

# RE-ENTRY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF FINNISH REPATRIATES

Study of Corporate Expatriates, Employees of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and  
Employees of the Defence Forces

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## JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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| <p>Abstract:</p> <p>This study provides an insight to the re-entry and re-adaptation experiences of three different privileged, voluntary, temporary groups of Finnish professionals.</p> <p>The main goal for the qualitative research was to find greater understanding of the re-entry phenomenon, and outline and identify the most important aspects of the home country re-entry process of the chosen sojourner groups. In addition, the study aimed to clarify possible differences and similarities of the re-entry experiences between these groups.</p> <p>The study was mainly based on the repatriation adjustment model of Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall from 1992, although theories and studies of various other academic scholars were also used.</p> <p>Re-entry has often been described difficult, yet the research proved otherwise as most of the respondents reported rather smooth repatriation experience although also some challenges were reported.</p> <p>Although re-entry is deeply personal experience and the amount it takes to make the transition is highly individualistic, the findings obtained from the study revealed no major differences in the re-entry experience and re-adaptation process back home between the groups.</p> <p>Although the qualitative study does not thoroughly fulfil the requirements of generalization of material, the study provided some new and useful insights into the repatriation experiences of Finnish repatriates and advanced the current understanding of the re-entry experience of the chosen Finnish sojourner groups. Comparison research among Finnish sojourner groups has been limited. This study offers a new insight to the phenomenon and might therefore be considered to act as a pioneering study in Finland. It also suggests there is room for future studies in the field.</p> |  |
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| Työn nimi:<br>SUOMALAISTEN REPATRIAATTIEN KOTIINPALUU SEKÄ SIIHEN LIITTYVÄT MERKITTÄVÄT ASIAT JA HAASTEET<br>Tutkimus Expatriaateista sekä Ulkoasiainministeriön ja Puolustusvoimien työntekijöistä   |                                      |
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| <p>Tiivistelmä:<br/>Tämä tapaustutkimus tutkii kolmen eri etuoikeutetun, vapaaehtoisen sekä tilapäisen suomalaisen työntekijäryhmän paluukokemuksia sekä sopeutumista takaisin kotimaahan ulkomaankomennuksen päätyttyä.</p> <p>Päätavoitteena laadullisessa tutkimuksessa oli hankkia laajempaa ymmärrystä paluusta ilmiönä, sekä hahmotella ja tunnistaa tärkeimmät elementit kotimaan paluuprosessissa valittujen ryhmien kesken. Lisäksi tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selkeyttää mahdollisia paluukokemusten välisiä eroja sekä samankaltaisuuksia näiden ryhmien välillä.</p> <p>Tutkimus perustuu pääosin Black, Gregersen, sekä Mendenhallin paluusopeutumismalliin vuodelta 1992, vaikka muidenkin tutkijoiden akateemisia teorioita sekä tutkimuksia käytettiin tutkimuksessa.</p> <p>Paluu on usein kuvattu vaikeana, mutta tutkimus osoitti toisin, sillä useimmat vastaajista kokivat paluun melko helppona kokemuksena vaikka haasteitakin raportoitiin.</p> <p>Vaikka paluu on erittäin henkilökohtainen kokemus, ja aika jonka sopeutuminen takaisin kotimaahan vie on yksilöllistä, tulokset paljastivat, että ryhmien kesken paluukokemuksissa ja uudelleen sopeutumisessa kotimaahan ei ollut suuria eroja.</p> <p>Vaikka laadullinen tutkimus ei perusteellisesti täytä vaatimusta materiaalin yleistettävyydestä, tutkimuksen tulokset antavat ensikäden tietoa valittujen ryhmien paluukokemuksista. Vertailututkimus suomalaisten ryhmien välillä on vähäistä. Tämä tutkimus tarjoaa uutta tietoa ilmiöstä sekä antaa mahdollisuuden toimia urauurtavana vertailevana tutkimuksena Suomessa. Se osoittaa myös, että lisätutkimukselle aiheesta on vielä tilaa.</p> |                                      |
| Asiasanat: Ulkomaankomennus, ekspatriaatti, repatriaatti / kotiinpalaava työntekijä, sopeutuminen, uudelleen sopeutuminen, paluu , kulttuurishokki, paluushokki.  |                                      |
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# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE OF THE RESEACH .....            | 7  |
| 1.1 Purpose and aim for the research .....                   | 10 |
| 1.2 Introduction of the survey groups .....                  | 12 |
| 1.2.1 Corporate Expatriates .....                            | 13 |
| 1.2.2 Employees of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.....     | 14 |
| 1.2.3 Military Observers.....                                | 16 |
| 1.3 Structure and outline of the research.....               | 18 |
| 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....                                | 20 |
| 2.1 Key concepts.....  | 21 |
| 2.2 Cross-cultural adjustment and readjustment process ..... | 24 |
| 2.3 Components of change .....                               | 29 |
| 2.4 Reduction of uncertainty and the need for control.....   | 31 |
| 2.5 Role of expectations .....                               | 32 |
| 2.6 Framework of repatriation adjustment theory .....        | 33 |
| 2.6.1 Anticipatory Adjustment.....                           | 35 |
| 2.6.2 In-country adjustment.....                             | 40 |
| 3 METHODOLOGY .....  | 46 |
| 3.1 Research questions .....                                 | 46 |
| 3.2 Research method and procedure .....                      | 48 |
| 3.2.1 Data collection.....                                   | 49 |
| 3.2.2 Data analysis .....                                    | 55 |
| 3.2.3 Reliability, validity and ethical considerations ..... | 58 |

