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**MENTAL HEALTH OF
EXPATRIATES IN FINNISH
ENTERPRISES IN BRAZIL**

by

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For my family

“Trago dentro do meu coração,
Como num cofre que se não pode fechar de cheio,
Todos os lugares onde estive,
Todos os portos a que cheguei,
Todas as paisagens que vi através de janelas ou vigias,
Ou de tombadilhos, sonhando,
E tudo isso, que é tanto, é pouco para o que eu quero...”

Fernando Pessoa

“I carry inside my heart,
As in a chest too full to shut,
All the places where I’ve been,
All the ports at which I’ve called,
All the sights I’ve seen through windows and portholes
And from quarterdecks, dreaming,
And all of this, which is so much, is nothing next to what I want...”

(Translated by Richard Zenith)

ABSTRACT

Luciana Duque

Mental Health of Expatriates in Finnish Enterprises in Brazil

Expatriation has become increasingly common due to the global trade expansion. Many large companies base their production facilities in far-flung countries, where experts are sent from their own countries to launch the operations. Working in a foreign environment demands from so-called expatriates considerable adaptability. This study aimed to investigate if following expatriation mental health difficulties were experienced by the employees themselves or their family members.

This study investigated by a questionnaire and interviews how expatriate employees in Finnish companies operating in different regions of Brazil and their families adjusted. Investigated employees were required to be at least 6 months in expatriation. Data were collected in Brazil during their stay at least 3 months after the arrival. The survey covered 121 expatriate employees, that operated in 17 different companies, from which 71 employees from 10 different companies responded to the questionnaire. All the employees from the two largest enterprises and their spouses were invited to focus groups; in total 43 persons (22 employees and 21 employees' spouses) participated in a group or individual interviews.

No significant mental health difficulties were found among the expatriate employees. Only a tenth of the expatriate employees reported strain. The experience of strain symptoms was found to be related to long working days, intense working rhythm and lack of friends. Work satisfaction seemed to be an important mediator in the coping process. While abroad, the expatriate employees were highly recognized for their work. Due to the immature organization of work they could often use their creative capacities to improve the work flow. The opportunity to see the effects of their own contribution with their own eyes to the development of the enterprise made them feel good.

The association between the expatriate employees' adjustment and that of their spouses' was evident. The spouses' situation was markedly different than that of the expatriate employees' themselves. Expatriation changed the family members' previous division of tasks considerably. The expatriate spouses had to change their roles more than the expatriate employees themselves; since most of them were highly educated women, who were leaded through an identity crisis due to at least temporary renunciation of own work and career.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Luciana Duque

Mental Health of Expatriates in Finnish Enterprises in Brazil

Väliaikainen työskentely ulkomailla on tullut yhä yleisemmäksi maailmanlaajuisen kaupan lisääntymisen myötä. Monet suuryhtiöt perustavat kaukaisiin maihin tuotantolaitoksia, joihin lähetetään asiantuntijoita omasta maasta käynnistämään toimintaa. Työskentely vieraassa ympäristössä vaatii ns. komennustyöntekijöiltä huomattavaa mukautumiskykyä. Tutkimuksella pyrittiin selvittämään, seurasiko ulkomailla työskentelystä mielenterveydellisiä vaikeuksia itse työntekijöille tai heidän perheensä jäsenille.

Tutkimuksessa selvitettiin kyselyn ja haastattelujen avulla, miten ulkomaiset työntekijät ja heidän perheensä viihtyivät suomalaisissa eri puolilla Brasiliassa toimivissa yrityksissä. Tutkittavilta edellytettiin vähintään 6 kuukauden komennusta. Tietoja kerättiin Brasiliassa olon aikana aikaisintaan 3 kuukautta maahan saapumisen jälkeen. Kyselytutkimus kohdistui 121 ulkomaiseen komennustyöntekijään, jotka toimivat 17 eri yrityksessä; heistä 71 työntekijää 10:stä eri yrityksestä vastasi kyselyyn. Haastatteluryhmiin pyydettiin kaikki työntekijät ja työntekijöiden puoliset kahdesta isommasta yrityksestä; kaikkiaan 43 henkilöä (22 työntekijää ja 21 työntekijöiden puolisoa) osallistui ryhmä- tai yksilöhaastatteluihin.

Merkittäviä mielenterveydellisiä vaikeuksia ei ollut todettavissa komennustyöntekijöiden keskuudessa. Vain kymmenesosa vastaajista raportoi stressiä; tämä liittyi pitkiin työpäiviin, intensiiviseen työtahtiin ja ystävien puutteeseen. Useimmille työntekijöille ulkomailla työskentely tarjosi mahdollisuuden käyttää luovia kykyjään varsin vapaasti vasta muovautumassa olevassa paikallisessa organisaatiossa. Mahdollisuus nähdä omin silmin oman työpanoksensa vaikutus yrityksen kehitykseen tuntui hyvältä ja moni tunsu saavansa enemmän tunnustusta hyvin tehdystä työstä kuin kotimaassa.

Komennustyöntekijöiden ja heidän puolisoidensa sopeutumisen välillä todettiin selvä yhteys. Puolisoiden tilanne oli selvästi erilainen kuin itse komennustyöntekijöiden. Työkomennus ulkomaille muutti usein perheenjäsenten siihenastista tehtävienjakoa huomattavasti. Puolisoiden piti muuttaa omaa rooliaan enemmän kuin itse komennustyöntekijöiden; valtaosa heistä oli naisia, jotka joutuivat läpikäymään identiteettikriisin luopuessaan ainakin väliaikaisesti omasta työstään ja urastaan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. FOREWORD

The idea of making this study has its origin in my work experience, as a coordinating doctor in an International Occupational Medicine service. My telephone number was available 24 hours a day for expatriates working for a Finnish company in Brazil. They could call me to make any kind of health-related solicitation or consultation. When necessary, or if the patients so wished, consultations were held in my clinic where general medicine and children's accompaniment consultations were performed.

Gradually my attention started to focus on the expatriate employees' and their families' general well-being. The phone consultations were more frequent than the consultations in the office, which could reveal patients' anxiety about their health. Cultural distance has been found to be related to the number of consultations in a study of an exchange students' health care unit (Babiker et al. 1980).

Brazil is a Catholic country and Portuguese is a Romance language. This characterizes a rather large cultural distance in relation to Finland and most of the other countries of origin of the study participants.

I lived in Brazil long enough to conclude the field research and the analysis of results there, but then I moved back to Finland to write a report of the results. Thus personal experience provided me with the opportunity of having enough identification elements with both the expatriate employees and their spouses to enable an understanding of the contents of their interviews.

1.2. WORKING ABROAD

The number of employees working in foreign countries has increased rapidly in the last decades. However, expatriate employees' and their families' well-being has been poorly studied in the field of occupational health. Even in the international human resource management area, studies concerning expatriate employees' and their families' well-being gained some attention only recently. However, expatriates well-being still needs to be measured and the relation between expatriates' well-being and the adjustment process needs to be investigated better. Especially understanding *how* the expatriates adjust lacks comprehension.

In some fields it has traditionally been common to live or spend a certain period of time abroad. This is the case of, among others, diplomats, sailors and oilrig workers. In the 20th century, the large enterprises' expansion caused more and more employees to live abroad in order to implement and maintain subsidiaries in other countries. The employees and their families moving abroad on international assignments are generally called "expatriates". The term expatriate can be defined using two types of criteria: one is based on the period of time spent abroad, and the other on the reason for moving abroad. In order to differentiate expatriates from travellers, the time criterion defines the

expatriate as a person who intends to live abroad for at least six months (Jones 2000). The definition based on the other criterion, assumes that an expatriate is a person who has to leave his/her home country for some clear reason. This concept is closer to the common idea of expatriate, related to war refugees and political problems, someone who is forced to leave his/her home country. Nowadays, an expatriate is often a person who has his/her work career as the reason for moving abroad.

The study subjects are the expatriates that move for work reasons. They can have the task of establishing a subsidiary, or implementing services in the host country subsidiary, or transmitting their knowledge to local employees, having to spend some period of time abroad to carry out their task. This period can be months or years, typically from one to three years. It implies abrupt changes in their lives. Many decisions related to the practical aspects of life have to be made on short notice.

If the expatriate employees are married or living in stable relationships, the first decision to make is whether to move with or without their spouses and families. The family is thus always involved in the process from the very beginning.

For spouses in working life, moving abroad often signifies interruption of their own career and may cause termination of employment. Children also face their own challenges; especially school-age children have to adjust fast to many new things. Well-adapted families can positively influence the adjustment of the employee, while non-adapted spouse influence it negatively. A decision to leave the family in the home country is seldom easy, and the separation can be related to considerable difficulties in the families' private life.

An expatriate has to adjust to a new work environment, culture, rhythm and routine. The expatriate employee and his/her family have to learn how to live and develop their own activities in the new environment, and basically to build a new life: new house or apartment, new school, new car, new friends, and managing to organize the practical aspects of life in a foreign environment and culture.

Work represents continuity in the expatriate employees' life in a certain way just as school life does for children. The changes in routine are greater for the spouses. The comprehension of what happens to them while abroad is important for the comprehension of the meaning of expatriation.

Adjustment is also necessary when it is time to return home. Repatriation requires its own adjustment process and can be quite stressful. It is necessary to look for a new position back home, which may be challenging as changes have taken place in the home country while the expatriate employee is abroad. It will again bring with it a change in one's work routine, and adaptation to a life style in many times more modest than that enjoyed abroad. Especially spouses' return to working can be difficult after a long time abroad.

Having to cope with so many changes, what is the well-being of the expatriate employees and their families while abroad? How do they manage to adjust? How does their family life change with expatriation? Which day-to-day factors are related to their well-being? A better understanding of these processes is the objective of this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The large majority of studies concerning expatriation and adjustment to an international assignment are studies in management. Most of them have a cross-sectional design and investigate adjustment but in the last ten years new areas and designs have started to be explored. Concerning pre-departure training, about half are controlled and longitudinal, and studies make a single or multifactorial analysis of the contributing factors. Traditionally, the studies were retrospective or based on data collected during expatriation by a mailed questionnaire. Recently, also qualitative, case-control and cohort studies have been carried out but these are still in the minority.

The first articles investigating the expatriate from a management point of view are from the 1970s (Miller 1973, Fiedler et al. 1971 and Hays 1971). At that time, the interest was directly related to the high costs of expatriation. As the costs of allocation of expatriate employees and their families overseas are very great, it is very important for human resources professionals to know about any risks to a successful assignment, or to recognize which kind of person will not succeed in order to avoid these risk factors and not to send people without an appropriate profile. For example, the costs to send an employee abroad for a year or two would be in the range of \$250,000-300,000 USD (Garonzik et al. 2000), and the costs of each expatriation failure are between 50,000 and 250,000 USD for US companies (Shaffer and Harrison 1998, Black and Gregersen 1990, Black 1988 and Harris 1979). In Sweden, the costs of the relocation of one family were estimated at 1.5 million SEK; about 160,000 euros in 1998's currency (Anderzén 1998). In addition, the failure rates are quite high, varying from 16-40% if the company is in the US to 5-15% if is in the EU and Japan (Jones 2000, Anderzén 1998, Black 1988 and Tung 1982). Aggravating the situation, from the business point of view, 30-50% of American expatriates who remain in their international assignments were considered ineffective or marginally effective by their companies (Copeland and Griggs 1985). Problems with adjustment to an international assignment account for 60% of premature returns (Jones 2000). This fact led researchers to discover which factors could menace a successful and productive agreement.

The first cross-cultural adjustment studies consisted of an effort to comprehend which factors are related to the expatriates' adjustment. These studies were further designated as "anecdotal" (Black et al. 1991) because adjustment was investigated empirically. Subsequently, the investigation was conducted in the light of the literature on work-role transition (Nicholson 1984), integrating the literatures on expatriation and domestic role transition (Feldman and Tompson 1993 and Black 1988). In many studies the contributing factors to adjustment were usually divided into non-work factors, work factors and to interacting with host nationals outside work (Shaffer et al. 1999, Feldman and Tompson 1993, Black et al. 1991, Briody and Chrisman 1991, Black 1988, Harvey 1985 and Brett 1982). Later, the investigation concerning adjustment began to be conducted based on cultural learning theory or behavioural acculturation. This line, called sociocultural adjustment, was privileged because during transitional processes, like expatriation, the

first attempts to control the environment would consist of active attempts (behaviour) to change the world (Waxin 2004, Ali et al. 2003, Selmer and Leung 2003-I, Jun et al. 2001, Jun et al. 1997 and Berry 1990).

Among the non-work factors, the influence of pre-departure training, cultural distance, previous overseas experience, family adjustment, selection process and personal skills in the expatriate employees' adjustment were often examined.

Pre-departure training seems to positively influence the adjustment (Waxin 2004, Caligiuri et al. 2001, Shaffer et al. 1999, Black and Mendenhall 1990, Mitchell et al. 1972 and Fiedler et al. 1971). Knowledge about the host country before moving positively influences work adjustment (Caligiuri et al. 2001, Black 1988).

Cultural distance was considered to have an influence on expatriates' adjustment; the greater the cultural distance, the poorer the adjustment (Torbiörn 1994 and 1988, Church 1982). Torbiörn classified the cultural distance into four levels from the closest to the farthest in relation to Sweden; closest were the English-speaking and Protestant cultures, second the Germanic languages and Christian cultures, third to Romance languages and Catholic cultures, and fourth Non-Indo-European languages and Non-Christian cultures. The literature about exchange students' health investigations corroborates with this as cultural distance impacts on mental health, such as the occurrence of feelings of anxiety (Anderzén 1998, Furnham and Bochner 1986, Babiker et al. 1980).

Finland is a predominantly protestant country situated in northern Europe, while Brazil is a catholic country located in Latin America. Brazil has a population of 190 million people; Finland's population is just over 5 million. Finland occupies an area of about 338.000 km² while Brazil's land area is 25 times larger. The biggest cities in Brazil have populations that are significantly larger than the whole population of Finland, e.g. São Paulo and the surrounding cities have a population of about 20 million and Rio de Janeiro and surrounding cities have a population of over 10 million people. The amount of pollution, violence, people living in the streets, noise and social problems in large Brazilian cities is very different compared to the major cities in Finland. The biggest cities in Finland, like Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa and Turku have a population equivalent to a small to mid-sized city in Brazil.

The four seasons (summer, autumn, winter and spring) of the year in Finland have clear differences between each other. The weather in Brazil is rather warm or hot all year round; the length of day and night time is similar. In Finland during the short summer, the daily sunlight is long, but during the long winter, daily sunlight is very short. People in Finland are very interested in the weather forecast; Brazilians hardly ever speak about it.

Brazilian people talk and show their emotions more. Finnish people think before they talk, while Brazilians think while talking, expecting other people to contribute to the conversation. Typically, Brazilians are gregarious and rarely want to be alone. Finns need to be alone and "at peace".

For Brazilians the concept of family is wider. Young adults gain independence much earlier in Finland than in Brazil, which is mainly possible due to government help in Finland. Also children in Brazil are much more dependent on parents than in Finland. Parents usually take their children everywhere, and in case they can't, they arrange another person to take the children. Usually schools offer transportation to and from school. In Brazil, children are usually never left alone at home, in a car, hotel, etc. Parents can lose custody of their children if they leave them alone. Especially in the big cities children should be with a responsible person and walk really close to him/her on the streets because the risk of being abducted from their parents exists. Partially for this reason middle- and upper-class Brazilians usually have a maid and possibly also a baby-sitter at home.

Social class differences (salary, life expectancy, family size, etc.) are huge in Brazil compared to Finland. One's future in Brazil depends a lot on the family she or he is born into. Brazilians working in multinational companies are usually well paid, speak English and have a good education, so many of the difficulties arising from social class differences are not apparent to the expats. These difficulties can be more evident for the spouse at home who has to deal with Brazilians from all social classes (who often don't speak English) when taking care of the daily routines of the home.

In Finland, people trust more what other people say. If somebody says that he will do something, you expect that the person is really going to do it, and you do not necessarily have to keep asking all the time "how is the task/project evolving?" In Brazil, you have to periodically ask how things are evolving in order to show that you really are interested that the task gets done.

The police is one of the most respected institutions in Finland, while in Brazil it is one of the least respected institutions. Finnish people generally believe what the authorities say, Brazilians do not. Corruption and "owing favours" are common in Brazil and have their origin in history. Finland is, at least according to some studies, one of the least corrupted countries in the world.

Also the concept of time is different. In Finland, people are always on time and any delay should be communicated. In Brazil, it is very common that meetings do not start on time. Actually delays of less than 15 minutes are not really considered a delay.

Thus, Finland and Brazil are quite dissimilar cultures. On the other hand, some studies have recently demonstrated that there are no significant differences in the adjustment to a similar or a dissimilar culture (Tanure and Fleury 2009, Selmer 2007 and Shenkar 2001). In addition, some studies have demonstrated that the cultural distance is not a symmetric concept. It means that even though one would expect Finnish expatriates in Brazil to face the same hurdles as Brazilian expatriates in Finland, there is no scientific evidence to justify such an assumption. Many studies have actually demonstrated cultural distance asymmetry (Selmer et al. 2007 and Shenkar 2001).

There is some evidence that previous overseas experience facilitates the adjustment to an international assignment (Selmer 2002, Shaffer et al. 1999, Black et al. 1991, Black 1988

and Torbiörn 1982). However, Black et al. (1991) could not demonstrate how previous overseas experience facilitated the adjustment, what was only clarified later when Shaffer et al. demonstrated the role of previous overseas experience as an important moderator of various relationships involving all three dimensions of adjustment.

Families' adjustment and expatriate employees' own adjustment and their impact on international assignments, have been largely investigated (Haslberger and Brewster 2008, Bikos et al. 2007, Herleman 2006, Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005, Ali et al. 2003, Shaffer and Harrison 2001, Caligiuri et al. 1998, Shaffer and Harrison 1998, Arthur and Bennett 1995, Fukuda and Chu 1994, Black and Gregersen 1991, Black and Stephens 1989 and Tung 1981). A positive relation was found between spouses' adjustment and expatriate employees' own adjustment in almost all studies. Lack of spouses' adjustment was largely implicated in the failure of international assignments and recently was considered the biggest predictor to expatriate employees' adaptation (Haslberger and Brewster 2008, Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005, Ali et al. 2003, Shaffer and Harrison 2001, Caligiuri et al. 1998, Shaffer and Harrison 1998, Arthur and Bennett 1995, Fukuda and Chu 1994, Black and Gregersen 1991, Black and Stephens 1989 and Tung 1981). It was demonstrated that social support correlated with high female spousal adjustment (Copeland and Norell 2002) and lack of support, especially from friends correlated with maladjustment and depression (Herleman 2006 and Copeland and Norell 2002). Every expatriate spouse undergoes a personality disruption process, which implies that in a crisis, as any disruption process is linked to a crisis situation (Harrison 2001). Caligiuri et al. (1998), studying the relationship between expatriate employees' work adjustment and expatriate families' adjustment, concluded that the spillover theory was consistent to explain the association between expatriate employees' and their families' adaptation. According to this theory, expatriate employees' work adjustment impacts their families' cross-cultural adjustment, and family's cross-cultural adjustment can affect expatriate employees' work adjustment. In the same study, they found that a high level of family support, family communication, and family adaptability were related to a family's cross-cultural adjustment at six months into the assignment (based on interviews with the expatriate employee and the expatriate spouses). Other studies revealed that expatriate employees perceived their work life as interfering with their personal life more extensively than their personal life interfering with their professional life (Grant-Vallone and Ensher 2001 and Nicholson and Imaizumi 1993). Moving disrupts the continuity and stability that are considered necessary for children's positive development. Whether relocation has positive or negative effects on the adjustment of children is related to many variables, such as the distance of the move, the frequency of moves, and parental attitude toward the move (Humke and Shaefer 1995). Negative parental attitudes towards relocation affect the children's adjustment (Humke and Shaefer 1995 and Pedersen and Sullivan 1964). Stroh and Brett (1990) studied the effects of corporate mobility on children's adjustment based on the mothers' reports. They found no difference between middle-class children who had moved and those who had not. The two major factors that accounted for the children's adjustment were the children's prior adjustment and parental satisfaction and self-confidence. Under ordinary conditions, children generally adjust to the move after a relatively short amount of time (Cornille 1993) but children with academic or adjustment

deficits preceding a move tend to be at risk of similar or greater problems after a move (De Wit et al. 1998 and Tucker et al. 1998). Unfortunately, children's adjustment has not been studied as much as spouses' adjustment (Anderzén 1998). Some studies imply that 3-5 years of age and early adolescence would be especially difficult phases as to moving abroad (De Wit et al. 1998 and Gaylord 1979), but these findings have not been confirmed in other studies (Brett and Reilly 1988).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggested that stress can be thought of as resulting from an "imbalance between demands and resources" or as occurring when "pressure exceeds one's perceived ability to cope". Stress management was developed and premised on the idea that stress is not a direct response to a stressor but rather one's resources and ability to cope mediate the stress response and are amenable to change, thus making stress controllable. In order to develop an effective stress management programme it is first necessary to identify the factors that are central to a person controlling his/her stress, and to identify the intervention methods which effectively target these factors. For this, most of the studies concerning stress in the management literature were based on Lazarus and Folkman's model or the Transactional model. The model breaks the stressor-stress link by proposing that if stressors are perceived as positive or challenging rather than as a threat, and if the stressed person is confident that he/she possesses adequate rather than deficient coping strategies, stress may not necessarily follow the presence of a potential stressor. For this, the expatriates' appropriate personal skills to be targeted in the selection process, and the different coping strategies utilized by expatriates have been studied in order to recognize which kind of person or which coping strategies would be more favourable in order to succeed in expatriation. These studies investigate how the expatriates are selected for expatriation in practice and the personal skills necessary to cope with the difficulties related to the adjustment process. According to the literature, the following skills seem to be correlated to expatriation adjustment: (i) the self-dimension and self-confidence dimension concerning the personal characteristics that provide the expatriate with the possibility of mental health maintenance; (ii) the relationship dimension that is related to the capability to establish a relationship with locals; (iii) the tolerance for ambiguity; (iv) the perception dimension that provides the expatriate with the ability to perceive and evaluate the host environment and its actors. Also a genuine desire to adjust seem to be positively correlated to adjustment (Mendenhall et al. 1987, Jones 1986, Mendenhall et al. 1985, Church 1982, Hawes and Kealey 1981, Tung 1981, Stening 1979, Hays 1974, Harris 1973 Miller 1973 and Hays 1971). Although negative thoughts about the home country as the main reason for moving abroad seem to be negatively correlated to adjustment (Torbiörn 1982), it was noticed that the problem-focused strategies were more efficient for a successful coping process (Stahl and Caligiuri 2005). Thus, all these skills should be noticed in the selection process. However, it was noticed that despite all the available literature about expatriates' appropriate profile in order to avoid expatriation failure, the enterprises continue to rate the technical abilities of the candidates higher than personal adjustment skills (Black 1988, Mendenhall et al. 1987, Hawes and Kealey 1981, Tung 1981, Bardo and Bardo 1980, Hays 1974, Harris 1973, Miller 1973 and Hays 1971). Spouses are not systematically interviewed before expatriation but they should be due to their importance in the adaptation process (Tung 1981). Ward and Kennedy (2001)

examined the relationship between coping styles and psychological adjustment, and three coping styles proved to be associated with psychological adjustment: the avoidant coping style was inversely correlated to psychological adjustment, while using humour to cope with stress and employing an approach coping style, which included planning, active coping, and suppression of competing activities, were positively correlated to psychological adjustment.

As told before, the investigation of work factors that could be related to the adjustment while abroad integrates the expatriation and domestic role transition literatures. These studies usually verify the relations between the contributing factors expected to be related to the adjustment while abroad. One study compared “work changers” and their adaptation to the new work place. Among the “work changers” were expatriates, repatriates and domestic job changers; and they experienced a quite similar adjustment (Feldman and Tompson 1993).

New work-role-related characteristics, such as role novelty, role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload relations to adjustment were investigated by Black (1988). Role ambiguity and role discretion were found to negatively influence work adjustment while abroad (Shaffer et al. 1999, Black et al. 1991 and Black 1988).

Job satisfaction is positively related to adjustment. While abroad, job satisfaction was influenced by satisfaction with housing, pay and other general life conditions/benefits (Feldman and Tompson 1993, Naumann 1992 and Black and Gregersen 1991). Recently boundary spanning activities were demonstrated to be positively associated with job satisfaction (Au and Fukuda 2002).

It was also noticed that boundary spanning activities were positively associated with job satisfaction and adjustment, and also that social capital, i.e. the network relationships a person possesses are related to retention (Suutari and Makela 2009, Au and Fukuda 2002 and Sanchez et al. 1993). Some studies concerning female expatriates showed that well-being is correlated with social support and interactional adjustment, personal adjustment and depression (Herleman 2006, Caligiuri and Lazarova 2002 and Copeland and Norell 2002).

The sociocultural adjustment was widely studied in the management literature, while the psychological adjustment, or personal well-being, has only received a little more attention in recent years (Fish and Bhanugopan 2008, Bikos et al. 2007, Bhanugopan and Fish 2006, Herleman 2006, Fish 2005, Selmer 2004, Au and Fukuda 2002, Aryee and Stone 1996, Nicholson and Imaizumi 1993). Personal well-being is related to a secondary attempt of control, attitudinal, consisting of a problem-oriented view. This kind of attempt consists of efforts to fit in with the world (Selmer and Leung 2003-I and Jun et al. 1997). The studies concerning well-being consist in an attempt to investigate the relations between well-being and socio-cultural or intra-cultural adjustment, sometimes testing interventions for cross-border adjustment, sometimes not. When the relation between expatriates’ well-being and expatriates’ turnover was established, these studies were meant to understand which factors are involved in expatriates’ well-being with the

target of discovering which kinds of interventions could promote expatriates' well-being and consequently avoid expatriates' turnover. The well-being was only measured in a few studies. Bikos et al. (2007) measured the well-being of expatriate spouses, making use of the the Mental Health Inventory and investigated the life factors that were related to well-being. Selmer (2004) studied the well-being of newcomer expatriates compared to long stay expatriates in China, making use of a general health questionnaire (GHQ), and noticed that both perceived inability to adjust and unwillingness to adjust among newcomers seem to affect some aspects of sociocultural adjustment, but not expatriates' psychological adjustment. However, these effects do not seem to be stable over time as there are no such effects in the case of long stay expatriates. Selmer and Leung (2003-I) studied the well-being of female expatriates in Hong Kong, using a general health questionnaire (GHQ), and noticed that the more they were determined to pursue an international career, the better their interaction adjustment, but not their well-being. Ward and Kennedy (2001) examined the relationship between coping styles and psychological adjustment. Nicholson and Imaizumi (1993) measured Japanese expatriates' well-being with a general health questionnaire (GHQ), which showed that the Japanese well-being was lower compared to non-expatriate English people's well-being, but Nicholson and Imaizumi lacked Japanese non-expatriate well-being measures to compare them with. Aryee and Stone (1996) investigated the psychological well-being of expatriate employees in Hong Kong represented by a quality of life concept and found that the expatriates expressed an average positive degree of quality of life well above the mid-point of the bipolar scales used.

Some other adjustment studies investigated the U-curve theory's validity. These studies investigate the timing of adjustment. Gullahorn and Gullahorn carried out a study in 1963, where they described the timing of adaptation of exchange students as a U-shaped curve. The first stage, "the honeymoon phase", starts immediately after the move and is defined by "initial excitement or elation", followed after about six months by "the involvement phase" characterized by feelings of depression and frustration as the person faces difficulties and complexities that can lead to a "cultural shock" characterized by anxiety and anger (Oberg 1960). In the third phase, the person improves in language fluency (or learns it) and starts to move around freely (Anderzén 1998), and in the fourth phase the person has adjusted and entered the phase of "sense of satisfaction or personal growth" (Gullahorn and Gullahorn 1963, Oberg 1960). Many studies were carried out based on the U-curve hypothesis (Adler 1991, Briody and Chrisman 1991, Berry 1990, Kealey 1989, Furnham and Bochner 1986, Copeland and Griggs 1985, Harvey 1985, Kepler et al. 1983 Church 1982, Torbiörn 1982, Adler 1981, Harris and Moran 1979, Jacobson 1963), but the adjustment timing did not fit into the U-shape in every study. Torbiörn (1982) reinforced the U-shaped hypothesis, investigating Swedish expatriates' adjustment behaviour, but Church as well as Furnham and Bochner, did not obtain the same results, and considered the U curve hypothesis "inconclusive and over generalized". A study in New Zealand specifically tested the U-curve model in a 1-year longitudinal study including 35 Japanese students (Ward et al. 1998). Results suggested that the greatest amount of social difficulty occurred at entry; however, no significant differences were found across the 4-, 6-, and 12-month time periods. Similarly, the highest level of

depression was reported at the initial testing; however, no further significant differences were found in subsequent testing. Finally, a meta-analysis found a nonlinear relationship with cultural adjustment. The best-fitting model roughly assumed the predicted U-shape but was described by the authors as a “sideways ‘S’” (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al 2005). In this curve, the honeymoon period appeared to end after 12 months on assignment, and the curve bottomed out at about three years. So, although very popular, the U-shaped adjustment profile cannot be generalized to cover all conditions.

Some studies examined aspects involved in the decision to leave an international assignment, and withdrawal and risk of premature departure (Bhanugopan and Fish 2006, Garonzik et al. 2000, Shannonhouse 1996 and Naumann 1992). The recent studies in this field usually refer to domestic turnover literature and expatriation adjustment literature, and employ multifactorial analysis of both work and non-work factors involved. In general, the following factors were tested: cross-cultural adjustment, satisfaction (stratified into work and non-work satisfaction), organizational commitment and family context factors’ impact on the decision or thoughts on leaving an international assignment. It seems that organizational commitment (affective and normative) and job satisfaction had a negative relation to withdrawal cognitions, while spouse’s adjustment was directly linked to expatriate employee’s adjustment, and difficulties in spouse adjustment were linked with withdrawal cognitions. The level of responsibility of the expatriate employee among his/her own family acts as a strengthening factor in this relation (Guzzo et al. 1994, and Garonzik et al. 2000, Shaffer and Harrison 1998, Noonan and Elron 1994, Gregersen and Black 1990). Recently a study showed that also perceived career support is negatively correlated to withdrawal cognitions (van der Heijden et al. 2009), while another study showed that “job burnout” is positively associated with expatriates’ intention to quit the international assignment (Bhanugopan and Fish 2006).

Factors related to expatriates’ retention cognitions (the intention to remain in an international assignment) have also been investigated. Most of the studies in this area are methodologically similar to the one cited above. If retention and not withdrawal is the main point, some differences are found, such as commitment to the parent company (not to the local company) and interaction with host country nationals and general local culture adjustment are correlated to the intent to stay (Gregersen and Black 1990 and Black and Stephens 1989). In Stahl and Caligiuri’s study (2005) it was noticed that even the problem-focused strategies being more efficient they were not related to intentions to remain.

One study compared organisational expatriates (sent abroad by their home companies) to self-initiated expatriates (those who themselves made the decision to live and work abroad) and noticed that self-initiated expatriates were better adjusted to general aspects of their host country and to interactions with host-country nationals than organisational expatriates (Peltokorpi and Froese 2009).

Recently, repatriation has been more and more investigated (Korhonen 2007, Jassawalla et al. 2004, Klaff 2002 and O’Conner 2002). For a long time, many authors pointed to the paucity of the literature concerning repatriation (Anderzén 1998, Harvey 1988

and Adler 1981), even showing that the adjustment process after repatriation could be more difficult than the adjustment to expatriation (Korhonen 2007, Jassawalla et al. 2004 and Adler 1981). Already in 1963, Gullahorn and Gullahorn had the perception that repatriation would entail some adjustment difficulties, and suggested that the U-shaped curve adjustment process probably occurs again back home. Adler suggested that a “flattened U-shaped” curve would correspond to the “moods” back home: an initial enthusiasm period lasting from a few hours to a month followed by a disappointment period lasting at least one or two months, starting to feel at least somewhat better by the sixth month after return (Adler 1986 and 1981). The disappointment seems to be the result of many pressures linked to the repatriation like organizational/career ambiguity, financial pressures and family problems (Harvey 1989). In addition, the expatriate misses the autonomy, attention, life style, and monetary benefits, and faces difficulty adjusting to a new work environment with new players (Jassawalla et al. 2004). A recently published study showed that a different person comes back home (Korhonen 2007). Because of this, it has been suggested that clear repatriation policies should be developed to facilitate the repatriation process and diminish the repatriates turn-over (Jassawalla et al. 2004, Klaff 2002, O’Conner 2002, Black et al. 1992 and Oddou 1992).

It seemed to be true earlier that international assignments were critical for employees who sought to succeed quickly in their career. Nevertheless, previous research on repatriation indicates that many former expatriates feel that their overseas assignments have harmed, rather than helped, their careers. Because of this, many studies focusing on expatriates’ career development have been done recently (Bolino 2007, Korhonen 2007, Tzeng 2006, Fish and Wood 1994).

In the 1980’s, the researchers’ attention turned to the fact that only around three percent of expatriates worldwide were female (Adler 1987 and 1984). Why were there far more male than female expatriate employees? There was a “myth” that women did not want international assignments and that foreigners’ prejudice against women rendered them ineffective (Adler 1987 and 1984). However it seems that the paucity of women expatriates is more a reflection of stereotypical assumptions about women in international management and discriminatory practices in the parental organisations than of women’s unwillingness to relocate or their ineffectiveness while abroad (Connerley et al. 2008, Wang and Bu 2004, Altman and Shortland 2001, Mathur-Helm 2002, Adler 1987 and 1984). In addition, most of the studies found that while abroad local managers see expatriate women as foreigners and do not expect them to act like the local women (Hartl 2004, Altman and Shortland 2001, and Adler 1987), but there is still some controversy about gender equality while abroad (Tzeng 2006, Culpan and Wright 2002 and Mathur-Helm 2002). Basically, in addition to the comparative researches, there are studies where female expatriate employees are the focus in the same fields investigated in expatriate literature in general. Some of the adjustment studies made use of qualitative methods of investigation. Evidence of behavioural gender differences was noticed, the most consistent findings were related to a correlation between social support and adjustment (Hartl 2004 and Caligiuri et al. 1998). Selmer and Leung (2003-I) found a similar correlation, but in their study, this correlation was mediated by the determination

to pursue an expatriate career. In a recent study, it was demonstrated that even though the organisations perceived their female expatriates' contribution to be equivalent to that of men, female expatriates do not perceive equal treatment on international assignments (Hutchings et. al 2008).

