your IA?

24. If applicable, do you mentor anyone yourself?

- If yes, what company support are you given to do this (e.g. time, training)?

25. What do you see as:

- The advantages of Collins Co.'s/Hagman Co.'s mentoring scheme?
- The disadvantages?

26. Do you think you act as a role model to other women considering an IA? Explain.

27. Do you think that a formal network for women assignees would help to support women's participation as expatriates? Explain.

28. How could (should?):

- The oil and gas exploration and production industry be made more attractive to women?
- IAs be made more 'female friendly'?
- Your employer better support women expatriates through policy and practice?

29. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX 7: The female expatriate survey questionnaire

Women's participation in expatriate assignments within oil and gas exploration

Please let me introduce myself and the research that I am carrying out, sponsored by **Collins Co.**, and supported and facilitated by Alexis, HR – International Assignments.

My name is Sue Shortland and I am a Principal Lecturer in International Human Resource Management at London Metropolitan University Business School. I am currently conducting research into women's participation as expatriates within the oil and gas exploration and production sector and I am contacting you to seek your help with this. Collins Co. has given me permission to approach you as part of the survey stage of my PhD research in which I shall be contacting all of the current female expatriates in your company. My aim is to investigate factors that potentially have an impact on women undertaking international assignments with the intention of evaluating your company's policies and practices.

I attach a survey questionnaire which I am asking you to complete and return it to me by e-mail to my university secure e-mail account s.shortland@londonmet.ac.uk or by fax or air mail post to the university (by 18 March 2009). However, if it makes it easier for you, I am happy to go through it with you on the telephone via a pre-arranged call at a mutually convenient time. To do this, I would need you to read it through beforehand and to have it in front of you during our conversation so that we are able to go through it easily together and I can record your responses in sequence. If you would prefer to complete this by phone, please e-mail me your availability so that a call can be scheduled appropriately. Completion of the questionnaire by e-mail or by telephone is likely to take around 45 minutes.

Please let me assure you that your individual response is confidential and it will not be shared with Collins Co. Results from all the participants will be aggregated to aid decision-making in respect of future policy.

Thank you in advance for your help. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Shortland
Principal Lecturer in International HRM
Department of HRM
London Metropolitan University Business School
London Metropolitan University
Stapleton House
277-281 Holloway Road
London
N7 8HN
UK

E-mail: s.shortland@londonmet.ac.uk (office)

Fax: +44 (0) 207 133 3899 (office)

Tel: +44 (0) * (personal) (*not included for reasons of privacy in this report)

Women's participation in expatriate assignments within oil and gas exploration

Please let me introduce myself and the research that I am carrying out, sponsored by **Hagman Co.**, and supported and facilitated by Sue Ellen, HR – International Assignments.

My name is Sue Shortland and I am a Principal Lecturer in International Human Resource Management at London Metropolitan University Business School. I am currently conducting research into women's participation as expatriates within the oil and gas exploration and production sector and I am contacting you to seek your help with this. Hagman Co. has given me permission to approach you as part of the survey stage of my PhD research in which I shall be contacting all of the current female expatriates in your company. My aim is to investigate factors that potentially have an impact on women undertaking international assignments with the intention of evaluating your company's policies and practices.

I attach a survey questionnaire which I am asking you to complete and return it to me by e-mail to my university secure e-mail account s.shortland@londonmet.ac.uk or by fax or air mail post to the university (by 28 February 2009). However, if it makes it easier for you, I am happy to go through it with you on the telephone via a pre-arranged call to my home at a mutually convenient time. To do this, I would need you to read it through beforehand and to have it in front of you during our conversation so that we are able to go through it easily together and I can record your responses in sequence. If you would prefer to complete this by phone, please e-mail me your availability so that a call can be scheduled appropriately. As this research has been sponsored by Hagman Co., Sue Ellen has asked me to stress to you that the cost of you making the phone call to my personal telephone number is approved company expenditure. Completion of the questionnaire by e-mail or by telephone is likely to take around 45 minutes.

Please let me assure you that your individual response is confidential and it will not be shared with Hagman Co. Results from all the participants will be aggregated to aid decision-making in respect of future policy.

Thank you in advance for your help. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Shortland
Principal Lecturer in International HRM
Department of HRM
London Metropolitan University Business School
London Metropolitan University
Stapleton House
277-281 Holloway Road
London
N7 8HN
UK

E-mail: s.shortland@londonmet.ac.uk (office)

Fax: +44 (0) 207 133 3899 (office)

Tel: +44 (0) * (personal) (*not included for reasons of privacy in this report)

Section A: About yourself

This section helps me to get to know a little about you to set the context for your answers.

Preferred first name:

Surname:

1. What is your marital status?

	Marital status	Please indicate as applicable
1	Married	
2	Partnered	
3	Single	
4	Divorced/ widowed	

2. Do you have children?

	Children	Please indicate as applicable
1	Yes	
2	No	

	If yes, how many?	
	If yes, what are their ages?	

3. Are you accompanied on your current assignment by your spouse/ partner or any other family member(s)?

	Are you accompanied?	
1	Yes	
2	No	

	Accompanied by whom?		
	Husband/partner	1. Yes	2. No
	All of my children	1. Yes	2. No
	Some of my children	1. Yes	2. No
		If yes, please state how many:	
	Another dependent family member(s)	1. Yes	2. No
		If yes, please state who?	

4. Please answer the following regarding your nationality, location and job role issues.

	Location issues	Please indicate
1	What is your nationality? If you have dual nationality, please state the one that you are using for this assignment.	
2	What is your home country (defined as the country where you would normally reside if you are not on an expatriate assignment)?	
3	Which country have you been sent from to undertake your current assignment (point of origin)?	
4	What is your sending business unit?	
5	What is your receiving business unit?	
6	What is your current corporate function?	
7	What is your current occupation?	
8	What is your current job title?	
9	What is your current grade?	

5. What is your ethnicity?

	Ethnicity	Please indicate the category that best applies to you
1	White	
2	Mixed	
3	Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi	
4	Chinese	
5	Other Asian	
6	Black Caribbean	
7	Black African	
8	Other black	
9	Other ethnic group	

6. What is your age?

	Age band	Please indicate the age band that applies
1	24 or under	
2	25-29	
3	30-34	
4	35-39	
5	40-44	
6	45-49	
7	50+	

Section B: Type of assignment and location

7. This question asks you to complete the table below to summarise your expatriation history with Collins Co./ Hagman Co. Please record each assignment you have undertaken (including where you have been assigned to the same country more than once) starting with your first posting. A fictitious example is given in italics to guide you. Please note that a long-term assignment refers to over 1 year; a short-term assignment refers to less than 1 year; a rotational assignment is for example, 28 days on/ 28 days off; a commuter assignment means that you commute home, for example, each weekend.

For each expatriate assignment that you have undertaken with Collins Co./ Hagman co. please indicate the start and end dates.	In which countries were these expatriate assignments undertaken?	Please specify the type of assignment (e.g. long-term; short term; rotational; commuter; other – please specify).	Please specify your occupation	Please specify your job title	Please specify your grade
<i>Collins Co.</i>					
<i>May 2002-June 2004</i>	<i>Algeria</i>	<i>Rotational</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>September 2006-December 2006</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>Senior Analyst</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>June 2007 – November 2007</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>Senior Analyst</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>February 2008-</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>Long-term</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>Section Head</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Hagman Co.</i>					
<i>May 2002-June 2004</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Rotational</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>September 2006-December 2006</i>	<i>Trinidad</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>Senior Analyst</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>June 2007 – November 2007</i>	<i>Trinidad</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>Senior Analyst</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>February 2008-</i>	<i>Australia</i>	<i>Long-term</i>	<i>Geologist</i>	<i>Section Head</i>	<i>B</i>

8. Which of the following types of assignments would you consider undertaking in the future within Collins Co./ Hagman Co.?

	Type of assignment	Not at all 1	Maybe 2	Definitely 3	No opinion 9
1	An accompanied long-term assignment (over 1 year)				
2	An unaccompanied long-term assignment (over 1 year)				
3	An accompanied short term assignment (under 1 year)				
4	An unaccompanied short term assignment (under 1 year)				
5	A rotational assignment (e.g. 28 days on/ 28 days off)				
6	A commuter assignment (you commute home, e.g. each weekend)				

9. Please rate the importance to you of the following:

	Assignment length	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	Not applicable to me 9
1	Being able to reduce the length of expatriate assignments				
2	Being able to extend the length of expatriate assignments				

Please explain your answer.

10. Please indicate whether the following location factors have acted as a disincentive or as a deterrent to your participation in respect of your current and any of your previous expatriate assignments within Collins Co./ Hagman Co.. (NA = not applicable)

	Location factor	My current assignment			My previous assignments			
		Yes – it was a disincentive 1	No 2	NA 9	Yes – it was a disincentive but I went 1	Yes – it was a deterrent, I turned down an assignment 2	No 3	NA 9
1	An extreme climate (weather) in the assignment location							
2	Limited facilities in the assignment location							
3	Primitive health care in the assignment location							
4	A high security assignment location							
5	The cultural restrictions affecting expatriates in the assignment location (e.g. dress, alcohol)							
6	The potential work opportunities in the host location for your spouse/ partner							
7	The potential education opportunities in the host location for your child/ children							
8	Other, please state:							

Please explain your answers.

11. Please feel free to comment on any of the issues raised in this section of the questionnaire if you wish to do so.

Section C: Expatriation and your career

12. Please rate the following career issues in relation to your decision to participate in your current expatriate assignment:

	Career issues	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	No opinion 9
1	Gaining international experience				
2	Gaining cultural understanding				
3	Gaining professional experience				
4	Gaining personal experience				
5	The potential to gain promotion in the host location				
6	The potential to damage your career through assignment refusal				
7	The potential to enhance your career through assignment acceptance				
8	Having a job to come back to on return home				
9	The potential to gain promotion on return home through undertaking the assignment				
10	Other, please state and rate:				
11	Which of the above is the most important to you and why?				

13. How important was the support that you received from the following people in relation to your decision to participate in your current expatriate assignment?

	Support issues	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	Not applicable to me 9
1	Support from a mentor				
2	Support from a network for women assignees				
3	The presence of female expatriate role models currently on assignment				
4	The views of female expatriate role models currently on assignment				
5	The views of female role models returning from an assignment				
6	Other, please state and rate:				

14. Please feel free to comment on any of the issues raised in this section of the questionnaire if you wish to do so.

Section D: Working time, leave and flexible working

This section relates to your working time, leave and ability to work flexibly (e.g. being able to work compressed hours such as nine day fortnights, or to participate in flexitime with core hours and flexible start and finish times). It also examines how important these issues were to you when you made your decision to participate in your current expatriate assignment.

15. Please explain whether being able to participate within flexible working arrangements matters to you with respect to an international assignment.

16. How important were the following working hours and leave issues to you in relation to your decision to participate in your current expatriate assignment?

	Working hours and leave	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	Not applicable to me 9
1	Working local hours in the assignment location (i.e. a different working pattern to that at home)				
2	Working additional hours in the assignment location as the business needs demand				
3	Undertaking international business trips from the assignment location involving extra hours of work				
4	Taking regular periods away from work through a rotational working pattern (e.g. by having 28 days off after 28 days on)				
5	Taking regular periods away from work through a commuter assignment (e.g. by having weekends at home after a week on)				
6	Home leave				
7	Rest and recreation leave (e.g. in remote/hardship locations)				
8	Being able to take maternity leave				
9	Being able to take parental leave (leave associated with caring for a child)				
10	For your spouse/ partner to be able to take paternity leave (if he also works for Collins Co./ Hagman Co.)				
11	Other, please state and rate:				

17. How many hours per week do you normally work in your current assignment?

18. How important to you were the following flexible working issues in relation to your decision to participate in your current expatriate assignment?

	Flexible working issues	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	Not applicable to me 9
1	Being able to work from home when you needed to				
2	Being able to work flexitime (core hours with flexible start and finish times)				
3	Being able to vary your working hours to address your personal needs				
4	Being able to vary your working hours to address your family needs				
5	Being able to take time off for family emergencies				
6	Being able to work part-time				
7	Being able to take a job share arrangement				
8	Other, please state and rate:				

Please explain your answer.

19. Please feel free to comment on any of the issues raised in this section of the questionnaire if you wish to do so.

Section E: The recruitment and selection process

This section relates to the process that applied to identify you as being available to take up your current expatriate assignment.

20. Did you take up your current expatriate assignment as a) an existing Collins Co./ Hagman Co. employee/graduate entrant on Collins Co./ Hagman Co.'s graduate programme (in which case please answer 'yes') or b) not (in which case please answer 'no')?

Yes	No
1	2

21. If you answered 'yes' to question 20, how did you make it known that you were interested in taking up an expatriate assignment? (If your answer to 20 above was 'no' please go to question 22).

	Stating my availability	Yes	No	Not applicable to me
		1	2	9
1	Raised in annual development review			
2	Raised in annual performance review			
3	Raised during one-to-one meetings with my manager			
4	Integral to graduate development programme			
5	Other, please state:			

22. How did you hear about the vacancy for your current expatriate assignment? (Please note questions 1-5 relate specifically to external appointments; questions 6-10 relate specifically to internal appointments, including the graduate entry programme).

	Hearing about and applying for your current expatriate assignment	Yes	No	Not applicable to me
		1	2	9
1	Advertised externally on Collins Co./ Hagman Co.'s website			
2	Advertised externally on a specialist website			
3	Via recruitment agency			
4	In press			
5	Approached to apply via executive search firm			
6	Openly advertised internally on the intranet			
7	Openly advertised internally on the intranet and I was invited to apply			
8	Invited personally to take up but it was not advertised			
9	Raised as possibility in my annual development review			
10	Discussed as part of the graduate development programme			
11	Other, please state:			

23. Who was involved/ had a say in the decision to select you for your current expatriate assignment? Please rate only those people who were involved in the selection decision in terms of their importance to you in being selected for your current expatriate assignment. If a particular individual did not have a say or it was not applicable for them to be involved in the selection decision for your assignment please record it as 'No' and do not rate them. If you answered 'no' or 'don't know' to all of the options in question 23, please go straight on to question 24.

	Who was involved/ had a say in the selection decision				Only where you have answered 'Yes', please rate the importance of their input within the selection decision.			
		Yes 1	No 2	Don't know 3	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	No opinion 9
1	Your direct line manager in the home country							
2	Your line of business manager (functional manager)							
3	Your line manager in the host country							
4	The HR's international assignments team							
5	The equal opportunities/ diversity representative							
6	Other, please state and rate:							

24. How did the selection process operate for your current expatriate assignment?

	How selection process conducted	Yes 1	No 2	Don't know 9
1	Formally according to process			
2	Informally			
3	In open/ transparent manner			
4	In closed/ not transparent manner			

25. How important to you were Collins Co./ Hagman Co.'s gender-related policies in enabling you to participate in your current expatriate assignment?

	Gender issues	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	No opinion 9
1	Collins Co./ Hagman Co.'s equal opportunities policy (compliance with legislation)				
2	Collins Co./ Hagman Co.'s diversity policy (accommodating differences)				

Please explain your answer.

26. Please feel free to comment on any of the issues raised in this section of the questionnaire if you wish to do so.

Section F: The training process

27. Please explain whether being able to participate within particular training programmes matters to you with respect to taking up an international assignment.

28. Please record which of the following training programmes were offered to you, which ones you took up and how you rate them in terms of importance in enabling you to participate in your current expatriate assignment.

	Training element	Which of the following training elements were offered? (NA = not applicable)			For the elements that were offered, did you undertake the training?		Finally, if you undertook the training, how important was the training received?			
		Yes 1	No 2	NA 9	Yes 1	No 2	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	No opinion 9
1	Job-related skills training for the available assignment position									
2	The provision of personal skills training for the available assignment position (e.g. managing myself, managing others)									
3	Pre-assignment visit									
4	Language training									
5	Country briefing									
6	Cross-cultural training									
7	Security briefing									
8	Driving training									
9	Office attendance training while on rotational assignment									
10	Spouse/ partner training									
11	Repatriation preparation									
12	Other, please state and rate:									

Section G: The international assignment policy

This section relates to the international assignment policy that has been applied to your current expatriate assignment.

29. Please complete the following table by stating which of the international assignment policy elements relating to financial issues you received. Then please rate only the items that you received in terms of their importance to your current expatriate assignment participation. If you did not receive an item or it was not applicable to your type of assignment please record it as 'No' or 'NA' (not applicable) and do not rate it.

	Financial issues	Did you receive this?			Importance of element received			
		Yes 1	No 2	NA 9	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	No opinion 9
1	Salary linked to your home country pay							
2	Pension continuity							
3	Financial incentives/ bonus							
4	Share schemes/ stock options							
5	Cost of living/ commodities and services allowance							
6	Foreign service premium (monthly uplift linked to location)							
7	Relocation/ expatriate mobility allowance (one-off payment)							
8	Rotational allowance							
9	Rest and recreation (change of scenery) allowance							
10	Disturbance/ expatriate allowance							
11	Graduate placement overseas allowance							
12	Tax preparation assistance							
13	Medical insurance cover							
14	Payment of other insurances (life, health)							
15	Work permit/ visa and passport assistance (financial and preparation) for yourself							

30. Please complete the following table by stating which of the international assignment policy elements relating to housing and subsistence issues you received. Then please rate only the items that you received in terms of their importance to your current expatriate assignment participation. If you did not receive an item or it was not applicable to your type of assignment please record it as 'No' or 'NA' (not applicable) and do not rate it.

	Housing and subsistence issues	Did you receive this?			Importance of element received			
	Policy element	Yes 1	No 2	NA 9	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	No opinion 9
1	Housing in host location							
2	Temporary accommodation							
3	Home search in the host location							
4	Payment of utilities							
5	Telephone payments							
6	Provision of a security guard							
7	Provision of/ payment for meals							

31. Please complete the following table by stating which of the international assignment policy elements relating to travel, transportation and leave issues you received. Then please rate only the items that you received in terms of their importance to your current expatriate assignment participation. If you did not receive an item or it was not applicable to your type of assignment please record it as 'No' or 'NA' (not applicable) and do not rate it.