|       |  |     |
|-------|--|-----|
| 4     | EMPIRICAL STUDY & FINDINGS .....   | 63  |
| 4.1   | How do repatriates experience re-entry?.....   | 65  |
| 4.1.1 | Repatriation adjustment of the repatriates .....   | 70  |
| 4.1.2 | Changes noticed .....  | 72  |
| 4.2   | What are the main issues related to the re-entry process of the returning sojourners?.....                       | 80  |
| 4.3   | What do the returning sojourners perceive as the main challenges in the re-entry and readjustment process? ..... | 82  |
| 4.4   | What are the possible elements influencing the repatriates' re-entry experience?.....                            | 87  |
| 4.4.1 | Communication during foreign assignment.....   | 88  |
| 4.4.2 | Motivation for the foreign assignment and for the return.....  | 90  |
| 4.4.3 | Overseas adjustment and satisfaction with the foreign assignment .....   | 95  |
| 4.4.4 | Previous re-entry experience.....  | 98  |
| 4.4.5 | Re-entry expectations .....  | 101 |
| 4.4.6 | Family members' repatriation experience .....  | 103 |
| 4.4.7 | Repatriation training and support provided .....   | 104 |
| 4.4.8 | Foreign assignments' influence on career .....   | 106 |
| 5     | DISCUSSION.....  | 110 |
| 5.1   | Implications for practice.....   | 111 |
| 5.2   | Limitations of the study.....  | 113 |
| 5.3   | Future research.....   | 114 |
| 6     | CONCLUSION.....  | 117 |
|       | REFERENCES .....   | 121 |
|       | APPENDICES   |     |

## **Table of Figures and Tables**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| FIGURE 1. The most important and the most difficult phases of foreign assignments ..... | 8  |
| FIGURE 2. The Expatriate Foreign Career Cycle .....                                     | 22 |
| FIGURE 3. The U-curve and W-curve of cultural change and adaptation over time .....     | 25 |
| FIGURE 4. Components of change .....  | 30 |
| FIGURE 5. Basic Framework of repatriation adjustment .....                              | 34 |
| FIGURE 6. Modified framework of repatriation adjustment.....                            | 45 |
| TABLE 1. Adaptation to host country .....   | 96 |
| TABLE 2. Satisfaction with the foreign assignment .....                                 | 98 |

## **List of Appendices**

- A. Questionnaire in English and in Finnish
- B. Interview questions with a person involved in managing the foreign assignment
- C. Results from the structured closed ended questions
- D. Repatriation and adaptation experience to work and in general
- E. Drawings
- F. Translations
- G. Translations

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE OF THE RESEACH**

Expanding global markets, technical developments and growing competition among other factors are forcing companies as well as workforce to become increasingly international. Aside the fact that cultural diversity among employees in organization is reality of everyday work life, for many people working abroad for a specific time period is an integral part of career development. Also, from Finland, an increasing amount of employees leave to work abroad for a specific duration.

According to Statistics Finland (2014), in 2012 Finnish enterprises had business activity in approximately 4 900 affiliates, located in 119 countries. The personnel abroad totaled over 570 000. The numbers have remained relatively same during the past years (Tilastokeskus, 2014), which indicate that internationalization and the existence of cultural diversity within organizations is a permanent phenomenon.

Admitting the fact that there are many opportunities and benefits that an international assignment can offer to an organization and to an individual sent abroad, such as exchange of know-how and building international management experience, there are also challenges often highlighted that are related to the process, and to the repatriation in particular, which can jeopardize the whole investment.

Global companies, European headquartered in particular, see the repatriation phase as the most difficult part of the foreign assignment process (Ernst & Young, 2009). Repatriation and readjustment back home has been

described to be more difficult than adjustment to a foreign culture also from sojourners' perspective (Adler, 1981; Black et al., 1992a; Hyder & Lövblad, 2007).

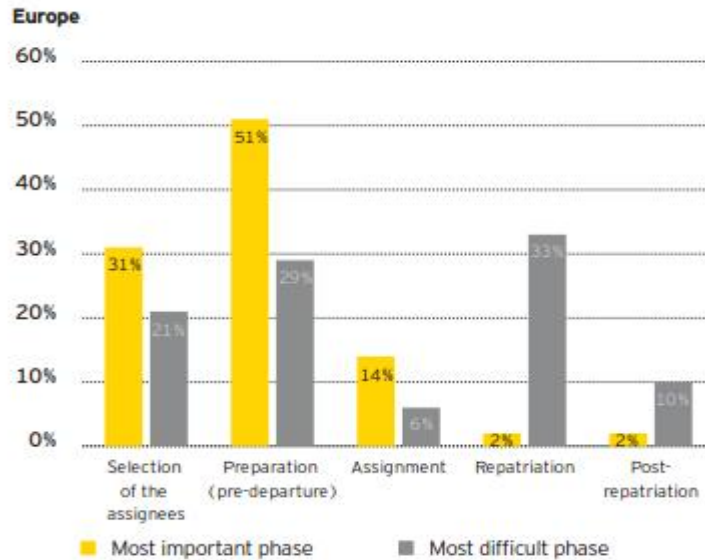


FIGURE 1: The most important and the most difficult phases of foreign assignments (Ernst & Young, 2009, p. 20.)

According to Black et al. (1999) two-thirds of repatriates consider repatriation as a major change both professionally and personally. Personal challenges of repatriation, together with dissatisfaction with the company's re-entry process, are often accompanied by a reduced work performance and motivation that may result in employee's voluntary turnover (Allen & Alvares, 1998; Szkudlarek, 2010).