Moving to a new country, most of times, the expatriate employees and their families are exposed to different risks than those in their home country. If the destination is a tropical country, they can be exposed to infections that do not exist at home, such as malaria, yellow fever, dengue, and other tropical diseases. In addition, they are exposed to risks similar to those that they had in their home country but in much higher frequencies, for example, the risk of traffic accidents and of contracting sexually-transmitted diseases. There are several studies about expatriates' health related to malaria (Roukens et al. 2008, Jackson et al. 2006, Philpott et al. 1990 and Ringwald et al. 1989) B and A-hepatitis (Dawson et al. 1987, Ramia 1986, Sleggs 1986, and Perin et al. 1984), HIV and AIDS (de Graaf et al. 1998 and 1997, Kane et al. 1993 and Bonneux et al. 1988), diarrhoea (van Loon et al. 1989 and Speelman et al 1986) and helminthiasis (Whitty et al. 2000, Fryatt et al. 1990, Harries 1986 and Mahoney 1981), as well as about prophylaxis and vaccination efficacy (Ezzedine et al. 2007, Berg and Visser 2007, Bourgeade et al. 1990, Philpott et al. 1990, Felix and Danis 1987, Bruce-Chwatt 1984 and Mackay 1979). There are also reports on iodine deficiency (Edwards 1975), sleep patterns (Montmayeur and Buguet 1992), and about sexual behaviour when living abroad (de Graaf et al. 1997). In the majority of these studies, the expatriates were examined both before and after expatriation. Awareness of these risks is very important in occupational medicine as, with the exception of sexual risks, they may be considered as work related risks because the expatriate employees and their families move abroad for work reasons (Jones 2000, Saphire and Doran 1996 and Moore 1994). In a study about self-rated general health in Middle Eastern the mean self-rated general health of the study group was better than comparable UK and New Zealand population norms. Self-rated general health was not associated with duration of assignment, but was associated with physical exercise, including a dose-response effect. Middle Eastern expatriates had lower self-rated health scores and a higher prevalence of cigarette smoking than other expatriates (Matthews and Nelson 2004).

Sakai et al. (2008-I) analyzed records of Japanese children who consulted at outpatient clinics in Bangkok Hospital in 2005 and 2006 and then compared the data with data from the patient survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan in 2005. Results demonstrate that children living in Japan contract asthma more frequently than infectious diseases, whereas those living in Thailand show the opposite trend, which supports the hygiene hypothesis that infections may protect against the development of allergic diseases, such as asthma.

Sakai et al. (2008-II) analyzed the records of Japanese male expatriates in their 30s to 50s who had consulted at outpatient clinics in Bangkok Hospital in 2005, and then compared the number and type of outpatient visits with data from the "Patient Survey" 2005 for age-matched males in Japan. "Diseases of the respiratory system" and "Certain infectious and parasitic diseases" had a higher rate of diagnosis among Japanese men living in Thailand than among those living in Japan. "Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic

diseases,” and “Mental and behavioral disorders” had a lower rate of diagnosis among Japanese men living in Thailand than among those in Japan. The authors estimated that the last mentioned disorders were underestimated as Japanese male expatriates have a tendency to not visit hospital when they have no subjective or objective symptoms, and concerning mental disorders, there are language fluency difficulties, stigma and other factors that would probably make them prefer to consult specialists in Japan or go to other private facilities than to a hospital.

Patel and collaborators (2006) made a prospective cohort study of expatriate observing that the incidence of health events in general was 21%, and that of psychological disorders 1%. They observed a higher morbidity in expatriate employees and unaccompanied expatriate employees than in expatriate spouses. The people who required consultation had been seen by the enterprises’ doctor. The study was based on doctors’ records.

In Brazil, in the general population, the first cause of death is cerebral vascular diseases; the second one is ischemic heart diseases and the third homicide. Between 10- and 59-year-old men, homicide is the principal cause of death. For men between 20 and 59 years of age the risk of death by homicide is seven times greater than among women. For them, the main cause of death is violence, the second is traffic accidents and the third is ischemic heart diseases. While for men between 20 and 59 years of age the two main causes of death are external for women, at the same age all the causes of death are natural (OPAS/BR). So, the risk of dying by external causes among young men is much greater in Brazil than in Finland. Among expatriates probably traffic accidents constitute the greatest risk. In Brazil, the expatriates are exposed to some diseases that they are not exposed to in Finland like dengue fever (found in all Brazilian cities with the exception of the cities in the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina), and malaria and yellow fever in the Amazon (OPAS/BR). Some infectious and parasitic diseases occur with a much greater frequency in Brazil than in Finland like helminthiasis and sexually transmitted diseases. In the work place, as the majority of expatriates worked in the office, the greatest risk is ergonomic due to continuous modifications in the ambience in growing organizations. In addition, the air conditioning can often be too cold in the offices causing muscular pains.

There are studies focusing on risks prevention during expatriation (Hamer et al. 2008, Dow 2000, Murrison 2000, Bunn 1999, Moore 1994 and Karpilow 1991) in accordance with the objectives of the occupational health services. Perone et al. (2008) wrote an article dedicated to expatriates’ mental health risk prevention. They identified three entities as more frequent: i) basic stress, which occurs in the beginning of expatriation: characterized by irritability, anxiety and fatigue; ii) cumulative stress, which is associated with the expatriate in general. It is common, insidious and pervasive. It is caused by the accumulation of several stress factors (personnel, work environment and frustrations) with prolonged exposure to these factors. The main symptoms are fatigue and emotional exhaustion. If not identified, it can lead to burnout, iii) traumatic stress; which is secondary to a violent event where the physical and psychological integrity of the person, or of one of his/her immediate relatives, is brutally assaulted or threatened; iv) psychological decompensation, which is rare, requires immediate care in the country of expatriation

with stabilization, followed by repatriation. The authors suggested a family doctor while abroad and close cooperation between the expatriate, the family, the family doctor and the employer, to preserve well-being.

Surprisingly, the risks related to expatriates' mental health and well-being have been poorly studied in the field of occupational health. Accordingly to Foyle and co-workers (1998), this lack of information requires rectification because expatriate life involves taking risks, some of which may have a deleterious mental health effect (Foyle et al. 1998). Expatriates present a high incidence of affective and adjustment disorders during their assignments. Foyle and co-workers examined 397 expatriates during 20 years: 218 subjects had symptoms and signs that merited a psychiatric diagnosis. Those with adjustment disorders more commonly suffered from anxiety related to work, home country anxieties, acculturation and physical ill-health. The patients with affective disorders showed a relation to a past history: specifically, previous psychiatry consultation, depressed mood, family history of suicide, psychosis or personality disorders. This study had the advantage of investigating the expatriates while abroad, but it had the disadvantage of not being based on the whole population. The high incidence of psychiatric disorders was probably related to the fact that the studied population had a need for psychiatric investigation. Even so, the study gives a picture of factors that are involved in the decrease of expatriates' well-being. It is noteworthy that expatriate spouses' difficulties were not referred to at all. This was due to the fact that, in this case, the spouses were not just accompanying persons but were equally serving the sponsoring organization as the expatriates in question were church members volunteering for work overseas.

Anderzén (1998) carried out a controlled prospective longitudinal study where both expatriates and a non-moving control group were followed. This study is important as it to some degree fills the paucity of prospective longitudinal studies and confirms reported feeling of stress by hormonal measures. Blood tests were performed to establish the hormonal profile and the (GHQ) was filled in before moving, once a year during the time abroad and once a year after repatriation. Anderzén concluded that relocation abroad is a psychophysiological stressor. Reactions to relocation are modified by individual and social characteristics. The first year of an assignment seems to be the most demanding phase in the adjustment process. Repatriation affects employees mentally more negatively than the actual expatriation.

Dally (1985) received 50 patients who had returned from overseas assignments to a London hospital; 22 were male employees (two thirds married), six female (all unmarried), 17 wives and 5 teenagers. The most common conditions were depression, psychosomatic disorders and anxiety states. Paranoid psychosis developed in three female employees and one male employee, while the diagnosis of the teenagers was anorexia nervosa. Those who broke down in the first nine months were reported to have had an inadequate personality structure.

Material about children's adaptation is available in the migration literature. However, as the conditions mostly differ from those of expatriation working in some international

company, other factors like financial difficulties may contribute to the results found. Migration is always a stressful experience that may render children's mental health vulnerable. The adjustment of migrant children depends on the family and the environment where the children live; it can result in a positive or negative experience for their health. Some disturbance of behaviour can occur; the children can become more aggressive or anxious and have less tolerance towards frustration, especially in the first year (Mota et al. 1999 and Aronowitz 1984).

The association between expatriation and disturbed mental health is not new. Littlewood (1985) described mental symptoms related to expatriation, and the different terminologies utilized to define these "diseases" in different historical periods. The terminologies were: Nostalgia (fever, palpitations and anxiety) from the Thirty Years War until the American Civil War; neurasthenia described by Beard in the 19th century (chronic physical and mental lassitude) with depression, anergia, anomie and difficulty in concentration. Tropical neurasthenia was considered to be a specific form characterized by incapacity to relax; it caused the return of a fifth of the employees of the Anglo Persian Oil Company in the 1920s. All these diseases improved when the patients were repatriated.

Work-related factors that can potentially influence mental health are insufficient time to realise projects, long workdays, differences in physical ambience, work tools and organizational culture, more challenging tasks like making agreements to enter the market, care of the installations of a new enterprise, or developing projects from the beginning. In addition, there are cross-cultural adjustment factors such as difficulties with local language, climate, local culture, services, lack of social support and one's own family adjustment that add to the task of organizing life abroad. "Moving from the United States to a foreign country often involves changes in the job the individual performs and the corporate culture in which responsibilities are executed. It can also involve dealing with unfamiliar norms related to the general culture, business practices, living conditions, weather, food, health care, daily customs, and political systems plus facing a foreign language on a daily basis" (Black et al. 1991).

The lack of social support cited above has also been implicated in stress during expatriation: a deficiency in social relations and broken social bonds may be a causal factor in the onset of stress, whether the move is across the world or across the country (Anderzén 1998, Fisher 1985 and Leavy 1983).

The relations between mental health and expatriation are medically established based on the detection of the physiological response to stress (Anderzén 1998), and on the high incidence of affective and adjustment disorders (Foyle et al. 1998) during international assignments. These results are reinforced by studies in management area about expatriates' psychological adjustment, sociocultural adjustment and repatriation difficulties (Perone et al. 2008, Selmer 2004, Selmer and Leung 2003-I, Shaffer and Harrison 2001, Feldman and Tompson 1993, Nicholson and Imaizumi 1993, Black et al. 1991, Briody & Chrisman 1991, Harvey 1989, Black 1988, Adler 1986, Harvey 1985, Brett 1982 and Adler 1981).

In the demand-discretion model (Karasek 1979), the psychological demand and decision latitude are the basic elements determining strain. Psychological strain is characterized by fatigue, anxiety, depression and physical illness. In their study, they postulated that in the long term, strain can cause stress-related illnesses such as heart disease. Strain typically occurs when the psychological demands of a job are high and the workers' decision latitude is low. When the psychological demands are high and the decision latitude also is high, the worker has a high level of control and thus the work does not present high levels of strain. This is what Karasek calls active work that could be defined as a challenging job. He attributes the absence of symptoms to the presence of a high level of satisfaction due to work realization. The passive job characterized by low psychological demands and low decision latitude. Social support was added to the model later; it was noticed that for women and executive men there was a stronger association between strain and lack of control when social support was missing. Theorell (1999) made a contribution to the physiological modifications related to anabolic (active) and catabolic (passive) situations.

In Déjour's work (1993, 1994) work psychophysiology, the most important factors are the interpersonal relations. The recognition of the work-realized value by the employee's peers is the most important kind of reward, called "symbolic reward". The recognition happens through the judgment of the beauty or utility of the work. The recognition is reflected in the person's identity, modifying it.

In conclusion, the available studies concerning expatriates' mental health signal expatriation as an emotionally demanding situation. Just recently, the expatriate employees' and their families' well-being gained some attention but the studies in the field make use of quite different methodologies and diverge greatly in their objectives. As a result, these studies point in some directions but it would be important to comprehend how the findings correlate with each other and, principally, to have a wider view of the whole phenomenon. The relation between expatriates' well-being and the adjustment process needs to be investigated better both in the light of the expatriation literature and of the occupational health tradition. In addition, the available findings should be confirmed. The expatriates' well-being still needs to be measured in the same populations and in those not already investigated.

3. AIM OF THE STUDY

3.1. GENERAL AIM

To determine mental health and well-being among expatriate employees working for Finnish companies in Brazil.

To investigate the relations between expatriation and expatriate employees' and their spouses' mental health.

3.2. SPECIFIC AIMS

To determine the occurrence of mental strain and minor mental disorders among expatriate employees working for Finnish companies in Brazil.

To establish the relations of expatriate employees' mental health to working conditions and private life situation.

To deepen the comprehension of expatriate employees' and their spouses' mental health by qualitative method.

To evaluate how living abroad modifies family relations.

4. STUDY DESIGN

Two methodological approaches were used: an epidemiological cross-sectional study, carried out as a questionnaire survey, and a qualitative approach based on individual and discussion group interviews (Table 1). This design was chosen in order to obtain different kinds of information complementing each other, resulting in a much more reliable result, than with just one method (Salmenperä 2005 and Weber 1990).

Table 1. Study design

QUESTIONNAIRE	INTERVIEW	
All employees	All employees of enterprises A and B N = 88	All spouses of employees of enterprises A and B N = 58
N = 121	5 focus group discussions N=18	5 focus group discussions N=19
	4 individual interviews N=4	2 individual interviews N=2

4.1. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

The purpose of this part of the study was to establish the well-being and to detect possible minor psychiatric disorders in expatriate employees.

4.2. QUALITATIVE STUDY

The purpose of this part of the study was to evaluate how expatriation affects expatriate employees' and their spouses' mental health, deepen understanding of the topic of the aspects of relevance to the mental health of expatriate employees and their spouses. According to the literature, expatriate spouses commonly experienced mental strain related to expatriation and there is a positive correlation between expatriates' and expatriate spouses' mental health.

5. MATERIAL AND METHODS

5.1. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY

Material

The target population was every employee with non-Brazilian citizenship working for a Finnish company in Brazil. The employees covered by the study should be organisational expatriates or those who have moved to Brazil for work reasons (Peltokorpi and Froese 2009), and had to be working in the country for at least six months. In order to be eligible for the study the expatriate should also have been living in Brazil for at least three months at the time of filling in the questionnaire form.

The research was started in 2003 by contacting the Finnish consulate in Rio de Janeiro in order to get information about Finnish enterprises with subsidiaries in Brazil. All the subsidiaries were contacted.

At the time the study was carried out (from May 2003 to May 2005), there were 21 subsidiaries of Finnish industrial companies in Brazil. Companies with activities in the commercial area, like banks, were excluded. The participant enterprises were active in the fields of chemical, construction, cranes, electronics, generators, informatics, logistics, minerals, packaging, paper, telecommunications, and tractors. They were situated in six different states in Brazil: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Paraná, Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais and Amazônia.

As it was difficult to distribute the forms to the employees personally due to long distances between the enterprises, the internet was chosen as the way to approach the target population. This was considered appropriate because the group in question was highly educated and used computers as work tools.

To obtain the e-mail addresses of the expatriates working in the subsidiaries of the Finnish enterprises in Brazil, the human resources' (HR) personnel responsible for the expatriates' affairs were contacted. On the first contact, they were asked if there were any foreign employees working in the enterprise, who had been there for more than three months and were going to stay for at least six months, and if so, could they provide a list of their names to be used for the purpose of this study.

The requirement of working in Brazil for at least three months was based on the need that the applicant should already have some experience of living there in order to be able to answer the questions. The requirement of six months was defined as the minimum assignment length in Brazil in order to exclude short-term employees; the maximum length of a temporary assignment is six months, as six months is the maximum residence time conceded to tourists. In addition, according to the literature, after six months' living abroad the foreigner can be considered an expatriate (Jones 2000; Langue et al. 1997 and Hill 1995).

The second step was to ask the HR contact persons to send an e-mail to the employees eligible for the research, presenting the author and the research, and asking the employee to send the form back directly to the investigator. In this way, the respondent knew that the answers to the questionnaire would go straight to the researcher. Thus, a possible bias due to a supposed involvement of the enterprise in the research could be avoided. It was also considered important to make clear to the enterprises involved that they would only get access to the final collective results of the research.

When the HR personnel sent the presentation e-mail with the questionnaire to the expatriates, they also sent it to the author (as a 'CC' in the MS-outlook program). After this, the author could resend the form directly to the employees.

Table 2. Comparison between respondents and non-respondents

	Respondents N=71 %	Non-respondents N=50 %
1- Age		
20-29	6	4
30-39	55	38
40-49	25	26
50-59	6	12
60 or more years	8	-
Unknown	-	20
2- Gender		
Male	92	90
Female	8	10
3- Marital status		
Married /Living together	79	64
Single/Divorced	21	18
Unknown	-	18
4- Work function		
Direction/presidency	14	14
Management	47	22
Operational	38	38
Unknown	1	26
5- Nationality		
Finnish	56	58
Other	44	42

Enterprises, unlike isolated individuals living or visiting abroad, practically always are in contact with their embassy and/or consulate in the host country already before establishing operations there. Thus, the Finnish embassy has a good understanding of

the Finnish companies operating in Brazil. As the author was in contact with the Finnish enterprises' human resource departments and the target population consisted of residents not visitors, it can be considered that the loss of expatriates due to lack of knowing about their existence was minimal. So, 121 expatriates were representative of the whole population.

The first questionnaires were sent in May 2003 and the last ones in May 2005. The questionnaires were not sent simultaneously because the possibility of sending them depended upon the agreement with the enterprises giving the names of the expatriate employees. If not answered, the forms were sent again from 3 to 6 times until May 2005. If e-mails for some reason were continuously undeliverable, the respective expatriate was excluded from the study population.

Of a group of 10 foreign employees working for Enterprise H, eight were excluded to assure the homogeneity of the population. They had an assignment on a local basis, and had been living in Brazil for a long time, had Brazilian friends and family. Some of them had started to work for another enterprise and did not plan to go back home to work for Enterprise H. For their part, working in Brazil was a consequence of the choice of living in Brazil and not the other way around. Thus, they could be defined as self-initiated expatriates and therefore not part of the target group (Peltokorpi and Froese 2009).

The defined population thus consisted of 121 foreign employees, employed by 17 companies: 73 were employed by enterprise A, 15 by enterprise B, 8 by enterprise C, 4 by enterprises D, E and F, 2 by enterprises G and H, and 1 by enterprises I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P and Q. One enterprise with one expatriate employee was excluded from the study because the e-mail address given continuously returned "undeliverable".

The study covered 71 expatriates (58.7%) employed by 10 Finnish enterprises.

In order to evaluate the possible effect of non-responding on the results, an analysis of the non-respondents' profile was performed. As to age, gender, nationality, marital status, and work function, there were no statistically significant differences between non-respondents' and respondents' profiles ($p > 0, 05$). (Table 2)

Methods

A questionnaire was developed for the study containing different blocks of questions with the purpose of assessing possible changes in life quality and work related to expatriation (Appendix 1). These blocks covered demographic and socio-economic factors concerning both the employee and his/her spouse, general life and health conditions (concerning housing, travel to work, etc), hobbies, social life, and work. Most of the questions concerning the present and the past were the same in order to provide the opportunity of compare present and past life conditions, and to get an idea of possible changes in the expatriates' lives. The questionnaire was divided into eight parts: Background information, Your situation in your own country, Work history, Working abroad, About your work now, Your adjustment in general, Family and Health.

The first part of the questionnaire asked for background information about the expatriates. There were altogether nine questions in this part. Questions 1-5 asked about the age, sex, civil status, nationality and education of the interviewee. Questions 6-8 asked about the profession, mother tongue and possible other languages that the expatriate employees spoke. Question number 9 asked more specifically about the knowledge of the Portuguese language, if the interviewee spoke it already on arrival or if he/she had learned it during his/her stay in Brazil.

The second part of the questionnaire asked about the interviewee's situation in his/her own country. This part consisted of six questions. The first question asked about the average weekly working hours. The second question asked the respondent to specify how much free time he/she had for family (item a), friends (item b) and hobbies (item c). Question 3 asked about the time used to get to and from work. In question 4, the interviewee had to answer about his level of satisfaction with the job and salary in his/her own country. Question 5 asked the number of bedrooms the interviewee had in his/her own country. Question 6 asked if the interviewee had some hobbies in his/her own country, which he/she was unable to practise in Brazil.

The third part of the questionnaire asked about the interviewee's work history. This part had three questions. Question 1 asked for how long the interviewee had worked in the company. Question 2 asked about the present work function and question 3 about the other positions the interviewee had had in the same company or in other companies.

The fourth part of the questionnaire asked about the interviewee's experience of working abroad. There were two questions. The first question asked if this was the interviewee's first assignment abroad, and if not, he/she was asked to specify where and when he/she had worked abroad before. The second question asked if the interviewee had come to Brazil directly from his/her home country, and if not, from which country.

Part five of the questionnaire asked about the interviewee's work in Brazil at the time of the interview. There were altogether 32 questions in this part. The first question asked the respondent to specify the department the interviewee was working in. Question 2 asked about the type of assignment and question 3 the length of the assignment. Question 4 asked about how sure the interviewee felt about there being work for him/her in his/her company when returning home. Question 5 asked for how long the interviewee had been in Brazil. Questions 6 and 7 were about the level of knowledge of Brazil of the interviewee, and in case he/she knew something about Brazil before moving to Brazil, where he/she had learned about Brazil. Questions 8 and 9 asked about the ways the interviewee has tried to learn about Brazil and for how long before moving to Brazil he/she had started to look for information about Brazil. Question 10 asked about the motivations of the interviewee in coming to Brazil. Question 11 asked the interviewee to compare his/her salary in Brazil with his/her salary in the home country. Question 12 asked about promotion possibilities in Brazil compared to the home country. Question 13 asked if the risk of the interviewee losing his/her job was bigger in Brazil or in the home country. Question 14 asked about the general work experience in Brazil, and question 15 about the work tools in Brazil compared to the home country. Question 16

asked about the time it takes to get to and from work in Brazil compared to the home country. Questions 17 and 18 asked about the working time and working rhythm in Brazil compared to the home country. Question 19 asked the interviewee to evaluate the quality of the work performed by the local employees.

Question 20 to 30 were related to strain in the workplace according to Karasek's theory: awareness of work, satisfaction, decision making process, transparency, group work, improvements, support, equality and level of control (Karasek and Theorell, 1990) were investigated in detail. Question 20 was about expatriate employees' awareness of work related factors like the objectives of their workplace/organization as a whole (item 1), the objectives of their unit (item 2) and their own objectives (item 3). Question 21 concerned work satisfaction investigating the expatriate employees satisfaction with their work in Brazil (item 1), with their salary in Brazil (item 2), with the way of administration in their work unit (item 3), and with the way of administration in the Brazilian organization as a whole (item 4). Question 22 asked about the decision making process. It was asked whether the decisions were made based on correct information (item 1), if it is possible to cancel or change the decisions that failed (item 2), if when a decision is made all the parties involved are represented (item 3), if the decisions made are coherent (item 4), if everybody has the right to que his/her own opinion in the questions related to himself/herself (item 5), if the effects of decisions are followed (item 6), and if it is possible to receive more information about the motives for the decisions made (item 7). Question 23 concerned transparency and investigated whether there was enough circulation of information between different professional groups (item 1), between supervisors and subordinates (item 2), between work units (item 3) and between expatriates and locals (item 4). Question 24 asked about group work, specifically if their work community was flexible (item 1), efficient (item 2), if the cooperation between members of the group was good (item 3) and the division of work in our group is clear (item 4). Question 25 asked about improvements, if the interviewee were stimulated to try new things (item 1) and if they continuously made improvements in their way of working (item 2). Question 26 investigated social support and asked whether in difficult situations, the expatriate employees received enough help from their boss (item 1) and from their colleagues (item 2). Question 27 asked about equality in the work place, investigating equality between the different age groups (item 1), between the different professional groups (item 2) and between the expatriates and the locals (item 3). Question 28 investigated the level of control, investigating how much the interviewees could influence their work monotony and lack of variation (item 1), the quality of their work (item 2), the division of work (item 3), the quantity of work (item 4), the rhythm of work (item 5) and factors related to the work place in general (item 6). Question 29 concerned also the level of control of own work, and asked how much the expatriate employees needed to exchange ideas with their colleagues in order to carry out their work. Question 30 investigated how well the interviewee managed in their work to get feed-back about their work from their boss (item 1), from their colleagues (item 2) and from the clients (item 3).

A multifactorial evaluation based on Karasek model's was performed in order to obtain a profile of potential strain factors in the work place (Karasek and Theorell, 1990). The

results of this analysis are presented below, together with the questions corresponding to each factor that could be correlated to strain: work awareness, work satisfaction, decision-making process, transparency in the work place, group work, improvements, social support, equality and level of control (Tables 6.3-6.11). The results of the multifactorial analysis were obtained by the direct mean of alternatives when the possibilities of answers were organised from negative to positive (mean of alternatives 1 and 2 of questions 25, 26 and 27, and of alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of question 28), and in the form 6 minus mean of alternatives of the questions where the alternatives started from positive to negative (6 minus mean of the three alternatives of question 20, of alternatives 3 and 4 of question 21, of all alternatives of question 22, of alternatives 1, 2 and 3 of question 23 and of alternatives 1, 2, 3 and 4 of question 24 - see the related questions in appendix 1, "About your work now").

In question 31 the interviewee was asked about his/her preference in which country he/she would like to live if he/she could freely choose. Question 32 asked if the interviewee was living alone, with spouse, with spouse and children, or with a spouse he/she had met during the assignment.

Part six of the questionnaire was about the interviewee's adjustment in general. There were altogether nine questions in this part. Question 1 asked about how happy the interviewee was in Brazil, and question 2 about living and working adaptation in Brazil. Question 3 asked about the number of bedrooms the interviewee had in his/her apartment in Brazil. Question 4 asked about the level of satisfaction in relation to the interviewee's apartment or house and its localization. Questions 5 and 6 asked about the number of friends the interviewee had in Brazil and if they were foreigners or Brazilians. Question 7 asked about the frequency with which the interviewee communicated with his/her home country. Question 8 asked the interviewee to specify where he/she spent his/her vacations. Question 9 asked the interviewee to specify how he/she divided his or her free time between a) family b) friends and c) hobbies in Brazil.

Part seven of the questionnaire concerned the interviewee's family. This part of the questionnaire was further divided into three sub-groups; the first two sub-groups had questions about the spouse and the third about the children. The first subgroup had 13 questions. Question 1 asked for how long the interviewee had been with his/her spouse. Questions 2-8 asked about the spouse's age, nationality, mother tongue, language he/she spoke, knowledge of Portuguese, level of formal education and his/her profession. Question 9 asked what was his /her work status at the time of the interview in Brazil. Question 10 asked about his/her work time in the home country. Question 11 asked about the spouse's satisfaction in relation to job and salary in his/her home country. Question 12 asked if the interviewee had children, and question 13 if the children had studied in an international school in the home country. The second sub-group, which had 12 questions, included questions about the spouse's happiness and the experience in general in Brazil. This part also asked about the spouse's satisfaction in relation to housing, location of the house, and the length of the interviewee's work day. In addition, there were questions about the spouse's friends, if they were Brazilians or foreigners, and how often the spouse communicated with the home country. Question 10 asked

how often his/her spouse called to the employee's job to complain. Question 11 asked how often the interviewee had to stay at home or leave early in order to solve family problems. Question 12 asked if the interviewee had noticed changes in the relationship during their stay in Brazil. The third sub-group, which had 8 questions, concerned the interviewee's children. In questions 1-6 the interviewee was asked about the happiness of his/her children, the experience in general the children had had in Brazil, about the adjustment of the children, where the children would prefer to live if they could freely choose, the number of friends and if the friends were Brazilian or foreigners. Question 7 asked if the interviewee had noticed any change in the relationship with his/her children. Question 8 asked about the school performance of the children in Brazil compared to the time before they had moved to Brazil.

Part eight of the questionnaire concerned the self-reported health of the interviewees and about their families' health conditions. This part had altogether 29 questions. Questions 1 and 2 asked about possible chronic diseases of the interviewee or his/her family members. Question 3 asked if working in Brazil had had a positive or negative effect on the interviewee's and his/her family members' mental health. Questions 4 and 5 asked about the level of healthiness of the interviewee and his/her family members now compared to the time before arriving in Brazil. Questions 6 and 7 asked about the consumption of alcohol of the interviewee and his/her family members in Brazil compared to the time before arriving in Brazil. Questions 8 and 9 asked about the usage of medical services in Brazil, and how satisfied the interviewee had been with them.

In the questionnaire there were five classes of answers for each of the described questions but in the results, I chose the option of presenting the results in three classes where the very positive and rather positive options became positive, the neutral option remained neutral, and the rather negative and very negative options became negative.

Questions 10-29 were a reproduction of the 'Self-Reporting Questionnaire', a WHO questionnaire to detect minor psychiatric disorders was applied (Appendix 2). This Self Reporting Questionnaire on Minor Psychiatric Disorders was first elaborated for strain detection in primary health care. Over time it has been used in many surveys around the world and proved to be an efficient screening instrument to detect strain in different cultural settings (Beusenberg, 1994). It has also been used in several studies to measure work related strain (Souza, 2007 and Ludermir and Lewis 2005). In the present study it was applied as the indicator of mental strain.

Because the number of participants was small Fisher's exact test was performed in the whole analysis when comparing participants stratified by sex and nationality. The Fisher exact test of significance may be used instead of the chi-square test in 2-by-2 tables, particularly for small samples. It tests the probability of getting a table as strong as the observed or stronger simply due to the chance of sampling, where "strong" is defined by the proportion of cases on the diagonal with the most cases. Though, usually employed as a one-tailed test, it may be computed as a two-tailed test as well. The Fisher exact test belongs to the class of so called exact tests because the significance of the deviation from a null hypothesis can be calculated exactly, rather than relying on an approximation that

becomes exact in the limit as the sample size grows to infinity, as with many statistical tests (Sheskin 2007). The significance level adopted in the present study was 5%.

5.2. QUALITATIVE STUDY

Material

The target population consisted of 73 expatriates of enterprise A and 15 expatriates of enterprise B and their spouses. The employees should have moved to Brazil for work reasons, and should be living there for at least six months; they should also have been living in Brazil for at least three months at the time of the interview.

Methods

To get a better understanding of the questions related to expatriates mental health and occupational factors related to it, discussion groups (focus groups) and interviews with individuals volunteering to be interviewed, were organised with expatriates from two companies. The enterprises were chosen because they had the largest number of expatriates, different activities, and were located in two different states, as well as in cities with different characteristics. Employees interviewed in Enterprise A worked in an office; most of them lived close to the office. Enterprise B employees worked in offices in a factory area; most of them lived in another city approximately 30 kilometres from their offices.

The focus groups with expatriate spouses were organised with spouses of enterprise A's and B's expatriate employees. Individual interviews with expatriate spouses were organized only with male expatriate spouses of enterprise A, as in enterprise B there wasn't any male expatriate spouse. It was considered important to include both the employees and their spouses from different regions and enterprises to see if/how these factors modified their experiences.

Interviews with HR personal, senior management members and with a person that organized free time activities for expatriate spouses were done on informal bases with members of enterprises A, B, C and H. As these persons didn't allow these interviews to be recorded on tape, paper memos of the content of these interviews were compiled.

As I had worked as expatriates' own doctor during their expatriation, I had some ideas and expectations before starting this research. I made a memo of my thoughts before the start of the field research.

The original intention was to observe expatriate's employees' work days and make memos of these observations, but the enterprises didn't allow this kind of approach. The reason given by the enterprises for this standpoint was that the majority of expatriate employees worked in offices and their workday observation would not add anything substantial to the research. However, almost all focus group interviews with expatriate employees were organised during work hour inside the enterprises' facilities, which

provided a possibility to get some idea of the expatriate employees' work routines and the activities of their enterprises.

The qualitative study was guided by the principles of phenomenology. This paradigm was chosen because the objective of the qualitative study was to get a better comprehension about the relations between expatriation and mental health, about *how* expatriation is related to expatriate employees' and their spouses' mental health and *how* expatriation modifies their families' relations.

“Phenomenological research is defined as the study of the ‘lived’ and its meanings” (Amatuzzi, 1996). It is interested in the way people experience their world, how to best understand them in their situation. In order to gain access to other peoples' experience phenomenologists collect intensive and exhaustive descriptions from their respondents. These descriptions are submitted to a questioning process, in which the researcher is open to the themes that emerge (Tesch, 1987). Finding commonalities and uniqueness in individual themes allows the researcher to crystallize the ‘constituents’ of the phenomenon (Schmitt, 2008 and Giorgi, 1975) resulting in the description of the general structure of the phenomenon studied.

The basic principles of the phenomenological paradigm are that the world is socially constructed and subjective (not external and objective), that an observer is part of what is observed (not independent), and that science is driven by human interest. Thus the phenomenological researchers should focus on meanings, not “facts”; they should try to understand what is happening, look at the totality of each situation and develop ideas through induction from evidence (Kohonen 2007 and Remenyi et al. 1998).

I made an aide memo with the topics I considered to be a priori relevant to mental health according to the literature. Before starting to collect the material I organised a pre-test with two participants. The aim of this pre-test was to examine the method of interviewing and to evaluate the importance of the topics considered relevant in the aide memoire. The content of the pre-test was analysed as an exercise but it was not included in the results. The aide memo proved to be appropriate and I kept it with me during the focus groups and interviews. The instrument used in the quantitative study also proved to investigate pertinent questions as all the themes that emerged in the pilot interview were covered, at least to some degree, by the questionnaire form.

Ten focus group discussions were organised; five with expatriate employees (2 groups with three participants and 3 groups with four), and five with expatriate spouses (1 group with three participants and 4 groups with four). In addition to these focus groups, six individual interviews, four with expatriate employees and two with expatriate employees' husbands, were recorded. The interviews in the enterprise A were organised from May 2003 to February 2004 and in Enterprise B in October 2004 (Table 1).

The focus groups offer an opportunity to study how individuals collectively make sense of some phenomenon and construct meanings around it. It is a central tenet of theoretical positions like symbolic interactionism, as coming to terms with and understanding social phenomena are not undertaken by an individual in isolation. Instead, it is something that

occurs in interaction and discussion with others (Nachreiner et al, 2007 and Bryman and Teevan, 2005).

The interviews were unstructured in order to generate rich, detailed answers that would best reveal the phenomena. Only one, main question was always presented: "How does it feel to be an expatriate?" The subsequent questions were elaborated during the interview, responding to the direction in which interviewees took the interview, adjusting the emphases in the research as a result of issues that emerged during the interviews, in order to deepen the contents of the answers. If the conversation stopped, I reintroduced some theme, mentioned already earlier but not sufficiently explored. All the topics listened in my aide memoire emerged in the groups.

It is very important to obtain fluid, spontaneous speech in phenomenological studies. In order to provide the interviewed the opportunity of speaking his/her own language whenever possible, or at least their most fluent foreign language, the interviews of individuals and groups were organized in Finnish, English or Spanish. I personally interviewed, transcribed and translated the whole material.

The material obtained in the interviews was analysed using content analyses, a process used to systematically analyse documents with the aim of describing some phenomenon. The method is appropriate to deal with the richness and complexity of this research's material in all its nuances. The content analysis methodology consists in the distillation, through analysis, of words into fewer content-related categories.