	Travel, transportation and leave issues	Did you receive this?			Importance of element received			
	Policy element	Yes 1	No 2	NA 9	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	No opinion 9
1	Transport to/ from host location							
2	Car/ cash allowance/ local transport							
3	Provision of a driver							
4	Shipment of household goods							
5	Home leave travel costs							
6	Vacation							
7	Flights to reunite family							

32. Please complete the following table by stating which of the international assignment policy elements relating to social and family issues you received. Then please rate only the items that you received in terms of their importance to your current expatriate assignment participation. If you did not receive an item or it was not applicable to your type of assignment please record it as 'No' or 'NA' (not applicable) and do not rate it.

	Social and family issues	Did you receive this?			Importance of element received			
		Yes 1	No 2	NA 9	Not important 1	Important 2	Very important 3	No opinion 9
1	Children's education allowance							
2	School search in the host location							
3	Co-working assistance (you and your spouse/ partner already work for your company)							
4	Dual career support (where only you are employed by your company)							
5	Work permit/ visa assistance for spouse/ partner							
6	Spouse/ partner employment assistance							
7	Spouse/ partner allowance							
8	Pregnancy support							
9	Club membership							
10	Family emergency assistance							
11	Repatriation social support							
12	Repatriation family support							
13	Education assistance for children on repatriation							

33. Please feel free to comment on any of the issues raised in this section of the questionnaire if you wish to do so.

34. Would you be willing to take part in a teleconferencing interview with me to discuss your answers in more detail? Yes/No*.

Thank you for your time and assistance in helping me with my research.

<p>Sue Shortland Principal Lecturer in International HRM Department of HRM London Metropolitan University Business School London Metropolitan University Stapleton House, 277-281 Holloway Road London N7 8HN UK</p>	<p>Please use the following contact details:</p> <p>E-mail: s.shortland@londonmet.ac.uk</p> <p>Fax: +44 (0) 207 133 3899 (office)</p> <p>Tel: +44 (0) * (personal) (*not included for reasons of privacy in this report)</p>
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APPENDIX 8: Coding descriptors and NVivo coding trees					
Research framework:	Research question [† = emergent issue/ question]	Coding groups [** = second round grouping] [† = emergent issue/ question]	Issues in first coding round [* = second round expansion of region to identify country level codes] [† = emergent issue/ question]	Collins Co. policy documents (see key)	Hagman Co. policy documents (see key)
Assignment type effect (Assignment type effect) Relates to aspects of the assignment type and how these affect women's expatriate participation.	Function (Assignment type effect\Function\ Function = functional role held by assignee, linked to assignment type.	**Commercial (Assignment type effect\ Function\Commercial) Commercial = marketing, buying/ selling oil and gas.	Commercial (Assignment type effect\Function\ Commercial) Contracts and Procurement (Assignment type effect\Function\ Commercial\Contracts and Procurement) Economics (Assignment type effect\ Function\Commercial\Economics)		
		**CSR (Assignment type effect\ Function\CSR) CSR = corporate social responsibility.	Community Development (Assignment type effect\Function\ CSR\Community Development) Community Relations (Assignment type effect\Function\ CSR\Community Relations) Sustainable Development (Assignment type effect\Function\ CSR\Sustainable Development)		
		**Engineering (Assignment type effect\ Function\Engineering) Engineering = roles frequently on rigs on/offshore, or field work.	EHS (Assignment type effect\Function\ Engineering\EHS) EHS = environmental health and safety		

			Engineering (Assignment type effect\Function\ Engineering)		
		**Exploration (Assignment type effect\ Function\Exploration) Exploration = sub-surface; data collection and analysis.	Geology (Assignment type effect\Function\ Exploration\Geology) Geophysics (Assignment type effect\Function\ Exploration\Geophysics)		
			Finance (Assignment type effect\Function\ Finance) Finance = accounts functions.		
			HR (Assignment type effect\Function\HR) HR = human resource management.		
			IT (Assignment type effect\Function\IT) IT = information technology.		
			Legal (Assignment type effect\Function\ Legal) Legal = contracts/links with host authorities.		
	Length (Assignment type effect\Length\ Length = period on assignment. This refers to the research question: what effect does the assignment length have on women's expatriation?)		Graduate scheme (Assignment type effect\Length\ Graduate scheme) Graduate scheme = a series of short- term placements, usually four over two years, at least one abroad.		IPP
			Local hire (Assignment type effect\Length\ local hire)	EIT	

			Local hire = lengthy assignment or on local terms.		
			LTA (Assignment type effect\Length\LTA) LTA = long-term assignment – typically at least one year.	Cat A Cat B	LTA
			STA (Assignment type effect\Length\STA) STA = short-term assignment – typically under a year.	STIDA	STA
	Location (Assignment type effect\Location\ Location = geographical factors. This refers to the research question: what effect does the assignment location have on women's expatriation?	†**Career development (Assignment type effect\ Location\Career development) Career development = career implications of assignment in country/location.	†Autonomy (Assignment type effect\Location\ Career development\Autonomy) Autonomy = career implications of having more or less autonomy. †Multiple assignments (Assignment type effect\Location\ Career development\Multiple assignments) Multiple assignments = career implications of a series of assignments. †Size of asset (Assignment type effect\Location\ Career development\Size of asset) Size of asset = career implications of assignment linked to size of host operation.		
		**Country factors (Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors) Country factors = living conditions in country/location.	Climate (Assignment type effect\Location\ Country factors\Climate) Climate = the weather.		

			<p>Culture (Assignment type effect\Location\ Country factors\Culture) Culture = cultural/societal norms and values.</p> <p>Health (Assignment type effect\Location\ Country factors\Health) Health = health care and concerns.</p> <p>Isolation (Assignment type effect\Location\ Country factors\Isolation) Isolation = distance from civilisation/family; also concerns over loneliness.</p> <p>Language (Assignment type effect\Location\ Country factors\Language) Language = host country language; language ability.</p> <p>Lifestyle (Assignment type effect\Location\ Country factors\Lifestyle) Lifestyle = way of life, hobbies and enjoyment in host location.</p> <p>†Pollution (Assignment type effect\Location\ Country factors\Pollution) Pollution = discomfort from host</p>		<p>LTA STA</p>
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			<p>country's unpleasant living conditions.</p> <p>†Road safety (Assignment type effect\Location\ Country factors\Road safety) Road safety = driving and transport concerns in host country.</p> <p>Security (Assignment type effect\Location\ Country factors\Security) Security = safety and security concerns in host country.</p>		
		<p>**Family factors (Assignment type effect\ Location\Family factors) Family factors = issues linked to partners, children and family members.</p>	<p>†Childcare (Assignment type effect\Location\ Family factors\Childcare) Childcare = childcare arrangements/concerns.</p> <p>Children (Assignment type effect\Location\ Family factors\Children) Children = concerns relating to children in host country.</p> <p>Partner (Assignment type effect\Location\ Family factors\Partner) Partner = concerns relating to spouses/partners in host country.</p> <p>Schooling (Assignment type effect\Location\ Family factors\Schooling)</p>		

			Schooling = children's schooling issues.		
		Region (Assignment type effect\ Location\Region) Region = the geographical region of assignment.	† HQ (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\HQ) HQ = nature of headquarters as a geographical location factor.		
		Central Asia (Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Central Asia)	*Azerbaijan (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Central Asia\Azerbaijan) *Kazakhstan (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Central Asia\Kazakhstan) *Russia (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Central Asia\Russia)		
		Far East (Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Far East)	*China (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Far East\China) *Indonesia (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Far East\Indonesia) *Malaysia (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Far East\Malaysia) *Philippines (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Far East\Philippines) *Singapore		

			(Assignment type effect\Location\Region\Far East\Singapore) *Thailand (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\Far East\Thailand)		
		Middle East (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\Middle East)	*Iran (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\Middle East\Iran) *Oman (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\Middle East\Oman) *Saudi Arabia (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\Middle East\Saudi Arabia)		
		North Africa (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\North Africa)	*Algeria (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\North Africa\Algeria) *Egypt (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\North Africa\Egypt) *Libya (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\North Africa\Libya) *Tunisia (Assignment type effect\Location\Region\North Africa\Tunisia)		
		North America (Assignment type effect\	*Canada (Assignment type effect\Location\		

		Location\Region\North America)	Region\North America\Canada) *USA (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\North America\USA)		
		South America (Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\South America)	*Brazil (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\South America\Brazil) *Peru (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\South America\Peru)		
		West Africa (Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\West Africa)	*Gabon (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\West Africa\Gabon) *Nigeria (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\West Africa\Nigeria)		
		Western Europe (Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Western Europe)	*Denmark (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Western Europe\Denmark) *Norway (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Western Europe\Norway) †UK (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\UK) UK = the co-ordination centre for expatriation.		
			Australia (Assignment type effect\Location\ 		

			Region\Australia) *India (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\India) *Trinidad (Assignment type effect\Location\ Region\Trinidad)		
	Pattern (Assignment type effect\ Pattern) Pattern = regular or irregular deployment. This refers to the research question: what effect does the assignment pattern have on women's expatriation?		Business trip (Assignment type effect\Pattern\ Business trip) Business trip = trips to and from the host country to perform duties not normally justifying expatriation. Commuter (Assignment type effect\Pattern\ Commuter) Commuter = frequent travel to and from the host location to carry out an expatriate role. Regular (Assignment type effect\Pattern\ Regular) Regular = deployment pattern is of a regular nature. Rotational (Assignment type effect\Pattern\ Rotational) Rotational = 28/28 days on/off shift assignments.	Rotational	Rotational

	<p>Purpose (Assignment type effect\ Purpose) Purpose = rationale for assignment. This refers to the research question: what effect does the assignment purpose have on women's expatriation?</p>		<p>Development (Assignment type effect\ Purpose\ Development) Development = assignment is of a developmental nature.</p> <p>Functional role (Assignment type effect\ Purpose\ Functional role) Functional role = carrying out a job, on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>Project (Assignment type effect\ Purpose\ Project) Project = a specific project required by the organisation.</p> <p>Strategic (Assignment type effect\ Purpose\ Strategic) Strategic = assignment is of a strategic nature.</p>	<p>Cat A STIDA</p> <p>STIDA</p>	
		<p>†**Dual career driven (Assignment type effect\ Purpose\ Dual career driven) Dual career driven = assignment purpose driven by spouse/partner career.</p>	<p>†Co-working (Assignment type effect\ Purpose\ Dual career driven\ Co-working) Co-working = assignment linked to that of spouse/partner working in the same organisation.</p> <p>†Lead career (Assignment type effect\ Purpose\ Dual career driven\ Lead career) Lead career = assignment linked to that</p>		

			<p>of spouse/partner but hers leads.</p> <p>†Trailing spouse (Assignment type effect\Purpose\ Dual career driven\Trailing spouse) Trailing spouse = assignment linked to that of spouse/partner but his leads.</p>		
	<p>Reason (Assignment type effect\Reason) Reason = why the assignment was taken up.</p>	<p>†**Career development (Assignment type effect\Reason\Career development) Career development = to further their career.</p>	<p>†Asset profile (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Asset profile) Asset profile = high or low organisational profile with consequent career implications.</p> <p>†Autonomy (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Autonomy) Autonomy = high or low autonomy with consequent career implications.</p> <p>Career (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Career) Career = effect on career.</p> <p>†Challenge (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Challenge) Challenge = degree of job challenge.</p> <p>†CV (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\CV) CV = to improve CV.</p>		

			<p>International experience (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\International experience) International experience = to gain international experience.</p> <p>Learning and development (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Learning and development) Learning and development = to learn and achieve development.</p> <p>†Objectives (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Objectives) Objectives = the job objectives.</p> <p>Personal development (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Personal development) Personal development = to develop oneself.</p> <p>Professional development (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Professional development) Professional development = to gain professional development.</p>	Performance management	
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			<p>†Prove yourself (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Prove yourself) Prove yourself = to prove one's worth.</p> <p>†Size of asset (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Size of asset) Size of asset = size of host asset with consequent career implications.</p> <p>Skills development (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Skills development) Skills development = to develop skills.</p> <p>†Time for change (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Time for change) Time for change = to do something new.</p> <p>†Variety (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Variety) Variety = the variety presented by the job/location.</p> <p>Work experience (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Career development\Work experience) Work experience = to gain work experience.</p>	Performance management	
		<p>**Country (Assignment type</p>	<p>Culture (Assignment type effect\Reason\ </p>		

		<p>effect\Reason\Country) Country = the assignment country/location of operation.</p>	<p>Country\Culture) Culture = to gain societal cultural understanding.</p> <p>†Immersion in local understanding (Assignment type effect\Reason\Country\Immersion in local understanding) Immersion in local understanding = to gain host country business practices knowledge/skills.</p>		
		<p>†**Family factors (Assignment type effect\Reason\Family factors) Family factors = aspects of family life (family drivers of expatriation).</p>	<p>†Compatible roles (Assignment type effect\Reason\Family factors\Compatible roles) Compatible roles = assignee and spouse/partner are not employed by the same organisation but both pursue their careers through expatriation.</p> <p>†Co-working (Assignment type effect\Reason\Family factors\Co-working) Co-working = assignment linked to that of spouse/partner working in the same organisation.</p> <p>†Family responsibilities (Assignment type effect\Reason\Family factors\Family responsibilities) Family responsibilities = responsibility for family members (typically aged parents).</p> <p>†Partner</p>	Cat A	<p>LTA Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>LTA</p>

			(Assignment type effect\Reason\ Family factors\Partner) Partner = the influence of the spouse/partner in the assignment decision. †Trailing (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Family factors\Trailing) Trailing = one partner trails to follow the career of the other.	Cat B EIT	Single status STA
		** Length (Assignment type effect\Reason\Length) Length = assignment length.	Extension of IA (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Length\Extension of IA) Extension of IA = the possibility of assignment extension.		
			Length (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Length\Length) Length = assignment length.		
			Money (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Money) Money = financial benefits from assignment.		
		†**Pattern (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Pattern) Pattern = regularity of assignment deployment.	†Timing (Assignment type effect\Reason\ Pattern\Timing) Timing = when the assignment took place.		
		**WLB (Assignment type effect\Reason\ WLB) WLB = work-life balance.	†Flexibility (Assignment type effect\Reason\WLB\ Flexibility) Flexibility = flexible working patterns or		

			<p>hours providing work-life balance.</p> <p>†Time off (Assignment type effect\Reason\WLB\Time off) Time off = time given off work providing work-life balance.</p>		
	<p>Status (Assignment type effect\Status) Status = accompanied/unaccompanied. This refers to the research question: what effect does the assignment status have on women's expatriation?</p>		<p>Accompanied (Assignment type effect\Status\Accompanied) Accompanied = the assignee takes her partner and/or family member(s) to the assignment location.</p> <p>Unaccompanied (Assignment type effect\Status\Unaccompanied) Unaccompanied = the assignee is single or does not take her partner and/or family member(s) to the assignment location.</p>	<p>Cat A</p> <p>STIDA</p>	<p>IPP LTA STA</p> <p>IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA</p>
<p>Organisational effect (Organisational effect) The extent to which – and how – organisational policy and practice addresses family, country, assignee and occupational segregation effects.</p>	<p>Diversity (Organisational effect\Diversity) This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does diversity policy and practice support women's expatriation?</p>	<p>**Application (Organisational effect\Diversity\Application) Application = the extent to which – and how – diversity policy is implemented.</p>	<p>Policy important (Organisational effect\Diversity\Application\Policy important) Policy important = policy/practice is valued.</p> <p>†Positive action (Organisational effect\Diversity\Application\Positive action) Positive action = interventions targeting under-represented groups.</p>	<p>Diversity statement</p>	<p>Group statement</p>

			† Senior grades (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Application\Senior grades) Senior grades = policy application at senior organisational level.		
		† ***Ethnicity (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Ethnicity Ethnicity = policy/practice to widen ethnicity.	† Localisation (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Ethnicity\Localisation) Localisation = drive to use local nationals. † Nationality (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Ethnicity\Nationality) Nationality = drive to widen range of nationalities employed.		
		**Gender (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Gender) Gender = drive to increase female participation.	† Female dominated (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Gender\Female dominated) Female dominated = women dominate a company process/intervention. † Female friendly (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Gender\Female friendly) Female friendly = company process/ intervention helpful to women. † Gender balance (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Gender\Gender balance) Gender balance = men and women are equally represented within company process/intervention.		