International assignment is often a considerable financial investment from a company. The salary of an expatriate is often two to five times the costs of hiring a local employee (Hellsten, 2009). Costs of unsuccessful and poorly handled repatriation can therefore be very expensive for a company in case the



investment is lost when an employee leaves the organization upon return because of issues related to repatriation (Cox, 2004).

Poorly handled repatriation and problems of coming home may result also in an inability for the company to further recruit key personnel to foreign positions as employees may feel reluctant to go abroad (Allen & Alvarez, 1998; Adler, 1981; Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987). This is a risk in a current global business environment that requires an international workforce.

While companies and the general society want to welcome back employees who are physically and mentally healthy and socially fit, organizations are particularly interested in receiving back employees that are motivated and efficient, and therefore quickly capable to give their full contribution to work when back in the home company. In addition, if the situation so requires, it is important that the repatriates are interested to travel and work abroad also in the future.

Despite the awareness of repatriation challenges, majority of global international companies consider the repatriation phase less important than the preparation phase prior the assignment abroad (Ernst & Young, 2009) as highlighted in Figure 1. Due to this, one can argue that repatriation process and sojourners' re-entry experiences require further attention. There are immense possibilities of internationalisation and the ever-growing global markets. In order for the organizations to be able to exploit these advantages, the process of repatriation might need closer scrutiny.

### **1.1 Purpose and aim for the research**

Despite several studies on expatriation, sojourner's re-entry and readjustment remained relatively under-researched for a quite some time according to many researchers (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black et al., 1992b) and empirical studies were reported limited (Harvey, 1989; Black 1992). In addition, it was criticized that only a few studies utilized data from true sojourners to determine factors influencing repatriation adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991).

According to Lazarova and Cerdin (2007), increased globalization has renewed the interest that academics and practitioners pay to the effective management of expatriates and attention has recently been given to repatriation and specifically to retaining repatriates. However, to date, comparative research has been scarce, possibly due to many researchers facing difficulties in approaching different sojourning groups (Szkudlarek, 2010). Although some global studies, including also Finnish repatriates, have been conducted (Black et al., 1992a; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002; Suutari & Brewster, 2003), comparison studies of different Finnish groups are little if any. Therefore, this study investigates the re-entry experience of three Finnish professional sojourner groups: Returning Corporate employees, employees of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland, and employees of the Finnish Defence Forces.

The study attempts to outline and identify the most important aspects of the home country re-entry process for Finnish repatriates and for the chosen sojourner groups in particular. As these organizations are well known for regularly sending employees on foreign assignments the results should give a

broad understanding of the phenomena and a good overview of the Finnish repatriates in general. Although, one could argue that by including also other groups of sojourners such as Finnish University and Missionary workers to the study, even a broader understanding of the phenomena and a greater picture of the Finnish repatriates' special situation could be obtained. However, as the number of employees sent abroad by the chosen survey groups of this study is much more compared, for example, to the number of employees the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland sent abroad in 2012 (Sakarsti, 2015), one believes that by focusing on the chosen three study groups a good cross-section of opinions of the Finnish repatriates is gained.

Different sojourner groups may experience the repatriation differently. Findings obtained from this study will help to reveal whether the re-entry is as challenging or easy for all Finnish sojourners regardless of the field. In addition, the study results hope to clarify and highlight the possible similarities and differences between the different groups, and identify whether intersecting links are found.

Unless one is aware of the main challenges, it is impossible to offer proper re-entry assistance and support. Therefore, the data gathered from this study will hope to assist the people working with repatriating employees by drawing a picture of the field of re-entry of the chosen groups. In addition that the results will be useful to various companies and organizations, possibly tackling the similar re-entry dilemma, the results may also assist returning individuals in their re-entry process. As stated by Szkudlarek (2010, p. 14):

In light of the difficulties faced by researchers in gaining access to different sojourning groups, facilitating contact with the returning individuals would greatly support academic efforts and stimulate the growth of the relevant literature. This, in turn, will impact the quality of

the support programs offered and ease the reentry process for the individuals in transition.

## **1.2 Introduction of the survey groups**

There are several reasons why one should study the repatriation experience of Finnish sojourners. Sojourners of Finnish organizations were selected for this study because Finland is a global economical player, and as there are many Finnish managers and professionals working abroad.

The main reason why these three different privileged, voluntary, temporary groups of sojourners were chosen for the study was the interest in focusing on groups of adults whose international transfer was due to work purposes. Although identity is not the focus of this paper, another reason why these groups of sojourners were chosen for the study was the interest in focusing on groups whose international mobility might have begun only in adulthood yet whose international experiences might bring a profound identity change as described by Schaetti (2006).

Although there might be similarities in the re-entry experiences of the three different professional sojourner groups, the re-entry experiences might also vary depending on e.g. the motivation and purpose for the particular intercultural sojourn. In addition, organizational efforts and support has often been mentioned to play a vital role in employees' repatriation process (Bossard & Peterson, 2005).