The observations were reduced, simplified and grouped exploring both similarities and differences. First the material was read and heard exhaustively in order to understand the phenomenon. Next, each line of the first interviews were coded, delivering subcategories. After that, the subcategories were labelled according to their characteristic content. Last, the main categories were derived deductively from the subcategories. The process of analyses is dynamic and during the whole analysis there is a constant movement backwards and forward. Each time an "old" sub-category emerges during the codification of a new interview, the speech was compared with precedent speech. Eventually new subcategories emerged and were checked in order to see if they belonged to some already existing category. All time it is necessary to try to answer to questions like: what is happening? why? who is involved? and how does it happen? (Schmitt, 2008, Schmitt et al. 2007, Teeri, 2007, Bryman and Teevan 2005, Salmenperä 2005, Kuokkanen 2003, Bardain, 2004, Kuokkanen and Leino-Kilpi, 2001 and Cavanagh 1997).

This study has its origins in my own life experience. First as a foreigner abroad, then as a foreigner's wife in my own country, and then as a foreigners' doctor in my own country. While abroad, as a spouse, I often did not recognize myself, I discovered that I was not as strong as I had thought; I discovered many unknown limits and strong ties to simple things that I had not perceived as important previously. I also perceived that it was difficult to live one day at a time without knowing exactly where we were heading. On the other hand, sometimes I also discovered unknown forces in myself. As a doctor I perceived the anxiety and sensibility of people while abroad. I knew from

experience which kinds of difficulties people face while abroad and I had a genuine desire to comprehend how people manage while abroad, which things are important for them and why, how they find the strength to continue. I noticed that there were not many studies concerning expatriates' well-being, so it would be important to measure well-being and study the factors correlated to well-being. But I wanted more; I wanted to comprehend the *lived*. So, I was from the beginning, completely involved with the theme and wanted to understand what the expatriation experience is and, in addition, I wanted to carry out the research during the expatriation, being close to the target population in the host country, because I wanted to find the kind of information that was not available in the literature.

Only a qualitative research could give answers to my questions. Because of this, the inclusion of a qualitative study in the design was natural. I could have made a structured questionnaire, but I did not want to do so, because I wanted to let people tell me about things that I would not necessarily have previously thought about and thus would not know to ask about. I wanted the material to bring to light things I would not be able to suspect; I did not want to confirm any previous theory. Because of this I felt that a structured questionnaire should be in some way like the epidemiologic study's form, but applied personally. So, the adoption of open ended interviews was also natural.

The choice of phenomenology fitted perfectly with my aims because I knew that I was involved and not an objective outsider. I did not have any illusion about being detached from the theme that I would like to investigate and, according to phenomenology's principles, I did not have to deny my experience with the pros and contras, the facilities and obstacles, this experience could represent in the study. By recognizing my own involvement with the theme, it was possible to deepen my own thoughts, beliefs and expectations about the phenomenon. The recognition helped me not only to be aware of the risks that my own involvement could present, but it also helped me to stay vigilant. In contrast to the positivist tradition where the involvement and expectations exist in the same way but are denied.

Another reason for doing a phenomenological study was that when I first read studies concerning the mental health of expatriates, I realized that they did not tell me much. These studies were quite disconnected from each other and they did not give answers to my questions. It was as if they were talking about a completely different thing from the one I would like to investigate. I wanted to make a study that would tell something to the expatriates, a study in which the expatriates could recognize themselves and that could make a person, who had never lived abroad or thought about these questions, perceive what kinds of questions and challenges expatriation brings with it. I wanted to make a study connected with real life. I chose content analysis to analyze the material, because I wanted anyone without any experience of the phenomenon to be able to join me and understand my decisions, while interpreting the material according to the phenomenological tradition. Thus, my own aims coincided with the aims of the method.

Phenomenology was a natural choice and a more adequate approach than grounded theory considering the objectives cited above I wanted to make an exploratory study to investigate in depth the experience of expatriates while abroad rather than present a theory, to understand and make people understand the implicit psychology more than the social experience.

Finally, I assume that any choice includes some empathy, affinity and beliefs, and that is the implicit reason why I chose phenomenology.

The qualitative material was analysed separately and in combination with the quantitative material using triangulation, i.e. the use of multiple methods, theories and data sets in the study of some common phenomenon (Schmitt, 2008, Schmitt et al, 2007 and Bryman and Teevan, 2005).

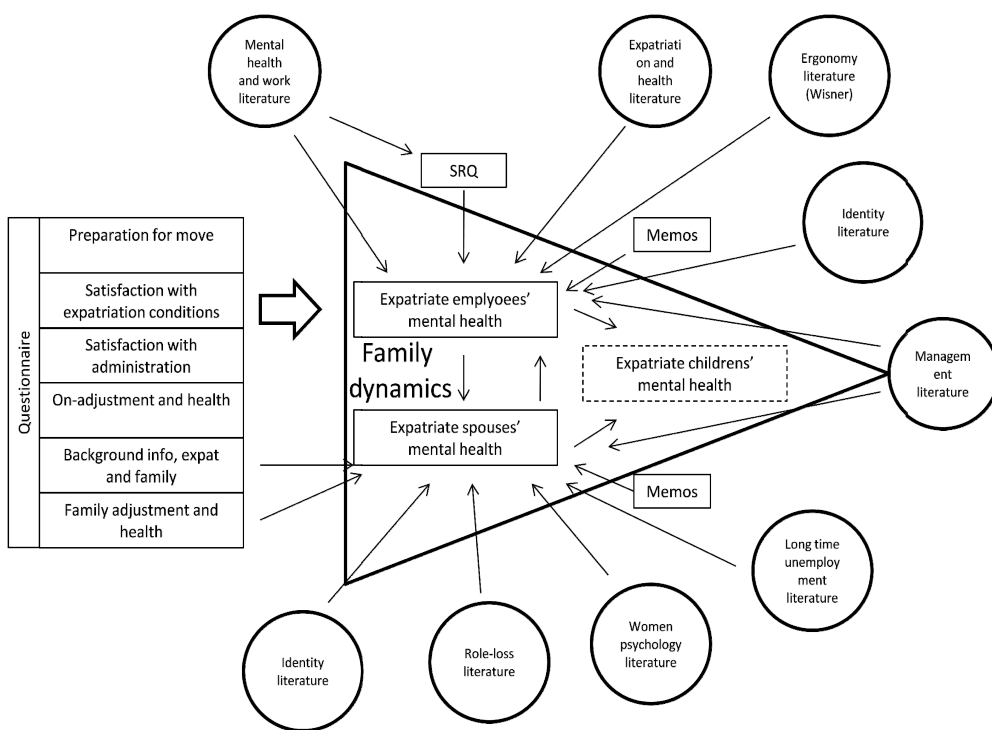


Figure 1. Triangulation

Figure 1 represents, in its totality, triangulation. The phenomenon could be understood as the content of the triangle. This content represents the closest picture I could compose of the phenomenon through triangulation. The picture would better illustrate triangulation if it were tridimensional. We could imagine that there *is* a phenomenon, that *exists* but can be appreciated only in the light of the different eyes or views around it, focusing on it, exemplified in the figure by: the interviews, where the participants are at the same time components of the phenomenon and the appreciators, carriers of their eyes and views, the questionnaire and its components, including the SRQ, that appears

differentiated because of its importance as a measure, the literature of different known fields, the memos, and also my eyes first impregnated with my own opinions, formation, time and limited by my own capacity to see. Through triangulation I intent to go to the other's place and try to appreciate the same view they appreciate (of course as I am a different person it cannot be exactly the same view) but the idea is to try to apprehend the core of the phenomenon, that will never be what exists in its totality but that if well represented, should be promptly recognised by any individual that in some way knows or has experienced the studied phenomenon.

6. RESULTS

6.1. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY

Most of the subjects were highly educated young European men with language skills, most of them working in the technological field. Most were married or living together with someone, and more than half had children. Their nationalities were Finnish, Swedish, Danish, French, Italian, American, Indian, Argentinean, Australian, British, Czech, German, Peruvian, Swiss, and Venezuelan (Table 3).

Table 3. Socio-demographic profile of the participants

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- Age					
20-29	6	-	5	6	6 (n= 4)
30-39	53	83	45	68	55 (n=39)
40-49	26	17	28	23	25 (n=18)
50-59	6	-	7	3	6 (n= 4)
60 or more	9	-	15	-	8 (n= 6)
2- Gender					
Male	100	-	90	94	92 (n=65)
Female	-	100	10	6	8 (n= 6)
3- Level of education					
Ph.D.	5	-	-	10	4 (n= 3)
University	84	100	88	84	86 (n=61)
Technical	11	-	12	6	10 (n= 7)
4- Profession**					
Administrative	17	66	25	19	22 (n=15)
Technological	64	17	50	71	59 (n=41)
Other	19	17	25	10	19 (n=13)
5- Marital status					
Single	17	50	23	16	20 (n=14)
Married	72	-	70	61	66 (n=47)
Living together	11	33	7	20	13 (n= 9)
Divorced	-	17	-	3	1 (n= 1)
6- Nationality					
Finnish	55	67	100	-	56 (n=40)
Other	45	33	-	100	44 (n=31)
7- Number of children					
1 child	33	-	24	43	25 (n=18)
2 children	39	-	44	33	31 (n=22)
3-6 children	28	-	32	24	23 (n=16)
no children	11	-	14	16	21 (n=15)

** Two persons did not answer

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except, when comparing men and women, in items 4 ($p = 0.016$) and 5 ($p = 0.016$).

Table 4. Work experience and satisfaction with work at home

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- Time working for the company					
1-5 years	34	17	25	42	32 (n=23)
6-9 years	35	50	30	45	37 (n=26)
10 or more years	31	33	45	13	31 (n=22)
2- Journey to work in the home country					
Up to 29 min	32	33	31	31	31 (n=22)
30-45 min	24	34	28	28	28 (n=20)
46 or more	44	33	41	41	41 (n=29)
3- Satisfaction with					
a) their job in their own country					
Satisfied	91	50	88	87	87 (n=62)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	33	5	10	7 (n= 5)
Dissatisfied	4	17	7	3	6 (n= 4)
b) their salary in their own country					
Satisfied	51	33	40	61	49 (n=35)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	32	50	35	32	34 (n=24)
Dissatisfied	17	17	25	7	17 (n=12)

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing men and women in item 3a ($p = 0.024$).

The different work functions were classified in top management (presidents and directors), management (managers with administrative functions) and operational (technical functions). Most of the expatriate employees had managerial tasks. They had been working in the enterprise from 4 to 12 years and had undertaken some other international assignment before the present one; 34% came directly from some other country (Venezuela, Switzerland, China, Hungary, UK, Argentina, Bolivia, Czech Republic, Finland, Morocco, Peru, Singapore, Spain, Sweden and USA). Most of them stated that they were satisfied with their work in the home country (Tables 4, 5.1 and 5.2).

Table 5.1. Assignment

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- Kind of assignment					
Expatriate	41	67	58	26	44 (n=40)
International expatriate	59	33	42	74	56 (n=31)
2- Length of assignment ***					
< 2.5 years	59	80	54	68	63 (n=43)
2.5-5 years	41	20	46	32	37 (n=25)
3- International assignments					
First	34	17	27	39	32 (n=48)
Other assignments previously	66	83	73	61	68 (n=23)

*** Three persons did not answer

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing men and women in item 1 ($p = 0.009$).

Table 5.2. General features of the expatriate employees' work in Brazil

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- Work function*					
Top management	16	-	18	10	14 (n=10)
Management	47	50	38	58	47 (n=33)
Operational	37	50	44	32	39 (n=27)
2- Work continuation**					
Sure that there will be work on return	33	50	53	13	35 (n=24)
Neither sure nor unsure	32	-	29	29	29 (n=20)
Unsure if there will be work on return	35	50	18	58	36 (n=25)
3- Salary					
Earning more in Brazil than before	77	100	90	64	79 (n=56)
Earning more or less the same	15	-	7	23	14 (n=10)
Earning less in Brazil than before	8	-	3	13	7 (n= 5)
4- Possibilities to be promoted*					
Better in Brazil than in the homeland	19	-	15	19	17 (n=12)
More or less the same	48	39	44	52	47 (n=33)
Worse in Brazil than in the homeland	33	67	41	29	36 (n=25)
5- Risk of losing the job*					
Greater in Brazil than in the homeland	30	33	25	37	30 (n=21)
More or less the same	47	67	47	50	49 (n=34)
Smaller in Brazil than in the homeland	23	-	28	13	21 (n=15)
6- Experience of work in Brazil					
Better than expected	40	17	37	39	38 (n=27)
As expected	40	50	48	32	41 (n=29)
Worse than expected	20	33	15	29	21 (n=15)
7- Time to get to and from work					
Longer than at home	32	50	37	29	34 (n=24)
As at home	26	33	26	29	27 (n=19)
Shorter than at home	42	17	37	42	39 (n=28)
8- Work time					
Longer in Brazil than at home	77	83	85	68	78 (n=55)
Similar	18	17	12	26	18 (n=13)
Shorter in Brazil than at home	5	-	3	6	4 (n= 3)
9- Work rhythm					
More intense in Brazil than at home	48	66	50	48	49 (n=35)
Similar to that at home	40	17	35	42	38 (n=27)
Less intense in Brazil than at home	12	17	15	10	13 (n= 9)
10- Quality of work performed by locals*					
Good	56	17	46	61	53 (n=37)
Neither good nor bad	36	66	44	32	39 (n=27)
Poor quality	8	17	10	7	8 (n= 6)

*One person did not answer

**Two persons did not answer

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing men and women in items 2 ($p < 0.001$) and 3 ($p = 0.17$).

About half of the expatriate employees were “international expatriates”, meaning that they were no longer linked to their home countries, while the other half consisted of expatriates who would be going back to their home country after finishing their assignment in Brazil. Most of them had an assignment for two and a half years (Table 5.1).

The respondents were mainly satisfied with their work and salary in Brazil, but about half of them were not satisfied with the way of administration in the Brazilian subsidiaries as a whole.

Most expatriate employees felt that they were well aware of the objectives of their workplace/organisation, of their unit and of their own work, and that they were able to influence the quality of their work quite much.

Most of them considered that their work community was flexible, that there was good cooperation between the members of the group, and that they received help from their colleagues in difficult situations.

Table 5.3. Work awareness

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
Awareness of					
a) their organization's objectives as a whole*					
Felt that they were well aware	91	83	90	90	90 (n=63)
Neither well nor badly aware	8	-	8	7	7 (n= 5)
Felt that they were badly aware	1	17	2	3	3 (n= 2)
b) their unit objectives *					
Felt that they were well aware	99	83	97	97	98 (n=68)
Neither well nor badly aware	1	-	-	3	1 (n= 1)
Felt that they were badly aware	-	17	3	-	1 (n= 1)
c) their own objectives**					
Felt that they were well aware	99	83	94	100	98 (n=67)
Neither well nor badly aware	-	17	3	-	1 (n= 1)
Felt that they were badly aware	1	-	3	-	1 (n= 1)
		Badly %		Neither badly nor well %	Well %
Awareness of work **		1		7	92

* One person did not answer

** Two persons did not answer

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared.

The expatriates considered that their work tools in Brazil were almost the same as back home, but the work rhythm was most of the time more intense than in their home countries.

They considered the work of the local employees to be of good quality (Table 5.2).

Table 5.4. Work satisfaction

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- Satisfaction with					
a) work					
Satisfied	75	50	78	68	73 (n=52)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17	33	12	26	18 (n=13)
Dissatisfied	8	17	10	6	9 (n= 6)
b) salary					
Satisfied	74	50	75	68	72 (n=51)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	21	33	18	29	22 (n=16)
Dissatisfied	5	17	7	3	6 (n= 4)
c) the way of administration of their unit					
Satisfied	41	33	30	55	41 (n=29)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	25	34	28	23	25 (n=18)
Dissatisfied	34	33	42	22	34 (n=24)
d) the way of administration in the Brazilian subsidiary as a whole					
Satisfied	15	-	15	13	14 (n=10)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	29	67	28	39	32 (n=23)
Dissatisfied	56	33	57	48	54 (n=38)
		Badly %	Neither badly nor well %		Well %
Satisfaction		49	38		13

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared.

Table 5.5. Decision making process

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
a) The decisions in their workplace were made based on correct information					
Agreed	49	50	42	58	49 (n=35)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	28	17	28	26	27 (n=19)
Disagreed	23	33	30	16	24 (n=17)
b) They could cancel or change the decisions that failed					
Agreed	63	66	64	61	63 (n=45)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	20	17	18	23	20 (n=14)
Disagreed	17	17	18	16	17 (n=12)
c) When they made a decision all the parties involved were represented					
Agreed	32	33	30	36	32 (n=23)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	26	34	23	32	27 (n=19)
Disagreed	42	33	47	32	41 (n=29)
d) The decisions made were coherent					
Agreed	43	17	35	48	41 (n=29)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	32	33	38	26	32 (n=23)
Disagreed	25	50	27	26	27 (n=19)
e) The expatriates had the right to give their own opinion in questions related to themselves*					
Agreed	61	67	65	57	61 (n=43)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	17	-	13	20	16 (n=11)
Disagreed	22	33	22	23	23 (n=16)
f) The effects of decisions were followed*					
Agreed	37	17	23	52	36 (n=25)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	36	17	41	26	34 (n=24)
Disagreed	27	66	36	22	30 (n=21)
g) If necessary, it was possible to receive more information about the motives for the decisions made					
Agreed	49	33	38	61	48 (n=34)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	22	50	30	16	24 (n=17)
Disagreed	29	17	32	23	28 (n=20)
		Badly %	Neither badly nor well %		Well %
Decision making process*		62	27		11

* One person did not answer

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared.

Table 5.6. Transparency in the work place

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finish Citi- zens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
Whether there was sufficient flow of information					
a) between different professional groups					
Sufficient	35	-	35	29	33 (n=23)
Neither sufficient nor insufficient	26	17	25	26	25 (n=18)
Insufficient	39	83	40	45	42 (n=30)
b) between supervisors and subordinates					
Sufficient	45	33	46	42	44 (n=31)
Neither sufficient nor insufficient	29	17	27	29	28 (n=20)
Insufficient	26	50	27	29	28 (n=20)
c) between work units					
Sufficient	26	-	22	26	24 (n=17)
Neither sufficient nor insufficient	40	17	38	39	38 (n=27)
Insufficient	34	83	40	35	38 (n=27)
d) between expatriates and locals					
Sufficient	44	-	30	55	41 (n=29)
Neither sufficient nor insufficient	28	33	43	10	28 (n=20)
Insufficient	28	67	27	35	31 (n=22)
		Badly %	Neither badly nor well %		Well %
Transparency		42	43		15

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared.

Table 5.7. Group work

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
Statements about group work					
a) the expatriates' work community was flexible					
Agreed	77	66	83	68	76 (n=54)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	11	17	5	19	11 (n= 8)
Disagreed	12	17	12	13	13 (n= 9)
b) their work community was efficient*					
Agreed	52	33	51	48	50 (n=35)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	33	34	28	39	33 (n=23)
Disagreed	15	33	21	13	17 (n=12)
c) the cooperation between members of the group was good**					
Agreed	71	33	64	74	68 (n=47)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	21	34	21	23	22 (n=15)
Disagreed	8	33	15	3	10 (n= 7)
d) the work division in their group was clear					
Agreed	60	-	55	55	55 (n=39)
Neither agreed nor disagreed	25	50	28	26	27 (n=19)
Disagreed	15	50	17	19	18 (n=13)
		Badly %	Neither badly nor well %		Well %
Group work**		16	42		42

* One person did not answer

** Two persons did not answer

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing men and women in item d ($p = 0.006$).

Table 5.8. Improvements

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
a) how often the respondents were stimulated to try new things*					
Rarely	20	50	27	17	23 (n=16)
Sometimes	33	17	35	27	31 (n=22)
Often	47	33	38	56	46 (n=32)
b) if they made improvements in their way of working continuously*					
Rarely	9	50	12	13	13 (n= 9)
Sometimes	56	50	63	47	56 (n=39)
Often	35	-	25	40	31 (n=22)
		Badly %	Neither badly nor well %		Well %
Improvements*		29	42		29

* One person didn't answer

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing men and women in item b ($p < 0.024$).

Table 5.9. Social support

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- In difficult situations the respondents received help					
a) from their boss					
Rarely	15	50	25	10	18 (n=13)
Sometimes	31	17	28	32	30 (n=21)
Often	54	33	47	58	52 (n=37)
b) from their colleagues					
Rarely	9	17	7	13	10 (n= 7)
Sometimes	25	50	30	22	27 (n=19)
Often	66	33	63	65	63 (n=45)
		Badly %	Neither badly nor well %		Well %
Support		17	39		44

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$).

Table 5.10. Equality

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
Statements about equality at the workplace					
a) There was equality between the different age groups					
Badly	8	33	5	16	10 (n= 7)
Equally	28	34	23	36	28 (n=20)
Well	64	33	72	48	62 (n=44)
b) There was equality between the different professional groups					
Badly	20	33	17	26	21 (n=15)
Equally	26	34	20	35	27 (n=19)
Well	54	33	63	39	52 (n=37)
c) There was equality between expatriates and locals					
Badly	34	66	30	45	37 (n=26)
Equally	37	17	45	23	35 (n=25)
Well	29	17	25	32	28 (n=20)
		Badly %	Neither badly nor well %		Well %
Equality		14	35		51

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$).

Table 5.11. Level of control

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1-How much could the respondents influence the following things in their work?					
a) Monotony and lack of variation*					
Not at all	9	17	8	13	3 (n= 7)
A little	27	50	33	23	36 (n=20)
Much	64	33	59	64	61 (n=43)
b) The quality of their work					
Not at all	2	-	-	3	- (n= 1)
A little	9	33	10	13	13 (n= 8)
Much	89	67	90	84	87 (n=62)
c) The division of work					
Not at all	9	-	5	13	- (n= 6)
A little	31	67	25	45	42 (n=24)
Much	60	33	70	42	58 (n=41)
d) The quantity of work					
Not at all	37	17	40	29	- (n=25)
A little	31	66	33	36	69 (n=24)
Much	32	17	27	35	31 (n=22)
e) The rhythm of work**					
Not at all	24	33	28	20	1 (n=17)
A little	17	34	15	23	42 (n=13)
Much	59	33	57	57	57 (n=39)
f) Things related to the work place in general **					
Not at all	23	20	18	29	3 (n=16)
A little	39	60	42	39	61 (n=28)
Much	38	20	40	32	36 (n=25)
2- How much did the respondents need to exchange ideas in order to do their work?*					
Rarely	6	-	28	13	6 (n= 4)
Sometimes	27	33	44	26	27 (n=19)
Often	67	67	28	61	67 (n=47)
		Badly %	Neither badly nor well %		Well %
Level of control		11	56		33

* One person did not answer

** Two persons did not answer

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing men and women in item f ($p < 0.004$).

Table 5.12. Feed-back

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finish Citi- zens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
About respondents' feed-back getting					
a) from their superior*					
Rarely	31	33	36	26	9 (n=22)
A little	36	50	41	32	60 (n=26)
Much	33	17	23	42	31 (n=22)
b) from their colleagues					
Rarely	36	33	42	26	10 (n=25)
A little	32	34	28	39	58 (n=23)
Much	32	33	30	35	32 (n=23)
c) from their clients (if they had clients) ¹					
Rarely	26	75	33	23	5 (n=17)
A little	36	25	27	46	59 (n=21)
Much	38	-	40	31	36 (n=21)

* One person did not answer

¹ In this item there were 59 participants.

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except, when comparing Finnish and other citizens in item c ($p = 0.025$).

About half of the participants knew only a little or nothing about Brazil before moving there. Most had looked for information about Brazil for two or three months in advance; only one person had looked for information for more than six months before moving there. The principal sources of information were other expatriate employees and the Internet (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. Expatriate employees' level of information about Brazil before moving

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- Knowledge about Brazil before moving?*					
Much	31	17	26	35	30 (n=21)
Neither much nor little	17	33	26	10	19 (n=13)
Little	52	50	48	55	51 (n=36)
2- If they knew about Brazil before moving how did they learn it? ¹					
Through a friend	15	17	15	15	15 (n=11)
Through books and newspapers	38	50	38	41	39 (n=28)
On a work trip	31	50	40	22	33 (n=23)
On a tourist trip	8	17	8	11	9 (n= 6)
Travelling to Brazil in order to see the country, because they had the opportunity of an assignment there	16	-	15	15	15 (n=11)
3- How long before moving did they start to look for information about Brazil?					
2 months or less	50	33	39	41	48 (n=34)
3-4 months	32	50	43	41	34 (n=24)
5-6 months	18	17	18	18	18 (n=13)
4- To learn more about Brazil before moving there ¹ they					
asked for information from the company	56	50	58	52	55 (n=39)
participated in courses for expatriates in the company	22	-	18	24	20 (n=14)
discussed with other expatriates	68	67	68	69	68 (n=48)
searched for information on internet	62	67	55	72	62 (n=44)

* One person did not answer

¹ In these questions the expatriate employees could choose more than one alternative

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$).

Usually, the respondents were earning more in Brazil than in the homeland, but a better salary did not seem to be the most important reason for moving. Rather, the biggest sources of motivation seemed to be life experience and professional challenge, followed by cultural interest in going to Brazil (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2. Expatriate employees' sources of motivations for moving to Brazil

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- How strong were the factors as motivation to move?					
a) Professional challenge					
Not at all	3	-	2	3	3 (n= 2)
A little	12	50	15	16	15 (n=11)
Much	85	50	83	81	82 (n=58)
b) Challenge/ experience in their lives					
Not at all	2	17	2	3	3 (n= 2)
A little	12	-	8	17	11 (n= 8)
Much	86	83	90	80	86 (n=61)
c) Better salary/promotion					
Not at all	5	17	7	3	6 (n= 4)
A little	52	66	51	58	53 (n=38)
Much	43	17	42	39	41 (n=29)
d) Cultural interest					
Not at all	5	-	2	6	4 (n= 3)
A little	28	-	36	13	26 (n=18)
Much	67	100	62	81	70 (n=50)
e) Opportunity to participate in the development of another country					
Not at all	14	-	17	7	13 (n= 9)
A little	53	33	61	40	51 (n=36)
Much	33	67	22	53	49 (n=35)

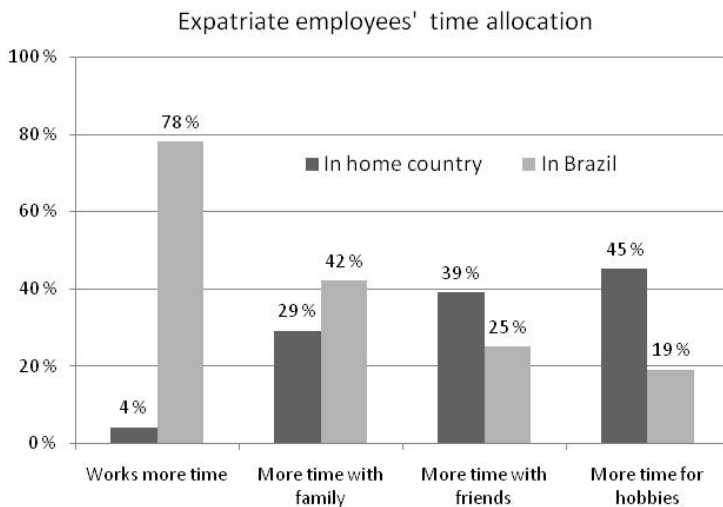
In these questions the expatriate employees could choose more than one alternative

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing Finnish and other citizens in item f ($p = 0.014$).

Adjustment to working and living in Brazil

A few of the expatriate employees spoke Portuguese already on their arrival in Brazil, and almost all of them learned it during their stay.

Most of them were well adapted to living and working in Brazil and satisfied with their housing. They were spending more time with family and less time with hobbies than at home (Figure 2). Even so, more than half considered that they had many friends in Brazil.

**Figure 2.** Expatriate employees' time allocation

Spouses

Most of the expatriates' spouses were young women with university level education and language skills. More than a half of them were European. Brazilian was the second most common nationality of the spouses (25%) (Tables 9.1 and 9.2).

Very few were unhappy, unable to adapt and wanting to move back home as soon as possible (Table 7).

Table 7. Adaptation to working and living in Brazil

	Men N=64 %	Women N=7 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- Speaking Portuguese **					
No	17	-	15	17	16 (n=12)
Yes, spoke already when arrived	14	17	15	13	14 (n=49)
Yes, learned it in Brazil	69	83	70	70	70 (n=10)
2- Living in Brazil					
Alone	22	67	28	23	25 (n=18)
Together with spouse	18	33	20	19	20 (n=14)
Together with spouse and children	55	-	45	58	51 (n=36)
Together with a spouse that they met during the assignment	5	-	7	-	4 (n= 3)
3- Feeling of happiness in Brazil?					
Happy	89	83	85	94	89 (n=63)
Neither happy nor unhappy	9	17	15	3	10 (n= 7)
Unhappy	2	-	-	3	1 (n= 1)
4- Adaptation to life and work in Brazil					
Well adapted	86	100	85	90	87 (n=62)
Neither well nor badly adapted	11	-	15	3	10 (n= 7)
Badly adapted	3	-	-	7	3 (n= 2)
5- Number of bedrooms in Brazilian house/apartment ¹					
1-2 bedrooms	13	33	20	10	15 (n=11)
3-4	75	67	72	77	74 (n=52)
More than four	12	-	8	13	11 (n= 8)
6- Satisfaction with housing*					
Satisfied	89	100	87	94	90 (n=63)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	-	10	7	9 (n= 6)
Dissatisfied	2	-	3	-	1 (n= 1)
7- Satisfaction with location of housing*					
Satisfied	95	100	95	97	96 (n=67)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	-	5	3	4 (n= 3)
Dissatisfied	-	-	-	-	-
8- Number of friends*					
Many friends	55	17	54	48	51 (n=36)
Few friends	42	83	44	48	46 (n=32)
None at all	3	-	2	4	3 (n= 2)
9- Nationality of friends**					
Most friends foreigners	57	33	68	39	55 (n=38)
Same amount of foreign and Brazilian friends	30	34	21	42	30 (n=21)
More Brazilian friends	13	33	11	19	15 (n= 10)
10- Communication with homeland					
More than once a week	54	33	58	45	52 (n=37)
Once a week	26	34	30	23	27 (n=19)
Less than once a week ²	20	33	12	32	21 (n= 15)
11- Where to spend vacations* ³					
In home country	73	17	85	47	69 (n=48)
In Brazil	50	83	48	60	53 (n=37)
In some other countries	17	33	20	17	19 (n=13)
12- If possible to freely choose where to live they					
Would go back to their own country at once	3	-	3	3	3 (n=10)
Would stay in Brazil until the end of their assignment and then leave for home	21	66	27	23	25 (n=10)
Would stay in Brazil after the end of their assignment	28	17	22	32	27 (n=10)
Would go to some other country at the end of the assignment	48	17	48	42	45 (n=10)

* One person did not answer

** Two persons did not answer

¹ In this item there were 66 participants.

² Among them one communicated less often than once a month

³ In this item, it was possible to choose more than one answer

▫ Statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing men and women in items 2 ($p = 0.033$) and 11 ($p = 0.012$) and when comparing Finnish and other citizens in items 9 ($p = 0.018$), 11 ($p = 0.002$) and 12 ($p = 0.033$).

Adjustment of the expatriate employees' spouses

More than a half of the expatriates' spouses were not employed themselves (see Table 8). Most of the spouses spoke Portuguese at the time of answering the questionnaire. Almost all of them had learned the language during their present stay in Brazil; excluding Brazilian spouses, only one spoke Portuguese before moving to Brazil.

Table 8. Sociodemographic information about the expatriate employees' spouses

	Women N=54 %	Finnish Citizens N=30 %	Other Citizenship N=26 %	Altogether N=56 %
1- Age				
20-29	15	13	15	14 (n= 8)
30-39	46	43	54	48 (n=27)
40-49	28	27	27	27 (n= 15)
50-59	7	10	4	7 (n= 4)
60 or more	4	7	-	4 (n= 2)
2- Gender				
Male	-	3	4	4 (n= 3)
Female	100	97	96	96 (n=53)
3- Level of education				
Primary school	4	7	-	4 (n= 2)
High school	22	23	19	21 (n=12)
University	72	67	81	73 (n=41)
Ph D	2	3	-	2 (n= 1)
4- Spouses' nationality				
Finnish	33	57	8	34 (n=19)
Brazilian	26	33	15	25 (n=14)
Other ¹	41	10	77	41 (n=23)
5- Length of relationship*				
0-6 years	34	30	44	34 (n=19)
7-13 years	32	33	28	33 (n=18)
14 or more	34	37	28	33 (n=18)
6- Employment status of spouse***				
Working	21	33	8	21 (n=11)
On temporary leave	16	23	8	15 (n= 8)
On maternity leave	10	11	8	9 (n= 5)
Unemployed	53	33	76	55 (n=29)

* One did not answer

***Three did not answer

◊Among the spouses of the respondents two were men.

¹ Brazilian, Swedish, French, British, Indian, Italian, Danish, Argentine, Czech, German, Swiss, Philippine, Russian, and Thai.

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing Finnish and other citizens in the items 4 ($p < 0.001$) and item 7 ($p = 0.025$).

More than a half of the expatriate spouses spoke three or four languages, and some spoke even five or more.

Most of the expatriate employees considered their spouses to be happy and well adapted in Brazil. They thought their spouses had managed to solve the practical life demands and were satisfied with their housing. More than a half of them considered that the spouses had many friends there.

Approximately 10% of the expatriates thought that their spouses were unhappy and would like to move back home right away if possible. The relationship between the expatriate employee and his/her partner changed in a negative way during expatriation for one tenth (Table 9).