			Male dominated (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Gender\Male dominated) Male dominated = men dominate a company process/intervention.		
		†** No information (Organisational effect\Diversity\ No information) No information = no relevance/awareness of policy and practice.	† Not relevant (Organisational effect\Diversity\ No information\Not relevant) Not relevant = policy not considered relevant in organisational context. † Policy unknown (Organisational effect\Diversity\ No information\Policy unknown) Policy unknown = no awareness of existence of policy.		
		†** Status (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Status) Status = company process/ intervention relevant to marital/partnered status.	† Family friendly (Organisational effect\Diversity\ Status\Family friendly) Family friendly = company process/intervention helpful to families.		
	EO (Organisational effect\EO) EO = equal opportunities This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does equal opportunities policy and practice support women's expatriation?			Scope	HR statement R&S guidelines
		†** Application (Organisational effect\EO\ Application) Application = the extent to which – and how – equal opportunities policy is implemented.	† Asset head (Organisational effect\EO\Application\ Asset head) Asset head = role/importance of top leader in host organisation in applying EO. † Being single (Organisational effect\EO\Application\ 		

			<p>Being single) Being single = application of EO policy to single people.</p> <p>†Field work (Organisational effect\EO\Application\ Field work) Field work = application of EO policy in partner organisations/in the field.</p> <p>†Line manager (Organisational effect\EO\Application\ Line manager) Line manager = role/importance of line manager in applying EO.</p> <p>†Lip service (Organisational effect\EO\Application\ Lip service) Lip service = EO policy not applied – it remains an espoused aim.</p> <p>Policy applied (Organisational effect\EO\Application\ Policy applied) Policy applied = EO policy works.</p> <p>†Policy favours men (Organisational effect\EO\Application\ Policy favours men) Policy favours men = EO policy gendered in application – to men's benefit.</p>		
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			† Senior grades (Organisational effect\EO\Application\Senior grades) Senior grades = policy application at senior organisational level.		
		†** No information (Organisational effect\EO\No information) No information = no relevance/awareness of policy and practice.	† Not relevant (Organisational effect\EO\No information\Not relevant) Not relevant = policy not considered relevant in organisational context. † Policy unknown (Organisational effect\EO\No information\Policy unknown) Policy unknown = no awareness of existence of policy.		
	WLB (Organisational effect\WLB) WLB = work-life balance. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does work-life balance policy/practice support women's expatriation?	†** Assignment type (Organisational effect\WLB\Assignment type) Assignment type = impact/influence type of assignment on working time/WLB.	† Rotational (Organisational effect\WLB\Assignment type\Rotational) Rotational = impact/influence of 28/28 day on/off shift pattern. † STA (Organisational effect\WLB\Assignment type\STA) STA = impact/influence of short-term assignment.	Rotational	Rotational
		†** Family factors (Organisational effect\WLB\Family factors) Family factors = impact/influence of family life on working time/WLB.	† Childcare (Organisational effect\WLB\Family factors\Childcare) Childcare = impact/influence of looking after children. † Effect of co-working		Flexible work policy

			<p>(Organisational effect\WLB\ Family factors\Effect of co-working) Effect of co-working = impact/influence of being part of a dual career couple employed by the same organisation.</p> <p>†Family (Organisational effect\WLB\ Family factors\Family) Family = impact/influence of family members on WLB.</p> <p>†Maternity (Organisational effect\WLB\ Family factors\Maternity) Maternity = impact/influence of pregnancy/having a child.</p> <p>†Men (Organisational effect\WLB\ Family factors\Men) Men = gendered implications of WLB.</p> <p>†Partner (Organisational effect\WLB\ Family factors\Partner) Partner = impact/influence of the assignee's spouse/partner.</p> <p>†Social aspects (Organisational effect\WLB\ Family factors\Social aspects) Social aspects = impact/influence of having/managing a social life.</p>		<p>WLB statement</p>
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		<p>**Hours (Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours) Hours = impact/influence of working time/WLB.</p>	<p>Abroad (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Abroad) Abroad = impact/influence of working abroad.</p> <p>Being an expat (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Being an expat) Being an expat = impact/influence of expatriate role/expectations.</p> <p>Being seen (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Being seen) Being seen = impact/influence of needing to be seen at work.</p> <p>Blackberry (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Blackberry) Blackberry = impact/influence of expectations to use a Blackberry.</p> <p>Delegate (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Delegate) Delegate = impact/influence of being able to hand work over to others.</p> <p>†Flexible hours (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Flexible hours) Flexible hours = impact/influence of</p>		<p>Flexibility statement Flexible work policy</p>
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			<p>†Long hours; career (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Long hours; career) Long hours; career = impact/influence of working long hours to enhance career.</p> <p>OT (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\OT) OT = impact/influence of overtime requirements.</p> <p>†Prove yourself (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Prove yourself) Prove yourself = impact/influence of needing to prove oneself in the role.</p> <p>†Retention (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Retention) Retention = impact/influence of working time and WLB on labour turnover.</p> <p>Role (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Role) Role = impact/influence of a particular role and associated expectations.</p> <p>†Senior grades (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Senior grades)</p>		Flexible work policy
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			<p>Senior grades = impact/influence of being in a senior position and associated expectations.</p> <p>Stress (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Stress) Stress = Effects of long hours working and/or lack of WLB.</p> <p>Time zones (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Time zones) Time zones = impact/influence of working across world time zones.</p> <p>Travel (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Travel) Travel = impact/influence of required business travel.</p> <p>†Unaccompanied (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Unaccompanied) Unaccompanied = impact/influence of single status assignments.</p> <p>†Variable hours (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Variable hours) Variable hours = impact/influence of non-standard hours of work.</p>		
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			Weekend working (Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\ Weekend working) Weekend working = impact/influence of working at the weekend.	Cat A Cat B EIT STIDA	IPP LTA Single status Rotational STA
		†** Location (Organisational effect\WLB\ Location) Location = impact/influence of host work environment on working time/WLB.	† Field work (Organisational effect\WLB\ Location\Field work) Field work = impact/influence of working offshore/in the field. † Home to work distance (Organisational effect\WLB\ Location\Home to work distance) Home to work distance = impact/influence of home to work travel time/distance. † Home work (Organisational effect\WLB\ Location\Home work) Home work = impact/influence of		Flexible work policy

			<p>working at home.</p> <p>†HQ (Organisational effect\WLB\ Location\HQ) HQ = impact/influence of the headquarters.</p> <p>†Working in home country (Organisational effect\WLB\ Location\Working in home country) Working in home country = impact/influence working in home country (rather than in host country).</p>		
		<p>†**Management (Organisational effect\WLB\ Management) Management = impact/influence of managers on working time/WLB.</p>	<p>†Asset manager (Organisational effect\WLB\ Management\Asset manager) Asset manager = impact/influence of host country operation's top manager.</p> <p>†CEO (Organisational effect\WLB\ Management\CEO) CEO = impact/influence of chief executive officer.</p> <p>†EVP (Organisational effect\WLB\ Management\EVP) EVP = impact/influence of executive vice president.</p> <p>†Line manager (Organisational effect\WLB\ </p>	<p>Rotational</p>	<p>LTA Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>Flexible work policy</p>

			<p>(Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\ Sabbatical) Sabbatical = impact/influence of being able to take time out to study.</p> <p>†Time off (Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\ Time off) Time off = impact/influence of being able to take time off work when needed.</p> <p>†Trips home (Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\ Trips home) Trips home = impact/influence taking trips home.</p> <p>†Unpaid leave (Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\ Unpaid leave) Unpaid leave = impact/influence taking unpaid leave.</p>		WLB statement
<p>IA (Organisational effect\IA) IA = international assignments. The extent to which – and how – international assignment policy and practice supports women’s expatriation.</p>	<p>Admin (Organisational effect\IA\ Admin) Admin = implementation of IA policy by organisational human resource function. This refers to the research question: how does the expatriation process operate in practice to support women’s expatriation?</p>	<p>†**Implementation (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\ Implementation) Implementation = how policy is applied.</p>	<p>†Flexibility (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\ Implementation\Flexibility) Flexibility = organisation adapts policy application to meet individual needs.</p> <p>†Inpats (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\ Implementation\Inpats) Inpats = policy applied to assignees expatriated into UK base of operation.</p>		

			<p>†Process (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\Implementation\Process) Process = relocation/physical move abroad.</p> <p>†Timing (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\Implementation\Timing) Timing = organisational flexibility given on date required to take up assignment.</p> <p>†Use of relocation company (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\Implementation\Use of relocation company) Use of relocation company = outsourcing of relocation management process.</p>	<p>Cat A Cat B</p>	
		<p>†**Money (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\Money) Money = general financial aspects of policy/practice.</p>	<p>†Access to policy (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\Access to policy) Access to policy = policy unavailable, hindering take-up of assignment.</p> <p>†Cost control (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\Cost control) Cost control = removal/cutting back of policy elements.</p> <p>†Equity (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\</p>		<p>IPP</p>

			<p>Equity) Equity = fair treatment with others.</p> <p>†Unclear policy (Organisational effect\IA\Admin\ Unclear policy) Unclear policy = policy/practice did not clarify elements to be applied.</p>		
	<p>Career management (Organisational effect\IA\ Career management) Career management = formal processes to plan careers. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does career management policy/practice support women's expatriation?</p>	<p>**EO (Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\EO) EO = equal opportunity within career management policy/practice.</p>	<p>†Career uncertainty (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\EO\Career uncertainty) Career uncertainty = lack of future role certainty despite (or as a result of) career management.</p> <p>†Gendered process (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\EO\Gendered process) Gendered process = gender balance/imbalance in career management.</p> <p>†Haphazard process (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\EO\Haphazard process) Haphazard process = ad hoc nature/lack of consistency/structure in career management.</p> <p>†Lack of opportunities (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\EO\Lack of opportunities) Lack of opportunities = lack of career opportunities despite (or as a result of)</p>		

			<p>career management.</p> <p>†Opaque process (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\EO\Opaque process) Opaque process = lack of clarity in operation of career management.</p>		
		<p>**Job-related (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related) Job-related = formal career management interventions linked to the work roles.</p>	<p>ADR (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related\ADR) ADR = Annual Development Review.</p> <p>APR (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related\APR) APR = Annual Performance Review.</p> <p>Career planning (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related\Career planning) Career planning = Future career path.</p> <p>Formal process (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related\Formal process) Formal process = policy is followed in a</p>	<p>Development review</p> <p>Performance management</p> <p>Development review Performance management</p> <p>Development review Performance management Rotational</p>	<p>Development review HR statement LTA Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>HR statement LTA Performance management Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>Development review Performance management</p>

			structured manner.	STIDA	
			<p>Function head (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related\Function head) Function head = input/role of senior management function.</p> <p>Graduate placement review (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related\Graduate placement review) Graduate placement review = role of graduate assignment review.</p> <p>Line manager (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related\Line manager) Line manager = input/role of line manager in home/host country.</p> <p>Parent manager (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related\Parent manager) Parent manager = input/role of function head.</p> <p>Purpose (Organisational effect\IA\Career</p>	<p>Performance management</p> <p>Development review Performance management STIDA</p> <p>Performance management</p> <p>Development review</p>	<p>IPP</p> <p>Development review IPP Performance management</p> <p>Development review IPP LTA Performance management Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>Performance management</p>

			<p>management\Job-related\Purpose) Purpose = rationale of ADR/APR in providing formal career management interventions.</p> <p>†Senior grades (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Senior grades) Senior grades = career management for expatriates at senior organisational level.</p> <p>†Succession planning (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Job-related\ Succession planning) Succession planning = future career mapping of expatriate population by function.</p>	Performance management	
		<p>**Support (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Support) Support = types of advice/help given to expatriates by individuals.</p>	<p>Mentor (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Support\Mentor) Mentor = wise/trusted counsellor.</p> <p>†Networks (Organisational effect\IA\Career management\Support\Networks) Networks = known work-related/other contacts.</p>	Development review	IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA
	<p>Development (Organisational effect\IA\ Development) Development = long-term, life/career changing</p>	<p>**Assignment-related (Organisational effect\IA\Development\ Assignment-related) Assignment-related =</p>	<p>Assignments (Organisational effect\IA\Development\ Assignment-related\Assignments) Assignments = role/importance of expatriation.</p>	Development review	Development review IPP

	interventions. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does development policy/practice support women's expatriation?	interventions linked to expatriation.	<p>Graduates (Organisational effect\IA\Development\ Assignment-related\Graduates) Graduates = development through expatriation via graduate scheme.</p> <p>†HQ (Organisational effect\IA\Development\ Assignment-related\HQ) HQ = role/importance of HQ links while on assignment.</p> <p>International experience (Organisational effect\IA\Development\ Assignment-related\International experience) International experience = role/importance of international experience gained via expatriation.</p> <p>Line manager (Organisational effect\IA\Development\ Assignment-related\Line manager) Line manager = role/importance of immediate reporting manager on assignment.</p> <p>†Visibility (Organisational effect\IA\Development\ Assignment-related\Visibility) Visibility = the need to maintain a high profile while on assignment to gain access to further development.</p>	<p>Development review</p> <p>Performance management</p>	<p>IPP</p> <p>IPP</p> <p>IPP</p>
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		<p>**Job-related (Organisational effect\IA\Development\Job-related) Job-related = interventions linked to work roles.</p>	<p>†Career change (Organisational effect\IA\Development\Job-related\Career change) Career change = actions taken/needed to change career.</p> <p>†Career ladder (Organisational effect\IA\Development\Job-related\Career ladder) Career ladder = grading structure.</p> <p>Career progression (Organisational effect\IA\Development\Job-related\Career progression) Career progression = actions taken/needed to enhance career prospects.</p> <p>Competency tool (Organisational effect\IA\Development\Job-related\Competency tool) Competency tool = intervention enabling identification of competency gaps to be addressed via training and development.</p> <p>Courses (Organisational effect\IA\Development\Job-related\Courses) Course = contribution of courses to long-term development.</p> <p>†Promotion (Organisational effect\IA\Development\</p>	<p>Development review Performance management Rotational STIDA</p> <p>Development review</p>	<p>LTA Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>LTA Rotational Single status STA</p>
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			<p>Job-related\Promotion) Promotion = actions taken/needed to rise up grading structure.</p> <p>†Sabbatical (Organisational effect\IA\Development\ Job-related\Sabbatical) Sabbatical = long-term study out of the workplace.</p>		
	<p>Dual careers (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers) Dual careers = both partners pursue their own career. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does dual career policy/practice support women's expatriation?</p>		<p>†Commuting (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Commuting) Commuting = support for couples who commute internationally to manage dual careers.</p> <p>†Compatible roles (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Compatible roles) Compatible roles = support for couples to pursue independent careers with different employers.</p> <p>Co-working (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Co-working) Co-working = support for couples working in the same organisation.</p> <p>†Lead career (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Lead career) Lead career = support for couples when one partner has the primary career.</p>	<p>Cat A Cat B EIT</p>	<p>LTA STA</p>

			<p>†Rotation (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Rotation) Rotation = support for couples when the partners balance dual careers via rotational working patterns.</p> <p>†Senior grades (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Senior grades) Senior grades = support for couples managing two careers at senior organisational level.</p> <p>†Timing (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Timing) Timing = support to facilitate compatibility of assignment timings.</p> <p>Trailing spouse (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Trailing spouse) Trailing spouse = support for non- working/non-career spouse/partner.</p> <p>†Two incomes (Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Two incomes) Two incomes = support for income loss/reduction by couple on expatriation.</p> <p>Visa</p>	<p>Cat A Cat B EIT</p>	
			Visa	Cat A	LTA

			(Organisational effect\IA\Dual careers\ Visa) Visa = support for visa for spouse/partner.	Cat B EIT	Single status STA
	Financial (Organisational effect\IA\ Financial) Financial = money from expatriate package. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how do financial elements of international assignment policy/practice support women's expatriation? Also to what extent and how do childcare and education policy/practice support women's expatriation?	**Country (Organisational effect\IA\ Financial\Country) Country = support linked to the nature of expatriate location related to health, security and welfare.	Car (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Country\Car) Car = provision of car on assignment. Driver (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Country\Driver) Driver = provision of driver on assignment. Emergency assistance (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Country\Emergency assistance) Emergency assistance = provision of help/support to return home in an emergency. Health care (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Country\Health care) Health care = provision of medical treatment on assignment. Housing (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Country\Housing) Housing = provision of house/temporary accommodation on assignment.	Cat A Cat B EIT Rotational STIDA Cat B Cat A Cat B EIT Rotational STIDA Cat A Cat B EIT Rotational STIDA	IPP LTA Rotational STA IPP LTA STA IPP LTA Rotational STA WLB statement IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA IPP LTA Rotational STA

			<p>Medical insurance (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Country\Medical insurance) Medical insurance = provision of insurance to cover medical treatment/evacuation on assignment.</p> <p>Security (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Country\Security) Security = provision of guards/security arrangements on assignment.</p> <p>Vaccinations (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Country\Vaccinations) Vaccinations = inoculations/ vaccinations given prior to assignment.</p> <p>Visa (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Country\Visa) Visa = visa obtained for assignment.</p>	<p>Cat A Cat B EIT Rotational STIDA</p> <p>Cat B</p> <p>Cat A Cat B</p> <p>Cat A Cat B EIT Rotational STIDA</p>	<p>IPP LTA Rotational STA</p> <p>LTA STA</p> <p>IPP Rotational</p> <p>Rotational</p>
		<p>**Family factors Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Family factors Family factors = support for family members.</p>	<p>†Childcare (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Family factors\Childcare) Childcare = pre-school support on assignment.</p> <p>†Pet (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Family factors\Pet)</p>		

			<p>Pet = issues relating to pets.</p> <p>Schooling (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Family factors\Schooling) Schooling = support for children's education on assignment.</p>	<p>Cat A Cat B</p>	<p>LTA STA</p>
		<p>**Money (Organisational effect\IA\ Financial\Money) Money = reward/ compensation elements on assignment.</p>	<p>Air fares (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Air fares) Air fares = costs/cashing-in flights.</p> <p>Bonus (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Bonus) Bonus = annual or end of project bonus.</p> <p>COLA (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\COLA) COLA = cost of living allowance/goods and services differential.</p> <p>Graduates (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Graduates) Graduates = reduced package applying to graduate scheme.</p> <p>†Inconsistent treatment (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Inconsistent treatment) Inconsistent treatment = inequitable delivery/application of package.</p>	<p>Cat A Cat B EIT</p> <p>Cat A Cat B</p>	<p>LTA STA</p> <p>LTA Rotational STA</p> <p>IPP LTA STA</p> <p>IPP</p>

			<p>Loss on sale of car (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Loss on sale of car) Loss on sale of car = money lost through forced sale of a car.</p> <p>Meals (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Meals) Meals = provision of meals in compound accommodation.</p> <p>Peer equity (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Peer equity) Peer equity = allowance to ensure assignees from a low living standards/cost of living country are not disadvantaged when expatriated compared to local peers in a high living standards/cost of living country.</p> <p>Pensions (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Pensions) Pensions = company pension on retirement.</p> <p>Relocation allowance (Organisational effect\IA\ Financial\Money\Relocation allowance) Relocation allowance = allowance to</p>	<p>Rotational</p> <p>STIDA</p> <p>Cat A Cat B EIT Rotational STIDA</p> <p>Cat A Cat B EIT</p>	<p>LTA</p> <p>LTA Rotational STA</p> <p>IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>IPP LTA STA</p>
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			cover disturbance on relocation.		
			Removals (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Removals) Removals = sea/air freight of belongings/excess baggage.	Cat A Cat B EIT STIDA	IPP LTA STA
			Repatriation (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Repatriation) Repatriation = support for going home.	Cat A Cat B EIT Rotational STIDA	IPP LTA Rotational STA
			Salary (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Salary) Salary = basic pay.	Cat A Cat B EIT Rotational STIDA	IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA
			Spouse allowance (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\Spouse allowance) Spouse allowance = money paid to spouse to pursue education/other opportunities.	Cat A Cat B	LTA
			STA (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\ Money\STA) STA = financial issues applicable to short-term assignments.		STA
			Tax	Rotational	IPP

			<p>(Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Tax) Tax = income tax paid/support for tax returns to reduce tax liability.</p> <p>Uplift (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Uplift) Uplift = foreign service premium/increase in salary paid while on assignment; high percentages apply in hostile/isolated locations.</p> <p>Utilities (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Utilities) Utilities = payments cover telephone, gas, electricity, air conditioning, etc.</p>	<p>STIDA</p> <p>Cat B Rotational STIDA</p> <p>Cat A Cat B Rotational STIDA</p>	<p>LTA Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>IPP LTA Rotational STA</p>
		<p>**WLB (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB) WLB = work-life balance support while on assignment.</p>	<p>Flights (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Flights) Flights = flights offered to/from assignment/home leave/other trips.</p> <p>Holidays (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Holidays) Holidays = time off for annual leave, public and other holidays.</p> <p>†Part-time work (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Part-time work) Part-time work = support for working</p>	<p>STIDA</p> <p>Cat A Cat B EIT Rotational STIDA</p>	<p>IPP LTA Rotational STA</p> <p>IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA</p>