There seems to be a discrepancy between the strategies of some organizations to internationalize their operations and businesses, and their actual practices to support and assist these global functions. While the current economic situation with its turndown has led many global organizations to

reduce the support provided for their repatriating employees as a consequent of cost reduction (Ernst & Young, 2009), the Finnish Military has increased the support provided for its employees returning from foreign missions (Huhtanen, 2010) by improving the emotional support offered (Hartio, 2014), by improving the feedback systems and debriefings (Karjalainen, 2011), and rehabilitation training (Malkamäki, 2010) organized, and by developing the peer group support provided (Rantanen, 2013; Roikonen, 2014). In 2008, the Finnish Defence Forces commenced a psychosocial support program to assist the crisis management veterans (Granqvist, 2014). Moreover, in May 2013, the Finnish Ministry of Defence made an official announcement to prepare a new crisis management veteran program to increase the efficiency of the support functions offered for personnel currently serving or who have previously served in military crisis management missions (Puolustusvoimat, 2013). This development of difference in support practices offered might have a serious impact on how the different sojourner groups experience re-entry and adaptation back home.

### **1.2.1 Corporate Expatriates**

Corporate employees were chosen as a study group, because expatriates are the most thoroughly researched group within the re-entry field (Szkudlarek, 2010). As the researcher herself had been working within the field of global mobility for the past eight years—and with Metso since 2011—an approval was received to use repatriates from Metso as a study group of corporate expatriates. Based on internal information, voluntary resignation after repatriation has been rather high within Metso. Although the phenomenon has

been studied thoroughly (Itani, 2011), there is still interest from the company to research the topic further.

The history of Metso goes back to the 1750s although the official Metso was created through the merger of Valmet and Rauma in 1999. At the beginning of 2014 Metso demerged again to Metso and Valmet (Avenue, 2013). During the time when the empirical study was conducted and data collected, in 2012, Metso was a global supplier of technology and services in the process industries, including mining, construction, pulp and paper, power, oil and gas, and operated within three segments: mining and construction, automation, and pulp, paper and power (Avenue, 2013). Metso had customers in more than 150 countries, operated in over 50 countries, and employed around 30,000 professionals around the world in 300 business units.

In 2012, Metso had around 115 expatriates in 22 different countries, whose assignment duration varied from a minimum of one to a maximum of five years (Avenue, 2013). According to the Guideline for International Assignment at Metso, the main reasons for the expatriate assignments were to transfer know-how, integrate operations, implement new processes or systems, build international management experience, support critical business needs to promote Metso's ways of working, and to ensure consistent financial control (Metso, 2011).

### **1.2.2 Employees of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

The main reason for the interest to study the group of Finnish Foreign Ministry employees was previous Master's degree studies made on the repatriation adjustment among the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Tasala, 2008). An

authorization to interview employees of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was received after requesting permission to use the questionnaire results the researcher already received from an acquaintance employed by the Finnish Foreign Ministry and two of the employee's colleagues who had repatriated back to Finland in the past year after working for the Finnish Foreign Ministry abroad.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland promotes the security and welfare of Finland and the Finnish people. In 2011, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had 97 diplomatic missions and about 400 Honorary Consuls working abroad (Ulkoasiainministeriö, 2009). Based on the figures from 2011, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has 2 800 employees. From these an average 900 employees work in Helsinki and 1 800 are locally engaged staff working at the various Diplomatic Missions abroad, of which 600 are on postings from Finland (Ulkoasiainministeriö, 2009).

At the Ministry for Foreign Affairs one works either as a specialist within general career or in support functions. The general career path contains two career options: diplomatic and office career (Ulkoasiainministeriö, 2009). The general career includes a regular job rotation that constitutes 3–4-year work periods both at the home country and at Missions abroad. The service time in one location at the Foreign Mission is from three to four years. However, in one go, one can serve abroad for a maximum of 7 years in two different assignment locations (Ulkoasiainministeriö, 2009). Although the officers in the general career path are obliged to transfer, they can decide themselves the work positions they want to apply at any given time (Ulkoasiainministeriö, 2009).

According to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2009), in 2009, there were 550 diplomats. Of these 275 worked in Finland and 275 abroad. At the same time there were 670 Office employees of which 270 worked abroad. As the advertisement was placed on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' intranet, both diplomats and employees in the Office Career path were able to participate in the study. The results from the different career paths were not separated in the analysis from each other.

### **1.2.3 Military Observers**

Previous Master's studies have also been done regarding repatriation adjustment of Finnish civilian crisis management personnel, police officers (Siljanen, 2009), and Finnish soldiers assigned to Afghanistan (Westersund, 2011). However, instead of using police officers or soldiers as a sample, the group of Finnish Military Observers was chosen as a study group, because the group of unarmed military observers seem closer to Corporate Expatriates and Foreign Ministry personnel.

The peacekeeping operation troops may consist of armed peacekeeping forces, civil policemen military observers. Military Observers are unarmed, special trained officers who are United Nations representatives. Unlike armed peacekeeping forces, the Military Observers do not have a permit to take part in the conflict at any stage. Their work is to observe the situation and report to the United Nations Security Council (Puolustusvoimat, 2013).

According to the Finnish Defence Forces (2013), while the general tasks of peacekeeping forces are to create and maintain cease-fires and buffer-zones in between combating parties and to ensure that violent conflicts do not



cause civil casualties or threat to the international peace and security, the observer's specifically detailed tasks may, for example, relate to supervision of executing a peace treaty.

For employees working as Military Observers, the operations are as voluntary based part of their career path. While the service duration at foreign missions are from six to twelve months, around 60 applications are received annually for the positions of which around 6–12 applicants are normally chosen for each United National Military Observers international training course (Puolustusvoimat, 2013). Applicants for peacekeeping operations and for Military Observer positions may be either people working for the military or reservists (Leskinen, 2011). However, to qualify for the Military Observer position one needs to have, for example, served at least twice in international crisis management operations passed with good grades, and hold at least a lieutenant military rank (Puolustusvoimat, 2014).