Table 9. Expatriate employees' evaluation of their spouses' adjustment to Brazil

	Men N=45 %	Finnish Citizens N=24 %	Other Citizenship N=23 %	Altogether N=47 %
1- Speaking ¹ Portuguese				
Does not speak it	18	17	19	18 (n=10)
Spoke already when arrived	28	33	19	27 (n=15)
Learned it in Brazil	54	50	62	55 (n=31)
2- How happy was the spouse in Brazil?				
Happy	72	76	69	72 (n=34)
Neither happy nor unhappy	19	16	22	19 (n= 9)
Unhappy	9	8	9	8 (n= 4)
3- The spouse's experience in Brazil was*				
Better than expected	48	61	31	46 (n=21)
As expected	41	35	52	43 (n=20)
Worse than expected	11	4	17	11 (n= 5)
4- The spouse was				
Well adapted in Brazil	71	79	65	72 (n=33)
Acceptably adapted	20	17	22	19 (n= 9)
Poorly adapted	9	4	13	9 (n= 4)
5- Satisfaction with housing*				
Satisfied	85	88	82	86 (n=40)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	4	9	6 (n= 3)
Dissatisfied	9	8	9	8 (n= 4)
6- Satisfaction with location of housing*				
Considered satisfied	96	100	91	96 (n=45)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	-	9	4 (n= 2)
Considered dissatisfied	-	-	-	-
7- Satisfaction with the length of their work day*				
Satisfied	24	28	22	25 (n=11)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	26	16	35	25 (n=11)
Dissatisfied	50	56	43	50 (n=24)
8- Number of spouse's friends				
Many friends	57	60	52	56 (n=27)
A few friends	43	40	48	44 (n=20)
None at all	-	-	-	-
9- Nationality of friends				
Most friends foreigners	61	68	48	58 (n=28)
Equally foreign and Brazilian friends	22	16	35	25 (n=12)
Most friends Brazilian	17	16	17	17 (n= 7)
10- Communication with homeland*				
More than once a week	45	46	50	48 (n=21)
Once a week	25	25	23	24 (n=11)
Less than once a week ²	30	29	27	28 (n=13)
11- If free to choose, what would your spouse do?				
Return to his/her home country at once	13	12	13	13 (n= 6)
Stay in Brazil until the end of the assignment and then leave for home	31			33 (n=15)
Stay in Brazil after the end of the assignment	26	36	30	
Go to some other country at the end of the assignment	24	24	27	25 (n=12)
12- The spouse has solved the practical life demands in Brazil**				
alone	60	71	53	62 (n=28)
with the expatriate employee's help	21	21	20	20 (n= 9)
with the help of a maid	5	-	9	4 (n= 2)
with help from friends	9	8	9	10 (n= 4)
has not been able to solve the practical life demands	5	-	9	4 (n= 2)
13- The spouse has called the employee to complain				
Often	7	-	14	6 (n= 3)
sometimes	20	20	18	19 (n= 9)
rarely	58	72	45	60 (n=27)
never	15	8	23	15 (n= 7)
14- Had to stay home or leave early from work to help to solve family problems*				
Often	2	4	-	-
rarely	80	76	78	79 (n=36)
never	18	20	22	21 (n=10)
15- Expatriate employees considered that the relationship with spouse during the time in Brazil*				
changed in a positive way	40	38	39	39 (n=18)
did not change	24	29	22	26 (n=12)
changed, but neither in a positive nor in a negative way	24	29	22	24 (n=11)
changed in a negative way	12	4	17	11 (n= 5)

* One person did not answer

** Two persons did not answer

♠ Among the married respondents two were women.

¹ In this item, the participants were all the spouses (n=56), not just the ones living in Brazil.

² Two communicated less often than once a month

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$) except when comparing Finnish and other citizens in item 3 ($p = 0.042$).

Table 10. Expatriate employees' view of their children's adjustment to Brazil

	Men N=36 %	Finnish Citizens N=18 %	Other Citizens N=18 %	Altogether N=36 %
1- How were the children in Brazil**?				
Happy	84	83	84	84 (n=29)
Neither happy nor unhappy	11	17	5	11 (n=3)
Unhappy	5	-	11	5 (n=2)
2- The children's experience in Brazil was***				
better than expected	52	53	50	52 (n=16)
as expected	42	47	38	42 (n=13)
worse than expected	6	-	12	6 (n= 2)
3- Their children were***				
well adapted in Brazil	88	94	82	88 (n=28)
acceptably adapted	9	6	12	9 (n= 2)
Poorly adapted	3	-	6	3 (n= 1)
4- Number of children's friends **				
many friends	44	53	35	48 (n=15)
a few friends	41	35	47	36 (n=11)
none at all	15	12	18	16 (n= 5)
5- Nationality of children's friends*				
mainly foreign friends	40	47	33	44 (n=12)
equally foreign and Brazilian friends	27	20	34	30 (n= 8)
most friends Brazilian	33	33	33	26 (n= 7)
6- If free to choose, what would your children do ¹ ?				
Go to their own home country at once	22	13	31	19 (n= 5)
Stay in Brazil until the end of the assignment and then leave for home	25	33	15	27 (n= 7)
Stay in Brazil after the end of the assignment	39	47	31	39 (n=10)
Go to some other country at the end of the assignment	14	7	23	15 (n= 4)
7- Expatriate employees considered that the relationship with their children during the time in Brazil***				
changed in a positive way	42	44	41	42 (n=13)
did not change	46	37	53	46 (n=14)
changed but neither in a positive nor in a negative way	12	19	6	12 (n= 4)
Changed in a negative way	-	-	-	-
8- Were their children doing better or worse at school compared to the time before moving to Brazil? ²				
Better than before	32	25	39	32 (n= 8)
More or less the same	52	58	46	52 (n=13)
Worse than before	16	17	15	16 (n= 4)

* One person did not answer

** Two persons did not answer

*** Three persons did not answer

¹ 28 respondents

² 25 respondents

Adjustment of children

Most of the expatriate employees had children (85%, n=48). Of those with children, 33% had one child, 39% two children, while the rest had three or more.

Altogether, the expatriate employees had 46 children. From those, 36 were living with their parents in Brazil. Several of the children were born in Brazil during the present assignment. The expatriates' children's age (including the ones that lived abroad) varied from 0 to 43 years.

Of all the children of school age, only one had already attended an international school during expatriation.

Half of the expatriates reported that their children were happy in Brazil and that their children's experience in Brazil was better than they had expected. Most of the expatriates considered that their children had many friends.

Most children were well adapted. Five of 35 expatriate employees considered that their children would choose to go back to their own country if that were possible, while four thought their children were doing worse in school than before. Two considered that their children were unhappy in Brazil, and one considered that they had not adapted to the new environment. All in all, about 10% of respondents noticed some signs of lacking adaptation in their children (Table 10).

Considerations of health and health care in Brazil

Most of the expatriate employees and their family members did not suffer from any chronic disease. They used medical services in Brazil for temporary ailments and were satisfied with the services they received.

Half of the expatriate employees felt as healthy as before, and among the rest, one quarter felt somewhat better and one quarter somewhat worse. The same was true for their families.

There was no clear change in the overall consumption of alcohol (Table 11).

Table 11. Questions related to expatriate employees' and their families' health

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- Do you have some chronic disease?					
No	89	67	80	97	87 (n=62)
Yes	11	33	20	3	13 (n= 9)
2- Does somebody in your family have some chronic disease? ^o					
No	83	100	79	90	84 (n=54)
Yes	17	-	21	10	16 (n=10)
3- How healthy do you feel compared to the time before you arrived in Brazil?					
Healthier than before	20	50	17	29	23 (n=16)
More or less the same	52	50	61	42	52 (n=37)
Less healthy than before	28	-	22	29	25 (n=18)
4- How healthy are your family members now compared to the time when they arrived in Brazil? ¹					
Healthier than before	19	-	12	24	18 (n= 9)
More or less the same	62	67	73	52	63 (n=32)
Less healthy than before	19	33	15	24	19 (n=10)
5- How much alcohol do you drink now compared to the time before you arrived in Brazil? [*]					
More than before	31	-	28	29	29 (n=20)
More or less the same	41	33	44	36	40 (n=28)
Less than before	28	67	28	35	31 (n=22)
6- How much alcohol do your family members drink compared to the time before they arrived in Brazil? ²					
More than before	17	-	24	9	17 (n= 9)
More or less the same	63	50	68	56	63 (n=36)
Less than before	20	50	8	35	20 (n=11)
7- Have they used medical services in Brazil?					
No	14	17	15	13	14 (n=10)
Yes	86	83	85	87	86 (n=61)
8- How satisfied were they with medical services there? ³					
Satisfied	78	100	91	65	80 (n=48)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	18	-	9	27	17 (n= 10)
Dissatisfied	4	-	-	8	3 (n= 2)

* One person did not answer

^o 64 respondents

¹ 51 respondents

² 48 respondents

³ 60 respondents

No statistically significant differences were found between the groups compared ($p < 0.05$).

Considerations of mental health

Most of the expatriate employees considered their mental health to be similar to how it was before moving. Those who reported changes in their mental health referred to factors presented in Table 12.1.

As to specific symptoms, a quarter of the expatriate employees reported headache and feeling of nervousness, tenseness or worry, and a tenth reported that they were sleeping badly. Twenty percent of the employees were feeling easily tired; 8% were tired all the time.

Of expatriate employees with other than Finnish citizenship, a quarter answered they had lost interest in things (Table 12.2).

Table 12.1. Reasons presented by the expatriate employees for positive or negative effects on their mental health¹, answering an open question in the form

Positive effect N=27	Negative effect ¹ N=31
More time for ourselves because we have a maid	Break-up with my boyfriend
The climate is good	Our family was separated
The warm weather is good for the spouse	Wife got health problems
Less stress, more healthier	Life hard, less friends
More professional development	More stress
Weight loss	Much more stress
More time for each other	Son rejected by schoolmates
New incentives	Stress due to risk of violence
Quite happy here	Too much stress at work
Better social level	Wife feels unsafe
	Wife stressed and irritated

¹ Of 52 respondents 42% said that expatriation had had no any effect either on their mental health or on any family member's mental health.

Table 12.2. SRQ symptoms frequency

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
1- Do you often have headaches?					
No	86	67	88	81	85 (n=60)
Yes	14	33	12	19	15 (n=11)
2- Is your appetite poor?					
No	99	83	95	100	97 (n=69)
Yes	1	17	5	-	3 (n=2)
3- Do you sleep badly?					
No	91	67	88	90	89 (n=63)
Yes	9	33	12	10	11 (n=8)
4- Are you easily frightened?					
No	99	100	100	97	99 (n=70)
Yes	1	-	-	3	1 (n= 1)
5- Do your hands shake?					
No	99	100	100	97	99 (n=70)
Yes	1	-	-	3	1 (n= 1)
6- Do you feel nervous, tense or worried?					
No	86	83	80	94	86 (n=61)
Yes	14	17	20	6	14 (n=10)
7- Is your digestion poor?					
No	92	100	93	94	93 (n=66)
Yes	8	-	7	6	7 (n= 5)
8- Do you have trouble thinking clearly?					
No	99	67	97	94	96 (n=68)
Yes	1	33	3	6	4 (n=3)
9- Do you feel unhappy?					
No	97	83	95	97	96 (n=68)
Yes	3	17	5	3	4 (n= 3)
10- Do you cry more than usual?					
No	99	83	100	94	97 (n=69)
Yes	1	17	-	6	3 (n= 2)
11- Do you find it difficult to enjoy your daily activities?					
No	94	83	93	94	93 (n=66)
Yes	6	17	7	6	7 (n= 5)
12- Do you find it difficult to make decisions?					
No	99	100	100	97	99 (n=70)
Yes	1	-	-	3	1 (n= 1)
13- Is your daily work suffering?					
No	97	67	95	94	94 (n=67)
Yes	3	33	5	6	6 (n=4)
14- Are you unable to play a useful part in life?					
No	97	100	100	94	97 (n=69)
Yes	3	-	-	6	3 (n= 2)
15- Have you lost interest in things?					
No	92	100	100	84	93 (n=66)
Yes	8	-	-	16	7 (n= 5)
16- Do you feel that you are a worthless person?					
No	100	100	100	100	100 (n=71)
Yes	-	-	-	-	-
17- Has the thought of ending your life been on your mind?					
No	100	100	100	100	100 (n=71)
Yes	-	-	-	-	-
18- Do you feel tired all the time?					
No	82	83	80	84	82 (n=58)
Yes	18	17	20	16	18 (n=13)
19- Do you have uncomfortable feelings in your stomach?					
No	92	100	95	90	93 (n=66)
Yes	8	-	5	10	7 (n= 5)
20- Are you easily tired?					
No	82	50	83	74	79 (n=56)
Yes	18	50	17	26	21 (n=15)

Symptomatic expatriate employees according to SRQ-20

On analysing the questionnaire results, based on a cut-off point of 5 for men and 6 for women, seven of the respondents had ‘minor psychiatric disorders’ (5 men and 2 women). With a stricter cut-off point of 7, four employees belonged to the “symptomatic group” (three men and one woman) (Table 13).

Table 13. Expatriate employees reporting mental symptoms in the SRQ-questionnaire by gender and citizenship

	Men N=65 %	Women N=6 %	Finnish Citizens N=40 %	Other Citizenship N=31 %	Altogether N=71 %
Symptomatic expatriate employees with cut-off point of 5 for men and 6 for women	8	33	10	10	10
Symptomatic expatriate employees with cut-off point of 7 for both genders	5	17	2	10	6

6.2. QUALITATIVE STUDY

The purpose of using interviews was to deepen the understanding obtained from the questionnaire study. Analysing the material a body was built from the recurrent themes. Both the recurrent ideas related to this body and the particular ones were described in detail.

These central themes were presented in blocks.

The presentation’s sequence follows as much as possible the sequence of the interviews’ material, trying to emphasise the themes that received more attention by the interviewed.

Thus the themes presented in the expatriate employees’ and their spouses’ results aren’t mandatorily the same and don’t follow the same sequence.

6.2.1. Expatriate employees

These results compose the “Expatriate employees’ mental health” field represented by a solid line rectangle in the Figure 1 that outlines how the phenomenon was approached through triangulation (see Figure 1).

From the expatriate employees’ material, work emerges immediately and with great emphasis. They speak proudly about their challenging work, almost as if they were “conquerors”. The work is the biggest thing and the whole adjustment process takes place inside the work. After that, with much less emphasis emerged the other themes.

6.2.1.1. Expatriation

6.2.1.1.1. *The preparation phase*

According to the interview answers, the main reasons for expatriation were the good salary and other benefits, the desire to explore new places and cultures and to have new challenges in life. In many interviews, the expatriates spoke about expatriation as a prize or fulfilment of a dream.

“There are so many different reasons for expatriation. It isn’t always money”.

“We looked for expatriation, it is an adventure.”

“This expatriation wasn’t a fever, but it was for a long time a kind of dream to move to South America again.”

“Me and my wife already have ‘our careers behind us’, so by doing this we could see something else...”

“You have someone in your home country that thinks: ‘This is a nice person, let’s send him abroad.”

Sometimes the opportunity of expatriation came unexpectedly; the expatriate was invited to take up the job abroad; it could be looked upon as a prize. Sometimes they looked actively for expatriation and could be waiting a long time for the opportunity. However, everyone stated that expatriation was not an obligation.

“Nobody is forcing me.”

“Is there anyone here who has been forced to come?”

Concerning the desire to move abroad, there are differences between the countries, as some are more desirable than others. Factors such as one’s own personality, geographic proximity to the home country, the country’s image, the phase of life, and whether the employee is moving alone or with his/her family are related to the acceptance of going abroad.

“Which kinds of people want to go to Europe, which kinds of people would like to go to the US, such people you couldn’t even imagine going to the US. I think that these groups are a little bit different. The group that you meet here is different from the group that you would meet in Europe, Asia, etc...”

“I wanted just this place even though I had other options. I had decided, even without having ever travelled here, that I would like Brazil.”

“If I could expect to get the same salary and the same agreement conditions, I would prefer (name of another country) rather than to stay in Rio, because it is far closer to home.”

“What we hear about a country through the press, through newspapers, is totally different from what you do, but it is the image you have of the country.”

“I think that the importance of work depends a lot on your age. It is like, in this phase of your life, what are the important things? If work is the priority you can move to other countries (...).”

“Alone, I could go to Asia, but with children and a wife I wouldn't consider any difficult place.”

Once the agreement is a reality, the length of the agreement seems to be an important question for the expatriate employee. Especially if he/she has a family, the length of assignment influences many practical aspects of life already before expatriation. It seems to be a determinant also for the definition of the expatriates' attitude in facing many aspects of life during expatriation.

“If you go on a one-year agreement, you can think that for one year I can stand it. If you think I'm here for three years, maybe it is better to try to think through things carefully, for three years or longer...”

“At least for me it is mentally difficult. If it is a one-year agreement, even if you know that it can change into a two- or three-year agreement you aren't completely sure about it. The length of the agreement influences our well being, at least for me. I don't know how to live without knowing what kind of agreement I have.”

“If you have to think of all the things you have to arrange when you move somewhere, to move back after just one year...If you think from the beginning that the agreement is just for one year or that you have just one more year and then you don't move at the end of this year you easily lose this year.”

Moving together is nowadays a choice as usually both members of a couple are in working life. Because of this, the decision to go abroad often includes a spouse's career sacrifice.

“In Finland usually both adults work. It is like my boyfriend and me. Both had good work places. If you go abroad one has to give up of a job.”

Sometimes the work position abroad opens at a short notice, and work should start immediately. In this situation, the expatriate employee often moves before the family. As the work cannot wait, this is the best option for the family in order to arrange the necessary things in the home country before leaving.

“My agreement came fast. My family arrived here eight months later. It was for us the most difficult time. It was the first time for all of us.”

“When I came as an expatriate to work here in Brazil my wife took care of the selling of the house, selling the cars, selling everything, arranging everything.”

Sometimes the family decides to be separated during the expatriation period. Usually this is related to dual career development needs.

“She would lose her job and she would lose part of her retirement pension.”

When the family is separated during expatriation the employee usually has a certain amount of flight tickets covered by the enterprise to provide the family with the possibility of being together.

“I’ve been there almost monthly, so we meet each other all the time. And we communicate by internet.”

Reasons for expatriation were the good salary and other benefits, the desire to explore new places and cultures, to have new challenges in life or fulfilment of a dream. Sometimes the opportunity of expatriation came unexpectedly. However expatriation was not an obligation.

Some host countries seems to be more desirable than others. The length of the agreement seems to be an important question for the expatriate employee.

The decision of moving abroad often means sacrificing the spouse’s career. Thus, because of dual career development ambitions, sometimes the family decides to be separated during the expatriation period.

6.2.1.1.2. Working abroad

During expatriation the expatriate employee’s life turns to work.

“I don’t have friends or lots of people to talk with here. This is certainly very good for the enterprise, because work becomes the biggest thing in life.”

“It’s tough work, but what can I say? 14 – 16 hours or more a day, sometimes the weekends. My family is not here all the time so I have the possibility to travel and do the work.”

This seems to be related not just to diminution of social life, as pointed out by expatriate employees above, but also to the need to get everything done in the beginning. This situation is clear in project expatriate employees’ comments, due to their responsibility of building a factory, setting up radio base stations or other very concrete projects. But it seems to be true for each expatriate, especially when the business is in the initial phase.

“In the beginning it was good that I lived close. I could come during the night or anytime.”

“In the beginning I had the kind of work that I did all the time and was never completed. I had long days building.”

“When I started as an expatriate, I was surprised about how hard work it was as we had to manage to make a lot happen in two years.”

The different phases of the subsidiary development influence the nature of the work required from the expatriate employees and also the intensity. There seems to be a kind of natural history of expatriation in these enterprises, requiring lots of expatriate employees in the beginning with a subsequent decrease. A small number is needed all along the years. This number and the kind of assignment vary between enterprises. This process will be presented in detail when the final period of expatriates' personal assignments is covered.

"We have an official work time of 40 hours a week. But we should anyway work as much as needed."

"When we move here we have this kind of agreement that extra work is included."

Working hard the expatriate employees felt recognized, they had a good salary and other benefits. While abroad, they felt they had a special value.

"If you imagine what kind of salary we receive, including salary, house and car ..."

"It is an infantile thing for sure but it comes to my mind all the time, the thought that I'm powerful."

"Probably I am an expat in this country because I have a kind of special value addition."

On one hand, they feel that they have power, a feeling that seems to be related to their better economic situation in Brazil compared to that in their home country, but on the other hand, they were given a great deal of responsibility by the company to make things happen in the host country and to decide themselves how to execute their tasks. They feel they are between the parental organisation and their subordinates.

"I think that the pressure is greater for expatriates. I think that more is expected of you. You are expected to do more hours, expected to think in troubles and order. That is why we are here."

"Because at the end of the day the responsibility is yours."

This condition gives them a higher status during expatriation. It may be uncomfortable as they have to deal with pressures from the organization they left and difficulties in task execution related to many unknown factors due to local conditions including cultural differences.

"It is not just a structural pressure. Sometimes there is also organisational pressure, you have work pressures, you have traditional work, you have to do a proper working day, you also have to work in the evenings, and you also have to travel a hundred times...May be you are in that spirit that you can't disappoint the people around, but with all these pressures growing, growing, and growing, you get too much pressure, you break or you are sick, or then you

are in a kind of depressive mood for a while, maybe for one day or two days, or whatever the time, you are really low.”

“In the beginning it was complicated. We didn’t even have e-mail. Now in this respect, it has become easier.”

“Small things that sometimes can be very destructive to your relationship with your colleagues. You just don’t do something intentionally, but the result is catastrophic. You know, you just got that feeling that it was something not related to the work, it was unintentional, but even so the results are catastrophic.”

As a result, the work is more challenging, more dynamic and the results more concrete. The obstacles to work realization, related to the structural lacks or other short comings make the expatriates need creativity in order to carry out their tasks. The simplicity of the subsidiary organization provides the expatriate employee with a wider vision of the enterprise’s activities. As a result they feel that their work very concretely contributes to the enterprise and thus experience an additional pleasure in work. This is very explicit when they describe work abroad in contrast to work in the home country.

“My work position here is similar to the one that I had before. But here we have to do everything. There the office was very big and we had so many people that one person did just one thing. Here it is mandatory to do everything.”

“Portuguese was very difficult in the beginning and it still is. I had a local man, who was my right hand, the only one who spoke English. This factory, we built it. It was ready on (day, month, year).”

“Even if you are in some defined function when you are abroad, your work is much wider, you have a wider picture of things in the enterprise than when you are at home. There you can have a very good comprehension about your work function, but you don’t know too much of what happens in the end.”

“In the home country all the systems are so well developed that you don’t need to do much. You just go there and...”

“Here everything is much more dynamic, things need to be developed, that is what I like...”

“Because in the home country you are one in a thousand. Here it is a completely different thing. You are much more independent.”

“I like being here so much. I’m so enthusiastic in doing my work, because in my home country, you stay in your box, it is always the same. If you do or don’t do your work, there are other similar employees doing similar work in similar boxes.”

“Here the resources are so few. If you do your work, it reflects relatively fast”.

During expatriation the expatriate employee's life's focus turns to work. By working hard the expatriate employees feel recognized, they have a good salary and other benefits. While abroad, they feel they have a special value.

On the other hand, even feeling powerful, the expatriates feel that they are between the parental organisation and their host country subordinates. They have to deal with pressures from the organization they left and difficulties in task execution related to many unknown factors due to local conditions, including cultural differences.

As a result, the work is more challenging, more dynamic and the results more concrete. The expatriates need creativity in order to carry out their tasks. Thus, they feel that their work very concretely contributes to the enterprise and experience an additional pleasure in work.

6.2.1.1.2.1. WORK ADJUSTMENT

When the expatriate employees start their work abroad they are very motivated. There are lots of things to be done, the work rhythm is intense.

“In the first months the motivation is very high. It is high because you don't start to look at anything else. Everything is exciting.”

“When you start you have more motivation and enthusiasm for everything just because you are starting fresh.”

At this time the expectations and the reality do not meet. Gradually, the expectations start to approach reality and always by this time the expatriates start to become adapted. You may say that adjustment takes place when they start to know how things work. It seems to happen after three to six months abroad.

“After living abroad for a few months you learn it in the hard way and then your expectation levels are reduced. I should not be waiting, I should not be expecting, not have this pressure. That is a sign that you have become adjusted to Rio...After you learn this, your expectation level is there and the things are there. That is how things change.”

In the first months, everything is exciting and the motivation is high, but after that the reality and the expectations come closer.”

“When you start you are new in the business and you are fresh. You don't know the country from before, the job, any customer and then you can feel elated. You really want to win this deal...But then after one year, the same customers, the same mistakes, we are making the same mistakes...”

“I moved here in February and went back to my home country for a while in September. As I knew where I was coming to when coming back from vacation, I knew that here we take care of things in a certain way.

Related to this discrepancy between expectances and reality are the cultural differences, which disturb the communication between expatriate and local employees, and answering for different timing in all kind of areas: material acquisition, work execution, local bureaucracy and laws.

“It is challenging. When you talk about something, everybody understands it in the same way. You don’t have to waste time making people understand. Here, already the question of comprehension is quite challenging.”

“We don’t know which of our actions, uncontrolled actions, unintentional actions may offend local persons unconsciously. We don’t mean any harm, we are not intending to do anything bad, but our actions may offend them.”

“As if you know the legal instruction. You don’t understand procedures, customs, so, these things. When you don’t know how things work in a society it gives you extra stress in your life.”

“It takes time until you find your own routine and your own rhythm; in my opinion, a month or more. For me it takes half a year until I learn the customs...”

Having had an expatriation experience before makes the fall less drastic, as it reduces the expectations in the beginning.

“The first time, there is a lot of learning. But once you have lived as an expatriate, have lived abroad for some years, then you basically get used to those kinds of things.”

“It is all work. I know exactly what it is. So, no surprises for me. I am experienced.”

“When you have been an expatriate you know how to be an expatriate, so you can go anywhere.”

Nearly all the expatriates interviewed said that the first expatriation is the most difficult one, especially because of the discrepancy between expectations and reality.

“It is a little bit different when you are in the first expatriation compared to the second or third. Your attitude develops during the subsequent expatriations compared to the first one.”

“I didn’t find the first expatriation the most difficult one just because it was the first, but it was, anyway, the most difficult.”

To deal with all these factors, expatriate employees emphasized that flexibility should be a desired characteristic of expatriate employees: they should learn how to be flexible.

“I think that you should learn how to be flexible or your routine will be very hard.”

When the expatriate employees start their work abroad they are very motivated.

Usually in the beginning the expectations and the reality do not meet. Gradually, the expectations start to approach reality and always by this time the expatriates start to become adapted.

Having had an expatriation experience before reduces the expectations in the beginning and seems to make the adjustment easier.

6.2.1.1.2.2. WORKING BETWEEN THE ORGANISATION THEY LEFT AND THE SUBSIDIARY ABROAD

The expatriate employees' action field most of the times is somewhere between the organisation they left and the subsidiary employees. They are given some task, in the organisation they left, to be executed abroad. Because of this, the relations with local employees are not always free of conflicts.

"If something was wrong in the home country, they will call you and then you have to solve the issue, together with the locals. You feel that responsibility."

"Whatever happens we push. The reason why we push is because we were sent here to push forward. But this develops a distance from the local employees and that is inconvenient."

It seems that the tension becomes clearer as the enterprise's structure abroad starts to be more consolidated, with more complexity and more employees. By this time the position and even the existence of the expatriate employee starts to be questioned by local employees. In the beginning, the need for expatriates is not questioned, but gradually it starts to become a theme of discussion. Over time, local employees begin to work as expatriate employees' peers, undertaking similar functions of those of the expatriates. The local employees start to argue that they could take over the expatriate employees' positions.

"We aren't as desired here as we were before."

Because of this, the expatriates start to have a need to justify their positions, to explain why they are necessary. It is like a self-affirmation process.

But anyway all the knowledge and experience that the enterprise has, is somewhere else than here. The knowledge needs to come here with someone, as we need it here to use it in practice. If you receive a fax or mail from Finland you may understand it in the wrong way. If you have a Finnish person here you check it in Finnish...

We have similar machines in Finland: To understand how we make this machine and put it to use is the kind of thing that does not necessarily work here.

"The enterprise says that there should be fewer and fewer expatriates. If it reduces the number of expatriates it means that the enterprise doesn't want to be an international company or become internationalized."

“The number of persons that would like to go abroad as expatriates is surprisingly small; those that really would be ready to go.”

It is difficult to say whether these thoughts are a sign that the ending of their agreement is coming closer and the need of replacement by a local is evident, or just a natural point of tension that persists as long as some expatriate employees remain in the enterprises (a kind of consequence of their function, especially when they have been longer or the enterprise becomes older).

“There is prejudice on both sides. Even though this enterprise is Finnish, Brazilians think that they don't need Finnish people here anymore.”

As the expatriate employees' work is performed along with local employees, comparison between work tasks, salary, benefits and other conditions is unavoidable. As the work is done geographically in the same place both expatriates and local employees sometimes forget that the expatriate assignment is by definition different from local assignments because of the expatriation situation itself, and also because of its temporality.

“There are also good locals who work very hard, but don't earn even close to what we do.”

“I think that the most difficult thing is to understand that you are an expatriate because you are working abroad. That you have certain advantages in the enterprise during this time, but that these advantages are temporary.”

Even knowing from the beginning that expatriation is temporary, the replacement time, i.e. the time when a local should take over the expatriate employee's work position, is not free of tension for the expatriate employee, as it signals that the present assignment is ending. The local employees can signal their readiness to take over as they start to assume tasks that belonged to the expatriate employees. For the expatriate this can result in an uncomfortable feeling of not being wanted at the work place.

“When you hire a good local employee to do the job the expatriate did up to that time, you have to dismiss the expatriate and they may have to go back to some small town in Finland.”

“Here I work in a project. When the project finishes work ends.”

“They told us straight: “you are too expensive, we don't need you here anymore, we want you to go as soon as possible.”

They say *“we need you there and there, we need you there and there”*, so people think they are needed. The last thing would be that they are not needed. To be needed is a necessity for people and the company should do what it can to avoid this type of situation.

It seems to be accepted by the expatriates that expatriation is unavoidable in order to expand business. However, there seems to be some controversy in the amount of expatriates needed as to which functions they perform, especially when the enterprise is already established.

“They had expatriates here too, because the only way the company would grow into a completely new organization is to have people transferring both technology and competent knowledge. If you don’t have that the new organization does not develop in the way you want.”

“For sure we need expatriates in many ways, but in what positions and for how long?”

“In my opinion, here we are making the same mistakes we make everywhere. For some positions we should have hired top Brazilian employees. When we want to launch a new enterprise abroad we just send expatriates there.”

The expatriate employees’ action field most of the times is somewhere between the organisation they left and the subsidiary employees. Because of this, the relations with local employees are not always free of conflicts.

It seems that the tension becomes clearer as the enterprise’s structure abroad starts to be more consolidated, with more complexity and more employees. By this time, the position and even the existence of the expatriate employees starts to be questioned by local employees.

Because of this, a kind of self-affirmation process, where the expatriates try to justify to themselves their importance, seems to take place.

6.2.1.1.2.3. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Expatriation is not necessarily positive for career development. It seems that the positive effect was considered true before, but nowadays it can be positive but need not be so, depending on how long the employee stays abroad. It depends on the age, the career phase and the kind of activity of the employee. An expatriation period is no longer a strong differential as this kind of experience has become more common than before.

“The effect of expatriation on your career is not necessarily good.”

“If you are young, this kind of two/three years of expatriation is positive. If you are older, it is more difficult to go back. Usually, you have been doing the kind of work abroad that going back means going to a poorer condition.”

“If I had to go back to work in Finland I don’t know what I could do there. For some years they would like to hire me but nobody would like to hire me just for one year in order that I could then retire.”

“I think that so many people have been abroad, that it is difficult to imagine that they would be there waiting for ‘these wonderful persons’ to put here and there in the good places.”

If the expatriate employees have been abroad for a long time it can become difficult for them to go back to their enterprise in the home country because many changes have

taken place during this period. Changes occur all the time also in the organisation they left; the work unit they left from may no longer exist when they consider returning.

“Nobody is sure if the original department in our home country will still exist when we go back. During the time we have been here many departments have been completely abolished.”

“It happened to one of us that it was impossible to go back to the same job because the work unit in question was extinct. Maybe you have to go to another city when you go back and will need to sell your house.”

“What would scare me is having to go back to work in Finland. If I go to work there my boss will be a man I selected for a work position when I was a boss there. Because many years have passed and the situation has changed. Now I would be the subordinate and he would be the boss.”

Expatriate employees refer to a feeling of isolation in relation to the organization they left. This feeling seems to be stronger in periods of large organizational changes or downsizing. If even in the organisation they left they do not know so well what the changes mean, when they are in a subsidiary abroad, of course they know even less.

“We are in different universes, the employees in Brazil and the employees in the home organisation.

“You don’t have the same responsibilities that you had when you were sent here. You have some other responsibilities, you have another boss, you have to be patient, try to. You develop a distance. It can be difficult to feel that you still have some trust – there was a feeling of trust when we were sent here – people believed that we had to do something here so they sent us here. They put new people in, a new title, new responsibilities. You feel confused.”

“All the ways of knowing general things about the enterprise in the home country are at home. There you are a part of the group and you know everything. Here we have access to information through the intranet of our unit but information about small things that happen in the enterprise doesn’t come here; just big, general things.

“If things are going well in the enterprise it is not a big problem if you don’t have access to information from the organisation you left. But if they are not going well, it is very important.”

A diminution of networking with the organisation they left with time seems to be almost unavoidable. Probably it is related to the fact that after a long time abroad it is difficult to manage a work position in the organisation they left and go back.

“You are out of the group that they can use. You should have your own group to inform you what is happening in HR in your own country.”

Even becoming very experienced abroad is not always an ability that will be directly recognized in the home country. It depends on the work function abroad.

“There aren’t lots of options in my area now. In Europe everything is built already, there is almost nothing new over there. In my home country there are no more such projects.”

“These things that we learned abroad don’t necessarily help in our home country. And nobody even in the head quarters makes a real career development.”

Career development after expatriation does not seem to be a natural consequence of working abroad. Nowadays, there are different kinds of assignments and even continuation of work in the enterprise is not always certain.

“Now it is very good if you are able to find a job”.

The expatriates usually say that when an assignment ends nowadays there is a tendency to not have any work guarantee period in order to find a new position. When they do it is for some months. In almost every interview they say that it would be good to have some time back home to look for a new position. As the end of the assignment comes closer, the expatriates think about these matters more and more often.

“If you have a work place in the home country to continue then you have continuation in the enterprise. If you don’t, depending on when you started to work for the enterprise, you have or don’t have six months to find a job. If you don’t find one you are out. Before you had a work place for sure in the same enterprise from which you came. Now, when the expatriation finishes it is possible that you become unemployed that same day.”

“Everything disturbs the work performance and disturbs you in general. While you need to think about your work continuation you are not doing your work and it makes you feel unsafe.”

When the enterprises underwent extensive organisational changes, expatriate employees were afraid of being dismissed. They speculated about whether their job was safer while abroad, or whether it would be safer to be in the home country. It seemed to them that they could be dismissed at anytime, like any other employee in the enterprise, but they felt that because of their special condition (working abroad, with dependents) the enterprise would not interrupt their assignment so they would be protected until the end of the agreement.

“It is difficult to say if we are safer here or in our home country just now. Because there maybe we would also need to fight for our work place. It can also be that here we are forgotten, and because of that, a little bit safer. But when the agreement ends it is possible that all the free positions are occupied and they will say: ‘there aren’t any jobs.’”

“In theory the agreement can be interrupted before the end, but I’ve understood that in our situation it happens only if it is absolutely mandatory. Because, in our situation, you come here with your family. At least I understood that we would not be the first ones to be dismissed.”

Expatriation is not necessarily positive for career development. Its positive effect seems to depend on the expatriates’ age, career phase, type of activity and the duration of the expatriation. Specially, if the expatriate employees have been abroad for a long time it can become difficult for them to go back to their enterprise in the home country, because many changes have taken place during this period.