			<p>part-time on assignment.</p> <p>Quarterly flights (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Quarterly flights) Quarterly flights = trips home each quarter for unaccompanied assignees.</p> <p>R&R (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\R&R) R&R = rest and relaxation leave/change of scenery trips.</p> <p>Travel days (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Travel days) Travel days = time off to compensate for travel to/from host location.</p> <p>Trips home (Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Trips home) Trips home = home leave/associated allowances.</p>	<p>Cat B</p> <p>Rotational</p> <p>Cat A Cat B STIDA</p>	<p>IPP Single status STA</p> <p>LTA Single status</p> <p>IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA</p> <p>Single status</p>
	<p>Localisation (Organisational effect\IA\Localisation) Localisation = policy/practice supporting use of local nationals rather than expatriates.</p>		<p>†Strategy (Organisational effect\IA\Localisation\Strategy) Strategy = organisational remit to backfill roles with local nationals.</p>		
	<p>Maternity (Organisational effect\IA\</p>			<p>Cat A Cat B</p>	<p>LTA Rotational</p>

	Maternity) Maternity = pregnancy/child birth policies/implementation practices. Typically UK policy/practice applies linked to UK assignment contracts. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does policy/practice on maternity support women's expatriation?				Single status STA
			Leave (Organisational effect\IA\Maternity\Leave) Leave = maternity leave taken in home/host country. Medical insurance (Organisational effect\IA\Maternity\Medical insurance) Medical insurance = medical cover while pregnant on assignment/birth of child. Parental leave (Organisational effect\IA\Maternity\Parental leave) Parental leave = extended time off after birth of child. Pregnancy support (Organisational effect\IA\Maternity\Pregnancy support) Pregnancy support = support during pregnancy while on assignment. Rotational (Organisational effect\IA\Maternity\Rotational) Rotational = maternity provision for rotational assignees.	Cat A Cat B	LTA Rotational Single status STA LTA Rotational Single status STA WLB statement LTA Rotational STA Rotational
	Preparation (Organisational effect\IA\	**Familiarisation (Organisational effect\IA\	Home search (Organisational effect\IA\Preparation\	Cat A Cat B	LTA

	Preparation) Preparation = familiarisation support given prior to assignment. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does policy/practice on preparation support women's expatriation?	Preparation\Familiarisation) Familiarisation = orientation/housing support.	Familiarisation\Home search) Home search = trip taken to seek out housing/schools. Look-see (Organisational effect\IA\Preparation\Familiarisation\Look-see) Look-see = orientation trip to host country/location.	Cat A Cat B	LTA STA
			† Settling-in (Organisational effect\IA\Preparation\Settling-in) Settling-in = familiarisation in work environment.		Rotational
	Repatriation (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation) Repatriation = policy/practice supporting return home. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does policy/practice on repatriation support women's expatriation?	†** Career uncertainty (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation\Career uncertainty) Career uncertainty = lack of support/enabling structures to aid repatriation.	† Flat structure (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation\Career uncertainty\Flat structure) Flat structure = few higher grades/poor prospects for career advancement. † Lack of support (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation\Career uncertainty\Lack of support) Lack of support = no supporting structures/processes in place. † No recognition (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation\Career uncertainty\No recognition) No recognition = no account taken of role played whilst expatriated. † Unknown role (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation\	Rotational	Rotational

			Career uncertainty\Unknown role) Unknown role = no job lined up on going home at assignment end.		
			† HQ (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation\HQ) HQ = role of HQ in returning home at assignment end.		
			† Localisation (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation\Localisation) Localisation = remaining as a local hire at assignment end.		
			† Planning process (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation\Planning process) Planning process = structured approach to career planning on return.	STIDA	IPP
			† Promotion (Organisational effect\IA\Repatriation\Promotion) Promotion = gaining promotion after assignment.		
	Selection (Organisational effect\IA\Selection) Selection = the appointment decision policy/process. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does policy/practice on selection support women's expatriation?				IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA
		†** Career management (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\Career management) Career management = formal, structured approach to managing selection.	ADR (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\Career management\ADR) ADR = annual development review records interest in expatriation to use as selection tool.		LTA Rotational Single status STA

			<p>†Asset level (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Career management\Asset level) Asset level = selection decisions/ processes operate at subsidiary level.</p> <p>†Line manager (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Career management\Line manager) Line manager = direct reporting manager in home/host location holds selection responsibility.</p> <p>†Parent manager (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Career management\Parent manager) Parent manager = functional head holds selection responsibility.</p> <p>†Reorganisation (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Career management\Reorganisation) Reorganisation = impact of restructuring/closure of subsidiaries.</p> <p>†Timing (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Career management\Timing) Timing = impact of when selection decision is made.</p>		<p>R&S guidelines</p> <p>R&S guidelines</p>
		<p>†**EO Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\EO)</p>	<p>†Gendered process (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ EO\Gendered process)</p>		

		EO = equality of opportunity in selection.	<p>Gendered process = gender balance/imbalance in selection.</p> <p>†Open process (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\EO\Open process) Open process = anyone can apply.</p> <p>†Portal (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\EO\Portal) Portal = use of intranet to advertise vacancies.</p>		<p>HR statement R&S guidelines</p> <p>R&S guidelines</p>
		<p>†**Informal approach (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\Informal approach) Informal approach = selection not subject to formal process.</p>	<p>†Closed process (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\Informal approach\Closed process) Closed process = selection decisions opaque; others excluded from it.</p> <p>†Colleagues (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\Informal approach\Colleagues) Colleagues = impact of colleagues in aiding selection.</p> <p>†Informal process (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\Informal approach\Informal process) Informal process = unstructured selection process.</p> <p>†Invite (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\Informal approach\Invite)</p>		<p>R&S guidelines</p>

			<p>Invite = assignee asked to take up role.</p> <p>†Only me (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Informal approach\Only me) Only me = assignee was only candidate for role.</p>		
			<p>†Communication (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Communication) Communication = how roles/ selection processes/decisions are communicated within organisation.</p>		
			<p>†Dual careers (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Dual careers) Dual careers = selection linked to spouse/partner dual career issues.</p>		LTA Single status STA
			<p>†External hire (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ External hire) External hire = recruitment/selection into expatriate role from outside the organisation.</p>		
			<p>†Senior grade (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Senior grade) Senior grade = selection process applied to top grades, above parent manager/functional head level.</p>		
			<p>†Single status (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Single status) Single status = selection decisions for</p>		

			unaccompanied assignments.		
			† Time serving (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ Time serving) Time serving = service required before consideration given to expatriation.		
			† UK-centric (Organisational effect\IA\Selection\ UK-centric) UK-centric = selection decisions linked to UK-based nature of oil and gas industry.		
	Support (Organisational effect\IA\ Support) Support = people who provide advice to assignees. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does policy/practice on support aid women's expatriation?	†** Line manager (Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Line manager) Line manager = role of direct reporting manager in supporting the expatriate.	† Gender (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Line manager\Gender) Gender = relevance of gender in support provision.		
		** Mentor (Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor) Mentor = wise, trusted counsellor.	† Assignees (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Mentor\Assignees) Assignees = expatriates provide support on assignee-related issues. † External support (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Mentor\External support) External support = mentors based outside employing organisation. Formal scheme (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Mentor\Formal scheme) Formal scheme = structured approach to		IPP LTA Rotational Single status

			<p>(Organisational effect\IA\Support\Mentor\Other company offices) Other company offices = relationship spans other office/asset locations within organisation.</p> <p>†Parent manager (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Mentor\Parent manager) Parent manager = mentor is functional head.</p> <p>†Promotion (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Mentor\Promotion) Promotion = importance of mentoring in gaining career advancement.</p> <p>†Skills (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Mentor\Skills) Skills = importance of mentoring in skills development.</p>		IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA
		†** Networks (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Networks) Networks = contacts providing support to expatriate.	† Assignees (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Networks\Assignees) Assignees = role played by other expatriates in support networks. <p>†Career (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Networks\Career) Career = role of networks in enhancing career development.</p>		

			<p>†Communications (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Networks\Communications) Communications = role of communication within networks.</p> <p>†Gender (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Networks\Gender) Gender = importance of gendered networks.</p> <p>†Lifestyle (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Networks\Lifestyle) Lifestyle = role played by networks in supporting lifestyle.</p> <p>†Partners (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Networks\Partners) Partners = role of spouse/partner in support network.</p> <p>†Reputation (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Networks\Reputation) Reputation = role of networks in building reputation to gain future expatriate roles/career enhancement.</p> <p>†Time to build contacts (Organisational effect\IA\Support\ Networks\Time to build contacts)</p>		
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			<p>Networks\Time to build contacts) Time to build contacts = time needed to develop networks to access key people to gain future expatriate roles/career enhancement.</p> <p>† Visibility (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Networks\Visibility) Visibility = role of networks in being seen/known by selection decision-makers.</p>		
			<p>† Family (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Family) Family = role of family members in supporting the expatriate.</p>		
			<p>Role model (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Role model) Role model = a female assignee acts as an exemplar to encourage others.</p>		
			<p>Sponsor (Organisational effect\IA\Support\Sponsor) Sponsor = employee held accountable for supporting expatriate.</p>		<p>IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA</p>
	<p>Training (Organisational effect\IA\Training) Training = short-term skills interventions. This refers to the research question: to what extent and how does</p>	<p>†**Assignment-related (Organisational effect\IA\Training\Assignment-related) Assignment-related = training issues/concerns affected by expatriation.</p>	<p>† Budget (Organisational effect\IA\Training\Assignment-related\Budget) Budget = financial impact of undertaking training while on assignment.</p>		

	training policy/practice support women's expatriation?		<p>†Limited by assignment (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Assignment-related\Limited by assignment) Limited by assignment = training precluded while on assignment.</p> <p>†More needed (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Assignment-related\More needed) More needed = extra training required.</p> <p>†Not limited by assignment (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Assignment-related\Not limited by assignment) Not limited by assignment = training unaffected while on assignment.</p> <p>Spouse (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Assignment-related\Spouse) Spouse = training opportunities for spouse/ partner.</p> <p>†Travel (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Assignment-related\Travel) Travel = impact of need to travel to attend training/associated costs/timing/issues.</p>	<p>Cat A Cat B</p> <p>Rotational</p>	<p>LTA Single status STA</p>
		** Job-related (Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related)	ADR (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\ADR)	Development review	

		<p>Job-related = training linked to role/changing role.</p>	<p>ADR = training requests/discussions during Annual Development Review.</p> <p>†Another role (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Another role) Another role = training undertaken within/to gain another role.</p> <p>Coaching (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Coaching) Coaching = personal training intervention to achieve personal development goals.</p> <p>Course (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Course) Course = short-term skills intervention via job/university course.</p> <p>†CPD (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\CPD) CPD = training for continuing professional development.</p> <p>†Keep up-to-date (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Keep up-to-date) Keep up-to-date = training to keep abreast of developments in job role.</p>	<p>Development review</p> <p>Development review</p>	<p>Development review Performance management</p> <p>Development review</p>
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			<p>†Managerial (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Managerial) Managerial = managerial training.</p> <p>†Not relevant (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Not relevant) Not relevant = training not needed in current role/position.</p> <p>†Offshore (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Offshore) Offshore = training on offshore rigs.</p> <p>†Personal development (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Personal development) Personal development = training to achieve personal growth/development.</p> <p>†Qualifications (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Qualifications) Qualifications = specific awards – in- company/external/university.</p> <p>†Technical (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Technical) Technical = technical training.</p> <p>†Within role</p>		
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			(Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Job-related\Within role) Within role = on-the-job training.		
		** Preparation (Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Preparation) Preparation = training specifically related to expatriation.	Cultural awareness (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Preparation\Cultural awareness) Cultural awareness = understanding host country societal culture. Driving (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Preparation\Driving) Driving = defensive driving for host road conditions. Language (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Preparation\Language) Language = host country language. Security (Organisational effect\IA\Training\ Preparation\Security) Security = safety/security in host country.	Cat A Cat B Rotational STIDA Cat A Cat B Cat A Cat B Rotational STIDA Cat A Cat B Rotational STIDA	IPP LTA Rotational LTA STA IPP LTA Rotational STA IPP LTA Rotational Single status STA
Industry effect (Industry effect\ This refers to the nature of the oil and gas industry. How industry expatriation processes operate and the impact on female expatriate	Industry effect (Industry effect\Influence) This refers to the research question: what are and how do industry effects influence female expatriate participation?	**Influence (Industry effect\Influence) Influence = location, timescales and environment of oil and gas exploration and production.	Location (Industry effect\Influence\Location) Location = bases of oil and gas global operations. Security (Industry effect\Influence\Security) Security = security factors in bases of operation.		

participation outcomes.			<p>Technical role (Industry effect\Influence\Technical role) Technical role = technical requirements of oil and gas work roles.</p> <p>Timescales (Industry effect\Influence\Timescales) Timescales = project requirements to meet tight deadlines.</p> <p>Work environment (Industry effect\Influence\Work environment) Work environment = ethos of workplace.</p>		
	<p>Industry effect (Industry effect\Nature) This refers to the research question: what is the nature of expatriation in the oil and gas exploration and production sector?</p>	<p>**Nature (Industry effect\Nature) Nature = the size and scale of oil and gas operations/partnerships.</p>	<p>†Acquisition (Industry effect\Nature\Acquisition) Acquisition = organisation acquires another oil and gas firm.</p> <p>†JV (Industry effect\Nature\JV) JV = joint venture arrangement.</p> <p>†Start up (Industry effect\Nature\Start up) Start up = new country/location operation.</p>		
	<p>Industry effect (Industry effect\Process) This refers to the research question: how does the</p>	<p>**Process (Industry effect\Process) Process = expatriation processes in different organisations.</p>	<p>Company level (Industry effect\Process\Company level) Company level = company practice</p>		

	expatriation process operate in practice to support women's expatriation?		<p>comparisons.</p> <p>†Dual careers (Industry effect\Process\Dual careers) Dual careers = dual career orientation of oil and gas industry.</p> <p>†Family friendly (Industry effect\Process\Family friendly) Family friendly = family orientation of oil and gas industry.</p> <p>Policy change (Industry effect\Process\Policy change) Policy change = impact of changes to organisational policy/practice.</p>		August 2009 Development review
Theoretical considerations (Theoretical considerations) Theoretical considerations = the four theoretical effects (assignee, country, family, occupational segregation) predicted to influence organisational policy/practice relating to female expatriate participation.	Assignee effect (Theoretical considerations\Assignee effect) Assignee effect = women's supply characteristics as assignees. This refers to the research question: which assignee effects influence organisational policy/practice relating to female expatriate participation?	Career paths (Theoretical Considerations\Assignee effect\Career paths) Career paths = men's careers considered linear/continuous; women's careers non-linear/discontinuous.			
		Human capital (Theoretical considerations\Assignee effect\Human capital) Human capital = women invest less in education/training/work experience than men.			
		Social capital (Theoretical considerations\Assignee effect\Social capital) Social capital = contacts/networks			

		that aid progression in organisations.			
	Country effect (Theoretical considerations\Country effect) Country effect = home/host country attitudes towards women. This refers to the research question: which country effects influence organisational policy/practice relating to female expatriate participation?	Breadwinners (Theoretical considerations\Country effect\Breadwinners) Breadwinners = gendered assumptions of primary earners.			
		National culture (Theoretical considerations\Country effect\National culture) National culture = gendered societal cultural assumptions.			
		Patriarchy (Theoretical considerations\Country effect\Patriarchy) Patriarchy = men's oppression of women via social structures/institutional impediments.			
	Family effect (Theoretical considerations\Family effect) Family effect = family responsibilities. This refers to the research question: which family effects influence organisational policy/practice relating to female expatriate participation?	Compensating differentials (Theoretical considerations\Family effect\Compensating differentials) Compensating differentials = women's preference for occupations with good working conditions over high monetary rewards.			
		Family power (Theoretical considerations\Family effect\Family power) Family power = individual with greatest power (financially) imposes career goals on partner.	†Alternating lead career (Theoretical considerations\Family effect\Family power\ Alternating lead career) Alternating lead career = family power resides in both partners who take turns to lead/trail/share career equivalency.		

		Gender stereotyping (Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\Gender stereotyping) Gender stereotyping = stereotyping of women's roles influences characteristics of women's occupations/choice to enter them.			
		Preference (Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\Preference) Preference = women's lifestyle choices presumed to give priority to home/ family.			
		Rational choice (Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\Rational choice) Rational choice = logical action to maximise/optimize engagement in co-operative exchange.	†Satisficing (Theoretical considerations\Family effect\Rational choice\Satisficing) Satisficing = behaviour to reach high levels of career/family goals rather than maximising one at expense of other.		
	Segregation effect (Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect) Segregation effect = women are segregated from men at work horizontally/vertically. This refers to the research question: which occupational segregation effects influence organisational policy/practice relating to female expatriate	Institutional (Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\Institutional) Institutional = employers engage in isomorphic behaviour, mimicking successful action.			
		Occupational segregation (Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\Occupational segregation) Occupational segregation = women and men segregated vertically and horizontally in the			

	participation?	workplace.			
		Queuing (Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\Queuing) Queuing = as roles become less attractive to men they are taken by women.			
		Sex roles (Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\Sex roles) Sex roles = individuals conditioned into behavioural roles leading to horizontal segregation.			
		Statistical discrimination (Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\Statistical discrimination) Statistical discrimination = women identified as a more costly group than men.			