Finland has participated in peacekeeping operations abroad since the operation in Sinai in 1956 (Puolustusvoimat, 2012). Since then, around 35 000 Finns have served as peacekeepers abroad in 36 peacekeeping and crisis management missions (Byman, 2013a; Byman, 2013b). So far, approximately 1100 Finns have participated in Military Observer operations (Puolustusvoimat, 2013). In 2013, there were Finnish peacekeeping forces serving in operations in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Kosovo, Uganda, Bosnia–Herzegovina, Somalia, and Liberia. In addition, there were Military Observers also in operations in the Middle East and India–Pakistan. Military Observers from Finland were also participating in the operations in Syria (Puolustusvoimat, 2013).

The operation in Afghanistan has been categorized as the most dangerous peacekeeping operation in which Finland has yet participated. This has led to an increase for need of psychosocial support among the repatriating Finnish peacekeepers (Granqvist, 2014) and interest for the Finnish Military to investigate and develop the re-entry support provided. Psychosocial support was not offered by the Finnish Defence Forces until 2008, so there is not much research about the topic prior to this. Although, a few significant studies have been done (Leskinen, 2011; Kousa 2008), there is still interest from the organization to further research the topic.

### **1.3 Structure and outline of the research**

This paper consists of six main chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the research in general, as it defines the main purpose and aim of the research. In addition, the first chapter also introduces the survey groups and justification for choosing the particular groups of sojourner.

In Chapter 2, different theoretical frameworks and models of repatriation together with key words are presented. While the repatriation adaptation theory by Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992b) is the main theory used, other models and concepts related to adaptation and repatriation such as W-curve of adaptation by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), components of change, role of expectations, concepts of uncertainty, and need for control are discussed.

The methodology of the study is presented in Chapter 3, where the research questions, research methods and process are discussed. Chapter 4 introduces the empirical part of the research where the main findings are

presented. This chapter is divided into different sections based on the research questions. In addition, comparison of the results between the survey groups are made and possible reasons and elements influencing the results are presented and discussed. The guiding theoretical framework used in this study, when analysing and comparing the gathered the data, is the Repatriation Adjustment Model presented by Black et al. (1992b). As previous global studies of Finnish repatriates have been conducted (Black et al., 1992a; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002; Suutari & Brewster, 2003) it is possible to compare the results also against earlier findings.

In Chapter 5, discussion and a synthesis of the results are produced. The chapter reviews the results against the theories, and discusses whether the results of this study are confirming or contradicting the theories used. In addition, limitations of the study, implications for practice and suggestions for further research are also made.

The thesis ends with a conclusion where implications and contributions of the study are discussed, after which a list of references and appendices used are presented.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Martin and Harrell (cited in Szkudlarek, 2010, p. 3) have grouped re-entry theories into three categories: affective, behavioral, and cognitive. While affective theories, such as the reverse culture shock theory developed by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), emphasize the emotional aspect and psychological wellbeing of a repatriate, behavioral theories focus on learning new skills and ways of behaving, and cognitive re-entry theories emphasize the cognitive processes of intercultural adaptation and acculturation (Szkudlarek, 2010).

In this study, a particular attention is given to cognitive repatriation adjustment theory by Black et al. (1992b), while also affective cross-cultural adaptation theories such as W-curve of adaptation, and General Adaptation Syndrome are presented. In addition, theoretical models and approaches regarding expectations, uncertainty, and change are described. Furthermore, empirical findings from earlier studies of American and Finnish repatriates are discussed (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Suutari & Brewster, 2003; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002). In the following chapter, the most important key words and concepts regarding the study and models are presented.

## 2.1 Key concepts

The central definitions concerning foreign assignments in this paper can be listed in two categories: main concepts referring to the individual, such as sojourner, expatriate, repatriate; and concepts referring to the foreign assignment process, such as adaptation, acculturation, adjustment, readjustment, repatriation, re-entry, culture shock, and reverse culture shock.

While Martin and Harrell argued (1996), intercultural sojourn refers to an intensive and extended visit into cultural contexts different from those in which one was socialized. In this study, the chosen sojourner study groups refer to persons who are relocated from one country to another for working purposes for a certain period of time by their home organization or company. In addition, the term sojourner in this paper refers to individuals who travel abroad to attain a particular goal or a specific aim within a specified period of time. The goals may vary according to the type of sojourner. The term sojourner can therefore be used to refer to many types of travellers including businessmen, military personnel, and Foreign Service officers (Brein & David, 1971)

According to Szkudlarek (2010), returning expatriates and their work-related challenges are the most well-researched group within the field of re-entry. While a term expatriate or international assignee refers to a national of one country who is sent by a parent organization to live and work in another country (Caligiuri et al., 2009) and is often used of corporate employees, a repatriate refers to an employee who returns back to his or her home country and organization after working abroad for a certain period of time, and is used in this study to refer to all sojourner sample groups.

The period the sojourner is abroad to attain a particular goal is usually called an international or foreign assignment. Temporary foreign assignments are often pictured as a circle including phases prior, during and after the assignment, such as the Expatriate Foreign Career Cycle presented by Adler (Adler, 1981) in Figure 2. Although the figure represents the typical assignment process of a corporate expatriate, the figure can also be used in describing the foreign assignment process of the other sojourner groups studied here.