Expatriate employees refer to a feeling of isolation in relation to the organization they left. This feeling seems to be stronger in periods of large organizational changes or downsizing. During these periods they speculated about whether their job was safer while abroad, or whether it would be safer to be in the home country.

6.2.1.1.3. Repatriation

When talking about repatriation the expatriate employees’ priority seemed to be the family issues. This is in contrast to when talking about expatriation, when they spoke about own expectations, fulfilment of own dreams. When talking about repatriation, families’ issues, especially spouses’ work situation emerges immediately.

If the expatriate employee has a spouse, going back home is not always simple as most of these families came from countries where husband and wife work. It is not only a question of tradition, but also due to the fact that the contribution of both is necessary to guarantee the families’ income when they are back home. The enterprises often try to compensate for the spouses’ lack of work with better salaries and benefits for the employees working abroad, even though it is not an official policy.

“I think that in Europe, especially Finland, Sweden and Norway, we both need to work for the incomes. We cannot survive with only one income, so both have to work and both have to make a career...”

As long as the spouse has the right to take up her/his work at home again, the expatriate employees refer to a kind of pressure from the spouses to go back home. This “pressure” is linked to the spouse’s ability to maintain her/his position in working life. The longer out of work, the more difficult it is to find a job again. As long as the work continuation is true for the spouse, the time to go back seems to be clear, and the return process is in a way facilitated by this certainty. After that, for most people, the choice of the right time to go back becomes difficult because it demands conciliation of many factors i.e. a work place for the expatriate employee and for his/her spouse, a school for the children and a place to live.

“When you arrive in the new country and see that you can’t find a job for your wife it is quite demotivating. Your life is staying in that country only for some time, maybe for one year, but after that the pressure starts to grow and

your wife is constantly feeling stressed if she has had a good job. My wife was working before we moved to Brazil and after coming here, she says once in a while that she would like to go back and go to work. Sometimes she even says that if you don't work for two or three years you are not able to go back to work anymore."

"In our case, we will go back sooner or later. But it depends on whether I have a job, if my wife wants to go back, if my wife has a job, if there are suitable schools for our children. There are a lot of things affecting our return. It is a big puzzle with many small pieces."

"Sometimes you want to go back but you don't find a job. And sometimes you would get a job but it does not suit you because of other things like your children's school or something".

"If you have children, to come and go is more difficult because they have school, friends and hobbies."

Some people manage a kind of situation where both are working during expatriation but it seems to be exceptional. In these cases maintaining work ability is not a point. This seems to eliminate the pressure to go back home quickly, as expatriation is advantageous for both in terms of work.

"I have a situation that many Finnish people would like to have. I have here the same kind of work that I had in Finland and my wife has here the same kind of work that she had in Finland, and our children are studying in Finland."

Most of the time it seems to be easier to move abroad or to continue as an expatriate employee than to move back to the home country. This difficulty was mentioned more often by those living in a big city than those in a small one.

"Because I think this seems to be difficult, more difficult, to go back than to go out."

"I think that you have to be quite brave and quite strong to go back home, for good."

"Now I'm going back and I'm thinking about what I'm going to do with my housework there. Here we usually have help with the housework and no problem. Going back will be a problem for us because we have changed during these six years abroad. And we'll have to change back again."

"When you are in a foreign country you can always complain about the people, culture, language and so on. But if you have similar problems in your home country, you have to take it, there is no way out."

Even continuing as an expatriate, it seems that the thought of moving back home is still in the mind. Some people have a more or less defined point in time to go back, more or less defined when children reach school age, maternity leave ends, etc., some people do

not. However, even so, they also are thinking about when it is time to go back. It seems to become a more insistent question the longer they live abroad.

“I think that it is related to the kids. Whether they go back to their home country to school, to study in their own language. You can say that the children rule.

“If you go to some other country and have the same attitude of always complaining about everything there is no place in the world where you can be happy.”

When talking about repatriation the expatriate employees’ priority seemed to be the family issues and not own expectations.

If the expatriate employee has a spouse and she/he couldn’t keep her/his job, going back home is not always simple, as most of these families need the contribution of both to guarantee the family’s income.

The longer out of work, the more difficult it is to find a job again. As long as the work continuation is true for the spouse, the time to go back seems to be clear, and the return process is in a way facilitated by this certainty. After that, for most people, the choice of the right time to go back becomes difficult because it demands conciliation of many factors.

It seems to be easier to move abroad or to continue as an expatriate employee than to move back to the home country.

Anyway, even continuing as an expatriate, it seems that the thought of moving back home is still in the expatriate employees’ minds.

6.2.1.1.4. Long-term expatriation

As the period of expatriation gets longer it seems to be increasingly difficult to find the right time to go back home. Probably, this is related to the “big puzzle of repatriation”, where you have to conciliate many factors in order to go back home. As the expatriation time grows longer, the possibility of going back to the same work place usually becomes more remote.

“These things are coming to my mind all the time and I cannot make up my mind. I think that this kind of question arises after staying here for too long. I think that I go through this question every day, but I cannot decide.”

“We can go back any time. We don’t have a work place at home, a house or anything else. But we can also stay here for many years.”

“After five years it starts to be a crucial time (to decide whether to go home or remain abroad ...)”

Accordingly to our results, after moving out a second time, it seems to be easier to continue abroad than to go back home. Expatriation becomes the routine, and going back home would be a new situation to adapt to.

“Maybe you aren’t consciously aware that when you leave it is only a temporary phase in your life and that when you go back you will have another routine ahead, or you understand in theory, but when it comes to practice you experience it as hard. And afterwards you think of going again. When you have once left it is easier to go again another time.”

“The problem is you adapt yourself too much to living abroad. For the majority of the Finnish ex-expatriates it seems to be difficult to adapt to going back to Finland.”

“The move from one foreign country to another represents a much smaller change than from the home country to a foreign country.”

Some people solve this conflict by staying abroad. It is interesting that they consider themselves “expatriates” as if expatriation would be a permanent condition.

“Our role here is just to start things going and then give it over to others. I don’t see any polemic in that. It won’t be for us, it will be for the people coming after us, and we must leave for the next country.”

“You make your choice... After that first year it has been my choice. I decided I want to be an expatriate maybe to explore the world or to see things, to make more money or whatever the reason was.

“When a person is starting an expatriate life...”

One employee stated that the most important thing is where you live and not what you do as if the work would not be the most important thing anymore, but the expatriate life style.

“I think that most expatriates become members of a special group, one for which it becomes easier to move from one country to the other all the time than to go back home.”

“Maybe it is not only the money. Maybe it is because of the good things that you don’t want to give up after seven years. The family and quality of life are more important than earning money.”

“When a person has been an expatriate, he/she normally has earned more than the locals and if you go back to your home country you have the same power as the locals. There, you don’t have that kind of luxury that you go and buy whatever you want. Your buying power has gone down, your living standard has gone down. As an expatriate you are probably living in one of the best places available to live in the city.”

This group has its own chapter in this study because it seems that they begin to stand out as a special group. As expatriation becomes a permanent condition they seem to lose most of their ties with the home country. Usually, they no longer belong to their own country's social security system, so they need to plan carefully for their own retirement, their spouses' retirement and the continuation of their children's studies.

"I have a friend who has been an expatriate for seven years. With the same amount of money that he should pay for social insurance in our home country he bought a much better international social insurance."

"In my home country it is the employer who pays the social insurance for me. But it isn't a good system because they don't pay anything for my wife. When she gets old she won't have hardly any money saved there..."

As expatriation life becomes "permanent" the expatriate employees have to continuously move to a new country, to make a new beginning. This may be tiresome.

"The expatriates' problem is that when you come to a new place, you start building up friendships from the beginning. When we moved here we had to arrange everything ...friends, house, everything from the beginning."

Another point is that many things happen in the home country while the expatriates are abroad: their parents get older, grandchildren are born, old work friends advance in the organization. A concern about relatives, especially parents, in the home country was common.

"The first time I went to the USA my father died. When I came here my mother died and then my brother's wife died. But you know when you go out you have to be ready to understand that these things can happen. It's not always easy."

"When I was sick I was thinking what would happen if my father or mother would get sick."

"If something happens to my parents I can't pick a flight and be back in three hours. We are on the other side of the world. That is a bit difficult, at times there is a lot of pressure."

"I don't want to lose touch with my grandchildren. I'll be back to see them grow up... it's something money can't buy."

As the period of expatriation gets longer, it seems to be increasingly difficult to find the right time to go back home, because it is necessary to conciliate many factors in order to go back home. Expatriation becomes the routine, and going back home would be a new situation to adapt to.

Some people solve this conflict by staying abroad. It is interesting that they consider themselves "expatriates" as if expatriation would be a permanent condition.

As expatriation becomes a “permanent” condition they seem to lose most of their ties with the home country. Usually, they no longer belong to their own country’s social insurance system, so they need to plan carefully for their own retirement, their spouses’ retirement and the continuation of their children’s studies.

As expatriation life becomes “permanent” the expatriate employees have to continuously move to a new country, to make a new beginning. This may be tiresome.

A concern about relatives, especially parents, in the home country was common.

6.2.1.1.5. Pre-information on national and cultural issues

The expatriates didn’t receive systematic information about practical life in Brazil before they left home.

“What was missing was two days of instructions about Brazilian culture. It is a bit like explaining all the “carioca things”, you know. I know that other companies have that.”

“The company has this kind of programme if there are a lot of new people coming here. When there is just one expat coming in and the other expat couples are well-established I don’t think that this kind of thing would be organized.”

“It was done for us when we moved for the first time from the subsidiary in India to China. We had a programme that was organized by the company in India especially for us, because we were going to a very different country... what we could expect to avoid a cultural shock. What we should expect and what would be very impolite. It definitely helped. There were some “mock” exercises, when we had to act in some situations.”

Many of the expatriates were quite lost at the beginning. Some kind of info material about how to proceed in difficult/dangerous situations would have been good to have, especially if the expat did not speak the local language.

“When I moved here I was the only expatriate and nobody gave me any kind of information about how to take care of things here, how we should behave. There wasn’t any kind of orientation about what to do in case of accident, whom to call, there wasn’t any kind of information.”

“If one of us had been in an accident, there wasn’t any kind of orientation. It should have been done in Finland, it is not the responsibility of the local organization. If for example there was a fire. The fireman doesn’t speak English. If we had to call and say that we have a fire at home, for sure help would not come very fast. This kind of things, the really difficult situations...if we would need to call for an ambulance...”

The expatriates didn't receive systematic information about practical life in Brazil before they left home, but they considered that some kind of info material about how to proceed in difficult/dangerous situations would have been good to have.

6.2.1.1.6. Adjustment to living abroad

6.2.1.1.6.1. ADJUSTMENT OF THE EMPLOYEE

The adjustment of the employee seems to happen mainly at work. There they learn most about the host country's culture.

"It is local culture. In work life and out of work life, it is a local culture. In one place it is in some respects more, in others less, but it is there all the time."

According to the comments of the expatriates, it seems that learning the local language is not a must for them, as they usually manage to carry out their work in English.

"Nobody forces you to learn. If I am in Rio and I don't want to learn Portuguese it is all right, I wouldn't in any way suffer because of that."

Accordingly to what they said, it seems that the work is most important. Other things do not have the same importance. Living in an interesting place seems to be good because it provides the expatriate employee with the possibility of doing interesting things during the weekends.

The adjustment of the employees seems to happen mainly at work. There they learn most about the host country's culture. They don't consider mandatory to learn the local language.

6.2.1.1.6.2. ADJUSTMENT OF THE FAMILY

The expatriate employees usually think that expatriation is easier for single employees. Moving abroad with a family seems to make the process of adjustment more complex.

"I think that it is easier if you are a single guy than travelling with two children that are reaching school age, as in my case..."

"I think that as an expatriate it is very good in many ways if you are single, but in some ways it is more challenging if you are going with your family..."

The adjustment of the family seems to reflect on their own adjustment and well being. The lack of adjustment of the family affects the expatriate employee; it is one of the biggest reasons for them to decide to go back home.

"If the family don't adjust usually people go back home. I've seen colleagues go back home because the family wants to go. How well the expat adapts depends on how well the family adapts. It is difficult to enjoy the stay if the others don't feel good about it."

“I know that many people would like to continue as expatriates but go back to the home country because the spouse wants to go back. But I think that is understandable because if the family is suffering abroad it is a reason to give up.”

The expatriate employees usually think that expatriation is easier for single employees. The adjustment of the family seems to reflect on their own adjustment and well-being.

6.2.1.1.6.2.1. Adjustment of the spouse

Usually the expatriate employees consider that their adjustment abroad is easier than that of their spouses. They believe that working is the factor that facilitates their adjustment in the host country in comparison to their spouses.

“Maybe it is emotionally easier for the employees as you have a place to go to regularly and you have a social life even if you know that it is just for two years. Or maybe it depends on the person...Myself I don't have to listen to complaints... my husband has adapted well and now speaks the language well.”

“Yes, expatriation is certainly more difficult for the spouse.”

There were some comments about the importance of language skills for the expatriate spouse. It seems that at least knowledge of English would be desirable.

“I've been wondering how someone can go abroad together with someone who doesn't speak languages. If you don't speak even English, how can you have a positive expatriation experience?”

Usually the expatriate employees consider that their adjustment abroad is easier than that of their spouses probably because of work. They considered language skills especially important for spouses.

6.2.1.1.6.2.2. Children's adjustment

These results correspond to the superior arrow pointing to the “Expatriate children's mental health” field represented by a dotted rectangle (see Figure 1). The rectangle's limits are dotted because in the present study the expatriate children's mental health was evaluated through their parents' responses.

Some of those interviewed found the children's adjustment easy, some considered it different from expected, and some said that it is important to remember that the period abroad is their “real childhood”. It was difficult to form any general impression on the basis of the interview answers.

“The oldest one likes to be here, while the youngest doesn't. He talks all the time about moving back. He talks about friends at home. It is strange when we moved here we thought that for the twelve-year-old there might be adjustment

difficulties but for the four-year-old not. But it happened the other way round”.

“Moving makes the children tired and it is important to understand that their development really takes place while abroad. Because of that, you can’t move for two years, it doesn’t help to be shopping all the time, it is a question of how they manage the day, go to school, etc.”

Some of those interviewed considered the children’s adjustment easy and some considered it different from expected.

6.2.1.1.7. Family dynamics

These results correspond to the field between the “Expatriate employees’ mental health” and the “Expatriate spouses’ mental health” (see Figure 1).

Probably the situation where the couple will be separated during the expatriation period is the most extreme example of how expatriation can change family dynamics. However, this study did not provide good possibilities to evaluate this matter.

“Working abroad, it’s not a problem for the person who is working abroad, but for the spouse who is at home it can be difficult, particularly if the spouse doesn’t have kids or others to take care of. We discussed this matter with my wife before I came here and I saw that it would be totally impossible for her to be here. First of all, she would lose her job and then she would lose part of her pension. And then for her to be here permanently she would be alone in our home, with no young kids, nothing to do. It would’ve been difficult.”

It seems that the family dynamics are reorganised. While abroad, the spouse usually does not work, tending to assume responsibility for the home. In principle, this is a temporary condition, but the longer abroad without working the more difficult is the reinsertion into working life when back in the home country. In this new situation, the expatriate employees’ responsibility for family members seems to grow.

“The wives here are dependent on their husbands. I think they are a bit in the dark. They don’t know what will happen, they don’t know if there will be work for them in the future. I think that it is a stressful life for them... they are always asking when are we moving from Brazil.”

“Of course my responsibility for my family is greater here. At home, they have good friends giving them support. They live in the same environment and speak the same language. If they have an emergency or something they can contact colleagues and they can explain the situation to them. But here it is not like that, because of the language and even knowing the language they cannot explain things very well”.

“You have more responsibility for your family while abroad. You can't go in front of them with empty hands. Because when they are looking for something, they are looking at you.”

“When you make a work trip, if you have somebody with you, you have to think of a lot of things. If they have money to survive the next week if you are not going to be here, if they will need something, which you should arrange before you travel.”

The expatriates say that they have fewer hobbies and time for friends and relatives abroad than in the home country, because they have more challenging work and tend to work more hours and travel more than in the home country. It is difficult to figure out whether, in the end, they have more time to be with their family. It is probably true that they have longer working days, but the amount of time they spend with the family is difficult to determine. Anyway, it seems that usually more of their free time is dedicated to their families than in the home country.

“You know that you will be working at least eight hours a day and that you have a spouse at home...”

“Here we have been much more with the children and the family than at home. At least I've spent much more time with my family.”

The expatriate employees consider that the enterprise's responsibility for them is greater than normal, and that it also has responsibility for the employees' families. It did not become clear whether this greater responsibility was formally defined in the assignments, but it seems to be clear to the employees that they are considered to have special conditions to prevent sudden interruption of their assignments.

“The agreement made between you and your employer is not just between you and the enterprise. It is between you, your family and the enterprise.”

“Here work affects our family much more than at home. A colleague's wife left her job and moved here with him. They sold their house and car. Because of that, the agreement made with his employer should guarantee the situation of his wife too. The effect of losing your job here is much greater than if you are in your home city working for some company... There, an interruption of an agreement doesn't directly affect everybody.”

It seems that during expatriation, the family dynamics are reorganised. If the spouse doesn't move together, it happens drastically and since the beginning. If the spouse moves together, usually she/he does not work, tending to assume responsibility for the home. In this new situation, the expatriate employees' responsibility for family members seems to grow.

Usually more of the expatriate employees' free time is dedicated to their families than in the home country.

The expatriate employees consider that the responsibility of the enterprise for them and their families is greater than normal.

6.2.1.1.8. Social support

It seems that the social support of expatriate employees remains more or less the same as before expatriation. It consists basically of friends, parents and relatives in the home country, and of course the spouse, who usually moves with them. At work they have a circle of colleagues, but according to them, their friends seem to remain in the home country.

“The close relationships remain in the home country”

“I never had very good friends here, not really close friends. I don't feel free to talk to them about everything and they don't feel free to talk to me.”

“A network is sometimes missing...This is the kind of thing that I wouldn't know even how to think about before moving. You move here and you don't have relatives. Some locals and work friends become your colleagues...”

If the expatriation period is short it seems that they do not even need to make new friends in the host country.

“We are going to go back to Finland anyway in a year or maybe in half a year. We are going back anyway, so I don't need to look for new close friends here.”

When the expatriation lasts longer, for example when the expatriate employee is moving from one foreign country to another, a “couple of friends” in each place is desirable, and some contact with people of one's own nationality become important.

“Here people are moving around, it is challenging to get in. We have a couple of friends.”

“We need to have some good friends in each place. But to achieve a good relationship with somebody always takes time. Everybody need close people to talk to, to share with, otherwise you cannot survive.”

It seems that the “couple of friends” are often people working with them, usually other expatriates. Usually, the expats don't develop friendships with locals, and they attribute this to difficulties in communicating in their language.

“Language is another barrier, of course. I have just those who speak English as options for friendship.”

“I don't have a lot to do with the locals...there is the language problem.”

“I don't have many good friends here. I have some, but it takes time to gather a circle of friends. I have many to talk to, sort of good morning friends and football friends. But those, with whom you can talk about your own things...”

So, the “couple of friends” are usually expatriate colleagues who are working together with them. There was just one exception, a person who had met a childhood friend, who was living in Brazil.

“We have a family we know here. The man is my friend from childhood. We live here in close contact with them and it is a very positive thing.”

But, without doubt, the spouse is the biggest support if he/she accompanies the expatriate employee. The spouse is the only one of the “old, permanent” support who is close.

“Basically you have one person to support you. So, the support function is missing, deficient...”

“When you are outside your home country you cannot meet your relatives, your grandfathers, your grandmothers, cousins, so you really rely only on your wife in this case.”

On the other hand, the expatriate employees often avoid sharing difficulties in the work place with their spouses. If the expatriate employees are insecure in their work positions, this has a big impact on their spouses, making them feel unsafe as well.

“I think that you need to be exceptionally strong, because they are dependent on you. You cannot come up to your wife and say: “I really don’t know how to do it”.

“For the wives you are like a rock”.

That is why it seems at times that the spouse’s support is often not enough...

“You can hold a warm hand with the other person, the other person can give you some kind of comfort feeling. You just say ok, I have my wife here but you still need somebody else sometimes”.

And they refer to being lonely at times. This seems to happen more often in difficult situations or when they are sick.

“I think that it is more when we have some problem, or when you are not well, like when you are sick or something. Usually your mind is occupied with Brazilian things, you don’t have time to think about your parents and your friends at home. It is sometimes, when you are sick, that you think about things back home, ...”

“When you have a difficult situation, you are in a hard situation, it happens to me that: “if only my father were here, if only my brother were here, it would be so nice” ...but it commonly happens when you are sick”

“I was really missing my family. Ok, I was sick, I was taking medicines, at such times you are more likely to be lonely.”

It seems that the social support of expatriate employees remains more or less the same as before expatriation. It consists basically of friends, parents and relatives in the home country, and of course the spouse, who usually moves with the expatriate.

If the expatriation period is short it seems that the expatriates do not even need to make new friends in the host country. When the expatriation lasts longer, a “couple of friends”, usually other expatriates working with them, is desirable in each place.

Without doubt, the spouse is the biggest support if he/she accompanies the expatriate employee. On the other hand, while abroad, the expatriate employees often avoid sharing work place difficulties with their spouses at home.

That is why the expatriates felt that the spouse’s support is often not enough.

Expatriate employees seemed to feel lonely more often in difficult situations or when they were sick.

6.2.2. The spouses

These results compose the “Expatriate spouses’ mental health” field represented by a full line rectangle in the Figure 1 (see Figure 1).

The host country’s cultural differences and the difficulty to organize daily life while abroad emerged immediately from the expatriate spouses’ material. It seems that if the spouse assumes the role of housewife (or husband), she/he “dives” immediately in the new culture (and role) and sometimes is so submerged that she/he undergoes an identity crisis.

6.2.2.1. Expatriation

The motivation to move abroad was diverse. For some spouses, expatriation presented an opportunity to care for their children, for some a possibility to improve the family’s financial situation, and for others an opportunity to have a break in ordinary work routine.

The children’s acquisition of a new language and a wider view of the world were considered additional motives.

In contrast to the expatriate employees, most of expatriate spouses’ motives to move abroad revealed their families’ and its’ wellness as their priority.

“When we left we thought that as long as the children are small. We had similar jobs and every time a workday got long we both had to stay at work. So we came to some kind of decision: “Ok, if we leave I will be at home”.

“I was pregnant but we thought five years ahead...It was like a deal: in the following phase it would be my turn to consider my career.”

“We moved abroad to save money.”

“I hoped that in two years I would have a little more buying power.”

“At home I was working during the day, studied in the evening and did house work during the night. My husband was no help because he was working all the time. I did this for three years. I was just very happy that I could move here and just be, I don't have to be on the go all the time...”

“The languages that you can learn are an important point for children. And to see more people.”

“At this point in our life it didn't change that much because I was also very much at home in Finland. We got used to me being at home and my husband at work.”

“I never had the objective or thought that I would stay in Finland. I always thought that I would like to move somewhere else.”

In some cases the move had been planned for a long time. It was something desired for a long time, it did not happen by chance, but as a result of actively seeking it. In other cases, it represented an opportunity that appeared unexpectedly.

“I've prepared myself very carefully for moving abroad. I've been planning it for years.”

“I met my wife already in Finland. She had travelled a lot around the world and I suggested that maybe it would be time for a longer trip...”

The decision about moving abroad was an option for the expatriate/family: there was no obligation to move.

“They don't force you to go. They give you options. You are the one who decides. If you don't want to move, you don't move.”

“We sought it”.

“I never thought: ‘this is my life’ or ‘I really want to do this’. The idea came from my husband.”

The agreement on the assignment started the “moving process”. It started already in the home country and it continued in the new country. For some of those interviewed it seemed to take longer than the expatriate family had expected it would: after moving, the furniture takes some time to arrive and it is necessary to find a place for the family to stay before that. During this period the couples/families lived in a hotel or a flat. The installation process took from one to some months and could be very “stressful”, especially for families with children.

“It is a big thing because when we move we don't get things arranged immediately in our house. It takes half a year. And we are there. It is a long time.”

“We had just the luggage. We had to go shopping immediately to look for beds and a table and these kinds of things. We didn’t know even where we could find these things and it was quite an adventure to drive around an unknown city.”

“You stay in a hotel for one month and a half and you aren’t very happy.”

“I feel that I had difficulties for one year. Our things came at the beginning of December. My daughter was 11 months at that time and she started to walk the same day: ‘We didn’t have anything!’”

“We lived six months in Ipanema and we had lots of things with us for the children. Finnish books, toys ... they had things to do.”

When the spouse of the expatriate employee couldn’t work in Brazil, their lives turned toward the house. This “shift” seems to happen especially for women, but it also happened for the male spouse with children interviewed in this research. The man without children interviewed in this study told that he was always doing things outside the house as he had many hobbies. The man with children told that he had had the experience of living abroad without children and that life was different.

“The one who works always thinks that the one at home has to take care of everything that is related to the house.”

“Even though I don’t experience it as being different to be at home as a man compared to a woman, it takes lots of energy. For two months I cared for my daughter for 24 hours a day. I didn’t have any free time at all... I was really down.”

Sometimes a consequence of the economic incentives offered to the expatriate employees and their families, a natural consequence of the expatriation was that they started to have a higher standard of living in the host country than they did at home. An expatriate spouse told that her husband had said to her during a discussion: “you have the life of a queen”.

“We have a good life, and we have to enjoy the situation, we have everything of the best”...

“Outside our own country we have more money.”

A common worry for expatriate spouses, discussed in each interview, is the length of the assignment. A short assignment signifies the certainty of managing to stay in the host country until the end of the assignment. In some cases, especially during the first expatriation, a short assignment provided the spouses with a possibility of reinsertion in their old lives (go back to work, study, etc). Knowing the length of the assignment gives some visibility to the future and makes the spouse feel safe.

“So, we left for two years but by the time we left I thought that it would be better to leave just for one year. So as carefully as possible.”

“The agreement was for two years and we aim to stay here just for the two years. If the agreement continues I will go back home alone and leave my wife here because I have to take part in practical training in Finland.”

“I lost my job after our first expatriation. Before leaving I told my boss: “I don’t want to lose my job”. After the first expatriation when I went to talk with my boss he said: ‘ Listen, you just had two years’ leave and now you have to cut the umbilical cord because there are other people wanting your job’.”

The length of the assignment becomes a concern for the spouses again as the end comes closer. By this time it may be a great concern because their future and the future of their family will be defined. “Will the assignment be prolonged in this country? Will the next assignment be in another country than the home country? Where? Will the future be in the home country? Is there a risk of becoming unemployed?

“As the time for searching for a new contract comes closer, the family gets imbalanced, because you don’t know if you will get a new contract with the company, you don’t know if the children can continue in the school here, you don’t know if you have to go back and find a new job. Life as a whole becomes so uncertain... It is very stressful for the whole family”.

“We have to live each day as it comes... But there is a limit. Every time the assignment is finishing and I get a continuation. It happens to me that even if I think that I will not think about it, I do.”

The worry is related to their need to prepare themselves. With the exception of continuation in the same country, all the other possibilities imply a change, especially in the life of the spouse. Usually the spouses’ lives are concentrated on the family and house/family-related tasks. Any of the other options means huge changes in the spouses’ routine. Probably a return to the home country, especially if the expatriate employee loses his job, is the most radical change, as the spouses will often be unemployed (especially following long assignments abroad when the spouse usually cannot continue the activities they had developed before).

“I don’t expect to plan for the next two years but, then, the contract is ending in the next three months, and you expect something...to know what is going to happen!”

“I don’t hear one positive word from anyone about the company now. Of course it affects me because I think: “will I go home now?” I don’t really want to go home...”

“These things are really important but I shouldn’t care. My husband is working a lot and I can’t tell him what I’m feeling because that would just put more pressure on him”.

The spouses who have children of school age living with them usually want to have as much information in advance as possible in order to prepare their children for the move.

“All these things are now in progress. We have been talking and organizing in order to prepare our children.”

“Our seven-year-old son says: “I want to go back”. When we decided to move to another country we asked him. And he said: “No, I want to go back”. But when we told him more about the new country he was very enthusiastic.”

In the interviews it was noticed that not all families managed to be together during the expatriation period. Because of dual career development needs, because of a retirement situation (as exemplified in the expatriate employees' qualitative phase), or when children are already older, because of their success in higher education entrance exams or other career plans, some families decide to be separated during expatriation .

Keeping the family together seemed to be a concern among many expatriate spouses. Especially women referred to the responsibility of avoiding the separation of family members.

“I believe that the family being together, at school age, is very important.”

“I think that the women decide to leave to ensure the family stays together, for the well-being of the family...”

Sometimes the decision on family separation occurs later, during the expatriation. A family which moved abroad together may not come back together. Reasons for this can be the spouses' career needs (the spouse has to return to work not to lose his/her position), when they feel that the time has come to take care of their own career, or when children should go back for the university or the army. Among those interviewed, there was a family where the assignment would finish at a time when going back could risk their children's future admission to an international programme at the university in their own country and, because of this, they were preparing themselves to continue living in Brazil alone.

“We have decided that if my husband doesn't find anything in our home country, I will stay there and he will stay here for an indeterminate time, maybe one year. I don't know what will happen to our marriage but, if there is no work in our home country I'm not ready to sacrifice...And I have to think about my future.”

“In the case of our son who is now seventeen, he will probably live far away from the family for one and a half years. Anyway, wherever we are, I think that the time of living separately is coming.”

In contrast to the expatriate employees, most of expatriate spouses' motives to move abroad revealed their families' desires and well-being as their priority.

In some cases they said the move had been planned for a long time, in other cases, it represented an opportunity that appeared unexpectedly.

Moving abroad was an option, not an obligation to move.

The “moving process” started already in the home country and it continued in the new country until their families were installed in their “permanent houses” (usually the families lived in a hotel or flat until their furniture arrived). The installation process took from one to some months and could be very “stressful”, especially for families with children.

A common worry for expatriate spouses was the length of the assignment. Knowing the length of the assignment helped them to have some visibility to the future and made them feel safer.

The spouses who had children of school age living with them usually wanted to have as much information as possible in advance in order to prepare their children for the move.

Not all families managed to be together during the expatriation period. Anyway, keeping the family together seemed to be a concern among many expatriate spouses.

6.2.2.1.1. Adjustment to living abroad

6.2.2.1.1.1. PRE-INFORMATION ON NATIONAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

Before moving abroad, the couples or families experience a phase that could be called the “preparation phase”. Often courses are offered by the enterprises in the home country in order to prepare them for living and working abroad. Psychological tests are usually done in order to evaluate the ability to succeed in an assignment abroad, and with the same objective, a pre-visit trip to get to know the future destination is often offered.

“The enterprise arranges courses”

“We came here for a few days to check how the place felt.”

“I don’t think they prepare you, never, nothing. I think that when you come to a new country there should be some kind of board, or package or briefing or something to help you... We need some emergency numbers, you know, to have some kind of security”.

The “preparation phase” starts already before the formal preparation phase, offered by the enterprise. It starts already when the future expatriates begin to consider the idea of moving abroad, think about it, analyse possibilities, look for information from colleagues, internet sites, books, etc.

“I’ve so carefully prepared myself and thought through all the possible bad sides that in the beginning I was also very positive.”

The expatriate spouses agree that the original idea of the host country and the first experiences in it are very important for the adjustment.

“I think that the problems that you meet when you arrive in Brazil are the most important ones. If you have difficulties they are not easy to forget.”

“I think that the idea we had before we came influences the adjustment a lot. Like the first impression that we have of people certainly influences our relations with them.”

Before moving abroad, the couples or families experienced a phase that could be called the “preparation phase”. This phase starts still in the home country, when the future expatriates begin to consider the idea of moving abroad, think about it, analyse possibilities, look for information from colleagues, internet sites, books, etc. Often courses are offered by the enterprises in the home country in order to prepare them for living and working abroad. Despite the preparative courses and training before the assignment, the expatriates felt that they would have needed help while abroad also. Psychological tests are usually done in order to evaluate the ability to succeed in an assignment abroad, and with the same objective, a pre-visit trip to the future assignment destination is often offered by the employer.-

The expatriate spouses agreed that both the original impression of the host country and the first experiences in it were very important for the adjustment.

6.2.2.1.1.2. ADJUSTMENT OF THE EXPATRIATE SPOUSES

Every interviewed person said that in Brazil it is not possible to solve practical life problems without speaking Portuguese because only people with a high level of education speak English. In this respect, the expatriate family needs about six months in order to start to adjust.

“Here without language, it is impossible.”

“It is difficult in the beginning when we don’t know yet how to speak the language.”

A common complaint is the lack of a person to care for expatriates in the beginning. In countries like Brazil, where it is difficult to communicate because of not knowing the local language, a support person would be very important in the beginning.

“Always when it is possible there should be someone from the company to help people in the beginning. Because when nobody has been in the place, you should do everything and you don’t even know what is offered. Sometimes there are situations when you have to call. You have to arrange everything by yourself. All the calls and reservations and transportation in this kind of country where you don’t know the language...”

According to the interviews, there seems to exist a kind of timing of adjustment. The beginning is the most difficult phase for the female spouses and the male spouses with children, and it requires a lot of energy to adapt. They usually have to solve practical life demands on the spot. After that, comes a phase when they start to know better how to arrange things and, finally, the phase when they start to enjoy living abroad more.

“In this first half year, for example, if the children got sick, where to find a paediatrician? Nothing was prepared. For example, to find a place to live, I hurried with children from one place to another. Because I didn't know anything...”

“In the first six months it was difficult to enjoy life.”

“So there are a lot of things to deal with and then there is the whole new experience, where everything is new. Everything requires your attention. So, I think that it is very tiring to move from one country to another. At least for three months, maybe six months, you are really tired.”

According to the interviews, for a man without children there seemed to be differences in the timing of adjustment when compared to a man with children and for women. This is curious because the man with children referred to a timing of adjustment similar to all the others interviewed in the present adjustment, but also similar to the man without children interviewed in the previous expatriation when he did not yet have children.

It seems that for the man without children the first month was very good as he was very enthusiastic about the new things in the country. After some months, a phase of disappointment began when he realized that things did not work in the host country in the same way as in his home country. Lastly, he described a kind of ‘resignation phase’ when he already knew that everything was different compared to his home country but started to accept it.

“I noticed for six months this first inspiration, as everything was so different and new. And after that comes this phase when it doesn't work in the same way as you are used to at home. After that we became aggressive for maybe one or two months, and then it settled down and we started to accept the new things, and anyway there was no longer anything new.”

Usually expatriate spouses tell that even being at home and not having to do housework (almost all of them had a maid), time passed very quickly with the day full of activities.

“Many people wonder how I manage to make time pass here. I never had any time to pass...I have almost been in a hurry all the time...All the time I have is scheduled.”

“I don't understand what happens to the time because if I have a plan for the day it is a completely full day.”

Every interviewed person said that in Brazil it is not possible to solve practical everyday life problems without speaking Portuguese. Because of this, a person that helps the expatriates in the beginning would be very important.