Key to policy documents	
Collins Co.	Hagman Co.
<p>Cat A = Expatriate policy international assignments Europe & US – category A, 27 October 2006.</p> <p>Cat B = Expatriate policy – long-term assignment – category B countries, 3 February 2005.</p> <p>Development review = My Development, Employee Edition, 2009.</p> <p>Diversity statement = Our corporate values, undated.</p> <p>EIT = Expatriate policy – extended international transfer – category A, 8 March 2005.</p> <p>Performance management = All employees – performance management, an overview: learning + development, 2006.</p> <p>Performance management = Professional development planner – helping you make the most of your opportunities, undated.</p> <p>Rotational = Terms and conditions for international assignees on assignment to North Africa, 1 July 2003.</p> <p>Scope = Equal opportunities policy, May 2000.</p> <p>STIDA = Terms and conditions for assignees on short term international development assignments, 27 September 2006.</p>	<p>August 2009 = Long term international assignments policy, August 2009; Major policy changes summary, August 2009.</p> <p>Development review = Annual development review, undated.</p> <p>Development review = Human resources ADR guidelines, July 2009.</p> <p>Flexibility statement = Group-wide: Flexible working policy statement, September 2005.</p> <p>Flexible work policy = UK: Flexible working policy, September 2005.</p> <p>Group statement = Group-wide equality & diversity statement, September 2005.</p> <p>HR statement = Group policy on human resources, September 2005.</p> <p>IPP = International placements policy, November 2007.</p> <p>LTA = International assignments policy, May 2007.</p> <p>Performance management = Managing performance in Hagman Co.: a summary guide to the key processes and priorities including the annual performance review, October 2008.</p> <p>Performance management = Hagman Co.'s performance scorecards – a user's guide, October 2008.</p> <p>R&S guidelines = Recruitment and selection: end to end guidelines, April 2008.</p> <p>Rotational = International rotational assignments policy, December 2007.</p> <p>Single status = International assignments policy, May 2007.</p> <p>STA = International assignments policy, May 2007.</p> <p>WLB statement = UK: Work-life balance statement, September 2005.</p>

APPENDIX 9: NVivo frequency data

Table 1: Industry effect – gender diversity and diversity strategy

Industry effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Gender diversity	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Gender\Male dominated	22	81	3	4	12	26
	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Gender\Female dominated	3	3	2	2	1	1
	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Gender\Female friendly	11	14	1	1	5	9
	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Gender\Gender balance	11	20	-	-	3	7
	Organisational effect\EO\ Application\Field work	7	19	1	1	2	7
Diversity strategy	Organisational effect\IA\ Localisation\Strategy	15	27	1	2	6	12
	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Ethnicity\ Localisation	2	2	-	-	4	9
	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Ethnicity\ Nationality	4	8	-	-	4	6

Table 2: Industry effect – nature of work and industry factors

Industry effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Nature of work	Industry effect\Influence\ Location	7	15	1	1	1	1
	Industry effect\Influence\ Security	7	9	1	1	1	1
	Industry effect\Influence\ Technical role	9	19	1	1	1	2
	Industry effect\Influence\ Timescales	4	6	-	-	2	2
	Industry effect\Influence\ Work environment	21	53	3	3	4	9
Nature of industry	Industry effect\Nature\JV	8	25	-	-	2	3
	Industry effect\Nature\Start up	-	-	1	1	2	6
	Industry effect\Nature\ Acquisition	3	6	-	-	-	-

Table 3: Industry effect – theoretical explanations

Industry effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Theoretical explanations	Theoretical considerations\ Country effect\Patriarchy	15	45	3	3	1	1
	Theoretical considerations\ Country effect\National culture	25	101	7	7	7	18
	Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\Gender stereotyping	15	22	-	-	5	6
	Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\ Occupational segregation	16	35	-	-	-	-
	Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\ Institutional	13	21	-	-	3	3
	Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\ Sex roles	10	20	-	-	-	-

Table 4: Assignment type effect – purpose

Assignment type effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Purpose	Assignment type effect\ Purpose\Development	16	24	-	-	3	4
	Assignment type effect\ Purpose\Functional role	14	15	-	-	4	8
	Assignment type effect\ Purpose\Project	19	32	1	1	3	4
	Assignment type effect\ Purpose\Strategic	5	5	-	-	1	1
	Assignment type effect\ Purpose\Dual career driven\ Co-working	4	6	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Purpose\Dual career driven\ Lead career	2	2	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Purpose\Dual career driven\ Trailing spouse	4	9	-	-	-	-

Table 5: Assignment type effect – reasons for expatriate participation

Assignment type effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Reason to take up assignment	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\ Asset profile	18	57	1	1	4	4
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\ Autonomy	4	4	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\ Career	21	54	8	9	1	1
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\ Challenge	7	14	7	7	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\ CV	2	2	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\ International experience	11	21	24	24	1	1
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\ Learning and development	10	17	4	4	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\ Objectives	8	18	3	4	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\ Personal	9	13	21	21	1	1

	development						
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\Professional development	6	12	31	31	1	1
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\Prove yourself	2	3	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\Size of asset	8	18	-	-	2	2
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\Skills development	4	4	3	3	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\Time for change	5	8	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\Variety	6	6	2	2	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Career development\Work experience	12	27	3	3	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Country\Culture	13	19	9	9	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Country\ Immersion in local understanding	14	21	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Family factors\Compatible roles	3	6	1	1	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Family factors\Co- working	3	5	1	1	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Family factors\ Family responsibilities	7	10	4	4	3	5
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Family factors\ Partner	8	16	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Family factors\ Trailing	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Money	18	47	6	7	3	7
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\WLB\Flexibility	-	-	9	9	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\WLB\Time off	2	2	1	2	-	-

Table 6: Assignment type effect – assignment location

Assignment type effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Country issues	Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors\Climate	3	6	6	6	1	2
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors\Culture	4	9	9	9	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors\Health	4	9	14	16	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors\Isolation	14	23	2	2	2	10
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors\Language	3	7	2	2	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors\Lifestyle	12	24	2	2	2	5
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors\Pollution	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors\Road safety	1	1	1	2	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Country factors\Security	7	9	13	15	3	8
Country	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Central Asia\Azerbaijan	2	9	-	-	1	3
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Central Asia\Kazakhstan	11	51	4	6	3	11
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Central Asia\Russia	4	6	-	-	2	4
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Far East\China	4	8	-	-	2	5
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Far East\Indonesia	3	10	2	4	1	1
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Far East\Malaysia	5	13	3	4	1	2
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Far East\Philippines	1	3	1	2	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Far East\Singapore	3	11	2	3	1	2
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Far	1	2	-	-	2	3

	East\Thailand						
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Middle East\Iran	2	3	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Middle East\Oman	4	8	1	1	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Middle East\Saudi Arabia	4	6	-	-	1	1
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\North Africa\Algeria	8	33	1	2	2	8
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\North Africa\Egypt	14	59	7	10	4	12
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\North Africa\Libya	8	17	1	1	3	7
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\North Africa\Tunisia	6	7	2	3	1	2
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\North America\Canada	1	1	1	2	2	5
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\North America\USA	9	50	4	4	5	9
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\South America\Brazil	11	24	1	1	2	4
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\South America\Peru	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\West Africa\Gabon	1	4	-	-	1	1
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\West Africa\Nigeria	10	54	3	4	2	6
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Western Europe\Denmark	1	1	-	-	1	2
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Western Europe\Norway	3	11	3	3	3	7
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\UK	15	48	6	6	5	11
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Australia	12	47	-	-	3	10
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\India	7	9	1	1	3	6
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\Trinidad	12	49	5	7	1	3
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Region\HQ	16	33	3	4	3	3
Location and career	Assignment type effect\ Location\Career	2	2	-	-	-	-

	development\Autonomy						
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Career development\Multiple assignments	8	13	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Career development\Size of asset	2	3	-	-	-	-
Location and family	Assignment type effect\ Location\Family factors\ Childcare	4	7	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Family factors\ Children	6	9	3	3	2	2
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Family factors\ Partner	3	3	13	13	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Location\Family factors\ Schooling	5	9	11	12	1	1

Table 7: Assignment type effect – assignment length, pattern and status

Assignment type effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Length	Assignment type effect\ Length\Graduate scheme	9	34	9	9	7	51
	Assignment type effect\ Length\ local hire	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Length\LTA	25	99	3	3	5	8
	Assignment type effect\ Length\STA	22	73	7	7	5	21
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Length\Extension of IA	16	28	7	7	1	2
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Length\Length	3	4	2	2	1	1
Pattern	Assignment type effect\ Pattern\Business trip	4	6	-	-	5	6
	Assignment type effect\ Pattern\Commuter	7	18	1	2	4	17
	Assignment type effect\ Pattern\Regular	1	1	-	-	1	1
	Assignment type effect\ Pattern\Rotational	25	126	10	20	8	26
	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Rotation	2	4	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\ Reason\Pattern\Timing	5	8	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Admin\Implementation\ Timing	9	17	3	3	3	3
Status	Assignment type effect\ Status\Accompanied	9	18	5	5	5	8
	Assignment type effect\ Status\Unaccompanied	21	73	1	1	6	23

Table 8: Assignment type effect – function

Assignment type effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Function	Assignment type effect\Function\Commercial	12	42	-	-	3	5
	Assignment type effect\Function\Commercial\Contracts and Procurement	2	9	-	-	1	1
	Assignment type effect\Function\Commercial\Economics	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\Function\CSR\Community Development	2	4	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\Function\CSR\Community Relations	2	2	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\Function\CSR\Sustainable Development	1	8	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\Function\Engineering\EHS	2	7	-	-	-	-
	Assignment type effect\Function\Engineering	15	28	2	2	5	13
	Assignment type effect\Function\Finance	5	10	-	-	5	8
	Assignment type effect\Function\Exploration\Geology	11	33	2	2	6	14
	Assignment type effect\Function\Exploration\Geophysics	6	9	-	-	5	13
	Assignment type effect\Function\HR	4	13	1	1	5	9
	Assignment type effect\Function\IT	3	9	-	-	1	1
	Assignment type effect\Function\Legal	3	24	2	3	2	4

Table 9: The organisational effect – access to career contribution – diversity and equal opportunities policies

Career contribution effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Diversity	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Application\ Policy important	4	6	2	2	5	16
	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Application\ Positive action	5	8	3	3	8	16
	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Application\ Senior grades	3	6	1	1	7	8
	Organisational effect\ Diversity\No information\ Not relevant	-	-	25	26	5	8
	Organisational effect\ Diversity\No information\ Policy unknown	-	-	9	10	1	6
Equal opportunity	Organisational effect\EO\ Application\Asset head	2	3	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\EO\ Application\ Line manager	3	3	1	2	-	-
	Organisational effect\EO\ Application\Lip service	3	4	1	1	3	8
	Organisational effect\EO\ Application\Policy applied	8	16	2	2	10	21
	Organisational effect\EO\ Application\Policy favours men	2	8	1	1	3	3
	Organisational effect\EO\ Application\Senior grades	1	7	1	1	1	1
	Organisational effect\EO\ No information\Not relevant	1	1	28	29	4	6
	Organisational effect\EO\ No information\Policy unknown	1	1	8	8	2	3

Table 10: The organisational effect – access to career contribution – selection

Career contribution effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Selection	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Career management\ADR	6	8	2	2	2	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Career management\Asset level	2	4	4	4	3	5
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Career management\Line manager	9	19	4	4	4	15
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Career management\Parent manager	10	16	7	9	4	8
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Career management\ Reorganisation	4	6	2	3	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Career management\Timing	2	2	2	2	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\EO\Gendered process	15	18	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\EO\Open process	9	20	8	9	6	17
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\EO\Portal	11	20	7	7	9	16
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Informal approach\Closed process	17	37	6	7	4	6
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Informal approach\Colleagues	4	7	5	5	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Informal approach\Informal process	14	18	1	1	3	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Informal approach\Invite	7	10	7	8	2	2
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Informal approach\Only me	3	3	1	1	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Communication	1	2	3	3	1	2
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\External hire	3	6	3	4	7	26
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Senior grade	2	5	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Single status	1	2	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Time serving	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\UK-centric	1	6	-	-	1	1

Table 11: The organisational effect – access to career contribution – preparation

Career contribution effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Preparation	Organisational effect\IA\ Preparation\Familiarisation \Look-see	8	16	3	3	4	10
	Organisational effect\IA\ Preparation\Settling-in	3	3	-	-	2	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Preparation\ Cultural awareness	7	9	5	5	4	9
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Preparation\ Driving	2	3	3	3	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Preparation\ Language	3	7	1	1	2	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Preparation\ Security	2	4	3	4	1	1

Table 12: The organisational effect – access to career contribution – theoretical explanations

Career contribution effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Theoretical explanations	Theoretical Considerations\ Assignee effect\Career paths	17	31	-	-	4	9
	Theoretical considerations\ Assignee effect\Human capital	15	29	3	3	4	13
	Theoretical considerations\ Assignee effect\Social capital	8	16	-	-	-	-
	Theoretical considerations\ Country effect\ Breadwinners	7	7	1	1	1	1
	Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\Queuing	2	4	-	-	1	2
	Theoretical considerations\ Segregation effect\ Statistical discrimination	-	-	-	-	2	3

Table 13: The organisational effect – development of career contribution – training

Career contribution effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Training	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Assignment-related\Budget	12	22	5	5	2	2
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Assignment-related\Limited by assignment	7	17	8	9	2	2
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Assignment-related\More needed	2	2	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Assignment-related\Not limited by assignment	3	5	7	7	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Assignment-related\Travel	6	11	7	7	2	5
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ADR	3	4	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ Another role	2	3	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ Coaching	6	15	-	-	5	20
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ Course	7	11	3	3	3	8
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\CPD	1	4	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\Keep up-to-date	1	1	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ Managerial	3	4	2	2	4	7
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\Not relevant	10	14	5	5	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ Offshore	1	2	1	1	1	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ Personal development	2	3	-	-	5	12
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ Qualifications	1	1	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ Technical	6	10	4	4	4	4
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Job-related\ Within role	7	10	2	2	1	1

Table 14: The organisational effect – development of career contribution – development

Career contribution effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Development	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Assignment-related\Assignments	25	76	4	4	9	28
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Assignment-related\Graduates	6	13	-	-	1	6
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\ Assignment-related\HQ	13	24	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Assignment-related\International experience	8	11	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Assignment-related\Line manager	6	15	-	-	3	5
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Assignment-related\Visibility	10	29	-	-	6	12
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Job-related\ Career change	9	20	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Job-related\ Career ladder	11	26	-	-	3	8
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Job-related\ Career progression	18	49	3	3	4	5
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Job-related\ Competency tool	2	6	1	1	2	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Job-related\ Courses	7	11	2	2	1	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Job-related\ Promotion	21	64	5	5	1	2
	Organisational effect\IA\ Development\Job-related\ Sabbatical	1	4	-	-	-	-

Table 15: The organisational effect – development of career contribution – support

Career contribution effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Support	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Line manager\ Gender	2	2	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Assignees	6	8	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\External support	5	6	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Formal scheme	13	32	-	-	1	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Gender	10	21	2	3	2	2
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\HQ	4	4	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Informal scheme	19	44	-	-	7	14
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Internal support	9	15	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Line manager	4	8	-	-	1	2
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Other company offices	3	5	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Parent manager	3	6	1	1	1	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Promotion	2	5	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Mentor\Skills	2	3	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Networks\ Assignees	6	8	5	5	2	4
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Networks\Career	15	55	-	-	3	8
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Networks\ Communications	8	11	-	-	1	5
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Networks\Gender	17	30	10	11	4	9
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Networks\ Lifestyle	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Networks\Partners	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Networks\ Reputation	2	5	-	-	-	-

	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Networks\Time to build contacts	5	7	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Networks\ Visibility	9	15	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Role model	21	29	11	11	6	9
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Sponsor	2	2	-	-	4	8

Table 16: The organisational effect – development of career contribution – career management

Career contribution effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Career management	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\EO\ Career uncertainty	7	19	3	3	3	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\EO\ Gendered process	5	7	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\EO\ Haphazard process	8	16	1	1	3	10
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\EO\ Lack of opportunities	10	19	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\EO\ Opaque process	7	17	-	-	2	5
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Job-related\ADR	26	96	1	1	9	34
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Job-related\APR	24	65	-	-	11	37
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Job-related\Career planning	16	38	-	-	4	9
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Job-related\Formal process	8	11	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Job-related\Function head	9	12	-	-	4	9
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Job-related\Graduate placement review	2	5	-	-	1	2
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Job-related\Line manager	26	78	1	1	5	22
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Job-related\Parent manager	18	54	-	-	8	28
	Organisational effect\IA\ 	7	9	-	-	3	5

	Career management\Job-related\Purpose						
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Senior grades	2	6	-	-	6	14
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\Job-related\ Succession planning	19	44	-	-	7	30
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\ Support\Mentor	4	8	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Career management\ Support\Networks	8	10	-	-	-	-

Table 17: The organisational effect – development of career contribution – repatriation

Career contribution effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Repatriation	Organisational effect\IA\ Repatriation\Career uncertainty\Flat structure	1	5	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Repatriation\Career uncertainty\Lack of support	7	10	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Repatriation\Career uncertainty\No recognition	5	7	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Repatriation\Career uncertainty\Unknown role	9	27	8	8	2	6
	Organisational effect\IA\ Repatriation\HQ	7	9	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Repatriation\Localisation	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Repatriation\Planning process	17	37	2	2	5	8
	Organisational effect\IA\ Repatriation\Promotion	2	4	1	1	1	1
Financial	Organisational effect\IA\ Financial\Repatriation	1	1	-	-	1	1

Table 18: The family effect – dual careers

Family effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Dual careers	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Commuting	1	4	-	-	1	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Compatible roles	13	40	5	6	4	6
	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Co-working	16	61	6	12	2	8
	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Lead career	9	24	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Senior grades	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Timing	13	25	1	1	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Trailing spouse	18	60	7	9	5	16
	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Two incomes	5	5	3	4	2	3
	Organisational effect\IA\ Dual careers\Visa	6	9	5	6	2	5
	Organisational effect\IA\ Financial\Money\Spouse allowance	7	13	5	5	3	7
	Organisational effect\IA\ Selection\Dual careers	3	5	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Training\Assignment-related\Spouse	1	2	3	3	1	2
EO and diversity policy	Organisational effect\EO\ Application\Being single	3	3	2	2	-	-
Industry effect	Industry effect\Process\ Dual careers	9	14	-	-	3	6

Table 19: The family effect – family and maternity

Family effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Family factors	Organisational effect\IA\ Financial\Family factors\ Childcare	2	7	-	-	3	5
	Organisational effect\IA\ Financial\Family factors\ Pet	3	3	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\ Financial\Family factors\ Schooling	9	21	1	1	4	6
	Organisational effect\IA\ Support\Family	1	1	6	6	-	-
Maternity	Organisational effect\IA\ Maternity\Leave	6	27	2	2	4	8
	Organisational effect\IA\ Maternity\Medical insurance	1	1	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Maternity\Parental leave	3	8	-	-	1	5
	Organisational effect\IA\ Maternity\Pregnancy support	1	1	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\ Maternity\Rotational	2	3	-	-	-	-
EO and diversity policy	Organisational effect\ Diversity\Status\Family friendly	3	3	-	-	-	-
Industry effect	Industry effect\ Process\Family friendly	5	6	-	-	-	-