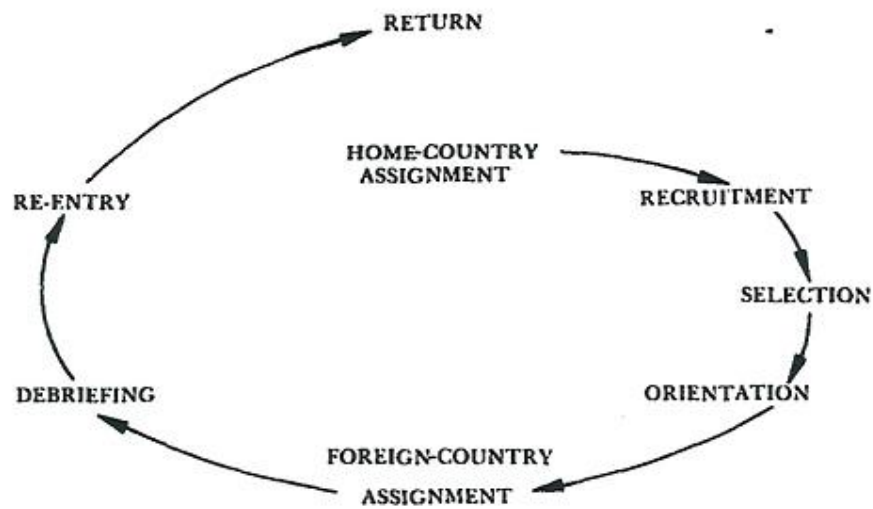


FIGURE 2: The Expatriate Foreign Career Cycle (Adler, N., 1981, p. 343)

While the need for the assignment often originates from the business, the desire for the assignment might also come from the employee. The need might originate from the employee's personal aspiration, for example, desire for personal growth, career progress, new experience, and financial gain (Hellsten, 2009).

The phase prior to the assignment includes the original need for the assignment and the recruitment process with elements such as the application

and selection processes. Also various pre-departure arrangements prior to the actual move to the host location are part of this phase of the assignment process, such as orientation, which should assist the employees' adaptation to the host country. Orientation, or debriefing, is also often organized prior to re-entry to assist the sojourners' adaptation back home.

The phase during the assignment refers to the acculturation, adjustment, and adaptation process to the host country. In addition, living and working in the new assignment location for the duration of the assignment is part of this phase. While acculturation is the cultural, emotional, and attitudinal adjustment of an individual to a foreign culture, re-acculturation is the process of readjustment into one's home culture after "re-entry," a return from a sojourn abroad (Martin, 1984). The word re-entry became part of the American lexicon through the space program, as people learned that re-entry to earth was as stressful and dangerous as leaving home (Hirshon et al., 1997). Adler (1981) defined re-entry, which is the third and last stage of the Foreign Assignment cycle, as the transition from a foreign culture back into one's home culture, while Andreason and Kinneer (2005) described the cross-cultural re-entry or repatriation as the transition from the foreign country back into the home country and organization. In both cases the re-entry, or repatriation, refers to the experience of facing previous familiar surroundings after living in a different environment for a significant period of time (Adler, 1997).

According to Martin (1984), there are similarities between the adjustment to the host culture and the readjustment to the home culture. Both processes are characterized by a sense of loss of familiar cues as a process of integrating into a different cultural system. Furthermore, both stages often

include phases of culture shock, which will be discussed in more detail in the next part of the study.

## **2.2 Cross-cultural adjustment and readjustment process**

There are different models and theories of intercultural adaptation process. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) have described the cross-cultural adjustment to a foreign country as a U-shaped curve, which is one of the most well known adaptation theories. The affective process of the U-curve of adaptation has generally been described in terms of different stages of adjustment: a honeymoon stage with a highly optimistic mood, a culture shock stage with a low mood, an adaptation stage, and possibly also a mastery stage (Adler, 1997; Black & Mendenhall, 1991).

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) argued that the cross-cultural adjustment process of the U-curve could be expanded into W-curve and applied also in the repatriation adjustment. The adjustment process at re-entry would therefore follow a similar kind of U-curve pattern, as presented in Figure 3.



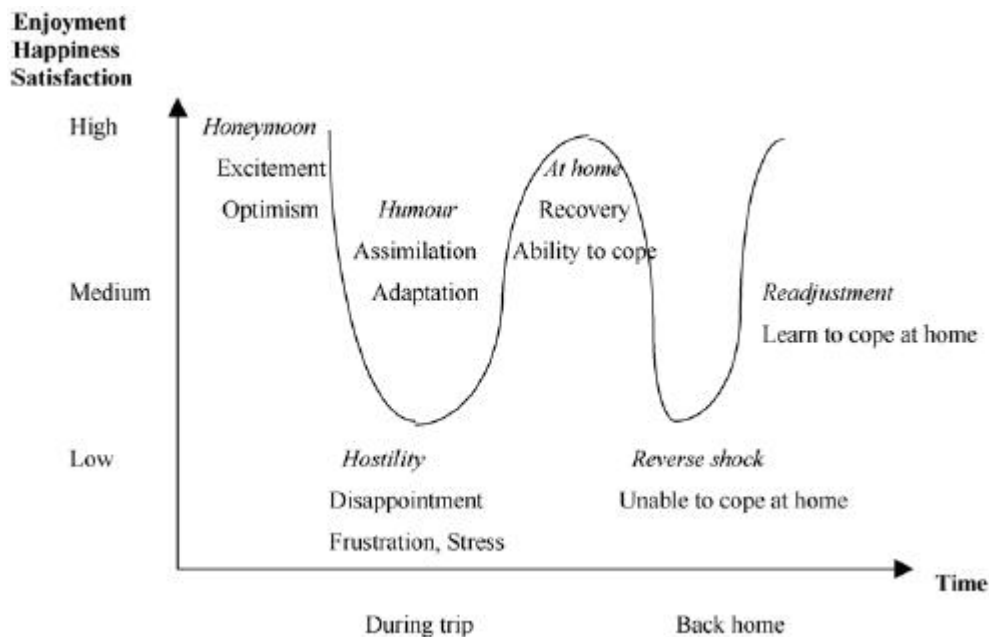


FIGURE 3. The U-curve and W-curve of cultural change and adaptation over time (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). *Cross-cultural behaviour in tourism: Concepts and analysis*. (p. 60) Burlington, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann.)