There seems to exist a kind of timing of adjustment. The beginning was the most difficult phase for the female spouses and the male spouses with children, and it required a lot of energy to adapt. They usually have to solve practical life demands on the spot. After that begins a phase when they start to know better how to arrange things and, finally, the phase when they start to enjoy living abroad more. The male spouse without children presented a different behaviour, similar to the expatriate employees' timing.

Usually expatriate spouses tell that despite being at home and not having to do housework (almost all of them had a maid), time passed very quickly with the day full of activities.

6.2.2.1.1.3. ADJUSTMENT OF THE FAMILY

6.2.2.1.1.3.1. Expatriate employee adjustment

According to the interviews, expatriate spouses of both sexes usually considered the adjustment of the employee easier than their own. Having to work hard and having many new things to adapt to in the work place, work provided the employee with a social life, with the advantage of offering a circle of new friends with a similar professional profile. Work also brought objectives and some continuity to the expatriate employee.

"I think that for people who are working, they don't mind where they are going. For them it doesn't have such a big influence. The work is similar, in different countries even if the people working are a bit different, they have lots of things to do, work trips...."

This was explained by a male spouse who had had the opportunity of working during another expatriation.

"I've been at home and I've been working. And I should say that according to my experience, working is better. Because work gives a frame to life. It is a programme for the day. It organises your life and time. When you are at home you have to invent a programme and if you don't have one you easily just waste your time..."

Another point is that the work routine and the work environment usually absorb the expatriate employee so much that cultural differences become evident only later.

"My husband immediately started travelling. He had a new job, a new work place, you know, he could not help. Everything you have to find by yourself. The basic things you have to do alone."

Because of this, some people thought that the timing of the effects of expatriation is different for employees and their spouses, as the first six months may not be the most difficult period for expatriate employees.

According to the interviews, expatriate spouses considered the adjustment of the employee easier than their own because of the work.

Another point is that the work routine and the work environment usually absorb the expatriate employee so much that cultural differences become evident only later.

6.2.2.1.1.3.2. Children's adjustment

These results correspond to the inferior arrow pointing to the "Expatriate children's mental health" field represented by a dotted rectangle (see Figure 1).

There was a consensus among female spouses that adjustment is easier for families with children. Some explanations for this could be that children provide their families with an active social life as a consequence of their activities, that they are company, that they demand attention because of their needs of care and advice, thus conferring on the person who takes care of them an important socially respected role and, finally, that when the family moves together, this feeling of being with the whole family makes the spouses feel "at home".

"And I asked myself: 'How can a woman without children manage to be abroad?' It must be more difficult for a person alone..."

"But children go to school and with school come other programmes."

"For me, being an expatriate will finish when my children are teenagers, because they don't need mother so much anymore."

Children's adjustment seems to depend a lot on the phase of life and on the personal characteristics of the child.

According to the interviews, children's adjustment seems to be easy. Pre-school children usually adapt well, perhaps because the parents are already the most important persons for children at this age, and usually the acquisition of a new language happens very naturally. Among the interviewed spouses, one had noticed some regression in her children.

"When we came here my daughter started to wet her pants again. And our older daughter who had spoken since she was one and a half, because here nobody understood what she said, stopped speaking, in some way she reacted to this."

School-age children seem to feel the move more than the younger ones because of the lack of the language domain. They are usually very disappointed when they notice that they cannot communicate.

"My daughter had lots of difficulties. It is difficult to live abroad when you don't know the ambient and don't understand anything that people are saying... I noticed that she suffered from this a lot. She came home from school and she

was like a Martian. She watched TV, looked out the window, stayed in her own room just sitting...

According to those interviewed, for teenagers it is usually more difficult to move compared to other age groups. For them the group is very important; they have boyfriends/girlfriends and the school work is more difficult.

“My son is thirteen years old and it was very stressful for him when we came to Brazil because he came from a very small school in Venezuela; he was a bright teen you know, everybody knew him. When he came here, joined a class that had been together since they were small, he was a complete outsider. He had some typical stress headaches.”

“They are in adolescence. Moving is exciting for them, but because they make friends and get involved with friends and boyfriends it is extremely difficult to say bye-bye to the old place, to start all over again in the new place.”

Among those interviewed, there were two mothers whose children had special needs. Both children adapted very well. In both situations, the move seemed to be very positive, as the mothers were very busy in their home countries, whereas they had more time to care for their children during the expatriation.

“It wasn’t so simple like with normal children. We were afraid. But now we have noticed that it is a very good experience also for him. His teacher in the home country said: ‘Be careful that a fall in his level doesn’t take place. But it happened for us that our son enjoyed it a lot. Our son now speaks also English and Portuguese.”

“(For him) the social situation doesn’t matter so much. He goes to a special school. It is an international programme. I think that he has adapted quite well.”

“We talked about this thing that both parents, at least in our situation, can’t promote their own career, try to be active in working life all the time. One of us needs to be at home.”

The female spouses considered that adjustment is easier for families with children.

Children’s adjustment seemed to depend a lot on the phase of life and on the personal characteristics of the child but seemed to be easy, especially of pre-school children, however, one spouse had noticed some regression in her pre-school children.

School-age children seemed to feel the move more than the younger ones because of the lack of the language domain.

The interviewed seemed to consider the adaptation more difficult for teenagers because the group is very important for them, because they have boyfriends/girlfriends and the school work is more difficult.

Among those interviewed, there were two mothers whose children had special needs. Both children adapted very well. In both situations, the move seemed to be very positive, as the mothers were very busy in their home countries, whereas they had more time to take care of their children during the expatriation.

6.2.2.1.2. The culture shock

This topic involves recurrent themes, including cultural differences and curiosities that seem to produce a positive or negative impact on the expatriate spouses.

Most of them considered Brazil to be a good country to live in, but there was not a consensus on this issue.

“In the beginning we didn’t know exactly what to expect. But it is wonderful here, once you adapt.”

“It is very difficult to explain. In the beginning it demands so much effort to get inside the country, to learn to know places and find some people to trust.”

The expatriate spouses interviewed considered that the biggest obstacles to adjustment in Brazil were the language and the violence. The climate and the local people were referred to as positive points for adjustment.

“For me what is the worst thing here is, yes, I know this is a violent city...”

“When I came, I spent five days in a hotel room. I didn’t go out of the hotel area, I went from one side to the other with the baby carrier. I thought I wouldn’t go out and I asked the hotel security staff. Is it safe to go out? Imagine... Because I was afraid! I went outside of the limits and came back in a hurry, because I was afraid!”

“And here we never know where things can stop...”

“In Europe, I think, they say that Brazil is very dangerous, that you can’t go out because they will kill you and I don’t know what else...Because of this you will arrive here afraid...”

“The adjustment was easy for both of us. The climate is very easy.

“Locals are always very gentle and helpful.”

Schedule differences, car utilization, difficulties with the “new rich”, the maids, and child care were noticed by the expatriate spouses. As to the men, they mentioned local prejudice about their situation.

“At home we leave children so much alone that in my opinion it is easier to be with children abroad because it is mandatory to drive them and pick them up. Children are in that way much safer, because here we can take them by car.”

“Here we can go everywhere with children, any time. If it is ten o’ clock in the evening in the restaurant, with children nobody pays any attention.”

“In practice, there aren’t lots of differences except that, that here we have to spend some time driving everywhere. In Finland we say let’s go and we move in a very small circle of friends. And it is not necessary to drive all the time.”

“When I lived in Europe I could go everywhere alone and I didn’t need a car, but in Barra there isn’t anything.”

“There are certainly people with money but badly educated. In my flat they told me that certainly they would start a legal process but it seems to be that anything may happen...And our lawyer told me that they won’t make do anything because this was also an aggression for me. Ehh...and I would also have a reason to do something about...”

“The attitude of people when a man moves here accompanying his wife, is a bit difficult to understand.”

“It is easier for people to accept a wife who is at home, because that is normal.”

This topic involved recurrent themes, including cultural differences and curiosities that seem to produce a positive or negative impact on the expatriate spouses. The interviewed expatriate spouses considered that the biggest obstacles to adjustment in Brazil were the language and the violence. The climate and the local people were referred to as positive points for adjustment.

6.2.2.1.3. Family dynamics

These results correspond to the field between the “Expatriate employees’ mental health” and the “Expatriate spouses’ mental health” fields containing two arrows and without clear limits (see Figure 1).

According to those interviewed, with the exception of the married male spouse without children, the family dynamics seemed to change in the following way: the expatriate spouses who typically were working in the home country, started to be relieved of housework and thus, they had more time to care for and follow their children, which was in general considered positive by them.

“Expatriation is very nice when children are small”.

In many cases it seemed that every member of the family suffered a reduction in social support: relatives, parents and friends were far away; the family members seemed to have stronger ties to each other inside the family during expatriation than they had in the home country.

“Here we are more like a family than in the home country because we need each other, we really need each other much more.”

“We are a bit more dependent on each other than in the home country, where both have social contacts. Here outside social contacts diminish.”

On the other hand, it could be that as the expatriate employee was working more and carrying out more challenging duties, the expatriate spouse was more at home and more available.

“Social contacts diminish for the person that is at home. The compensation should be more time with the spouse but when the expatriate employee goes abroad he is supposed to do lots of work. So, this is the paradox.”

“I would want to go for a trip every weekend and go to eat outside and my husband says: “I want to sleep”...

“Out of eight weeks he has been travelling for three. After this he came home for three weeks. He always came back on Saturday morning, so the weekend was spoiled.”

As the expatriate employee most of times experienced career promotion and became socially more important, the expatriate spouse became socially limited and relieved of housework. As a consequence, the topics of conversation circled in different spheres than before.

“Their work day is long and after they come home if we, for example try to move the refrigerator, thinking: ‘Will this refrigerator ever move?’ We are on such different levels...”

“When my husband comes home I say: ‘Well, tell me something good tell, tell, tell’

Usually while abroad the spouses had more time to take care of their children, which was in general considered positive by them.

In many cases, as parents and friends were far away, the family members seemed to have stronger ties to each other inside the family during expatriation than they had in the home country. On the other hand, it could be that as the expatriate employee was working more and carrying out more challenging duties, the expatriate spouse was more at home, available, socially limited and relieved of housework. As a consequence, the topics of conversation circled in different spheres than before.

6.2.2.1.4. The question of the spouses' work life

The interviewed expatriate spouses of both sexes came from countries where women also work.

“ Someone that doesn't work... Everybody works! ”

“I don't know if I'm too much an original Finn, work is such a big thing...”

As the spouses do not have a work permit in Brazil, financial dependence is almost unavoidable. At times, some people manage to retain some activity informally, earning some money through this. In these cases, where it was possible to retain some productive activities, even if they were unpaid (for example, studies) it was important for them.

“At times I have private students at home. Even though we have no formal agreement, I have “something of my own”. Sometimes I write an article for a journal”.

“I look for my own appreciation by means of the things I do. My studies now fill this need completely. ”

However, financial dependence was the rule and female expatriate spouses described the situation as to some extent uncomfortable because they did not feel free to spend their spouses' money. As they did not work to earn money they did not feel the money was their own.

“If the money is my own I can spend everything. But with my husband's money I can't because it is his.”

“When I said that: ‘I'm an expat’ I noticed already that in some places I started to explain: “Yes, yes, but I have my work and everything”. I don't do it anymore. I remember that, in the beginning, it was for me a way to say that I'm dependent, to admit that.”

The central question in the expatriate spouses' interviews seemed to be: “What is my role now? Who am I?”

“But you know, I don't even know what I would like to do with my life...”

“Because you are not you, you are the spouse of the director, of the president, ...”

“They say: ‘Ah, yes you are this (husband name)'s wife’. And I would like to say: ‘yes, among many other things, I'm this (husband name)'s wife.’ Afterwards, when you visit your children's school they say: ‘Here is (child's name)'s mother”.

Some women who had been an expatriate spouse for a long time, managed to elaborate this anxiety better and understood their role as a support person without whom the partner would not manage during expatriation. As one spouse said: *“We are a part of the enterprise's team.”* This seemed to make them feel good, as they saw their role as important for the maintenance of their family's expatriation.

“Your husband is working for the company and you are also doing what you can for the company, because you are caring for the family and moving to new places. That is how I justify my role in some way. Because if I didn't do those things he wouldn't. He just wouldn't.”

“ I would say I’m also working with him. I’m waiting for him to come home from work, I listen to his problems, I make sacrifices for him and our children so that he can see them just during Sundays. It is important to say this, that we are also working. ”

When the spouses had moved from one country to another several times, the expatriate life became their routine and they no longer thought about going back to work. They were working for the family, they said. If the possibility to go back home emerged as a real possibility they might feel unsafe. Returning to the home country they would probably continue to stay at home.

“When I go back I will be with my husband, and we will have some years to make a home, also to travel,... And also work, but I don’t know how much, because my son also needs help,...I don’t know. ”

“When I think that we will go back when the assignment finishes ...I start to panic! Because in my country without a job I’m out of the circle of my family, because in my family everyone works!”

There was also the group that was sure to have a work place when they went back home. For them the expatriate period was clearly temporary and the thought of return did not trigger any feeling of crisis.

“I left my studies and my work. It is possible that I can go back to my work, but anyway they promised that I can go back to my school.”

The majority of those interviewed seemed to be somewhere between these two groups. Their starting situations were diverse, as shown above, but with the rare exception of people who admitted that they never wanted to work, they talked in each interview about their earlier working life. They said that when they had work they had their ‘*own life and own name*’. Some of them spoke about the satisfaction provided by work of seeing something done by themselves. This feeling was described by people both in challenging positions and in simple tasks.

“For me it is the same. I’ve never been this kind of career person. I was watching the time all the time at work, I never liked it. ”

“Actually I miss this, this thing called ‘own life’. When I went to work I had my own friends at work, my own figures, my own work. And my work friends didn’t ask me if I had washed this blouse, or if I’ve ironed that, or if I had cooked my food: “what kind of food do you have?” We talked about work things and it liberated me from the home routine.”

“Because when we have our own work and some of our own things, we have our own name.”

“When I worked, I really liked it. I liked to be able to say: “oh, I really do a lot. You should see what I did”. I was a printer, you know... When I saw what I did I thought: “Uau...great!”

The female spouses said that even with a high standard of living, having money to buy things “*having the life of a queen*” they did not feel good. And they felt they were misunderstood by almost everybody, including their spouses for this.

“I have relatives that say like: ‘uau! You are very well off, you don’t have any problem...’ But they say that because they have their work in their own country.”

“I’m a healthy person and I’ve symptoms all the time...”

“Even being at home so rich and being grateful for the possibility of living abroad isn’t enough.”

“I always miss this, something of my own, that I would have things outside the home. It is important. I like sport but it doesn’t fill this emptiness...”

“My husband says: “What more do you want? You are with your children... you are in another country, you can learn to know the world...”-“Yes, but I need something, I need to talk, to do...and they won’t understand you, the husbands, because they just work.”

The wives said that they felt they had sacrificed their careers to follow their spouses and that they were not recognised for caring for the home as they had been when they were working in their own professions. They demanded more recognition from their spouses.

“We have to value ourselves more. Our decision to give up our own things to follow our husbands was courageous. But I think that sometimes they (husbands) forget that. They think: ‘she is a housewife,’ which is everything that I didn’t want to become in my life.”

“It can’t be like this, that the wife is sacrificed all the time. If she had her own career she has the right to it.”

“I always say to my husband if you would appreciate...if like supposition. I’m with our children at home and nobody comes to say “uau, how well you are doing it”.

“I also know what kind of hard work it is to be at home with children and nobody appreciates it.”

It seemed that during expatriation if spouses knew that there would be a secure work place for them on their return, they would be aware of the temporality of the expatriation. If expatriation lasted longer, they started to be worried about their future work possibilities in the home country and about their ability to return to their own profession when they

went back. They would worry about their age, whether there would ever be a job for them. By this time it started to be difficult for them to think: ‘this is just temporary and I must just enjoy it’. If the time abroad started to lengthen, they started to feel unable to cope in their profession, and most of them seemed to start to look at expatriation as their own profession, in this way resolving the conflict, assuming the new role as the own role.

“Do I want to live like this? If I stay abroad for another five years I will be so old. I’ve been so long out of work... I won’t have any possibility to get a job.”

“I would very much like to return to my old job when we go back. But now that I don’t have my job anymore it is more difficult to go back. I’m thinking more...”

“I worked in (a company) for not many years (...). Soon I will be forty years old and then I was twenty-five years old...I’m thinking more that when I go back...(...) of opening a shop or something...”

“I don’t want to be without the expatriation experience either.”

The interviewed expatriate spouses of both sexes came from countries where women also work, but as the spouses did not have a work permit in Brazil, they couldn’t work and were financially dependent. At times, some spouses managed to get work-like activities (for example voluntary work or studying), and even though the activity was unpaid, it was considered very important. Anyway, financial dependency was the rule and female expatriate spouses described the situation as to some extent uncomfortable because they did not feel free to spend their spouses’ money.

The wives said that they felt they had sacrificed their careers to follow their spouses and that they were not recognised for caring for the home as they had been when they were working in their own professions. They said that when they had work they had their “own life and own name”.

The central question in the expatriate spouses’ interviews seemed to be: “What is my role now? Who am I?”

It seemed that this “identity crisis” didn’t happen (or at least did not happen strongly) if during expatriation spouses knew that there would be a secure work place for them on their return, because they would be aware of the temporality of the expatriation. If expatriation lasted longer, they started to be worried about their future work possibilities in the home country and about their ability to return to their own profession when they would go back. If the time abroad started to lengthen, they started to feel unable to cope in their profession, and most of them seemed to start to look at expatriation as their own profession, in this way resolving the conflict, assuming the new role as their own role. They managed to elaborate this anxiety better and understood their role as a support person without whom the partner would not manage during expatriation. Many times in

these cases, if the option to go back home emerged as a real possibility they might feel unsafe.

6.2.2.1.5. Social support

Help would be desirable especially in the beginning. Usually other expatriate families in Brazil and the maids represented an important source of social support, helping a lot in the adjustment. They were mentioned as facilitators of the adjustment.

“Everybody has a baby sitter, they help a lot in the phase when we are learning the language. They help us to adjust to the culture, and the quality of life improves clearly”.

For school children, sometimes a friend of the same nationality, already adapted to the host country and communicating well there, could have the same role.

“Everything changed suddenly in a positive way when another Finnish girl came. As she spoke English this facilitated a lot. She translated everything for my daughter who picked up very fast.”

The process of making friends required lots of energy from the expatriates.

“What disturbs me is that we have to make new friends every day. When you live in your own country you already have your friends. It is disturbing to make new friends all the time.”

“After the first expatriation you usually don’t want too much to start new friendships. New friendships demand lots of effort.”

According to the expatriate spouses, their old friends in the home country could usually act as social support only when they came to visit. One expatriate spouse said: “Rio is in” meaning that many friends came to visit. They considered that real old friendships continue. However, the expatriate spouses said that after expatriation they couldn’t share their difficulties with their old friends in the same way as before, because they just couldn’t understand them anymore. Their lives became so different. On the other hand, an expatriate spouse said that it is difficult to hear old friends’ problems and maintain a conversation with them because it became ‘boring’.

“And here friends visit us all the time. They come to Brazil a lot. Two weeks ago some went back and in two days some others will come.”

“In my opinion the friends that stay, they are the real friends.”

“When you go back you don’t know so much about your friends anymore... You’ve been in other cultures, seen other things so when you talk, people won’t understand you...”

“My friends don’t speak to me anymore in the same way as before, or I talk with them like before but it is not natural anymore. Or it is natural but, I don’t know, you would like more...”

“I’m from a small city and when I speak they look at me like this...”What?”

Their spouses were also very involved with their work tasks and were not able to understand their spouses’ difficulties concerning expatriation. According to the spouses, as the expatriate employees were working a lot, they considered their spouses’ life as a kind of wonder life: good financial condition, lots of new possibilities of amusement and time to enjoy them.

“A tired husband comes home and doesn’t want to hear his wife’s problems that for him just don’t exist.”

“It is important to do something independent of the family, because my husband doesn’t listen to me.”

The expatriate spouses felt that family members who stayed in the home country all the time didn’t understand them. Sometimes the expatriate spouses avoided telling them about things that happened in the host country because they were afraid of worrying them with facts that they were not able to evaluate, that were not concrete for them because of a lack of knowledge of the reality in Brazil.

“And also the family! When you speak they are like: What?...I don’t know!... It became difficult. You have to try to go a little bit back in time to talk with them.”

“We didn’t report everything that happened in the city to prevent them worrying for nothing. Because it is very difficult to understand in our home country that if something happens here in Rio far from us it doesn’t influence us in any way.”

Another point related to the expatriates’ parents was the concern to be in their home countries in order to be able to act as a support for them as they are getting older.

“But we get worried that our parents are getting older and it would be nice to live with them at the end of their life.”

Those interviewed told that during expatriation their friends were other expatriate spouses, who had a similar reality and could understand their problems.

“My husband, he doesn’t listen to me. It is necessary to experience the same conditions that I have to understand them.”

Their new friends sometimes had a completely different profile from the old ones; they were those who happened to be there at the same time. They said that they were, in a way, less selective than in the home country. They had less prejudice and were more

open to be friends with people of different ages and ready to be with people that they would usually avoid.

“Another curious thing about expatriation is that your friends don’t have an age. They can be sixty years old or eighteen. It is all the same. Any person who listens to you, who gives you some attention is valuable.”

“When you don’t like someone you think well, everybody is like he or she is and you are more open to this.”

Related to this was the temporality of their new friendships. They knew that they would be in the host country only for a certain time and most of their new friends were in the same situation. It felt like: “nothing here is permanent”.

Another thing related to making friends abroad is that they may leave abruptly.

“Our friends moved back suddenly. And the emotions...”

“I never really had close friends here. I have lots of friends in my home country but here it is really difficult to have close friends. We don’t know exactly when we are leaving and neither do they...”

Thus, especially the expatriate spouses who had been abroad before referred to a “self-protecting behaviour”. They avoided deepening relations because they knew that they would move on and that their friends would move on too. According to them, older children also started to show the same behaviour after some expatriations. Often their self-protection mechanisms were not so well developed as that of their parents and they usually suffered more when they had to go back, especially the teenagers, who usually got more involved with their friends and had boyfriends or girlfriends.

“You don’t want to get so involved emotionally with people. You are protecting your feelings.”

“My friend told me that they don’t even have the courage to be closer to other children because they know that soon we will have to change places again.”

Friendship with locals was usually desired but considered more difficult to achieve than with other expatriates. In the beginning, it was difficult because of language limitations. Later, they noticed that locals in general had a solid and quite closed circle of friends. In addition, the opportunities for contact with locals were limited with the exception of the neighbourhood. Thus, most circles frequented by expatriates were very international. They included the other expatriates from their enterprise, parents of children who went to the same school as their children, and some others they met in other social situations.

“It always takes time. Even in Finland it takes time to make new friends. And with locals it takes more time, it should take more time.”

Sometimes the expatriate spouses organized group activities. These groups were very supportive in the beginning of expatriation. The Finnish women of the enterprise in

Rio had a group with a very well-organized schedule, which broke up when the person who organized it went back home. They missed the group but they did not want to have a scheduled programme every day. The expatriate spouses of other nationalities with husbands working for the same enterprise stated in the interviews that it would be good to have a group to meet with regularly and to share experiences with. The expatriate spouses of another enterprise, all women, did not have a formal group but as they almost all lived in the same area they joined together in many activities and did many things together.

“We have been very much in contact but as soon as people started to find their own place they started to leave the group.”

“If we can't speak among us let's go to a psychologist. Or talk among those of us who speak the same language. So that we can talk about expatriation problems, you know? Like this we can also cry, look at each other...”

In the case of the male expatriate spouses it was difficult to organise groups because they were so few.

“Here there aren't too many men. With n.n.. I sometimes play golf or do something else. We don't have too many men joining their wives in the company either.”

In the interview, many told us that they felt lonely. Physically they were far from their relatives and old friends but, in terms of participating in social life, it was often full of activities but with basically superficial relations.

“It makes me depressed to think that I'm a little bit alone.”

“We are really alone when we come here. I can't avoid feeling that.”

“But actually, especially when we have been longer abroad and a kind of routine starts, we feel lonely.”

They tried to keep in contact with their home countries, follow the news on the Internet, but the longer they lived abroad, more distant their home countries became. Paradoxically, they said that their own country and the people from their own country gradually became more important for them.

“I always follow on the Internet what happens in Finland, what they talk about, the main news, I noticed that I have been abroad for two years and my friends continue to be friends, I noticed that all the time I have been in touch with my friends. And this doesn't cost, it doesn't cost anything compared to if I had have been calling. I noticed that I managed to maintain the relations.”

“For me it was difficult at the beginning of the year. I went to Finland and when I heard the evening news or heard Finnish news, thirty minutes news, I didn't know anything about anything.”

“I always try to do something in Finnish, to do crosswords. I read in Finnish and do crosswords. But it doesn’t come to anything. Sometimes I see some last name like Aho and I think: “now, it is Esko Aho” but it is somebody else.”

“If I read a three-month-old newspaper it is all the same to me. It doesn’t matter if the day has gone...It doesn’t make any difference.”

A feeling shared by all those interviewed was that of being between two countries. They had real friends and relatives in the home countries but they referred to themselves as feeling “outsiders” there. And as they didn’t have a “permanent” life in the host country, they did not feel members of that society either. It was an uncomfortable feeling of not belonging anywhere, like not having a place of one’s own.

“It is a kind of conflict inside me. It is a strange feeling. One side would like to be there, the other here.”

“I also want to go to back to my home country because it is permanent, it doesn’t change.”

“Nobody can understand. Even when you want to go back and leave this life here happily and smiling they won’t understand you. So you think: “Well I’ll go back and I will have a problem. I’ll go back and I will have a problem because they can’t understand me”. It is another world for them. ”

“It is like me here. Life passes and we aren’t a part of that life. It feels so bad.”

In relation to these feelings, some people described an attitude of postponing things, leaving things for the future. Another group referred to the importance of avoiding this behaviour by recognizing that it is a negative behaviour from the point of view of mental health.

“I buy things and sometimes I don’t use them. I save them to be used later. It is like: I can use them later.”

“I think that it is like that: later on, when life..., in a way the way of thinking is: later, when we move to our home country and then, after that...”

“When I’m in Brazil, I buy one thousand things, to put in my house when I move to Argentine. It keeps my spirits up.”

On the other hand, people moving from place to place continuously had the seductive feeling of having the earth as their home place.

“We don’t have a home country. We have home countries.”

Help would be desirable especially in the beginning. Usually other expatriate families in Brazil and the maids represented an important source of social support, helping a lot in the adjustment. They were mentioned as facilitators of the adjustment.

For school children, sometimes a friend of the same nationality, already adapted to the host country and communicating well there, could have the same role.

The process of making friends required lots of energy from the expatriates.

According to the expatriate spouses, their best old friendships continued, but after expatriation they couldn't share their difficulties anymore with them in the same way as before, because they just couldn't understand them anymore.

Their spouses were working a lot and considered their spouses' life as a kind of wonder life and were not able to understand their spouses' difficulties concerning expatriation.

Also family members who stayed in the home country didn't understand them. Sometimes the expatriate spouses avoided telling them about things that happened in the host country because they were afraid of worrying them. Another point related to the expatriates' parents was the concern to be in their home countries in order to be able to act as a support for them as they are getting older.

Those interviewed told that during expatriation their friends were other expatriate spouses, who had a similar reality and could understand their problems. The new friends had a completely different profile from the old ones; they were those who happened to be there at the same time: other expatriates from their enterprise, parents of children who went to the same school as their children, and some others they met in other social situations. Friendship with locals was usually desired but considered more difficult to achieve than with other expatriates.

They knew that they would be in the host country only for a certain time and most of their new friends were in the same situation. It felt like: "nothing here is permanent". For this, especially the expatriate spouses who had been abroad before referred to a "self-protecting behaviour". They avoided deepening relations because they knew that they would move on and that their friends would move on too. According to them, older children also started to show to some degree same type of behaviour after some expatriations, however, still getting more involved than adults.

Sometimes the expatriate spouses organized group activities. These groups were very supportive especially in the beginning of expatriation. Later they considered that they did not want to have a scheduled programme every day. Anyway, they considered important to share their experiences with other expatriate spouses.

Many told they felt lonely despite of having the days full of activities, since most of their social relations were quite superficial.

They tried to keep in contact with their home countries, follow the news on the Internet, but the longer they lived abroad, more distant the home country reality became for them.

A feeling shared by all those interviewed was that of being between two countries. On the other hand, people moving from place to place continuously had the feeling of having the earth as their home place.

6.2.2.1.6. Repatriation

Usually expatriate spouses considered repatriation more difficult than continuation of expatriation. An exception was those who spent a period of time abroad that was so short that reinsertion in the home country was assured, and those who had special conditions where the possibility to go back to the old job was assured for longer.

“Because when you go for one year or two, you only take a leave of work or a break from studies and you can go back and continue the same work, for example.”

Almost every expatriate spouse referred to the fear of “the drop”. This implied the change from a comfortable situation with a high level life style to the situation of unemployment. It was like falling from the “wonder land” to a grey mist.

Usually, the longer the person was abroad, the more difficult it was to move back. It seemed that the expatriate spouses started to feel that they were not able to work in their professions anymore. And if they had been abroad for a long time they started to feel that they would never find a job again in the home country.

“Of course I’m afraid of that: “Will I fall down completely? Will I one day find a job after being at home these three years?... It is interesting how this fear is there all the time...one’s know-how grows here, but in the CV there are only many empty years.”

“If, in this phase, I start to study for a new career...it may be I will have to leave it in the middle...”

“In this respect, I had no problem to leave, on the other hand I have lately been afraid of having to move back.”

“Many people say that the biggest culture shock comes when you go back to your home country.”

In the male interviews, nobody mentioned being worried about going back to the home country, although this was a central theme in every interview with the women. The men considered the home country as easy and safe. They never mentioned any concern about not being able to find their place back home. It seemed to be true for them that they would manage to arrange things when they returned home.

“I would also like to do some other thing. Personally I could do something completely new, but I don’t know if it is the objective of life...Maybe because I’ve missed the forty’s crisis, thought about the value of life again...”

“I’ve always thought that I’m a Finn and I will always be a Finn independent of how many years I’ve been living abroad. I never thought that I could stay abroad for ever.”

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6.2.2.1.7. Differences between male and female expatriate spouses.

From the first contact, male and female expatriate spouses presented differences in their behaviour: female spouses agreed to be interviewed in groups without resistance, while male expatriate spouses asked to be interviewed individually, male spouses did not refer to feeling lonely or missing support persons, nor that they were in any way worried about going back to the home country. They considered the home country as easy and safe.

Some differences about the timing of expatriation and the way they told about it were also noticed and the possibility of this being role related and not gender related should also be investigated.

A male expatriate spouse with children who had experienced expatriation before without children described two clearly distinct expatriation processes. In the previous expatriation, when he did not have children, expatriation was described in the same way as by other male expatriate spouses without children and by expatriate employees: as an adventure, a challenge. The idea of conquest or fulfilment of a dream is also pertinent in the case of male spouses without children. Their timing of adjustment was also similar to that described by expatriate employees: the first months were very good because they were very exciting as they were very enthusiastic about the new things in the host country. After some months, a phase of disappointment started, when they realized that things did not work in the host country in the same way as in their home country. At a later stage they described a kind of ‘resignation phase’ when they already knew that everything was different from their home countries but they started to accept this.

The male expatriate spouse with children had a similar behaviour to the one described in the female expatriate spouses’ topic.

Another gender related curiosity was that all the non-working female spouses assumed the housewife role, even the ones that did not have children and presented the profile described in detail in the spouses’ chapter.

Both male expatriate spouses referred to the fact that they noticed prejudice on the part of the locals against them. They felt that locals accepted them better when a female spouse came to join her husband in an international assignment than the other way round. They considered that this prejudice was cultural and related to the paternalist character of the Brazilian society.

As there were only two men among the spouses interviewed the material can not be discussed in more detail for ethical reasons, but as these phenomena were noticed, it was imperative to register them.

7. DISCUSSION

This study managed to determine the well-being of expatriates and fill the gaps in the literature concerning expatriates' well-being. The study throws light on the adaptation process, providing the opportunity to understand the role of many factors that are known to be correlated with mental health in the literature, and that were demonstrated to be correlated with mental health in this study play in the well-being dynamics.

In this study, the expatriates and their spouses were interviewed personally and while abroad, whereas most reported studies have been carried out in the home country before and/or after expatriation. The majority of the studies made during expatriation have been based on posted questionnaires as happened in the quantitative phase of this study.

Expatriation is a stressful life event (Perone et al. 2008, Eytan and Loutan 2006, Dow 2000 and Anderzén 1998). Perone et al. (2008) presented basic stress as inherent to expatriation. However, expatriate employees' and their families' well-being has been poorly studied in the field of occupational health. In the studies concerning consultations scores (Sakai et al 2008-II and Patel et al. 2006) the number of psychiatric affections tends to be underestimated. Patel et al. (2006) made a prospective cohort study of expatriates, observing that the incidence of psychological disorders was 1% of all consultations. They observed a higher morbidity in expatriate employees and unaccompanied expatriate employees than in expatriate spouses. However, as data were gathered in the enterprise's own occupational health service, the number of psychiatric affections tends to be smaller than it is in reality: expatriate spouses probably would not go to the enterprise for a consultation concerning mental health, and even expatriate employees would be reluctant to consult the enterprise's medical service if the consultation reason concerned mental health because of stigma. Sakai et al. (2008-II) analysed the records of Japanese male expatriates in their 30s to 50s who consulted outpatient clinics at Bangkok Hospital in 2005 for number and type of outpatient visits, and then compared them with data from the "Patient Survey" 2005 for age-matched males in Japan: there was a lower rate of "Mental and behavioral disorders" diagnoses among Japanese men living in Thailand than among those in Japan. The authors estimated that these disorders were underestimated as Japanese male expatriates have a tendency to not visit hospital when they have no subjective or objective symptoms and, concerning mental disorders, there are language fluency difficulties, stigma and other factors that would probably make them prefer to consult specialists in Japan or go to other private facilities than to a hospital. On the other hand, data gathered in psychiatric services tend to reveal a greater number of psychiatric affections (Foyle 1998 and Dally 1985).

Anderzén (1998) confirmed by psychophysiological methods that expatriation is a stressful life event and that repatriation is even more stressful than the adjustment phase abroad. Her study had the advantage of being a prospective case-control study. However, it did not reveal much about the process of adaptation and what kinds of difficulties the expatriate employees and their families experience while abroad. The expatriates were investigated during their vacation time in the home country and after the expatriates had returned home.

Recently, studies concerning expatriate employees' and their families' well-being have gained some attention in the management literature (Fish and Bhanugopan 2008, Bhanugopan and Fish 2006, Fish 2005, Selmer 2004, Selmer and Leung 2003-I, Au and Fukuda 2002, Ward and Kennedy 2001, Aryee and Stone 1996 and Nicholson and Imaizumi 1993). On the other hand, only Nicholson and Imaizumi (1993) measured well-being and compared it to another normative well-being measure as was done in the present study, while only Bhanugopan and Fish (2006) and Nicholson and Imaizumi (1993) related factors that could influence expatriates' well-being and the measured well-being, as was done in this study. However, Nicholson and Imaizumi's study (1993) is much closer to the present study's quantitative study than Bhanugopan and Fish's study (2006).