Table 20: The family effect – theoretical explanations

Family effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Theoretical explanations	Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\ Compensating differentials	2	2	-	-	-	-
	Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\Family power	23	86	13	13	5	9
	Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\ Family power\ Alternating lead career	4	11	-	-	1	1
	Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\Preference	12	17	-	-	1	2
	Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\Rational choice	15	52	-	-	5	8
	Theoretical considerations\ Family effect\Rational choice\Satisficing	17	53	4	6	5	6

Table 21: The family effect – work-life balance

Family effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Work-life balance	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Flights	6	8	-	-	1	2
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Holidays	2	3	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Part-time work	1	1	-	-	1	2
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Quarterly flights	4	5	1	1	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\R&R	4	6	3	3	1	2
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Travel days	3	10	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\WLB\Trips home	12	21	3	3	1	3
	Organisational effect\WLB\Assignment type\Rotational	6	43	6	14	2	4
	Organisational effect\WLB\Assignment type\STA	1	2	2	2	1	1
	Organisational effect\WLB\Family factors\Childcare	7	17	4	4	1	1
	Organisational effect\WLB\Family factors\Effect of co-working	4	7	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\WLB\Family factors\Family	4	5	12	14	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Family factors\Maternity	2	2	3	6	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Family factors\Men	2	3	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Family factors\Partner	5	6	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Family factors\Social aspects	13	39	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\Abroad	12	16	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\Being an expat	19	35	8	8	1	1
	Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\Being seen	4	10	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Hours\Blackberry	3	9	-	-	-	-

Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Delegate	3	3	-	-	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Flexible hours	22	61	33	39	1	2
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Flexible hours (taken away)	1	4	-	-	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Leadership	1	1	2	2	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Learning the job	2	2	-	-	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Local culture	14	32	2	3	2	4
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Long hours	23	97	9	10	2	2
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Long hours; career	4	10	-	-	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\OT	1	4	-	-	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Prove yourself	7	14	1	1	1	2
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Retention	-	-	2	2	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Role	6	7	1	1	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Senior grades	5	10	-	-	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Stress	2	5	-	-	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Time zones	7	16	2	2	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Travel	2	7	4	4	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\ Unaccompanied	4	9	1	1	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Variable hours	1	2	1	1	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Weekend working	15	23	-	-	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Working time	4	7	17	18	1	2
Organisational effect\ WLB\Hours\Workload	14	23	7	7	1	1
Organisational effect\ WLB\Location\Field work	4	6	1	1	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Location\Home to work distance	6	12	1	1	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Location\Home work	7	14	11	12	1	1
Organisational effect\ WLB\Location\HQ	12	18	1	1	-	-
Organisational effect\ WLB\Location\Other	5	16	3	3	-	-

	WLB\Location\Working in home country						
	Organisational effect\WLB\Management\Asset manager	4	6	-	-	2	2
	Organisational effect\WLB\Management\CEO	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Management\EVP	2	2	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Management\Line manager	16	32	2	2	1	1
	Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\9 day fortnights	7	13	6	6	1	1
	Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\Annual leave	4	10	5	5	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\Job share	1	1	1	1	2	2
	Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\Part-time work	8	32	5	6	3	8
	Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\Quarterly flights	5	7	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\Sabbatical	1	2	-	-	1	3
	Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\Time off	3	8	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\Trips home	5	6	-	-	1	2
	Organisational effect\WLB\Time off\Unpaid leave	2	6	1	1	-	-
Financial	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Air fares	9	14	-	-	-	-

Table 22: Preconditions – housing

Preconditions effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Housing and associated issues	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Country\Housing	24	53	3	3	4	4
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Removals	6	8	2	2	1	2
	Organisational effect\IA\Preparation\Familiarisation\Home search	8	12	2	3	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Country\Security	2	2	1	1	1	2
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Utilities	2	2	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Meals	-	-	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\STA	2	2	-	-	-	-

Table 23: Preconditions – remuneration and allowances

Preconditions effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Remuneration and allowances	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Salary	8	10	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Uplift	17	39	1	1	2	6
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Relocation allowance	3	3	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Pensions	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Graduates	3	5	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\COLA	9	12	2	3	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Bonus	2	2	-	-	1	1

	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Country\Car	10	12	-	-	1	1
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Country\Driver	4	4	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Loss on sale of car	1	1	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Peer equity	1	1	-	-	-	-

Table 24: Preconditions – medical, visa and tax issues

Preconditions effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Medical, tax and visa issues	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Country\Health care	2	3	1	1	2	2
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Country\Medical insurance	1	2	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Money\Tax	4	9	1	1	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Country\Vaccinations	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\IA\Financial\Country\Visa	9	14	1	1	2	4

Table 25: Preconditions – policy administration, implementation and logistics

Preconditions effect issue	Nvivo coding tree	Women expatriate interviews		Survey open comments		HR expert interviews	
		Sources	References	Sources	References	Sources	References
Policy administration issues	Organisational effect\ IA\Admin\ Implementation\ Flexibility	9	23	-	-	5	16
	Organisational effect\ IA\Admin\ Implementation\ Inpats	1	1	-	-	-	-
	Organisational effect\ IA\Admin\ Implementation\ Process	26	84	3	3	4	7
	Organisational effect\ IA\Admin\ Implementation\Use of relocation company	4	8	-	-	1	4
	Organisational effect\ IA\Admin\ Access to policy	6	17	2	2	1	1
	Organisational effect\ IA\Admin\ Cost control	16	41	1	2	5	11
	Organisational effect\ IA\Admin\ Equity	12	35	2	2	2	4
	Organisational effect\ IA\Admin\ Unclear policy	7	13	3	3	1	1
	Organisational effect\ IA\Financial\ Money\Inconsistent treatment	2	3	-	-	-	-
	Industry effect\ Process\ Company level	4	5	-	-	2	5
	Industry effect\ Process\Policy change	16	37	-	-	2	20

APPENDIX 10: Survey data

Participant profile

Background

The questionnaire survey was distributed by e-mail to all of the 93 female expatriates within the two case study firms and a total of 71 replies were received; representing a response rate of 76%. Given the low numbers of female expatriates, descriptive statistics are presented with the actual numbers of women identified (percentages are included and rounded to integers but as a result percentages may not add to 100%).

Marital and family status

Thirty five of the women (49%) were married and 10 (14%) had partners; 24 (34%) were single and two (3%) were divorced or widowed. Seventeen women (24%) had children; 54 (76%) did not. Of those who had children, seven women had only one child; five each had two and three children. The 32 children ranged in age from babies under one year old to adults aged 18 or over. Twenty two of the children were under 11 years; six were aged between 18 and 26; while only four were aged between 12 and 16.

Accompanied status

Thirty three women (46%) were accompanied on their assignments; 38 (54%) were not. Of those who were accompanied, 31 were accompanied by their husband or partner and 12 by all of their children. Three women were accompanied by some but not all of their children (leaving the older children behind). Two women were not accompanied by their children (one had grown up children; the other had left a teenage child behind while on a short-term assignment). One woman was accompanied by a dependent family member (her sister).

Age range

Forty eight (68%) of the women were aged between 30 and 44. Within this wide age band, there were 16 women (23%) aged between 30 and 34 and the same number aged between 35 and 39 and also between 40 and 44. Eighteen women (25%) were aged under 29: 13 (18%) were between 25 and 29 and five (7%) were aged 24 or under. There were relatively few older women in the sample: five (7%) were aged 45 and over. Of these, two (3%) were aged between 45 and 49 and three (4%) were 50 plus.

Ethnicity and nationality

Ethnicity was classified using the categories in the UK 2001 Census (Office for National Statistics, 2001). Forty seven women (66%) were white and eight (11%) were of mixed race. Five women (7%) were each classified as Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi and other Asian. There were two (3%) black African women, and one each (1%) black Caribbean and Chinese. There were two (3%) women from other ethnic groups.

There was a wide range of nationalities represented. Thirty three women (46%) were British (representing the case study research being centred on firms with UK bases of operation). There were six Canadians (9%) and four Irish (6%). Three women (4%) were Americans and a similar number Brazilian. Two women (3%) each held the following nationality: Australian, Egyptian, French, Indian, Kazak, Malaysian, Nigerian, Thai, and Trinidadian. There was one (1%) of each of the following nationalities: Danish, German, Indonesian and Portuguese.

Home and host locations of survey respondents

Country	Home		Host	
	Number	%	Number	%
Algeria			1	1
Austria	1	1		
Australia	3	4	4	6
Azerbaijan			1	1
Brazil	3	4		
Canada	3	4	1	1
Denmark			1	1
Egypt	2	3	6	8
France	1	1		
Germany	1	1		
India	2	3		
Indonesia	1	1	1	1
Kazakhstan	2	3	5	7
Malaysia	2	3	6	8
Nigeria	1	1	3	4
Norway			3	4
Oman			1	1
Singapore			4	6
Thailand	2	3		
Trinidad	4	6	6	8
Tunisia			3	4
UK	38	55	14	20
USA	3	4	11	16

Functional area

The survey respondents were asked to name their corporate function but this led to a wide range of responses and inconsistent use of terminology. For example, in the functional area of exploration, the women reported that they worked in advance geophysics, geophysics, geology, geology and geophysics, exploration, oil and gas exploration and global basins. The responses given by each respondent in relation to their corporate function, current occupation and current job title were therefore taken together to classify the roles held by the women within nine broad functional areas. The female expatriates were, in the main, employed in the commercial function (covering such disciplines as contracts and procurement and business development), engineering, and exploration (geology and geophysics).

Corporate functional area of survey respondents

Corporate functional area	Number	%
Commercial	19	27
Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	2	3
Engineering	18	25
Exploration	15	21
Finance	3	4
Information technology (IT)	2	3
Human resource management (HR)	5	7
Legal	4	6
Other	3	4

Grade

The two case study firms use different grading descriptors and hence the results for this demographic are presented here by case study firm. Collins Co. has a numeric system with lower numbers representing lower grades while Hagman Co. uses an alphabetic system from E to A with E being the lowest grade. In Collins Co., there was one woman (5%) in each of the lowest and highest grades represented in the sample (grades 2 and 6). The majority were in grades 3 and 4: eight and nine women (42% and 47%) respectively. In Hagman Co., there were 13 women (25%) in the lowest grade E; again the majority were in the middle grades D and C: 20 (38%) in grade D; 18 (35%) in grade C. There was one senior graded woman (2%) in the highest grade recorded, that of grade B. The grade profiles of the two case study firms are not that dissimilar except that Collins Co. did not, at the time of the survey, have any graduates on international assignment whereas Hagman Co. did (the graduates being in the lowest grades in both firms).

Types and numbers of assignments undertaken

Fifty one of the women (72%) were undertaking a long-term assignment at the time of the survey; 12 (17%) were on a short-term assignment (including nine graduates); five (7%) were on a rotational assignment and three (4%) were on an extended international transfer.

Thirty four of the survey population (48%) had undertaken a previous expatriate assignment. Eighteen of them (53%) had been on a short-term assignment for their first posting; while 12 (35%) had been on a long-term assignment prior to their current expatriate position. Two women (6%) reported having undertaken a rotational assignment as their first expatriate role while one each (3%) noted being on a commuter assignment and an extended international transfer as their first assignment type.

Twelve of the 71 women (17%) had undertaken two previous assignments before their current expatriate role. Nine of these (75%) said their second assignment was long-term while three (25%) said it was short-term. Five women in the survey sample (7%) said they had been on three previous assignments; only one woman had undertaken four previous assignments.

Table 1: Importance of career issues

Career issue	Importance									
	n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
					n	%	n	%	n	%
Gaining international experience	71	3.00	2.80	.435	58	81.7	12	16.9	1	1.4
Gaining cultural understanding	68	2.00	2.34	.660	30	44.1	31	45.6	7	10.3
Gaining professional experience	71	3.00	2.82	.390	58	81.7	13	18.3	-	-
Gaining personal experience	70	3.00	2.74	.502	54	77.1	14	20.0	2	2.9
The potential to gain promotion in the host location	66	2.00	1.89	.825	19	28.8	21	31.8	26	39.4
The potential to damage your career through assignment refusal	52	1.00	1.33	.617	4	7.7	9	17.3	39	75.0
The potential to enhance your career through assignment acceptance	66	2.00	2.12	.755	23	34.8	28	42.4	15	22.7
Having a job to come back to on return home	67	2.00	2.15	.744	24	35.8	29	43.3	14	20.9
The potential to gain promotion on return home through undertaking the assignment	68	2.00	2.00	.753	19	27.9	30	44.1	19	27.9

Table 2: Location factors as disincentives or deterrents to assignment participation

Location factor	Current assignment							Previous assignments								
	n	Yes* (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)		n	Yes* (1)		Yes** (2)		No (3)		N/A (9)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
An extreme climate (weather) in the assignment location	71	6	8.5	42	59.2	23	32.4	34	4	11.8	4	11.8	15	44.1	11	32.4
Limited facilities in the assignment location	71	6	8.5	33	46.5	32	45.1	34	7	20.6	2	5.9	13	38.2	12	35.3
Primitive health care in the assignment location	71	8	11.3	31	43.7	32	45.1	34	8	23.5	1	2.9	13	38.2	12	35.3
A high security assignment location	70	8	11.4	26	37.1	36	51.4	33	7	21.2	1	3.0	11	33.3	14	42.4
The cultural restrictions affecting expatriates in the assignment location (e.g. dress, alcohol)	71	3	4.2	39	54.9	29	40.8	33	5	15.2	2	6.1	13	39.4	13	39.4
The potential work opportunities in the host location for your spouse/ partner	71	15	21.1	22	31.0	34	47.9	33	6	18.2	1	3.0	7	21.2	19	57.6
The potential education opportunities in the host location for your child/ children	71	4	5.6	12	16.9	55	77.5	32	1	3.1	1	3.1	2	6.3	28	87.5

* It was a disincentive; but assignment was accepted

** It was a deterrent; assignment was turned down

Table 3: Importance of career issues by current assignment type

Career issue	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>International experience</i>							
Long-term	51	44	86.3	6	11.8	1	1.9
Extended transfer	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	12	8	75.0	4	25.0	-	-
Rotational	5	3	60.0	2	40.0	-	-
<i>Cultural understanding</i>							
Long-term	50	23	46.0	22	44.0	5	10.0
Extended transfer	3	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3
Short-term	11	5	45.5	6	54.5	-	-
Rotational	4	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0
<i>Professional experience</i>							
Long-term	51	44	86.3	7	13.7	-	-
Extended transfer	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
Short-term	12	8	75.0	4	25.0	-	-
Rotational	5	4	80.0	1	20.0	-	-
<i>Personal experience</i>							
Long-term	50	41	82.0	8	16.0	1	2.0
Extended transfer	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	12	8	75.0	4	25.0	-	-
Rotational	5	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0
<i>Promotion in host country</i>							
Long-term	48	13	27.1	17	35.4	18	37.5
Extended transfer	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
Short-term	11	2	18.2	2	18.2	7	63.6
Rotational	4	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0

Career issue (cont.)	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Damage through refusal</i>							
Long-term	38	3	7.9	5	13.2	30	78.9
Extended transfer	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Short-term	7	1	14.3	3	42.9	3	42.9
Rotational	5	-	-	-	-	5	100.0
<i>Enhance through acceptance</i>							
Long-term	47	14	29.8	21	44.7	12	25.5
Extended transfer	3	-	-	3	100.0	-	-
Short-term	11	7	63.6	2	18.2	2	18.2
Rotational	5	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0
<i>Job on repatriation</i>							
Long-term	49	20	40.8	18	36.7	11	22.4
Extended transfer	3	-	-	3	100.0	-	-
Short-term	12	3	25.0	8	66.7	1	8.3
Rotational	3	1	33.3	-	-	2	66.7
<i>Promotion on repatriation</i>							
Long-term	50	14	28.0	21	42.0	15	30.0
Extended transfer	2	-	-	2	100.0	-	-
Short-term	11	3	27.3	5	45.5	3	27.3
Rotational	5	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0

Table 4: Future willingness to undertake particular assignment types

Type of assignment	Would be undertaken								
	n	Definitely (3)		Maybe (2)		Not at all (1)		No opinion (9)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Long-term accompanied	70	52	74.3	15	21.4	1	1.4	2	2.9
Long-term unaccompanied	71	14	19.7	20	28.2	37	52.1	-	-
Short-term accompanied	70	27	38.6	36	51.4	5	7.1	2	2.9
Short-term unaccompanied	70	12	17.1	33	47.1	25	35.7	-	-
Rotational	71	18	25.4	29	40.8	20	28.2	4	5.6
Commuter	70	10	14.3	31	44.3	26	37.1	3	4.3

Table 5: Importance of extending or reducing assignment length

Assignment length	Importance									
	n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
					n	%	n	%	n	%
Being able to reduce the length of expatriation	60	2.00	2.00	1.000	12	20.0	27	45.0	21	35.0
Being able to extend length of expatriation	66	2.00	2.00	1.000	24	36.4	34	51.5	8	12.1

Table 6: Future willingness to undertake particular assignment types by current assignment type

Current assignment type	Would be undertaken						
	n	Definitely (3)		Maybe (2)		Not at all (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Long-term</i>							
Long-term accompanied	48	37	77.1	11	22.9	-	-
Long-term unaccompanied	51	11	21.6	12	23.5	28	54.9
Short-term accompanied	48	16	33.3	28	58.3	4	8.3
Short-term unaccompanied	51	8	15.7	23	45.1	20	39.2
Rotational	48	9	18.8	22	45.8	17	35.4
Commuter	47	6	12.8	21	44.7	20	42.6
<i>Extended international transfer</i>							
Long-term accompanied	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
Long-term unaccompanied	3	-	-	1	33.3	2	66.7
Short-term accompanied	3	-	-	3	100.0	-	-
Short-term unaccompanied	3	-	-	1	33.3	2	66.7
Rotational	3	-	-	2	66.7	1	33.3
Commuter	3	-	-	1	33.3	2	66.7
<i>Short-term</i>							
Long-term accompanied	12	11	91.7	1	8.3	-	-
Long-term unaccompanied	12	3	25.0	5	41.7	4	33.3
Short-term accompanied	12	9	75.0	3	25.0	-	-
Short-term unaccompanied	12	4	33.3	6	50.0	2	16.7
Rotational	11	5	45.5	5	45.5	1	9.1
Commuter	12	3	25.0	6	50.0	3	25.0
<i>Rotational</i>							
Long-term accompanied	5	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0
Long-term unaccompanied	5	-	-	2	40.0	3	60.0
Short-term accompanied	5	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0
Short-term unaccompanied	4	-	-	3	75.0	1	25.0
Rotational	5	4	80.0	-	-	1	20.0
Commuter	5	1	20.0	3	60.0	1	20.0