The Honeymoon phase is often characterized by excitement and optimism. Adjusting to a new culture and environment is interesting and the host culture is fascinating and differences are exiting (Ruben & Steward, 1998).

During the culture shock phase differences become apparent and problems occur. Fascination and novelty experienced in the beginning turn into frustration and disappointment. The sojourner may experience irritation, homesickness, depression, and helplessness (Ruben & Steward, 1998). The period of sojourner's decrease in adaptation is described as the first downward slope in the W-curve. The bottom of the curve is the strongest point of culture shock, which is often characterized by sojourner's very low mood and negative attitudes toward the host society. This phase is often associated with increased contact with fellow sojourners while the sojourner is annoyed by the rules, customs and ways of doing things in the host society. At its worse, the phase

may lead to hostility towards the host country (Ruben & Steward, 1998). As described by Adler (1997), stress-related culture shock may take many forms such as anger, anxiety, disappointment, embarrassment, frustration, identity confusion, impatience, and psychological responses such as sleeplessness, stomachaches, and headaches.

Gradually the sojourner develops strategies to cope with difficulties, and a recovery in the sojourner's adaptation occurs. This gradual adaptation to the host culture is presented as the first upward trend in the W-curve. The adjustment phase is often characterized by an acceptance and enjoyment of the new cultural environment. Sojourner begins to learn and understand the way of life in the foreign culture and cope in the new environment (Ruben & Steward, 1998). In case the adjustment continues, the sojourner might reach a level of mastery while regaining balance and level of comfort while she or he gradually adapts to the host culture (Ruben & Steward, 1998).

The repatriate is often excited about returning home. According to the W-curve model, after returning home the sojourner may experience a new honeymoon period. Compared to the initial U-curve of adaptation to the foreign country, this new honeymoon period at re-entry is often described to be shorter as it might last less than two months or even only a few hours. In addition, the new honeymoon period has also been argued to begin earlier upon repatriation (Hyder & Lövblad, 2007).

Shortly after the return home the repatriate might become frustrated and angry and experience a new period of culture shock. This reverse culture shock is caused by the readjustment challenges at re-entry as the sojourner might encounter difficulties in readjusting back home (Hammer et al., 1998; Martin,

1984) after being socialized into new ways of thinking and behaving in the host culture while possibly losing touch with the home culture and society (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

According to the model, gradually the individual adjusts to life at home again. While Adler (1981) argued the readjustment process could take around six months, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) argued the repatriation adjustment and readjustment process could take up to 18 months. Having said that, it is impossible to draw any specific timeframes for the duration of the stages, as the re-entry process is as individual as the initial adaptation process. This argument is supported by Andreason and Kinner (2005), according to whom, the U-curve model has received heavy criticism as individuals may experience cross-cultural adaptation in different ways and may not follow the U-curve. Furthermore, it has been suggested that there are also cultural differences in the way people experience reverse culture shock and re-adaptation. For example, reverse culture shock is said to be more likely to occur among Finns than among other nationals such as Americans, or even continental Europeans, due to the homogeneity of the Finnish culture and mother tongue (Suutari & Välimaa, 2002).

The readjustment process for soldiers has also been described with a curve. According to Nash (2007), people who participate in combat, or who deploy to military operations in support of combat, are all impacted by the actions or war. The General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) originally defined by Selye (1956), and further modified by Nash (2007), describe the soldiers' adaptation to combat and operational stress during a foreign assignment. The model postulates that during an operation the soldier may experience several

events that may increase the level of stress experienced which affects the person's ability to function. Unless the person is not offered periods of recovery, e.g. visits home, the stress might cumulate in a level where the person is no longer able to function properly (Nash, 2007).

Repatriation is influenced by how well the person has been able to recover from the stress factors (Nash, 2007). In case the person has experienced high levels of stress, e.g. suffered from or witnessed a very traumatic event during the operation, or in case the person has been unable to recover from stress the cumulative stress, the person might experience acute stress still at home. Persistent reactions to combat or operational stress may therefore affect the person still after return.

In events of mild combat stress, the mental war injury can heal in a few days. But in serious cases the experienced combat stress can lead to a posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Nash, 2007). Posttraumatic stress disorder was first diagnosed with US Vietnam veterans. According to Hirshon et al. (1997) post-traumatic stress disorders and adjustment disorders, caused by a life-threatening experience, might include psychological symptoms such as sleeping disorders, feelings of disorientation and numbing, avoidance of thinking or talking about the experiences, periods of crying, depression, anxiety, change in appetite, difficulty making decisions, and outbursts of anger. In the worst case the person might be a danger to him- or herself and to other people and close environments.