Thus, expatriates' well-being still needs to be measured, and the relations between expatriates' well-being and the factors involved in the adjustment process still need to be established.

In this study, the well-being of the expatriate employees and their families was not just related to various background and environmental factors. An important part of the present study was to try to understand how the adaptation processes takes place with the advantage that the qualitative material was collected personally and abroad.

The six years' experience of treating expatriate employees and their families in Brazil provided me with a preliminary understanding of their situation when planning the study.

The epidemiological approach in this study provided the possibility of getting a detailed view of how the expatriate employees' and their families' life, work and free time changed while abroad. It gave access to psychosocial work characteristics, to measure strain in the population under study, and to examine factors related to it.

The SRQ sensitivity to detect strain varies from 73 to 83% and the specificity from 72 to 85% with a cut-off point from 5-11 (Harding et al., 1980), while with a cut-off of 7 or 8, the sensitivity varied from 83 to 90% and specificity from 70 to 95.2% (Carta et al, 1993, Mari and Williams, 1986 and Dhadphale et al, 1982). As some authors found more false negative values for males than females, a difference between the cut-off point per gender was suggested and, following this, one study has validated the cut-off point of 5 for males and 6 for females to better access strain, making use of the SRQ. According to this study, with these cut-off points, a better balance between sensitivity and specificity was achieved - a sensitivity of 75.6% and a specificity of 78.4% for males, and a sensitivity of 77.8 and a specificity of 79.7% for females (Palácios et al, 1997). In the present study, both the cut-off point of 5 for males and 6 for females and the cut-off point of 7 for males and females were used.

The qualitative analyses provided a wider picture of the questions under study than expected. As the interviews and discussion groups took place during expatriation in the host country, those interviewed had a natural need to talk, which resulted in a detailed picture of their feelings, worries, sense making processes and daily life abroad. In the

majority of the groups, participants said that they felt enriched by the discussion, that in some way their lived experience abroad became clearer for them. Many spouses even suggested that I continue to organise group discussions with them. They told me that even though they had activities together and were used to talking about their experiences as expatriates, the group discussion was different: they experienced our discussions as more efficient and gratifying.

The analyses of their talk clarified the adjustment process and its relations to expatriate employees' and their spouses' mental health, and how the expatriate employees and their spouses cope with stressful life events.

Thus, this study managed to fill gaps in the dynamics of the adjustment process better than the study made by Korhonen (2007). The comprehension of the spouses' mental health situation was very important for the comprehension of the family dynamics while abroad.

The qualitative material was collected according to the phenomenological method and it proved to be an adequate paradigm to this study's qualitative phase purpose.

As the study covered people of different nationalities the decision of making the focus groups and interviews in Finnish, English or Spanish to give to as many as possible of the expatriate employees and their spouses the opportunity to speak in their own language, or at least in the most comfortable one that we had in common was appropriated and for sure caused less damage to the material's quality than if the interviewed would speak in foreign language, because the material resulted in a fluid speech and if some doubt remained I could clear it as I had all the material recorded and had time to sedimentate it.

The two approaches chosen effectively complemented each other, helping to understand many questions that would otherwise have remained unanswered.

7.1. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

An epidemiological cross-sectional study has the limitations of descriptive studies: they describe the situation at a certain point in time and they often lack a relevant comparison group. Brazil's very large area makes it impossible to meet every member of a target population personally. However, the participation rate in the questionnaire study (59 %) has to be considered very good, compared to the 20 % response rates usually obtained in studies of expatriate employees (Black and Gregersen 1991). It was possible to get quite good information about the non-respondents; according to the qualitative analyses of the non-respondents, it was found that the sample could be considered representative of the population under study.

Half of the expatriates in the population under study were Finnish, but no statistically significant differences were noted between the results of the Finnish and non-Finnish employees. Some impressive gender differences were verified, but due to the low proportion of women the results were not statistically significant.

Gender-related differences were noticed both in the quantitative and in the qualitative parts of this study. Some of these differences in the narratives could be due to some difficulty for men to talk about certain problems with a female interviewer in terms of the qualitative material.

In the epidemiological analyses, the questions related to children's adjustment and children's school life were the ones that most commonly were left unanswered. This was maybe due to the children's age if they were too young to go to school, or at times maybe because they were born in Brazil and the Brazilian life style was the only one they knew. The children were not interviewed themselves; their adjustment was investigated only through their parents' appreciation of their adjustment.

7.2. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Qualitative research is often based on interviews and interpretation of the tape or video-recorded material. Qualitative analysis is inherently subjective because the researcher is the instrument for analysis. It depends of the researcher's ability to follow the narrative of the person interviewed, ask adequate follow up questions, certify that the interviewers' speeches are understood in the right way, interpret, analyse, go deep into the meanings and describe them accurately. The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to demonstrate that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to them, the trustworthiness of qualitative research is composed of four factors: credibility, meaning that the interpretation made during the analysis corresponds to the narrative told by the persons interviewed; transferability, meaning that the categories and core categories can be applied to other situations and circumstances; dependability, meaning that the way the analysis is done is applicable to the cases regardless of differences within the cases; and confirmability, meaning that it is possible to reach similar results with the material used by using different methods. In this study, credibility of the interpretations of the material of the research was assured by confirming with the research's participants during the whole investigation process that the themes that emerged in the discussions were well understood. The interpretations were discussed with one of my advisors, who was not involved in the interviews, but who is experienced in qualitative research and had access to the transcribed texts. Thus, it was possible to use this advisor as an outsider evaluator. After this, I discussed the interpretations with my other advisor. In addition, I made practical exercises and analysed the pre-test material before starting to collect the qualitative material in order to be able to perform the qualitative investigation. Transferability in this study can be easily demonstrated as the same relevant themes emerged in the interviews of expatriate employees in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and the same was verified in their spouses' interviews regardless of the differences in the environment, enterprises and life style. In addition, no differences were verified in the themes that emerged in the interviews of persons from different cultures and nationalities. Concerning the dependability, regardless of gender, nationality, host city and enterprise, no specific problems of using phenomenology were detected, confirming that the way the analysis was done was

applicable to the cases regardless of differences within them. Concerning confirmability, a quantitative method could apprehend the phenomenon in all its nuances. However, the phenomenon could probably be successfully investigated also by grounded theory. The use of both methodological and theoretical triangulation in this study should contribute to its trustworthiness.

7.3. ETHICAL ASPECTS

According to Pietarinen (1999), there are eight ethical requirements for all researchers: interest, honesty, conscientiousness, eliminating danger, respect of human values, social responsibility, development of the profession, and collegial respect. This project was inspired by genuine interest in the expatriate employees' and their families' well-being. Honesty has been very important for me during my work. I was, for example quite disappointed with the expatriate employees' material because I expected to hear about strain and heard about a "conquest". However, as I honestly wanted to comprehend the phenomenon and not prove my own ideas about it, I could appreciate the beauty and richness of its dynamics and how things were correlated to others. The researcher should be conscientious during the whole research project and not leave out any information found in the material used for the research. In this case, I personally transcribed and translated the texts and listened to and read the material several times, trying to comprehend, perceive the relevant themes and describe it with as much fidelity as possible. Eliminating danger in this study can be understood as giving trustworthy information about the expatriation process and its risks to the expatriates' and their families' mental health, to give them the possibility to evaluate their own resources and capabilities to cope with the situations they face while abroad and make reasonable decisions from the beginning. In addition, elimination of danger to expatriates' and their families' mental health can also be promoted via the recommendations concerning the parts involved in expatriation in this study. Respect of human values was observed during the whole project. The project was submitted to the Committee of Ethics in Research of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), which approved the study protocol and gave permission to collect the data. Informed consent was given by each participant. Participants in the interviews returned a signed consent to the author. The persons interviewed were treated respectfully and the consequences of the research should not harm them. Social responsibility in this research is related to producing material with important information for expatriate employees' and their families' mental health promotion, including all its positive consequences for the enterprises for which they work. In addition, this study is an exploratory study without any expectation to prove (own or other theories) or serve specific interests. Finally, collegial respects concerns to the respects to the authors and their studies and also this principle was observed.

7.4. QUESTIONS AND AIMS

The main aim of this study was to determine mental health and well-being among expatriate employees working for Finnish companies in Brazil, establishing relations

between expatriate employees' mental health and both working conditions and private life situations deepening the comprehension of these relations by qualitative method, and to investigate the relations between expatriation and both expatriate employees' and expatriate spouses' mental health, at the same time evaluating how living abroad modified their family relations.

7.4.1. Statistically significant results

As aimed, the occurrence of mental strain and minor mental disorders among expatriate employees working for Finnish companies in Brazil was determined and it was 6-10% (6% when using a cut-off point of 7, and 10% when using a cut-off point of 5 for men and 6 for women). This occurrence is not high when compared to other studies where the SRQ questionnaire has been used: 20-60% in bank tellers in Brazil (Palácios, 1996) and 22% in medical students in Brazil (Loayza 2001). Taking into account that expatriation is a stressful life event (Perone et al. 2008, Dow 2000 and Anderzén 1998) and that the expatriate employees' working hours were longer and the work intensity higher while in Brazil (see Table 5.2) this is a surprising finding.

Also Aryee and Stone (1996) investigated the psychological well-being of expatriate employees in Hong Kong, but represented by a quality of life concept and found that the expatriates expressed an average positive degree of quality of life well above the mid-point of the bipolar scales used.

However, Nicholson and Imaizumi (1993) measured the well-being of Japanese expatriates in England by the GHQ, and it was lower when compared to non-expatriate English well-being, but they lacked other studies' GHQ measures to compare with.

Unfortunately, the other studies concerning expatriate employees' well-being did not use well-being measures in a comparative way (Fish and Bhanugopan 2008, Bhanugopan and Fish 2006, Fish 2005, Selmer 2004, Selmer and Leung 2003-I, Au and Fukuda 2002 and Ward and Kennedy 2001). Some studies measured the well-being of expatriate spouses (Bikos et al. 2007 and Herleman 2006), but not of expatriate employees.

As aimed, the relations between expatriate employees' mental health and both working conditions and private life situations were established and long working days, intense work rhythm and lack of friends, were related to experience of strain in a statistically significant way.

The presence of a stressful condition does not necessarily produce perceived stress as there are different mediators between stressful condition and occurrence of strain, e.g. personal characteristics, coping strategies and job satisfaction. However, in this study there was a positive relation between the intensity of the work rhythm and the experience of strain as well as long working days ("quantitative role overload") and strain. Also Bhanugopan and Fish (2006) reported a positive correlation between "role overload" and "emotional exhaustion". Unfortunately, in their work, the expression "role overload" corresponded to both "qualitative" and "quantitative" role overload indiscriminately.

According to Karasek (1979), a high level of work satisfaction can explain the absence of strain in many challenging jobs and 89 % of expatriate employees referred to being satisfied in Brazil (see Table 7). Expatriation can be considered a challenging work condition. Most of the expatriate employees participating in the study considered the professional or personal challenge as their greatest motivation to move abroad (Table 6.2). In this case, thus the challenge was considered positive, job satisfaction being probably a major mediator between the stressful conditions of expatriation and the low incidence of strain.

This result is consistent with findings in the expatriation literature, where job satisfaction has been found to be positively associated with retention and negatively associated with withdrawal cognitions (Naumann 1993, Shaffer and Harrison, 1998, Feldman and Thompson, 1993 and Black and Gregersen, 1991). While abroad, job satisfaction is associated with pay satisfaction, housing satisfaction and other benefits while abroad. It is pertinent to remember that most of the expatriates in his study were earning more while in Brazil (Table 5.2) and were satisfied with their housing (Table 7).

The questionnaire used in this study was well suited to determine job satisfaction as such, as well as factors related to job satisfaction while abroad. However, the dynamics of job satisfaction became much clearer in the qualitative analysis.

Gender-related differences between expatriates have been well investigated in the last twenty years (Connerley et al. 2008, Tzeng 2006, Hartl 2004, Wang and Bu 2004, Culpan and Wright 2002, Altman and Shortland 2001, Mathur-Helm 2002, Adler 1987 and 1984). In this study, the risk of present strain was four-fold higher for female expatriate employees when compared to males. But, like in most-of the time in the expatriate literature, there were far more male than female expatriate employees in the present study (and consequently no statistical relevance). Anyway, this finding is corroborated by Striker et al.'s (1999) findings. They perceived that women were more worried than men regarding travel related stresses.

Karasek and Theorell (1990) noticed that women and executive men were more susceptible to lack of social support in the work place than men in general. The addition of lack of support to lack of control was more strongly related to experience of strain in these two groups than the combination of high psychological demands and lack of control.

Lack of friends was also found to be a risk factor for being in the symptomatic group. Of the four symptomatic women, one answered the question about how work in Brazil influenced (positively or negatively) her mental health (the only open question in the questionnaire), that it influenced negatively because life was hard and she had fewer friends. This fits well with the studies of managerial and professional women's well-being, which postulate that women invest more in their social networks than men. Burke (1996) states that: "women invest more in and place a greater value on friendships than do men, and women receive greater benefits from social support than do men.

Greenglass (1993) makes a persuasive case that coping, for women, cannot be separated from interpersonal relationships.”

This could be related to another finding in this study; the role of being married as a “protector factor” for women (while acting as a “risk factor” for men) to avoid minor psychiatric disorders. The husbands of expatriate employees could be attenuating, at least partially, the problem of lack of social support while abroad. As Hartl (2004) noticed in her qualitative study: “If ‘available’, the family therefore becomes a prime social integrator, as pointed out by the married women who underlined the benefits of coming to Hong Kong with a partner/family. As a protected and protecting place, the family as a nuclear unit becomes an important source of personal security. One participant pointed to the strain this situation (of being focused on the family for emotional support and stability) puts on a marriage.”

Jones (2000) wrote that “being accompanied by one’s spouse will have a stabilizing influence on behaviour, whereas the isolation of being a ‘single at post’ could increase the likelihood of sexual contact as well as substance abuse and psychological problems associated with the breakup of normal family life.” Eytan and Loutan (2006) also highlighted the same risks in their study. This study, with the exception of the situation of female expatriate employees, does not confirm Jones’ idea as none of the single men belonged to the symptomatic group, and in terms of substance abuse, single and divorced men reported the same amount of drinking or less than before expatriation, while expatriate employees who were married or living together were drinking the same amount as before or more. Sexual behaviour wasn’t investigated in the present study.

A positive association between expatriate employees’ and spouses’ happiness was verified in this study. Many other authors describe the same phenomenon, considering that expatriate spouses’ adjustment is one of the most critical determinants of whether an expatriate completes his or her assignment (Ali et al. 2003, Shaffer and Harrison 2001 and 1998, Caligiuri et al. 1998, Fukuda and Chu 1994, Black and Gregersen 1991, Black and Stephan 1989 and Tung 1981), and recently in a meta-analytic review of 12 predictors of adjustment for the expatriate employee, the spouse’s adjustment was the most salient (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005). Could this finding be related to the supposition that being married would be a “risk factor” for men to fall into the symptomatic group? Could their symptoms be related to their (female) spouses’ adjustment difficulties?

Future studies would be needed to clarify the impact of expatriation on mental health in men compared to women, both among employees and spouses. A progressive study, covering the relationships between married partners not only during expatriation, but also before and after it would shed more light on this question.

As the number of symptomatic expatriate employees was limited, the findings of the study cannot be generalised on a statistical basis. Some of the results confirmed findings of previous studies, while other results revealed new findings, indicating new directions for future studies.

7.4.2. Central themes

As aimed, the qualitative study provided me with elements for the comprehension of the relation between expatriation and both expatriate employees' and expatriate spouses' mental health. In addition, as aimed, it was possible to deepen the comprehension of how living abroad modified the expatriates' family relations.

The relevant themes to deepen the comprehension of the phenomenon will be discussed based on the basis of the results obtained in both the quantitative and the qualitative approach, and in the light of the available literature in accordance with the principles of triangulation (see Figure 1). In Figure 1, the whole picture represents triangulation and the apprehended phenomenon could be understood as the content of the triangle. The triangle's content thus represents the most complete picture I could compose through triangulation.

The expatriate employees and their challenging work abroad

It was surprising that the topics the expatriates brought up were so different from those of their spouses.

The expatriates talked all the time about work. The adjustment process to the host country as such was never brought up in the interviews. The same phenomenon was observed in Briody and Chrisman's study (1991). Everything happened in the work place and during task execution. There, they noticed the cultural differences and adapted to them. They did everything that was necessary to achieve the work objective. The world outside work seemed to be just a place where they spent their free time and holidays. This finding is corroborated by Shaffer et al.'s study findings (1999). They noticed that the Black adjustment's model (Black et al. 1991) fit improved when the work-related factors were allowed to influence expatriates' interaction and general adjustment.

When talking about expatriation, the expatriate employees were basically talking about a pleasant experience.

After listening to the interviews carefully and starting to do the transcription, it became clear that the expatriates were not denying the potential stressors. They talked about communication difficulties, cultural differences, difficulties in evaluating how much time would be necessary for task realization due to lack of knowledge of local resources such as, e.g. services, material, and logistics. They found working abroad more challenging and they wanted to manage or "*win this deal*" as one of them said; they were like conquerors in some way. They really seemed to feel recompensed in many ways by their jobs. The expatriation experience with all its own challenges was worthwhile, and most of the time pleasant for them. They were describing in detail how this experience was pleasant, and how they found energy to deal with all the challenges. Thus, they gave a rather good picture of their way of thinking and their experiences.

These perceptions were in accordance with the epidemiological study results, where of all the factors investigated only long working days, intense work rhythm and lack of friends were related to the presence of strain.

The expatriate employees said that they had longer working days, they had many things to do in a short period of time, they had a great responsibility, and that they were supposed to work as much as possible.

They had to deal with many pressures: deadlines for work completion, communication difficulties, cultural differences and structural shortages in the young organization. Thus, there was a combination of factors that could easily lead to strain. The main question is why, when dealing with so many potential stressors, the strain level among expatriate employees was only ten percent and they talked about a pleasant experience? Accordingly to Karasek's model, this is an active situation. They had high psychological demands and high decision latitude, fitting the definition of challenging work very well, where job satisfaction plays a large role in strain avoidance (Karasek and Theorell 1990). Decision-making authority proved to be associated with expatriate employees' adjustment (Takeuchi et al. 2008, Shaffer et al. 1999, Aryee and Stone 1996 and Black and Gregersen 1991), and positively related to all three facets of expatriate adjustment (Takeuchi et al. 2008).

In this study, the degree of work satisfaction while abroad was higher than in the home country, even though the degree of satisfaction with work and organizational matters in general was not very good (see Tables 6.2 and 6.4). On the other hand, satisfaction with pay and housing was much greater abroad (see Tables 6.2 and 8). So, consistent with the literature, these benefits could be related to job satisfaction while abroad (Feldman and Tompson 1993, Naumann 1992 and Black and Gregersen 1991).

The qualitative analyses clarified this point, revealing that work satisfaction did not depend on work and the organization's good conditions, but on the successful performance of a challenging job and the recognition related to the benefits, and on the use of creative intelligence, resulting in a clear personal contribution to task realization. Jassawalla et al. (2004) noticed the same in their qualitative investigation, that expatriate managers often feel highly valued during foreign assignments which produces effective responses. They tend to enjoy greater autonomy overseas and are the focus of attention. As one expatriate employee pointed out: *"Because in the home country you are one in a thousand. Here it is a completely different thing. You are much more independent."*

Even if they were working hard, working abroad provided the expatriate employees with the possibility to experience both dimensions of recognition proposed by Déjours. Their work received the judgement of "utility", as it was recognized by superiors in the organization, who were ready to provide a good salary and benefits. In addition, it was also clearly perceived by their subordinates, as the work was very visible, e.g. the building of a factory or the successful entrance into a new market.

As to the second dimension, the judgement of their work's "beauty", by their peers, as they managed to implement their work tasks with limited resources, adding something of themselves through their creativity, their own contribution. The expatriate employees' contribution to the organization was perceived and was being recognised.

In this sense, the expatriation was a pleasant experience as it provided the expatriate employees with the possibility to receive recognition, the "symbolic reward" appreciated

by all employees. Through the recognition of the quality of their work they got the feeling of being special and powerful, which was reflected in their own identity. For many, this may have been the greatest reward from working abroad, the pleasure of being able to carry out difficult tasks, with few resources and experiencing gratification from doing so.

This can explain the expatriates' mechanisms to deal with the potential stressors inherent in the experience of working abroad. They had a competitive salary, good housing, a car and other benefits. The enterprise trusted them and gave them a great responsibility. The recognition of their work gave them psychological satisfaction, in addition to the salary and other material benefits. It made them feel special and appreciated. On the other hand, they felt that *more was expected from them*, they felt that they should do more, because they received more.

Wisner (1994) studied enterprise and work organization in technology transfers. According to him, many unexpected obstacles to work abroad means that work cannot be carried out in the same way as it would be in the headquarters. In these cases, it is probably easier if the organization is less rigid and formal. The expatriate employees refer to this need of flexibility in order to succeed while abroad. Because of lack of resources they have to do many things not directly related to their work in order to be able to achieve the objectives. Due to communication difficulties and cultural differences, they sometimes were expecting one thing related to schedule or local services but they had to make do with another.

This made the expatriate employees think creatively, giving more of themselves in order to carry out their work. On the other hand, they got gratification more directly, had a wider view of the enterprises' whole business, and they could better recognize their own contribution to the final work. They said that the work was more dynamic and they were more independent.

Déjourné (1993) postulated that "the construction of the sense of the work by the recognition gratifying the person through his or her *own* expectations (identity construction in the social field) can change suffering into pleasure."

The expatriate spouses' identity crises

After the introduction of the main question: "How does it feel to be an expatriate?", the expatriate spouses usually spoke for a long time about many day-to-day aspects of life that were not considered relevant by the investigator, e.g. that the services were always late, that the curtains did not come on the expected day, or that the legs of the sofa were ordered in one colour and came in another. These themes were so often brought up that the interviewer began to be disappointed, thinking that maybe the method was not good enough for its purpose, or that she was personally unable to make this kind of investigation in the right way.

After listening to the interviews many times and thinking about the content of the interviews as a whole, the researcher, however, noticed that these comments were in

the right place, and were actually very relevant to the expatriate spouses. They showed that the (above-mentioned) shift had occurred in expatriate spouses' lives, turning their attention to domestic matters. These first comments reflected this phenomenon and were perfectly coherent after a deeper analysis of the material. Most of the expatriate spouses started a new life in the host country, making everything happen from the beginning: a new house, new school for the children, new friends, new language, and usually a new role (74% of the expatriate spouses had a university degree and 79% of them were out of work while abroad, 53% with the status of "unemployed" (Table 8)).

It seemed that their old lives were left in their own country and they were starting a new one abroad. This did not happen to the expatriate employees who continued in working life. Briody and Chrisman (1991) obtained the same kinds of results when they collected retrospective data through open-ended interviews. They even presented it graphically in their study: the expatriate spouses were immediately and completely submerged in the host country culture, while the expatriate employees were immediately and completely submerged in working life and their adjustments happened in these respective places. (The expatriate employees' adjustment process will be discussed in detail in its own section).

According to Shaffer and Harrison (2001), "all expatriate spouses are likely to go through some disruption or change in their identity (...) some disruptions are more extreme than others, ranging from a reduction in the clarity of their identity to a need to form a new one." They based their hypothesis partially on Burke's identity disruption theory (Burke 1991), where "disruptions in the identity process occur when individuals enter new cultures or adopt noteworthy new roles" and following the consequent 'distress' generated by the big change starts the "formation of a revised self-concept that facilitates adjustment". Recently also Bikos et al. (2007) demonstrated that expatriate spouses correspond to a typical role-loss example when they move abroad.

In the present study, it was considered that the process described probably produces some level of identity disruption and its consequent re-formation. This re-formation process is very clear when analyzing the answers and comments of the expatriate spouses, especially in the social support item where they say that their home country social support does not function anymore, and that other expatriate spouses were their biggest social support as they could understand their problems and their way of thinking. Consistent with this is the perception of the different profile of the new friends compared to the home country ones (Qualitative analyses, item 6.2.2.1.6., "Social Support").

The fact that spouses who work during expatriation "were better able to transport their definitions of self to the new environment" (Shaffer and Harrison 2001, Portes and Rumbaut 1990) was also largely verified in this study. For example, the employee whose wife worked told that their routine had not changed very much. This also explains why almost all expatriate spouses said that they consider the adjustment process easier for the expatriate employees as they are working.

Another big difference between expatriate spouses and expatriate employees, which corroborates the idea that the interaction with the host country is immediate and more

intense for the expatriate spouses than for the expatriate employees, is that for the spouses the learning of the host country's language was considered mandatory, in order to be able to take care of work at home and to organize their days. For expatriate employees, it was voluntary, as they could speak English at work.

As Caligiuri et al (1998) say: "The expatriate has the comfort of the familiarity of his or her company's culture, whereas the other family members experience completely new surroundings in their day-to-day life." Consistent with the higher level of interaction with the host country, due to the new life's formation need, and possibly the consequent identity re-formation, is the different timing of adjustment revealed in the qualitative analyses. The expatriate spouses report that the first six months are the most difficult, while the expatriate employees report that the most difficult time starts after six months abroad. It makes sense as the interaction of expatriate spouses with the host country, 'being completely surrounded in their day-to-day lives' is a fact and starts with the beginning of expatriation, while the expatriate employees are so involved in work in the beginning, so enthusiastic with all the novelty in the work and the new challenges they experience that the difficult period starts only after six months.

Work is the biggest differential. Expatriate working spouses or expatriate employees adjusted in a different way and did not present this identity disruption process. In this respect, the results of the study are in disagreement with those of Shaffer and Harrison (2001), who found that while working: "the expatriate spouses lives didn't change very much" but considered that "a shift from employment to unemployment did not seem to affect spouse adjustment", perhaps because spouses have already reconciled themselves with this fact before accepting the assignment". However, Shaffer and Harrison admitted that this issue was very rudimentarily analyzed in their study and suggested that more studies should be done in this area.

In the present study, unemployment was a central theme for the expatriate spouses and a permanent worry, in some cases being the determinant for the decision to return home. Also Bikos et al. (2007) reported that the expatriate spouses were worried about the impact that the gap of unrelated employment would have on their career path. This finding is coherent with the profile of the spouses.

It is possible that the concern about one's own professional future was more evident in this study because the interviews were took place during expatriation in the host country when the spouses were most of the time very unsure about what would happen to their career after returning to the home country. The relation between identity and work was so explicit that some expatriate spouses linked their own work to their own name in the interviews: "*When we have our own work and some own things we also have our own name.*" As few things can be more directly linked to one's own identity than one's own name, the relation between one's own work and one's own identity must be considered very important. Work and identity were so closely related in the group under study that it would even be possible to infer that a discontinuity in working life could signify a discontinuity (disruption) of identity.

What I have called an ‘identity crisis’ could very well be called an identity disruption, as was done by Shaffer and Harrison (2001). The interruption of working life was a major contributing factor in this process as, while abroad, there is so much novelty that once the professional identity is lost it would be natural to admit a wider identity re-formation process. This ‘crisis’ situation was also noticed by Caligiuri et al. (1998) who stated that: “changes in employment status and possible sacrifices of professional careers are likely to become an important identity issue”.

Many authors have studied the relation between work and identity. Christophe Déjours postulated that the work done is reflected in the person’s identity through its recognition. The judgement of “beauty” or “utility” of the work done, or recognition, is the biggest source of reward and is also a source of pleasure. This satisfaction with work done was also described by the expatriate spouses, and seemed to occur independently of their job’s complexity, as in the example of the women who worked with the copying machine (Déjours 1993).

The expatriate spouses said that they missed the recognition ‘or appreciation’, that they experienced while participating in working life. They did not consider themselves recognized in the same way when they took care of the tasks at home. Sometimes they would feel recognized when executing minor, temporary work or studying. Their role of taking care of the work at home could rarely fill this need completely. They described working life as “*own life*”. This definition shows quite well how the discontinuity of work meant discontinuity of “*own life*” or, in other words, “disruption of the identity”.

If the expatriation time lasted for a long time, the expatriate spouses tended to assume their new role completely and some no longer even planned to go back to work. This kind of behaviour seemed to solve the “identity crisis” or role conflict, characterizing the consolidation of an identity re-formation process.

Some of the expatriate spouses, who had been on expatriate assignment for a long time, did have plans to go back to working life, but said that they would like to change profession or start their own business. This may reveal a feeling of uncertainty or even an inability to perform one’s work after a long time out of the profession.

A similar attitude to one’s own work was described by Seligman Silva (1997) in her study on long-term unemployment. In her study, this feeling of inability was related to a kind of identity crisis. According to her classification, the expatriate spouses at this phase could probably be classified in the “occult unemployment definition” where the situation of unemployment is disguised by some other condition. As if they would no longer want to return to work, or as if they were afraid of trying to do so, because of the long-term unemployment. They used the continuation of the expatriation as a way to disguise the reality of unemployment. When they talked about “*falling down*” referring to possible repatriation, it meant for them losing the expatriate spouse’s role and a change to unemployment. Seligman Silva also described somatic symptoms related to the long-term unemployment condition, which were also described in this study: “*I’m a healthy person and I’ve symptoms all time...*”

This similarity is interesting, because reading Edith's study (Seligman Silva 1997) we could also attribute these feelings to a lack of money, which was a reality after some time without working among the population investigated by her, but is not a reality among the expatriate spouses, and as their unemployment condition is a consequence of their own choice, these feelings corroborate the idea that the work realization is 'per se' very valuable for a person's identity or its integrity, and a source of pleasure.

This similarity is better understood in the light of the role-loss literature. There is an especially interesting study consistent with this that covers the significance of role losses without financial loss. Schelenker and Gutek (1987) studied employees who were moved to different and simpler functions without salary loss compared to a group that was dismissed by the same employer. Both presented quite similar behaviour, reinforcing the importance of role loss without financial loss. Their results are especially interesting when trying to understand the expatriate spouses' psychology.

At times, expatriation could be acting as a disguise for unemployment. Some of those interviewed revealed that they never liked to work or that they had subjective feeling of burn-out, and expatriation was probably a socially more acceptable way of taking a break than just stopping work.

The continuation of work seems to keep the identity at least longer or more efficiently than if the person does not have work. Many spouses in this situation managed to define clearly: 'I'm here for this time but after that I will go back to my work.'

Children's adaptation

Among the respondents, 5% said their children were unhappy in Brazil and 3% said they were poorly adapted. Even among the vast majority of expatriates whose children had adapted well, 47 % of them would like to return to their home country at once, if possible, according to their parents' understands. According to the qualitative material, even children with special needs adapted well. Of expatriate employees 15% answered that their children did not have any friends, however, it should be noted that most of these children were still too young to have friends. Also the expatriates children's friends' nationality profile was not as clear as their parents' friends' profile, probably because in the international schools they have the opportunity to know both foreign and Brazilian children. Adolescence was considered a critical age to move by the expatriate children's parents, but one father was surprised that his four-year-old had a difficult adjustment (De Wit et al. 1998 and Gaylord 1979). However, according to the literature, both preschool and early adolescence are the most demanding childhood phases concerning adaptation. As expected, the period immediately after the move was identified as the most difficult period by the children's parents, as children recognise the environment as unknown. A friend of the same nationality can be a valuable facilitator in the adaptation process. According to the spouses, after many relocations children avoid getting involved with other children. This finding was new and its impact in children's psychology should be clarified. Confirming the previous studies' findings, even though relocation is a demanding process for children, they seem to adapt quite well, but their parents should

prepare them well before relocation and be present and available during the moving process (De Wit et al. 1998, Cornille 1993 and Stroh and Brett 1990).

How living abroad modified the family dynamics

A global assignment, unlike a domestic position, blurs the lines between home and work because of the involvement of the entire family (Haslberger and Brewster 2008, Grant-Vallone and Ensher 2001, Caligiuri et al. 1998 and Harvey 1985).

This observation was verified in the present study, for example, when the expatriate spouses say that they are also *working for the company* and refer to their worry about expatriate employees' work issues. The expatriate employees also seem to present the same belief that the enterprise is not just their employer, but is, in a way *responsible* for both them and their families. This becomes very clear when they say that they cannot be dismissed in the middle of an assignment; when asked about this, they explained that they were abroad and had their family depending of them. It is a different situation than that of employees in the home country. However, they did not give any legally based explanation for their opinion. As Jones has stated (2000), the responsibility of the enterprises for expatriate employees and their families is greater as "all the expatriate's new health risks can be considered to be occupational in nature".

The spouses' financial dependence probably explains why internal matters of the enterprise affect the expatriate spouses in a completely different way than in the home country. Caligiuri (1998) postulated that both the "family's cross-cultural adjustment was influenced by the expatriate's adjustment to working in the host country", as well as the expatriate's adjustment to working in the host country being influenced by the family's cross-cultural adjustment; the same observation was made in this study.

The expatriate employees interviewed in this study referred to the great responsibility for their families. They recognize the dependence of their family and assumed the provider role, avoiding telling their spouses about enterprises matters that might worry them.

To understand why their family's matters affected them so strongly, notice that their spouses constituted the biggest social support for them during expatriation. Their family members are their only old "supporters" present while abroad. Corresponding to this interview observation was the result from the epidemiological study, showing that expatriate employees changed their free time use while abroad, starting to dedicate time formerly spent with friends and hobbies to the family.

Thus, it is natural that the expatriate employees are directly affected by their spouses' possible lack of well-being and vice-versa. In the epidemiological study, the association between the spouses' happiness and the employees' happiness already demonstrated in previous studies was confirmed (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005, Ali et al. 2003, Shaffer and Harrison 2001, Caligiuri et al. 1998, Shaffer and Harrison 1998, Arthur and Bennett 1995, Fukuda and Chu 1994, Black and Gregersen 1991, Black and Stephens 1989 and Tung 1981). As one spouse said: "we really need each other much more."

It seems, that even dedicating most of their free time to their families (see Figure 2), it is not enough to fulfil their spouses' needs of contact during expatriation (Nicholson and Imaizumi 1993). It was not possible to quantify how much time the expatriate employees dedicated to their families, but it was probably more than to all other social activities. This reflects both a lack of consistent supports while abroad and the difficulties in keeping up previous hobbies.

To conclude, expatriation put the expatriate employees and their spouses (if not working) in completely different situations. They assumed different roles, had different needs and interacted with different intensity with the host country. It seems that the couple move in opposite directions: in the beginning of the expatriation the expatriate employee typically goes abroad because of his/her own objectives, to make his/her own *conquests* while the expatriate spouse moves abroad thinking of the family's well-being; in the end of expatriation the expatriate employee's priority is the family, while sometimes the expatriate spouse's priority is to take care of her/his own career issues or own individual aims; during expatriation the expatriate employee most of the times experiences recognition and promotion, while the expatriate spouse experiences role-loss; the expatriate employee is very busy while the expatriate spouse is very available. This process seemed to result in some form of family reorganization.