Table 7: Future willingness to undertake particular assignment types by current assignment status

Current status	Would be undertaken						
	n	Definitely (3)		Maybe (2)		Not at all (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Accompanied</i>							
Long-term accompanied	33	28	84.8	5	15.2	-	-
Long-term unaccompanied	33	1	3.0	3	9.1	29	87.9
Short-term accompanied	33	8	24.2	21	63.6	4	12.1
Short-term unaccompanied	33	1	3.0	10	30.3	22	66.7
Rotational	31	4	12.9	12	38.7	15	48.4
Commuter	31	2	6.5	12	38.7	17	54.8
<i>Unaccompanied</i>							
Long-term accompanied	35	24	68.6	10	28.6	1	2.9
Long-term unaccompanied	38	13	34.2	17	44.7	8	21.1
Short-term accompanied	35	19	54.3	15	42.9	1	2.9
Short-term unaccompanied	37	11	29.7	23	62.2	3	8.1
Rotational	36	14	38.9	17	47.2	5	13.9
Commuter	36	8	22.2	19	52.8	9	25.0

Table 8: Future willingness to undertake particular assignment types by marital/ family status

Marital/ family status	Would be undertaken						
	n	Definitely (3)		Maybe (2)		Not at all (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Married/Partnered							
Long-term accompanied	45	38	84.4	6	13.3	1	2.2
Long-term unaccompanied	45	2	4.4	7	15.6	36	80.0
Short-term accompanied	45	15	33.3	25	55.6	5	11.1
Short-term unaccompanied	45	2	4.4	18	40.0	25	55.6
Rotational	42	9	21.4	16	38.1	17	40.4
Commuter	43	6	14.0	18	41.9	19	44.2
Single/Divorced/Widowed							
Long-term accompanied	23	14	60.9	9	39.1	-	-
Long-term unaccompanied	26	12	46.2	13	50.0	1	3.8
Short-term accompanied	23	12	52.2	11	47.8	-	-
Short-term unaccompanied	25	10	40.0	15	60.0	-	-
Rotational	25	9	36.0	13	52.0	3	12.0
Commuter	24	4	16.7	13	54.2	7	29.2
Have children							
Long-term accompanied	17	15	88.2	2	11.8	-	-
Long-term unaccompanied	17	2	11.8	2	11.8	13	76.5
Short-term accompanied	17	5	29.4	10	58.8	2	11.8
Short-term unaccompanied	17	1	5.9	5	29.4	11	64.7
Rotational	14	3	21.4	3	21.4	8	57.1
Commuter	15	2	13.3	6	40.0	7	46.7
Have no children							
Long-term accompanied	51	37	72.5	13	25.5	1	2.0
Long-term unaccompanied	54	12	22.2	18	33.3	24	44.4
Short-term accompanied	51	22	43.1	26	51.0	3	5.9
Short-term unaccompanied	53	11	20.8	28	52.8	14	26.4
Rotational	53	15	28.3	26	49.1	12	22.6
Commuter	52	8	15.4	25	48.1	19	36.5

Table 9: Importance of gender policies

Gender policy	Importance									
	n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
					n	%	n	%	n	%
Equal opportunities policy	44	1.00	1.61	.754	7	15.9	13	29.5	24	54.5
Diversity policy	37	1.00	1.46	.691	4	10.8	9	24.3	24	64.9

Table 10: Importance of gender policies by current assignment type

Gender policy	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Equal opportunities policy</i>							
Long-term	33	6	18.2	10	30.3	17	51.5
Extended transfer	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Short-term	7	1	14.3	1	14.3	5	71.4
Rotational	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
<i>Diversity policy</i>							
Long-term	28	4	14.3	6	21.4	18	64.3
Extended transfer	1	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
Short-term	6	-	-	2	33.3	4	66.7
Rotational	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0

Table 11: The recruitment and selection process for expatriation

Recruitment and selection issue	n	Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Taking up expatriate role:</i>							
As an existing employee	71	58	81.7	13	18.3	-	-
<i>Stating availability:</i>							
Raised in annual development review	47	34	72.3	9	19.1	4	8.5
Raised in annual performance review	46	34	73.9	9	19.6	3	6.5
Raised during one-to-ones with manager	47	36	76.6	9	19.1	2	4.3
Integral to graduate development programme	38	9	23.7	5	13.2	24	63.2
<i>Hearing about and applying for current expatriate role:</i>							
Advertised externally on company website	44	5	11.4	17	38.6	22	50.0
Advertised externally on specialist website	42	1	2.4	17	40.5	24	57.1
Via recruitment agency	44	3	6.8	16	36.4	25	56.8
In press	43	-	-	19	44.2	24	55.8
Approached via executive search firm	43	2	4.7	17	39.5	24	55.8
Openly advertised internally on intranet (portal)	48	11	22.9	25	52.1	12	25.0
Openly advertised internally on intranet (portal) and I was invited to apply	49	8	16.3	29	59.2	12	24.5
Invited personally (not advertised)	51	33	64.7	11	21.6	7	13.7
Raised in annual development review	49	14	28.6	24	49.0	11	22.4
Discussed within graduate development programme	48	8	16.7	13	27.1	27	56.3
<i>Operation of selection process:</i>							
Formally according to process	70	28	40.0	23	32.9	19	27.1
Informally	68	31	45.6	22	32.4	15	22.1
In an open/ transparent manner	69	38	55.1	16	23.2	15	21.7
In closed/ not transparent manner	66	16	24.2	35	53.0	15	22.7

Table 12: Taking up an expatriate role as an existing employee by current assignment type

Existing employee	n	Yes (1)		No (2)	
		n	%	n	%
<i>Taking up expatriate role as existing employee</i>					
Long-term	51	40	78.4	11	21.6
Extended transfer	3	3	100.0	-	-
Short-term	12	11	91.7	1	8.3
Rotational	5	4	80.0	1	20.0

Table 13: Hearing about and applying for current expatriate role by current assignment type

Hearing about and applying for current expatriate role	n	Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Advertised externally on company website</i>							
Long-term	32	4	12.5	11	34.4	17	53.1
Extended transfer	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Short-term	6	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0
Rotational	4	-	-	3	75.0	1	25.0
<i>Advertised externally on specialist website</i>							
Long-term	31	1	3.2	11	35.5	19	61.3
Extended transfer	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Short-term	5	-	-	2	40.0	3	60.0
Rotational	4	-	-	3	75.0	1	25.0
<i>Via recruitment agency</i>							
Long-term	33	2	6.1	11	33.3	20	60.6
Extended transfer	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Short-term	5	-	-	2	40.0	3	60.0
Rotational	4	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0
<i>In press</i>							
Long-term	32	-	-	13	40.6	19	59.4
Extended transfer	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Short-term	5	-	-	2	40.0	3	60.0
Rotational	4	-	-	3	75.0	1	25.0
<i>Approached via executive search firm</i>							
Long-term	32	1	3.1	12	37.5	19	59.4
Extended transfer	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Short-term	5	-	-	2	40.0	3	60.0
Rotational	4	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0

Hearing about and applying for current expatriate role (cont.)	n	Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)	
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Openly advertised internally on intranet (portal)</i>							
Long-term	33	9	27.3	16	48.5	8	24.2
Extended transfer	2	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	10	-	-	7	70.0	3	30.0
Rotational	3	-	-	2	66.7	1	33.3
<i>Openly advertised internally on intranet (portal)and I was invited to apply</i>							
Long-term	34	6	17.6	20	58.8	8	23.5
Extended transfer	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-
Short-term	10	-	-	7	70.0	3	30.0
Rotational	3	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3
<i>Invited personally (not advertised)</i>							
Long-term	36	25	69.4	7	19.4	4	11.1
Extended transfer	2	-	-	2	100.0	-	-
Short-term	10	6	60.0	1	10.0	3	30.0
Rotational	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
<i>Raised in annual development review</i>							
Long-term	34	9	26.5	18	52.9	7	20.6
Extended transfer	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Short-term	10	2	20.0	5	50.0	3	30.0
Rotational	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
<i>Discussed within graduate development programme</i>							
Long-term	33	2	6.1	8	24.2	23	69.7
Extended transfer	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
Short-term	11	6	54.5	4	36.4	1	9.1
Rotational	3	-	-	-	-	3	100.0

Table 14: Stating availability for expatriation by current assignment type

Stating availability for expatriation	n	Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Raised in annual development review</i>							
Long-term	35	26	74.3	7	20.0	2	5.7
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	9	5	55.6	2	22.2	2	22.2
Rotational	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
<i>Raised in annual performance review</i>							
Long-term	34	26	76.5	6	17.6	2	5.9
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	9	6	66.7	2	22.2	1	11.1
Rotational	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
<i>Raised during one-to-ones with manager</i>							
Long-term	34	24	70.6	8	23.5	2	5.9
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	9	9	100.0	-	-	-	-
Rotational	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
<i>Integral to graduate development programme</i>							
Long-term	26	2	7.7	4	15.4	20	76.9
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	9	7	77.8	1	11.1	1	11.1
Rotational	3	-	-	-	-	3	100.0

Table 15: Importance of personnel in expatriate selection decision

Personnel involved in expatriate selection decision	n	Involved						Importance									
		Yes (1)		No (2)		Don't know (3)		n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%					n	%	n	%	n	%
Home country direct line manager	71	40	56.3	21	29.6	10	14.1	39	3.00	2.46	.600	20	51.3	17	43.6	2	5.1
Line of business manager (function/ parent manager)	69	50	72.5	8	11.6	11	15.9	46	3.00	2.63	.532	30	65.2	15	32.6	1	2.2
Host country line manager	69	52	75.4	8	11.6	9	13.0	52	3.00	2.69	.466	36	69.2	16	30.8	-	-
HR international assignments team	69	19	27.5	25	36.2	25	36.2	18	2.00	1.89	.758	4	22.2	8	44.4	6	33.3
Equal opportunities/ diversity representative	65	1	1.5	32	49.2	32	49.2	1	2.00	2.00	.000	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
Other function	17	15	88.2	1	5.9	1	5.9	15	3.00	2.73	.458	11	73.3	4	26.7	-	-

Table 16: Importance of personnel in the expatriate selection decision by current assignment type

Personnel involved in expatriate selection decision	Importance						
	Very important (3)			Important (2)		Not important (1)	
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Home country direct line manager</i>							
Long-term	29	16	55.2	13	44.8	-	-
Extended transfer	3	1	33.3	2	66.7	-	-
Short-term	4	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0
Rotational	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
<i>Line of business manager (function/ parent manager)</i>							
Long-term	32	19	59.4	12	37.5	1	3.1
Extended transfer	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-
Short-term	9	7	77.8	2	22.2	-	-
Rotational	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
<i>Host country line manager</i>							
Long-term	38	29	76.3	9	23.7	-	-
Extended transfer	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
Short-term	8	4	50.0	4	50.0	-	-
Rotational	3	1	33.3	2	66.7	-	-
<i>HR international assignments team</i>							
Long-term	12	2	16.7	5	41.7	5	41.7
Extended transfer	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-
Short-term	4	1	25.0	2	50.0	1	25.0
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Equal opportunities/ diversity representative</i>							
Long-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 17: Operation of selection process for expatriation by current assignment type

Operation of selection process	n	Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Formally according to process</i>							
Long-term	50	24	48.0	18	36.0	8	16.0
Extended transfer	3	1	33.3	-	-	2	66.7
Short-term	12	2	16.7	5	41.7	5	41.7
Rotational	5	1	20.0	-	-	4	80.0
<i>Informally</i>							
Long-term	48	22	45.8	19	39.6	7	14.6
Extended transfer	3	-	-	1	33.3	2	66.7
Short-term	12	7	58.3	1	8.3	4	33.3
Rotational	5	2	40.0	1	20.0	2	40.0
<i>In an open/ transparent manner</i>							
Long-term	49	30	61.2	12	24.5	7	14.3
Extended transfer	3	2	66.7	-	-	1	33.3
Short-term	12	4	33.3	4	33.3	4	33.3
Rotational	5	2	40.0	-	-	3	60.0
<i>In closed/ not transparent manner</i>							
Long-term	46	12	26.1	28	60.9	6	13.0
Extended transfer	3	-	-	2	66.7	1	33.3
Short-term	12	4	33.3	3	25.0	5	41.7
Rotational	5	-	-	2	40.0	3	60.0

Table 18: Importance of expatriate preparation and training elements

Preparation and training element	Offered							Undertaken					Importance									
	n							n					n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		Yes (1)	No (2)	N/A (9)	Yes (1)	No (2)	n		%	n	%	n					%	n	%			
		n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%	n	%					n	%	n	%		
Job-related skills	71	31	43.7	30	42.3	10	14.1	28	27	96.4	1	3.6	27	3.00	2.70	.465	19	70.4	8	29.6	-	-
Personal skills	71	24	33.8	36	50.7	11	15.5	21	18	85.7	3	14.3	18	2.50	2.44	.616	9	50.0	8	44.4	1	5.6
Pre-assignment visit	71	41	57.7	23	32.4	7	9.9	38	37	97.4	1	2.6	37	3.00	2.76	.548	30	81.1	5	13.5	2	5.4
Language	71	22	31.0	23	32.4	26	36.6	21	15	71.4	6	28.6	15	2.00	2.20	.775	6	40.0	6	40.0	3	20.0
Country briefing	71	35	49.3	30	42.3	6	8.5	33	27	81.8	6	18.2	27	2.00	2.33	.620	11	40.7	14	51.9	2	7.4
Cross-cultural	70	24	34.3	35	50.0	11	15.7	23	16	69.6	7	30.4	16	2.00	2.12	.719	5	31.3	8	50.0	3	18.8
Security	71	34	47.9	32	45.1	5	7.0	31	30	96.8	1	3.2	30	2.50	2.43	.626	15	50.0	13	43.3	2	6.7
Driving	71	32	45.1	27	38.0	12	16.9	29	24	82.8	5	17.2	24	3.00	2.67	.637	18	75.0	4	16.7	2	8.3
Office attendance	70	3	4.3	19	27.1	48	68.6	3	3	100.0	-	-	3	2.00	2.00	1.000	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3
Spouse/ partner	70	15	21.4	19	27.1	36	51.4	13	12	92.3	1	7.7	12	3.00	2.58	.515	7	58.3	5	41.7	-	-
Repatriation preparation	70	3	4.3	30	42.9	37	52.9	3	3	100.0	-	-	3	3.00	3.00	.000	3	100.0	-	-	-	-

Table 19: Importance of expatriate preparation and training issues by current assignment type

Preparation and training issue	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Job-related skills</i>							
Long-term	17	13	76.5	4	23.5	-	-
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	5	3	60.0	2	40.0	-	-
Rotational	4	2	50.0	2	50.0	-	-
<i>Personal skills</i>							
Long-term	11	5	45.5	5	45.5	1	9.1
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-
Rotational	3	1	66.7	2	33.3	-	-
<i>Pre-assignment visit</i>							
Long-term	35	29	82.9	4	11.4	2	5.7
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Language</i>							
Long-term	11	5	45.5	4	36.4	2	18.2
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Rotational	3	-	-	2	66.7	1	33.3
<i>Country briefing</i>							
Long-term	24	10	41.7	12	50.0	2	8.3
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	2	-	-	2	100.0	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Preparation and training issue (cont.)	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Cross-cultural</i>							
Long-term	14	5	35.7	6	42.9	3	21.4
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	2	-	-	2	100.0	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Security</i>							
Long-term	23	11	47.8	10	43.5	2	8.7
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	4	2	50.0	2	50.0	-	-
Rotational	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-
<i>Driving</i>							
Long-term	19	13	68.4	4	21.1	2	10.5
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Rotational	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
<i>Spouse/ partner</i>							
Long-term	12	7	58.3	5	41.7	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Repatriation preparation</i>							
Long-term	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 20: Importance of expatriate support issues

Support issue	Importance									
	n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
					n	%	n	%	n	%
Support from a mentor	49	2.00	2.16	.657	15	30.6	27	55.1	7	14.3
Support from a women's network	34	1.00	1.26	.511	1	2.9	7	20.6	26	76.5
Presence of current female expatriate role models	39	1.00	1.38	.590	2	5.1	11	28.2	26	66.7
Views of current female expatriate role models	39	1.00	1.41	.637	3	7.7	10	25.6	26	66.7
Views of returned female expatriate role models	39	1.00	1.33	.530	1	2.6	11	28.2	27	69.2

Table 21: Importance of expatriate support issues by current assignment type

Support issue	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Mentor</i>							
Long-term	35	11	31.4	19	54.3	5	14.3
Extended transfer	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
Short-term	9	4	44.4	4	44.4	1	11.1
Rotational	4	-	-	3	75.0	1	25.0
<i>Women's network</i>							
Long-term	24	1	4.2	5	20.8	18	75.0
Extended transfer	1	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
Short-term	8	-	-	2	25.0	6	75.0
Rotational	1	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
<i>Presence of current female expatriate role models</i>							
Long-term	28	1	3.6	6	21.4	21	75.0
Extended transfer	2	1	50.0	-	-	1	50.0
Short-term	8	-	-	4	50.0	4	50.0
Rotational	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
<i>Views of current female expatriate role models</i>							
Long-term	27	2	7.4	5	18.5	20	74.1
Extended transfer	2	1	50.0	-	-	1	50.0
Short-term	9	-	-	4	44.4	5	55.6
Rotational	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
<i>Views of returned female expatriate role models</i>							
Long-term	29	1	3.4	7	24.1	21	72.4
Extended transfer	1	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
Short-term	8	-	-	3	37.5	5	62.5
Rotational	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-