Repatriation and career development

Consistent with the literature, most of the expatriate employees considered that adjusting to life in the home country is more difficult than adapting to life abroad (Anderzén 1998, Adler 1981 and Harvey 1989).

For the expatriate spouses, it seemed that adjustment to life back home depended basically on the immediate viability of their own professional life, meaning a job (either old or new), continuation of university studies, or other. When they had these kinds of ties, repatriation was easier, if not, it was very difficult for them, too. Accordingly to Harvey (1989) "the spouse may also experience difficulty starting/restarting his/her career. If the spouse had to stop a career to permit a husband/wife the opportunity to take a foreign assignment, the spouse may resent career problems that have to be coped with upon repatriation."

The expatriate employees referred to a feeling of not being *desired* anymore, when expatriation ended, especially if a local substitute had already taken over the expatriate's position, or if there was no need for the position anymore. One expatriate said that this was a thing that "*you do not want to feel*". It was as if the value of their work was being questioned and the recognition of their work was ending.

Probably this is why the conversation is so emotional when it gets to this theme; they argue the need for expatriates as if they would be trying to self-affirm. It is like an identity fight where they want to show the importance of their work, which probably by this phase starts to be less clear even for them, due to the role conflict that begins. It can be noticed, for example, that when they compare their own work to local employees'

work and say that *there are good locals*, they probably mean that they are not so sure anymore that they are so much better than the locals.

The position at home is not necessarily a consequence of the experience gained abroad. Sometimes, the expatriates do not get a higher position in the organization when they go back home, but things go the other way (Bolino 2007, Korhonen 2007, Tzeng 2006, Fish and Wood 1994). In the quantitative study more expatriate employees considered that the possibilities of getting a promotion were worse in Brazil than in the home country (see Table 5.2, item 4). Adler (1981) observed that “although employees acquired a number of commonly valued managerial skills while working abroad, home-country organizations tended neither to recognize nor to utilize these skills.” The combination of these factors together with the change in the expatriate employees’ identities is probably responsible for the high rate (around 30%) of change of employer during the first year after repatriation.

“On repatriation the ambiguity of a new position, if available, as well as the modification in career path will be of the utmost concern to repatriated executives” (Harvey 1989, Dotlich 1982 and Murry 1978). They are not recognized in the same way as they were before (Jassawalla et al. 2004). They do not have the symbolic gratification (Déjours, 1993). They have to live with a job without satisfaction and support (Karasek and Theorell, 1990), a situation that could more easily lead to strain than that of expatriation (Anderzén 1998, Adler 1981 and Harvey 1989). This role conflict and role ambiguity is described in the literature (Anderzén 1998, Oddou 1992 and Black et al. 1992). The local partners do not appreciate their work in the same way as they did before, and their superiors do not want to continue the international assignment anymore. It is just time to go back home.

They realize that at home they will not have the same benefits or salary as abroad. However, as they said, they forget this. By this time the employment situation of the spouse starts to be important. If the spouse does not get a job, it adds to the difficulties of returning. In this case, *the big puzzle* (of long-term expatriation), as referred to by an expatriate employee, becomes reality.

Long-term expatriation

Anderzén (1998) noticed that the readjustment during repatriation was more difficult the longer the assignment.

In long-term expatriation, or after many subsequent international assignments, the expatriate employees started to define themselves as expatriates.

Probably after a long time performing a challenging work, occupying key positions and living on a better social level the expatriates’ identities suffered a slow and gradual change, coherent with their new work position. But, in contrast to spouses’ identity changes, the expatriate employees’ identity changes seemed to happen without any disruption process. Their professional identity seemed to maintain the core of their identity for a long time untouched, as shown by, for example, the fact that their social supports and

beliefs remain for a long time intact. However, with time, the reward, symbolic or not, obtained from work seemed to gradually change them. The longer one had been abroad, the more one had changed. This “refashioning” of their identities was also noticed by Korhonen (2007) while studying expatriates after their return.

Thus, the longer the time spent abroad, the more difficult it is for the expatriates to conciliate all the factors necessary to make them want to go back: a good job for the expatriate employee, work for his/her spouse, school for children. Aggravating this situation is the high expectation level of the experienced employee looking for a position.

According to one expatriate employee, the expatriates become a *selected group*, which would have difficulties in adapting back to the home country. It is as if the reflections of recognition in one’s own identity, the feeling of being powerful and special had been incorporated into one’s own personality. It becomes difficult to give up this position.

The number of contacts the expatriates have at the headquarters has generally decreased during the years. This makes finding a new position more difficult, and especially finding the kind of position one would like to have. As one expatriate stated in the interview: “*if I go to work there (in the home country) my boss will be a man that I selected for a work position in the enterprise at the time when I was the boss there.*” Sometimes, when the expatriates plan to go back they feel that overseas assignments have harmed, rather than helped, their careers (Bolino 2007).

It is easier to continue as an expatriate if you can find a position that matches your experience and continue in an expatriate life style.

The situation of the spouses, who may have been away from working life for a long time, aggravates this situation. After many years of expatriation most spouses have completely incorporated the “expatriate spouses’ role” and usually do not desire or do not feel capable of going back to work. They find it easier to continue in the role they have adopted, continuing from one assignment to another.

As the temporary situation becomes “permanent”, the worries about spouses’ retirement and own parents, who are getting older, increase.

In addition, moving continuously from one country to another is very tiring for all the family members (DeWit et al. 1998) and modifies the quality of the friendships they have. The friendships become more superficial due to the self-protecting behaviour that occurs in spouses and children (referred to in the spouses social support section).

However, the adaptation of children is more difficult the longer the family stays abroad. As one employee said, at times they have not yet had the opportunity of living in the home country, making the adaptation to school life and general life much more difficult than in a new international school, and country abroad if they don’t speak their own mother tongue well.

Adaptation differences by gender

Some authors have suggested that the process of cross-cultural adjustment is not the same for female and male employees (Haslberger and Brewster 2008 and Selmer and Leung 2003-II). In the present study gender differences were noticed concerning the timing of adaptation, need of social support and repatriation in both the quantitative and qualitative studies. It seems that lack of social support is negatively correlated to the female well-being while abroad. Similar findings were also mentioned also in previous studies (Herleman 2006 and Caligiuri and Lazarova 2002). Lack of support was also negatively correlated to male expatriates' well-being in this study, but seemed to be especially associated with female's well-being.

Social support

Already when commenting on the epidemiological results in the light of the qualitative analyses, it was seen that the presence of symptoms was associated with lack of friends. The presence of symptoms may well be a consequence of lack of friends, and of course it can be, but it may also reflect the attention paid to the lack of friends when experiencing difficulties at work. Spouses cannot provide enough support for the expatriate employees in these matters as they usually try to avoid talking about enterprise issues that might worry their spouses.

A study concerning female expatriate spouses' well-being showed significant relationships between social support and interactional adjustment, personal adjustment and depression (Herleman 2006). Caligiuri and Lazarova (2002) noticed the same and suggested that social support and social interaction are clear ways to intervene to ensure that female expatriates are cross-culturally adjusted. Attention to female expatriates' social networks will facilitate their emotional well-being and cross-cultural adjustment, and, in turn, their performance on the job. It was also noticed also that boundary spanning activities were demonstrated to be positively associated with job satisfaction (Au and Fukuda 2002), adjustment and also that social capital i.e. the network relationships a person possesses is related to retention (Suutari and Makela 2009).

In the population studied, almost 9 out of 10 of expatriate employees said they were happy in Brazil and considered themselves well adapted to both living and working. More than half of them had more foreign than Brazilian friends, and most of them said that it was difficult to get closer to the Brazilians. Of their spouses, three out of four said they were happy in Brazil and well adapted; they also had more foreign than Brazilian friends. These findings confirm the findings of previous studies about organisational expatriates' social interactions, which tend to be limited to other expatriates in the same organization and the limited number of host country nationals they meet in their work places, professional clubs, residential areas, etc (Peltokorpi and Froese 2009 and Copeland and Norel 2002).

The support is especially important for the expatriate employees in difficult times. During expatriation, expatriate employees considered their own spouse and their friends in the home country as their biggest support. This found changed slightly with prolonged

expatriation when foreign friends abroad started to become gradually more important. For the expatriate spouses, again, the support profiles totally changed, consistent with the identity disruption idea and the immediate crisis after moving. Other expatriate spouses became their most important support persons, in addition to their spouses, while abroad. Copeland and Norell (2002) noticed that highly adapted female spouses were the ones who, while abroad, received more of their support from local rather than long-distance providers and were in more cohesive families. On the other hand, in the present study they felt they were less and less understood by their husbands. The friends and family in the home country could no longer act as a support because they could not understand their new life condition. Also this finding is consistent with Copeland and Norell's study as they emphasised the importance of friends to female expatriate spouses' adjustment. It was the loss in and dissatisfaction with the amount of time with friends that was negatively correlated to the participants' adjustment.

Peltokorpi and Froese (2009) showed that self-initiated expatriates are better adjusted to general aspects of their host country and interactions with host-country nationals than organizational expatriates, like the participants of the present study. They considered that self-initiated expatriates had more motivation and frequency of cross-cultural interaction and tend to be more tolerant with locals, probably because of the interest to remain in the host country. This finding reinforces the considerations of expatriate spouses in the qualitative results of the present study concerning the temporality of the friendships while abroad, the relationships with other expatriate spouses and their "self-protecting" behavior.

The timing of expatriation

In this study male expatriate employees and male spouses without children seemed to present an adaptation process similar to the U-curve, while female expatriate spouses and male expatriate spouses with children presented a different one.

Even if Anderzén's (1998) interpretation of her results is different from those obtained in this study, Anderzén's results are already perfectly compatible with the present study because, in the present study, probably around the sixth month, the expatriate employees are really becoming discouraged (the second stage of the U-curve), while the expatriate spouses are probably often already recovering from the worst phase.

In their longitudinal study noticed that the U-curve theory did not fit the female expatriate spouses' adaptation. They considered that adaptation could fit better into a S-curve. In the present study, there were not enough elements to confirm the S-curve theory.

Cultural distance

In this study, it was not possible to make any conclusions anything about the role of cultural distance in adaptation, as the opinions presented were so diverse. This finding is corroborated by Selmer's study (2007) where no differences in adaptation were noticed, independent of the cultural similarity (or dissimilarity). Even though the investigated

were from different nationalities and with different cultural distance from Brazil, like India, Finland and Argentina, no clear relation between cultural distance and adaptation was noticed. Some people would like to move to an exotic country simply because it is exotic. Motivations to move somewhere and reactions to the move seemed to be more personal than consequence of cultural distance. Shenkar's study (2001) also corroborates the present study's finding. Shenkar postulated, e.g. that "certain cultures are considered attractive to other cultures" and questioned many believes beliefs concerning cultural distance like the ideas of symmetry, linearity and stability.

Previous overseas experience

Previous overseas experience was considered an important facilitator factor for adaptation to a subsequent expatriation. The attitudes while abroad were considered different when the expatriate employee and/or his/her spouse had a previous experience of working/living abroad. The informants said that, based on the anterior experience(s), they could anticipate what kind of problems they would face and that this knowledge helped. Only one person disagreed with this statement, but paradoxically the same person referred to more difficulties during the first expatriation. These findings are corroborated by Shaffer et al.'s (1999) findings. They demonstrated the role of previous overseas experience as an important moderator of various relationships involving all three dimensions of adjustment: adjustment to general non-work environment, adjustment to interaction with host nationals outside work, and adjustment to work. Selmer confirmed these findings (Selmer 2002).

Language fluency

Shaffer et al.'s (1999) findings demonstrated that also host language fluency acts as an important moderator of various relationships involving the dimensions of adjustment. In the present work, Portuguese language fluency was considered very important by the expatriate spouses, but optional by the expatriate employees. This finding is in concordance with the finding that the non-working expatriate spouses "dived" into the host culture, while the expatriate employees were occupied with their "challenging work" where they could communicate in English.

Pre-departure training

Among those interviewed, just one person among the expatriate employees mentioned a training course before the first expatriation and experienced it as useful. None mentioned such a course before subsequent expatriations. In the quantitative study, 20% participated in courses in their own enterprise. The expatriate employees' opinion was that it would be desirable to have a training course before each expatriation. The spouses received pre-departure training before the first expatriation but they would like to have had training before each expatriation and also while abroad.

The image of the host country

Both the expatriate employees and the spouses referred mentioned that the previous interest in the host country and the image that the person had of the host country before moving influenced the adaptation process.

Anticipatory adjustment

Black et al. (1991) noticed that: “individuals clearly make anticipatory adjustments before they actually encounter the new situation” and it was stated that this phase should be accompanied by the parental enterprise, which should, e.g. offer training courses to the expatriate employees and their spouses (Black et al. 1991 and Shaffer et al. 1999). A clear anticipatory adjustment process was noticed in the present study and was described in detail in sections 6.2.1.1.1., 6.2.2.1. and 6.2.2.1.2.

Necessity of control

In many different situations the expatriate employees and their spouses referred to the necessity of some level of control in order to succeed abroad. Clear information about issues like the length of assignment and work continuation seems to make the expatriates and their families feel safe. They referred to a need to know the details about their assignment in order to prepare themselves and their children for the new situations.

7.5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

A study to investigate possible gender-related differences in the adjustment process and well-being should be elaborated. Future studies would be needed to clarify the impact of expatriation on mental health in men compared to women, both among employees and spouses. A progressive study, covering the relationships between married partners not only during expatriation, but also before and after it would shed more light on this question.

Children’s well-being during expatriation should also be further investigated. An ideal study should include a direct study of children. Also the impact of expatriation on children’s well-being in late repatriation should be investigated.

Another interesting theme for future investigation is how the existence of a permanent work place in the home country could prevent the expatriate spouses’ identity disruption process. This was associated with a lack of awareness of the temporality of the experience abroad in the qualitative study.

7.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

For the enterprises:

There should be a person in the HR responsible for giving detailed information to the expatriate employees about what is happening in the organization they have left.

Mental strain and a decrease in expatriates' performance can be avoided by planning expatriation and repatriation well with the expatriate employee. As described in this study, if the work continuation issues are not clear the expatriates feel unsafe and cannot concentrate on their work.

Provide clear information about all the details of the expatriation plan also to the expatriate spouses and their children.

Consider the idea of having global expatriates (people who do not have a parental enterprise), with clear career planning and retirement plans for both expatriate employees and their wives.

Systematically organise pre-departure training for the expatriate employees and their families before each expatriation.

A support person in the host country to help in practical life issues, available for the expatriate employees and their families, can be important for the expatriate families' well-being and consequently adaptation and productivity.

Promote peers' activities and also discussion groups for expats and specially wives during all phases of expatriation and repatriation.

A family doctor with language skills responsible for the care of the expatriate families is very important.

Motivate spouses to arrange, if possible already before moving, motivating activities for their own future while abroad or help in finding a job. Motivate the spouses to come back to their jobs if still possible.

If the expatriation is prolonged, the enterprise should discuss/plan the expatriates' future together with the expatriate employees.

Facilitate the repatriation process: helping to arrange practical issues back home, helping the expatriate employees to find a compatible job, as well as a job for their spouses.

Promote pre-repatriation preparation.

For the expatriate employees:

Maintain a good network within the home organization.

Invest in networking while abroad.

If expatriation for is to be prolonged, discuss and agree with the employer about a plan for the future, if possible.

Try to understand and value your spouse's new role, his/her challenges and his/her crucial importance to your own and your children's adjustment and to the well-being of the whole family.

Give as much information as possible to your spouse and your children and let them participate as much as possible in the decision making process.

Try to be flexible and avoid expectations based on previous experiences and keep a sense of humour.

Try to keep in mind the temporality of the expatriation.

Avoid excesses, maintain as much as possible a regular life.

For the expatriate spouses:

Try to have a clear idea about why you are moving abroad and in what ways the move is important in your own life.

Invest in networking especially with other expatriate spouses.

If possible, it is useful to hire a local maid.

Try to be flexible and avoid expectations based on previous experiences and keep a sense of humor.

Concerning children:

Prepare the children well for the move.

Let your children know as much as possible about the expatriation plans, and if possible, let them participate in the decision-making process.

Keep close contact with your children's teachers in order to detect possible difficulties as soon as possible.

During the adaptation process try to control own anxiety and /or guilty feelings in order to be available to help your children. Arrange time to be as present as possible during the adaptation process.

If possible, contact other parents with children of the same age in your home country to support your children.

8. CONCLUSION

Even if expatriation is a challenging situation with many potential stressors, only a tenth of the expatriate employees reported strain according to the questionnaire. However, an increased risk of experiencing symptoms of strain was observed in the female expatriate employees compared to the male, suggesting a gender-related association. Long working days, intense work rhythm and lack of friends were related to experience of strain symptoms. Marriage seemed to act as a protective factor for women, while it seemed to be a risk factor for men. The same was true for alcohol consumption; drinking was more common among married than single men. As the number of cases was small, further studies are required to confirm these observations.

Evaluating the material in the light of Karasek's and Déjours' theories, and deepening the analysis of the organization functioning abroad in the light of Wisner's study, the findings were found to be in agreement with them; while abroad, the expatriate employees got a great deal of recognition for their work, and due to various structural short-comings of the subsidiary organization, they could often use their creative capacities at work. The opportunity to access by themselves the effects of their own contribution to the development of the enterprise pleased the employees. The lack of routine, together with the independence at work that is usually inherent in expatriation, characterizes an active work situation. Even though there are high psychological demands, the decision latitude is also high, and thus does not constitute a situation of high strain risk.

The association between the expatriate employees' adjustment and that of their spouses', observed in several earlier studies, was confirmed. With expatriation, a kind of disruption in expatriate spouses' identity was verified which could be attributed to the change to an "unemployment role" in a group consisting mostly of highly educated women. This disruption process can be understood as a crisis of identity that results in an identity reformation process, where the expatriate spouse's new profile is delineated. The worry about one's professional future is always present, with the exception of the expatriate spouses who maintained ties with their own work and had a clear plan for their return. Such ties probably maintain the spouses' own identity for a longer time.

Expatriation puts expatriate employees and their non-working spouses in completely different situations; thus, they assume different roles, have different needs and interact with different intensity with the host country. This restructuring of family life means concentrating more on work and family abroad than at home.

Most expatriate employees thought that repatriation could be more difficult than expatriation. This was related to a feeling of diminished appreciation/recognition of their work back home. Finishing their international assignment meant losing various material benefits, and often handing over their tasks to the local employees replacing them. Usually, the future position in the home country would not be as challenging as the one abroad. The expatriate spouses' reaction seems to depend a great deal on their career situation in the home country. It was easier if they could go back to their previous job or continue their studies.

A group of expatriate employees solves the problems related to repatriation by continuation of expatriation, moving to another international assignment. In these cases, their ties to the home country diminish further, while the ties abroad continue to grow. By time the expatriate spouses begin to feel unable to go back to work and continuation of expatriation may become a preferable option for them.

9. SUMMARY

Many large enterprises need to transfer their activities to other countries in order to expand, sending personnel to work for them abroad as “expatriate” employees. The expatriates move abroad for a certain time, either by themselves or together with their families. This temporary emigration brings many changes in work routine and day to day life, demanding capacity to adapt to a new situation from both the expatriate employees and their families.

The aims of this study were to determine the occurrence of mental strain and minor mental disorders among expatriate employees working for Finnish companies in Brazil, to establish the relations of expatriate employees’ mental health to their working conditions and their private life situation, and to evaluate how living abroad modifies family relations. The expatriate employees and their spouses were investigated during their expatriation in Brazil.

The study is based on two methodological approaches: an epidemiological cross-sectional questionnaire survey and a qualitative interview study based on individual and group interviews with expatriate employees and their spouses.

The population consisted of 121 foreign employees, employed by 17 companies, out of whom 71 expatriates employed by 10 enterprises answered the questions.

Even if expatriation is a challenging situation with many potential stressors, only a tenth of the expatriate employees reported strain. The experience of strain symptoms was found to be related to long working days, intense working rhythm and lack of friends.

Work satisfaction seemed to be an important mediator in the coping process. While abroad, the expatriate employees were highly recognised for their work. Due to the immature organization of work they could often use their creative capacities to improve the work flow. The opportunity to see the effects of their own contribution by their own eyes to the development of the enterprise made them feel good.

Expatriation puts expatriate employees and their non-working spouses in completely different situations. They assume different roles, have different needs and interact with different intensity with the host country. Thus, expatriation restructures family life, concentrating more on work and family while abroad than at home.

The association between the expatriate employees’ adjustment and that of their spouses’ was evident.

With expatriation a kind of disruption appeared in the expatriate spouses’ identity. This “identity crisis” could primarily be attributed to the change to an “unemployed role” among the spouses, who were mostly highly educated women.

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11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Background information

- 1- Age ___years
- 2- Sex Male Female
- 3- Civil status
 Single Living together Married Divorced Widow
- 4- Nationality: _____
- 5- Education:
 Primary school High school University Ph.D.
- 6- What is your profession? _____
- 7- Mother tongue: _____
- 8- Other languages that you speak: _____
- 3- If you speak Portuguese, did you:
 Speak it already when you arrived in Brazil Learned it here

Your situation in your own country

- 1- Your work time in your own country was on average: _____ hours/ week
- 2 - Organization of free time (in own country):
 a) Time for family _____ hours/week
 b) Time for friends _____ hours/week
 c) Time for hobbies _____ hours/week
- 3- How much time did it take you to get to and from work in your own country each day? _____
- 4- How satisfied were you with:
- | | Very satisfied | Rather satisfied | Neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied | Rather dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) your job in your own country? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) your salary in your own country? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 5- Number of bedrooms in your apartment/ house in your own country (just bedrooms): _____ rooms
- 6- Did you have some hobbies in your own country that you cannot keep up here?
 No Yes. What? _____

Work history

- 1- For how long have you been working in your company? _____
- 2- What is your present position? _____
- 3- Other positions you have worked in before (in the same company, as well as in other companies):
- _____ Years
- _____ Years
- _____ Years
- _____ Years
- _____ Years

Working abroadHistory

- 1- Is this your first assignment abroad?
- No Yes. If you have been working abroad before, where and when?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 2- Did you come directly from your home country to Brazil?
- Yes No. From which country? _____

About your work now

- 1- What is your department? _____
- 2- Which kind of assignment do you have?
- Expatriate International expatriate Local
- 3- For how long is your assignment? _____
- 4- How sure are you that there will be work for you in your company when you return home?
- Very sure Quite sure Neither sure nor unsure Quite unsure Very unsure
- 5- For how long have you been in Brazil? _____
- 6- How much did you know about Brazil before you came here?
- Very much Quite much Neither much nor little Quite little Very little
- 7- If you knew about Brazil before you came to work here how did you learn about it?
- Through a friend Through books and newspapers I was here on a work trip I was here as a tourist I travelled to Brazil to see the country myself because I had the opportunity of an assignment here

8- How did you try to learn more about Brazil before coming here?

	Yes	No
Asking for information from the company	()	()
Participating in courses for expatriates in the company	()	()
Discussing with other expatriates	()	()
Searching information on internet sites	()	()

9- How long before coming here did you start to look for information about Brazil? _____

10- How strongly did the following options motivate you to come to Brazil?

	Not at all	Quite little	A little	Quite much	Very much
1) Professional challenge	()	()	()	()	()
2) Challenge/experience in your life	()	()	()	()	()
3) Better salary/promotion	()	()	()	()	()
4) Cultural interest	()	()	()	()	()
5) Opportunity to participate in the development of a country	()	()	()	()	()

11- How much do you earn in Brazil compared to what you earned before coming here?

() Much more () Somewhat more () The same () Somewhat less () Much less

12- What are your possibilities to get promotion in Brazil compared to those at home?

() Much better () Somewhat better () The possibilities are more or less the same () Somewhat worse () Much worse

13- Do you think that the risk of losing your job in the company is greater or smaller in Brazil than it is in your home country?

() Much bigger risk when working here () Somewhat bigger risk when working here () It does not affect the risk () Somewhat smaller risk when working here () Much smaller risk when working here

14- How about your work experience here in Brazil:

() It is much better than I expected () It is somewhat better than I expected () It is as I expected () It is somewhat worse than I expected () It is much worse than I expected

15- How similar are your work tools compared to those used in your home country?

() Very similar to the home country () Somewhat similar to the home country () The same () Somewhat different to the home country () Very different to the home country

16- How much time does it take you to get to and from work each day in Brazil compared to at home?

() Much more than at home () Somewhat more than at home () As much time as at home () Somewhat less than at home () Much less than at home

17- How about your working hours in Brazil compared to those at home?

() Much longer here () Somewhat longer here () Similar to those at home () Somewhat shorter here () Much shorter here

18- Your work rhythm in Brazil compared with that at home?

() Much more intense () Somewhat more intense () Similar to that at home () Somewhat less intense () Much less intense

19- What do you think about the quality of work performed by the local employees?

() It is of excellent () Of good quality () Not good nor bad () Of bad quality () Of very bad quality

20- How well are you aware of

	Very well	Rather well	Neither well nor badly	Rather badly	Very badly
1) The objectives of your workplace/ organization as a whole?	()	()	()	()	()
2) The objectives of your unit?	()	()	()	()	()
3) Your own work objectives?	()	()	()	()	()

21- Are you satisfied

	Very satisfied	Rather satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Rather dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
1) With your work in Brazil?	()	()	()	()	()
2) With your salary in Brazil?	()	()	()	()	()
3) With the way of administration in your work unit?	()	()	()	()	()
4) With the way of administration in the Brazilian organization as a whole?	()	()	()	()	()

22- The following statements are related to the way of administration of your work place. Choose the option that best represents your opinion

	Totally agree	Rather agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Rather disagree	Totally disagree
1) The decisions in my work place are made on the basis of correct information	()	()	()	()	()
2) We can cancel or change the decisions that fail	()	()	()	()	()
3) When we make a decision all the parties involved are represented	()	()	()	()	()
4) The decisions made in our work-place are coherent (the decisions are the same for everybody)	()	()	()	()	()
5) Everybody has the right to give his/her own opinion on questions related to himself/herself	()	()	()	()	()
6) The effects of decisions are followed	()	()	()	()	()
7) If necessary, it is possible to receive more information about the motives for the decisions made	()	()	()	()	()

23- Do you think that the circulation of information is adequate in the following areas:

	Definitely enough	Quite enough	Neither enough nor insufficient	Quite insufficient	Definitely insufficient
1) Between different professional groups?	()	()	()	()	()
2) Between supervisors and subordinates?	()	()	()	()	()
3) Between work units?	()	()	()	()	()
4) Between expatriates and locals?	()	()	()	()	()

24- To what degree does each of the following statements hold true for your work community

	Totally agree	Rather agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Rather disagree	Totally disagree
1) Our work community is flexible	()	()	()	()	()
2) Our work community is efficient	()	()	()	()	()
3) The cooperation between members of the group is good	()	()	()	()	()
4) The division of work in our group is clear	()	()	()	()	()

25- How often are the following statements true in your work community?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1) We are stimulated to try new things	()	()	()	()	()
2) We make improvements in our way of working all the time	()	()	()	()	()

26- Do you receive enough help in difficult situations

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1) From your boss?	()	()	()	()	()
2) From your colleagues?	()	()	()	()	()

27- How well are the following statements true in your work group?

	Very badly	Rather badly	Equally	Rather well	Very well
1) There is equality between the different ages groups	()	()	()	()	()
2) There is equality between the different professional groups	()	()	()	()	()
3) There is equality between the expatriates and the locals	()	()	()	()	()

28- How much can you influence the following factors in your work?

	Not at all	Quite little	A little	Quite much	Very much
1) Monotony and lack of variation	()	()	()	()	()
2) The quality of your work	()	()	()	()	()
3) The division of work	()	()	()	()	()
4) The quantity of work	()	()	()	()	()
5) The rhythm of work	()	()	()	()	()
6) Factors related to the work place in general	()	()	()	()	()

29- How much do you need to exchange ideas with your colleagues in order to do your work?

() Never () Rarely () Sometimes () Often () Very often

30- Do you get feed-back about how well you have managed in your work?

	Not at all	Quite little	A little	Quite much	Very much
1) From your boss	()	()	()	()	()
2) From your colleagues	()	()	()	()	()
3) From the clients (if you have clients)	()	()	()	()	()

31- If you could freely choose where to live, what would you do?

() go back to your own country at once () stay in Brazil until the end of your present assignment and then leave for home () stay here after the end of your assignment () go to some other country after the end of the assignment

32- How do you live here:

- Alone with your spouse with your spouse and children with a spouse whom you met here during the assignment

Your adjustment in general

1- How happy or unhappy are you here in Brazil?

- Very happy Happy Neither happy nor unhappy Unhappy Very unhappy

2- How have you adapted to living and working here in Brazil?

- Very well Rather well Neither well nor badly Rather badly Very badly

3- How many bedrooms do you have in your apartment/house here? ____rooms.

4- How satisfied are you with:

- | | Very satisfied | Rather satisfied | Neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied | Rather dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) your apartment/house here? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) the locality of your house here? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5- How many friends do you have here?

- Very many Quite many Only a few friends None at all

6- Are your friends foreigners or Brazilians?

- All foreigners Most are foreigners Half of them are foreigners, the other half Brazilians Mostly Brazilians Only Brazilians

7- How often are you in communication with your home country?

- Daily A few times a week Once a week A few times a month Once a month Less often than once a month

8- Where do you spend your vacations?

- In your home country In Brazil In some other country/countries

9- How do you use your free time here:

- a) Together with your family ____hours/ week
 b) Together with your friends ____hours/ week
 c) Time for hobbies ____hours/week

Family

About your spouse

1- For how long have you been with your spouse? _____

2- How old is your spouse: ____ years

3- Spouse's nationality: _____

4- Spouse's mother tongue: _____

5- How many languages does he/she speak? _____ languages. Which ones? _____

6- If he/she speaks Portuguese, did he/she:

Speak it already when you arrived in Brazil Learned it here

7- What is his/her level of formal education?

Primary school High school University Ph.D.

8- What is his/her profession? _____

9- What is his/her status now in terms of working life?

Working On temporary leave from own employment On maternity leave On sick-leave Retired because of health/age Unemployed

10- His/her working hours in the home country: _____ hours/day

11- How satisfied was he/she with:

(Only answer if your spouse was working in the home country)

	Very satisfied	Rather satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Rather dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
1) his/her job in the home country? <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) his/her salary in your home country? <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12- Do you have children?

No Yes. How many? _____ Children's age _____ years

13- Did your children study in an international school in the home country?

Yes No

Questions for those living with their family in Brazil

About your spouse:

1- How happy or unhappy do you think that your spouse feels in Brazil?

Very happy Rather happy Not happy nor unhappy Rather unhappy Very unhappy

2- His/her experience here has been in general:

Much better than I expected Somewhat better than I expected As I expected Somewhat worse than I expected Much worse than I expected

3- About your spouse's adjustment, do you consider he/she is:

Very well adjusted Rather well adjusted Acceptably adjusted Rather badly adjusted Very badly adjusted

4- If your spouse could freely choose now where to live what would he/she do?

go back to your own country at once stay in Brazil until the end of your present assignment stay here after the end of your assignment go to some other country after the end of the assignment

5- How satisfied is your spouse with:

	Very satisfied	Rather satisfied	Neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied	Rather dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
1) your apartment/house here?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) the locality of your house here?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) the length of your working day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6- How many friends does your spouse have here?

Very many Quite many Only a few friends None at all

7- Are your spouse's friends foreigners or Brazilians?

All foreigners Most are foreigners Half of them are foreigners, the other half Brazilians Mostly Brazilians Only Brazilians

8- How often is your spouse in communication with your home country?

Daily A few times a week Once a week A few times a month Once a month Less often than once a month

9- Does your spouse manage to solve the practical life demands here?

Yes, he/she solves them most of the time alone Yes, with my help Yes, with the help of a maid Yes, with help from friends No, he/she often needs a lot of help

10- How often does your spouse call to your job to complain?

Very often Quite often Now and then Quite rarely Very rarely Never

11- How often do you have to stay at home or leave early from work to help to solve some family problems?

Very often Rather often Rather rarely Very rarely I never have to leave work to solve family problems

12- Have you noticed changes in your relationship with your spouse during your stay here?

It has changed a lot in a positive way It has changed somewhat in a positive way It has not changed It has changed but the change is neither positive nor negative It has changed somewhat in a negative way It has changed a lot in a negative way

About your children:

1- How happy or unhappy are your children here in Brazil?

Very happy Happy Neither happy nor unhappy Unhappy Very unhappy

2- Their experience here has been in general:

Much better than I expected Somewhat better than I expected As I expected Somewhat worse than I expected Much worse than I expected

3- About your children's adjustment, do you consider them:

Very well adjusted Rather well adjusted Acceptably adjusted Rather badly adjusted Very badly adjusted

4- If your children could freely choose now where to live, what would they do?

go back to your own country at once stay in Brazil until the end of your present assignment stay here after the end of your assignment go to some other country after the end of the assignment

5- How many friends do your children have here?

Very many Quite many Only a few friends None at all

6- Are your children's friends foreigners or Brazilians?

All foreigners Most are foreigners Half of them are foreigners, the other half Brazilians Mostly Brazilians Only Brazilians

7- Have you noticed changes in your relationship with your children during your stay here?

It has changed a lot in a positive way It has changed somewhat in a positive way It has not changed It has changed but the change is neither positive nor negative It has changed somewhat in a negative way It has changed a lot in a negative way

8- Are your children doing better or worse at school compared to the time before you moved to Brazil?

Much better than before Somewhat better than before More or less the same Somewhat worse than before Much worse than before

Only answer if your family doesn't live here with you:

1- Do you think that the assignment has changed your relations with your spouse/family?

Yes, it has changed a lot in a positive way Yes, it has changed somewhat in a positive way No, it is still the same It has changed but the change is neither positive nor negative Yes, it has changed somewhat in a negative way Yes, it has changed a lot in a negative way

Health

1- Do you have any chronic disease?

No Yes. What?

2- Does anybody else in your family have some chronic disease?

No Yes. Who? What? _____

Appendix 2-SRQ

	YES	NO
Do you often have headaches?	()	()
Is your appetite poor?	()	()
Do you sleep badly?	()	()
Are you easily frightened?	()	()
Do your hands shakes?	()	()
Do you feel nervous, tense or worried?	()	()
Is your digestion poor?	()	()
Do you have trouble thinking clearly?	()	()
Do you feel unhappy?	()	()
Do you cry more than usual?	()	()
Do you find it difficult to enjoy your daily activities?	()	()
Do you find it difficult to make decisions?	()	()
Is your daily work suffering?	()	()
Are you unable to play a useful part in life?	()	()
Have you lost interest in things?	()	()
Do you feel that you are a worthless person?	()	()
Has the thought of ending your life been on your mind?	()	()
Do you feel tired all the time?	()	()
Do you have uncomfortable feelings in your stomach?	()	()
Are you easily tired?	()	()