Table 22: Social and family support issues

Social and family support issue	Received							Importance									
	n	Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)		n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%					n	%	n	%	n	%
Children's education allowance	71	9	12.7	7	9.9	55	77.5	9	3.00	3.00	.000	9	100.0	-	-	-	-
School search in host location	71	7	9.9	8	11.3	56	78.9	7	3.00	2.71	.488	5	71.4	2	28.6	-	-
Co-working assistance	70	5	7.1	11	15.7	54	77.1	5	3.00	3.00	.000	5	100.0	-	-	-	-
Dual career support	70	3	4.3	22	31.4	45	64.3	2	3.00	3.00	.000	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
Work permit/ visa assistance for spouse/ partner	71	22	31.0	11	15.5	38	53.5	22	3.00	2.86	.351	19	86.4	3	13.6	-	-
Spouse/ partner employment assistance	71	3	4.2	21	29.6	47	66.2	3	3.00	3.00	.000	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Spouse/ partner allowance	71	12	16.9	16	22.5	43	60.6	12	2.50	2.25	.866	6	50.0	3	25.0	3	25.0
Pregnancy support	71	4	5.6	10	14.1	57	80.3	4	3.00	2.75	.500	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-
Club membership	70	36	51.4	14	20.0	20	28.6	34	2.00	2.09	.753	11	32.4	15	44.1	8	23.5
Family emergency assistance	70	13	18.6	17	24.3	40	57.1	12	3.00	2.92	.289	11	91.7	1	8.3	-	-
Repatriation social support	71	1	1.4	20	28.2	50	70.4	1	1.00	1.00	.000	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
Repatriation family support	71	1	1.4	16	22.5	54	76.1	1	1.00	1.00	.000	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
Education assistance for children on repatriation	71	3	4.2	6	8.5	62	87.3	3	3.00	3.00	.000	3	100.0	-	-	-	-

Table 23: Importance of social and family issues by current assignment type

Social and family support issue	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Children's education allowance</i>							
Long-term	9	9	100.0	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>School search in host location</i>							
Long-term	7	5	71.4	2	28.6	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Co-working assistance</i>							
Long-term	5	5	100.0	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Dual career support</i>							
Long-term	2	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Work permit/ visa assistance for spouse/ partner</i>							
Long-term	19	17	89.5	2	10.5	-	-
Extended transfer	2	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Social and family support issue (cont.)	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Spouse/ partner employment assistance</i>							
Long-term	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Spouse/ partner allowance</i>							
Long-term	12	6	50.0	3	25.0	3	25.0
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Pregnancy support</i>							
Long-term	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Club membership</i>							
Long-term	32	10	31.3	15	46.9	7	21.9
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	2	1	50.0	-	-	1	50.0
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Family emergency assistance</i>							
Long-term	11	10	90.9	1	9.1	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-

Social and family support issue (cont.)	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Repatriation social support</i>							
Long-term	1	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Repatriation family support</i>							
Long-term	1	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Education assistance for children on repatriation</i>							
Long-term	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 24: Importance of working hours and leave

Working hours and leave issue	Importance									
	n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
					n	%	n	%	n	%
Working local hours in assignment location	58	1.00	1.34	.608	4	6.9	12	20.7	42	72.4
Working additional hours in assignment location	65	1.00	1.32	.562	3	4.6	15	23.1	47	72.3
Undertaking international business trips involving extra hours of work	60	1.00	1.38	.613	4	6.7	15	25.0	41	68.3
Taking regular periods away from work through a rotational working pattern	19	2.00	1.89	.875	6	31.6	5	26.3	8	42.1
Taking regular periods away from work through a commuter assignment	15	2.00	1.67	.724	2	13.3	6	40.0	7	46.7
Home leave	58	3.00	2.52	.707	37	63.8	14	24.1	7	12.1
Rest and recreation leave	35	3.00	2.49	.742	22	62.9	8	22.9	5	14.3
Being able to take maternity leave	24	3.00	2.37	.875	15	62.5	3	12.5	6	25.0
Being able to take parental leave	20	2.00	2.20	.834	9	45.0	6	30.0	5	25.0
Partner being able to take paternity leave	9	3.00	2.33	1.000	6	66.7	-	-	3	33.3

Table 25: Importance of working hours and leave by current assignment type

Working hours and leave issue	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Working local hours in assignment location</i>							
Long-term	40	3	7.5	8	20.0	29	72.5
Extended transfer	3	-	-	2	66.7	1	33.3
Short-term	11	-	-	1	9.1	10	90.9
Rotational	4	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0
<i>Working additional hours in assignment location</i>							
Long-term	46	3	6.5	9	19.6	34	73.9
Extended transfer	3	-	-	1	33.3	2	66.7
Short-term	12	-	-	4	33.3	8	66.7
Rotational	4	-	-	1	25.0	3	75.0
<i>Undertaking international business trips involving extra hours of work</i>							
Long-term	43	4	9.3	10	23.3	29	67.4
Extended transfer	3	-	-	1	33.3	2	66.7
Short-term	9	-	-	2	22.2	7	77.8
Rotational	5	-	-	2	40.0	3	60.0
<i>Taking regular periods away from work through a rotational working pattern</i>							
Long-term	11	2	18.2	2	18.2	7	63.6
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	3	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3
Rotational	5	3	60.0	2	40.0	-	-
<i>Taking regular periods away from work through a commuter assignment</i>							
Long-term	12	1	8.3	5	41.7	6	50.0
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	3	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Working hours and leave issue (cont.)	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Home leave</i>							
Long-term	47	33	70.2	9	19.1	5	10.6
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	9	4	44.4	4	44.4	1	11.1
Rotational	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
<i>Rest and recreation leave</i>							
Long-term	27	19	70.4	6	22.2	2	7.4
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	6	3	50.0	1	16.7	2	33.3
Rotational	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
<i>Being able to take maternity leave</i>							
Long-term	20	13	65.0	2	10.0	5	25.0
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	3	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3
Rotational	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
<i>Being able to take parental leave</i>							
Long-term	17	8	47.1	5	29.4	4	23.5
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	2	1	50.0	-	-	1	50.0
Rotational	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
<i>Partner being able to take paternity leave</i>							
Long-term	7	5	71.4	-	-	2	28.6
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	2	1	50.0	-	-	1	50.0
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 26: Weekly hours worked by assignment type

Hours worked per week	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum	Range
All assignments	69	49.67	11.213	39.0	90.0	51.0
Long-term	50	46.86	6.069	39.0	60.0	21.0
Short-term	11	46.82	5.135	40.0	55.0	15.0
Rotational	5	83.80	4.604	77.0	90.0	13.0
Extended international transfer	3	50.00	6.614	42.5	55.0	12.5

Table 27: Travel, transport and vacation

Element	n	Received						Importance									
		Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)		n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%					n	%	n	%	n	%
Transport to and from host location	71	64	90.1	1	1.4	6	8.5	63	3.00	2.90	.296	57	90.5	6	9.5	-	-
Home leave travel costs	71	56	78.9	8	11.3	7	9.9	56	3.00	2.86	.353	48	85.7	8	14.3	-	-
Vacation	71	52	73.2	14	19.7	5	7.0	50	3.00	2.94	.240	47	94.0	3	6.0	-	-
Flights to reunite family	71	23	32.4	28	39.4	20	28.2	23	3.00	2.91	.288	21	91.3	2	8.7	-	-

Table 28: Importance of travel, transport and vacation by current assignment type

Travel, transport and leave working element	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Transport to and from host location</i>							
Long-term	45	41	91.1	4	8.9	-	-
Extended transfer	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	10	9	90.0	1	10.0	-	-
Rotational	5	4	80.0	1	20.0		
<i>Home leave travel costs</i>							
Long-term	47	40	85.1	7	14.9	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	8	7	87.5	1	12.5	-	-
Rotational	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
<i>Vacation</i>							
Long-term	43	42	97.7	1	2.3	-	-
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	6	4	66.7	2	33.3	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Flights to reunite family</i>							
Long-term	18	17	94.4	1	5.6	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	5	4	80.0	1	20.0	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 29: Importance of flexible working

Flexible working issue	Importance									
	n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
					n	%	n	%	n	%
Being able to work from home	46	1.00	1.65	.766	8	17.4	14	30.4	24	52.2
Being able to work flexitime	44	2.00	1.82	.756	9	20.5	18	40.9	17	38.6
Being able vary working time to address personal needs	52	2.00	2.00	.686	12	23.1	28	53.8	12	23.1
Being able vary working time to address family needs	34	2.00	2.06	.736	10	29.4	16	47.1	8	23.5
Being able to take time off for family emergencies	51	3.00	2.61	.532	32	62.7	18	35.3	1	2.0
Being able to work part-time	16	1.00	1.25	.447	-	-	4	25.0	12	75.0
Being able to take a job share arrangement	15	1.00	1.20	.414	-	-	3	20.0	12	80.0

Table 30: Importance of flexible working by current assignment type

Flexible working issue	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Being able to work from home</i>							
Long-term	38	8	21.1	10	26.3	20	52.6
Extended transfer	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
Short-term	7	-	-	3	42.9	4	57.1
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Being able to work flexitime</i>							
Long-term	33	9	27.3	12	36.4	12	36.4
Extended transfer	3	-	-	3	100.0	-	-
Short-term	8	-	-	3	37.5	5	62.5
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Being able vary working time to address personal needs</i>							
Long-term	40	12	30.0	19	47.5	9	22.5
Extended transfer	3	-	-	3	100.0	-	-
Short-term	8	-	-	5	62.5	3	37.5
Rotational	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-

Flexible working issue (cont.)	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Being able vary working time to address family needs</i>							
Long-term	29	10	34.5	13	44.8	6	20.7
Extended transfer	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
Short-term	4	-	-	2	50.0	2	50.0
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Being able to take time off for family emergencies</i>							
Long-term	40	27	67.5	13	32.5	-	-
Extended transfer	2	-	-	2	100.0	-	-
Short-term	7	3	42.9	3	42.9	1	14.3
Rotational	2	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
<i>Being able to work part-time</i>							
Long-term	13	-	-	3	23.1	10	76.9
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	3	-	-	1	33.3	2	66.7
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Being able to take a job share arrangement</i>							
Long-term	13	-	-	2	15.4	11	84.6
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	2	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 31: Housing and related issues

Housing and related issues	Received							Importance									
	n	Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)		n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%					n	%	n	%	n	%
Housing	71	67	94.4	3	4.2	1	1.4	67	3.00	2.94	.295	64	95.5	2	3.0	1	1.5
Temporary accommodation	71	48	67.6	10	14.1	13	18.3	48	3.00	2.79	.544	41	85.4	4	8.3	3	6.3
Home search	71	50	70.4	11	15.5	10	14.1	50	3.00	2.74	.565	40	80.0	7	14.0	3	6.0
Utilities payment	71	67	94.4	4	5.6	-	-	67	3.00	2.60	.552	42	62.7	23	34.3	2	3.0
Telephone payment	71	48	67.6	19	26.8	4	5.6	48	2.50	2.40	.676	24	50.0	19	39.6	5	10.4
Security guard	71	14	19.7	35	49.3	22	31.0	14	2.00	2.29	.726	6	42.9	6	42.9	2	14.3
Meals payment	71	7	9.9	47	66.2	17	23.9	6	3.00	2.50	.837	4	66.7	1	16.7	1	16.7
Shipment of household goods	71	55	77.5	12	16.9	4	5.6	54	3.00	2.89	.317	48	88.9	6	11.1	-	-

Table 32: Importance of housing and related issues by current assignment type

Housing and related issue	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Housing</i>							
Long-term	51	51	100.0	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	11	9	81.8	1	9.1	1	9.1
Rotational	5	4	80.0	1	20.0	-	-
<i>Temporary accommodation</i>							
Long-term	38	34	89.5	3	7.9	1	2.6
Extended transfer	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	7	4	57.1	1	14.3	2	28.6
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Home search</i>							
Long-term	43	35	81.4	7	16.3	1	2.3
Extended transfer	2	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	5	3	60.0	-	-	2	40.0
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Housing and related issue	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Utilities payment</i>							
Long-term	51	33	64.7	17	33.3	1	2.0
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	12	6	50.0	5	41.7	1	8.3
Rotational	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-
<i>Telephone payment</i>							
Long-term	36	18	50.0	14	38.9	4	11.1
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	8	3	37.5	4	50.0	1	12.5
Rotational	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
<i>Security guard</i>							
Long-term	10	3	30.0	5	50.0	2	20.0
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Rotational	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
<i>Meals</i>							
Long-term	1	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Rotational	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-
<i>Shipment of household goods</i>							
Long-term	48	44	91.7	4	8.3	-	-
Extended transfer	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	3	1	33.3	2	66.7	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 33: Allowances and elements of remuneration

Allowance and remuneration element	n	Received						Importance									
		Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)		n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%					n	%	n	%	n	%
Salary linked to home country pay	71	69	97.2	2	2.8	-	-	63	3.00	2.67	.539	44	69.8	17	27.0	2	3.2
Pension continuity	70	62	88.6	3	4.3	5	7.1	62	3.00	2.81	.438	51	82.3	10	16.1	1	1.6
Financial incentives/ bonus	71	57	80.3	12	16.9	2	2.8	57	3.00	2.71	.491	42	73.7	14	24.6	1	1.8
Share schemes/ stock options	71	55	77.5	13	18.3	3	4.2	55	3.00	2.62	.561	36	65.5	17	30.9	2	3.6
Cost of living (COLA)	70	52	74.3	11	15.7	7	10.0	52	3.00	2.75	.519	41	78.8	9	17.3	2	3.8
Foreign service premium (FSP)	71	54	76.1	11	15.5	6	8.5	53	3.00	2.87	.342	46	86.8	7	13.2	-	-
Mobility premium	71	62	87.3	3	4.2	6	8.5	62	3.00	2.68	.505	43	69.4	18	29.0	1	1.6
Rest and recreation allowance	71	20	28.2	25	35.2	26	36.6	20	3.00	2.70	.470	14	70.0	6	30.0	-	-
Disturbance	70	11	15.7	23	32.9	36	51.4	11	3.00	2.73	.467	8	72.7	3	27.3	-	-
Rotational allowance	70	5	7.1	15	21.4	50	71.4	5	3.00	2.80	.447	4	80.0	1	20.0	-	-
Graduate placement allowance	70	4	5.7	15	21.4	51	72.9	4	3.00	3.00	.000	4	100.0	-	-	-	-
Car/allowance/local transport	71	63	88.7	8	11.3	-	-	62	3.00	2.82	.385	51	82.3	11	17.7	-	-
Driver	70	16	22.9	32	45.7	22	31.4	15	3.00	2.60	.632	10	66.7	4	26.7	1	6.7

Table 34: Importance of allowances and elements of remuneration by current assignment type

Allowance and remuneration element	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Salary linked to home country pay</i>							
Long-term	46	35	76.1	9	19.6	2	4.3
Extended transfer	2	-	-	2	100.0	-	-
Short-term	10	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-
Rotational	5	3	60.0	2	40.0	-	-
<i>Pension continuity</i>							
Long-term	45	40	88.9	5	11.1	-	-
Extended transfer	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
Short-term	10	6	60.0	3	30.0	1	10.0
Rotational	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-
<i>Financial incentives/ bonus</i>							
Long-term	46	34	73.9	11	23.9	1	2.2
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	6	4	66.7	2	33.3	-	-
Rotational	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-
<i>Share schemes/ stock options</i>							
Long-term	42	28	66.7	13	31.0	1	2.4
Extended transfer	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-
Short-term	7	5	71.4	1	14.3	1	14.3
Rotational	4	2	50.0	2	50.0	-	-
<i>Cost of living (COLA)</i>							
Long-term	42	36	85.7	6	14.3	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	9	5	55.6	2	22.2	2	22.2
Rotational	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-

Allowance and remuneration element (cont.)	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Foreign Service Premium (FSP)</i>							
Long-term	42	36	85.7	6	14.3	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	9	8	88.9	1	11.1	-	-
Rotational	2	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
<i>Mobility premium</i>							
Long-term	49	34	69.4	14	28.6	1	2.0
Extended transfer	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	10	6	60.0	4	40.0	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Rest and recreation allowance</i>							
Long-term	19	13	68.4	6	31.6	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Disturbance</i>							
Long-term	10	8	80.0	2	20.0	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Allowance and remuneration element (cont.)	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Rotational allowance</i>							
Long-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rotational	5	4	80.0	1	20.0	-	-
<i>Graduate placement allowance</i>							
Long-term	2	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	2	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
Rotational	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Car/allowance/local transport</i>							
Long-term	48	41	85.4	7	14.6	-	-
Extended transfer	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	9	6	66.7	3	33.3	-	-
Rotational	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-
<i>Driver</i>							
Long-term	11	8	72.7	2	18.2	1	9.1
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-
Rotational	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-

Table 35: Medical, insurances and assistance-related issues

Medical, insurance and assistance-related element	Received							Importance									
	n	Yes (1)		No (2)		N/A (9)		n	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%					n	%	n	%	n	%
Medical insurance	71	67	94.4	3	4.2	1	1.4	67	3.00	2.88	.327	59	88.1	8	11.9	-	-
Other insurances	69	36	52.2	20	29.0	13	18.8	36	3.00	2.61	.599	24	66.7	10	27.8	2	5.6
Tax preparation	71	67	94.4	3	4.2	1	1.4	66	3.00	2.65	.595	47	71.2	15	22.7	4	6.1
Work permit/ visa	71	66	93.0	4	5.6	1	1.4	65	3.00	2.80	.403	52	80.0	13	20.0	-	-

Table 36: Importance of medical insurance and assistance-related issues by current assignment type

Medical, insurance and assistance-related elements	Importance						
	n	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Medical insurance</i>							
Long-term	51	48	94.1	3	5.9	-	-
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	11	7	63.6	4	36.4	-	-
Rotational	5	4	80.0	1	20.0	-	-
<i>Other insurances</i>							
Long-term	28	21	75.0	6	21.4	1	3.6
Extended transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term	6	2	33.3	3	50.0	1	16.7
Rotational	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-
<i>Tax assistance</i>							
Long-term	48	36	75.0	11	22.9	1	2.1
Extended transfer	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	11	5	45.5	3	27.3	3	27.3
Rotational	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	-	-
<i>Work permit/ visa assistance</i>							
Long-term	47	39	83.0	8	17.0	-	-
Extended transfer	3	3	100.0	-	-	-	-
Short-term	11	8	72.7	3	27.3	-	-
Rotational	4	2	50.0	2	50.0	-	-