Based on Lehtinen's study of Finnish peacekeepers (Huhtanen, 2010), prior Afghanistan Finnish peacekeepers have suffered or experienced relatively little posttraumatic stress, although they have experienced some adaptation

problems or symptoms of stress during the first weeks back home. Based on the study of Kousa (2008), it has been estimated that around 1,2–3,6% of Finns who have participated in the crisis management mission abroad have suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder.

### **2.3 Components of change**

Adjustment of an individual to the host culture and the readjustment back to the home culture are both characterized by a sense of loss of familiar cues as a process of integrating into different cultural systems (Martin, 1984). However, cross-cultural readjustment to one's home culture is often described to be more difficult than adjusting to a foreign culture (Adler, 1981; Black et al., 1992a; Black et al., 1992b; Hyder & Lövblad 2007; Martin, 1984). The severity of re-entry shock is often related to the magnitude of changes (Hammer et al., 1998) and awareness of change (Martin, 1984), as according to two separate authors Pearson and Strolley (as cited in Brein & David, 1971, p. 219) at re-entry unnoticed, unquestioned, and even taken for granted attitudes and beliefs held prior to the sojourn might become visible for the sojourner.

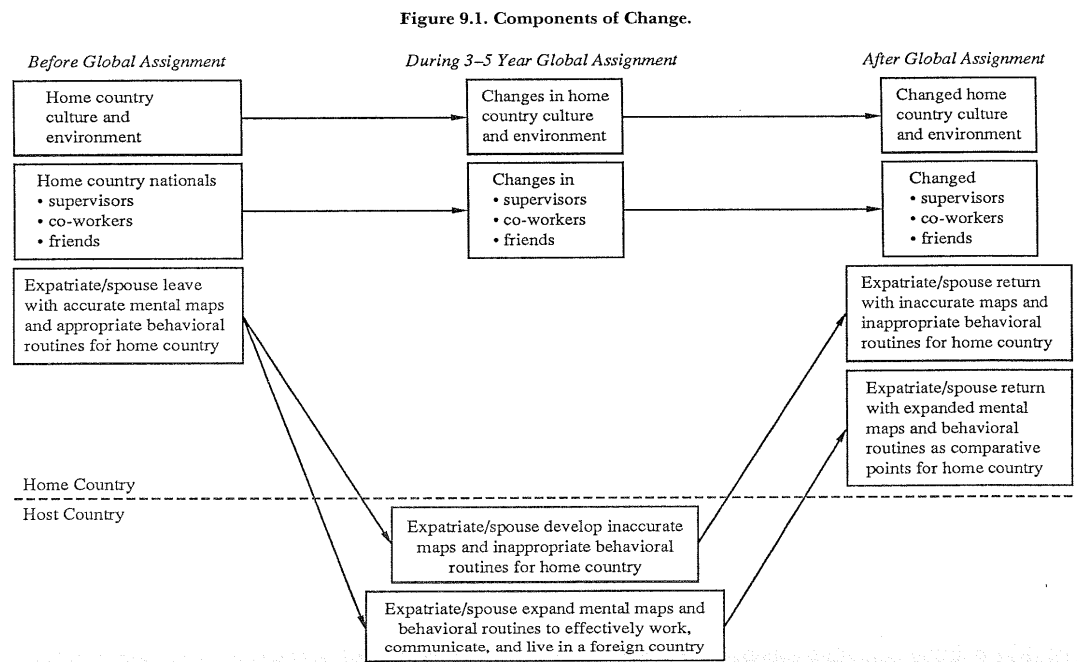


FIGURE 4. Components of change (Black et al., 1992a, p. 222)

According to the model of Components of Change (Black et al. 1992a), as outlined in the Figure 4, during the foreign assignment the sojourner may learn and adopt new behaviour that is accepted in the host society. While creating new attitudes and mental maps, the sojourner might abandon behaviour customary in the home county. As a consequence, at re-entry the sojourner might need to relearn the norms and behavior acceptable in the home country (Szkudlarek, 2010).

Although changes might have occurred during the foreign assignment, the home environment usually expects the person coming home to be the same individual as the one who left (Martin, 1984). At the same time, the sojourner might still carry a picture of the home society based on what it was like before she or he left (Martin, 1984), and possibly return with idealized and unrealistic memories of the home country (Adler, 1981). However, changes might have also occurred at home. For example, friends might have got married and

colleagues might have been promoted. Furthermore, changes are likely to have been taken place also at work as supervisors might have changed and new office tools could have been taken into use (Black et al., 1992a).

As the expectations of the repatriate and home environment might not be in line with reality, and as neither the individual nor the social environment is prepared for any readjustment and adaptation difficulties, reverse culture shock might occur (Hurn, 1999).

#### **2.4 Reduction of uncertainty and the need for control**

Both expatriation and repatriation adjustment include considerable level of uncertainty (Black 1988; Berger, 2009). When people are placed in new and unfamiliar environments they often experience significant level of uncertainty and anxiety. Also, when previously formed routines are broken an individual's sense of control is reduced. Thus, at repatriation, the individual might have a need to re-establish the decreased or lost level of control which moving back home might have caused (Black et al., 1992a).

According to Black et al. (1992b), individual may attempt to re-establish control by reducing uncertainty in the new situation through predictive and behavioural control. While predictive control is "the ability to make sense, or predict, one's environment in terms of the ability to predict how one is expected to behave," behavioural control is "the ability to control one's own behaviours that have an important impact on the current environment" (Black et al., 1992b, p. 742).

According to Black et al. (1992b), individual can therefore make anticipatory adjustments before entering a new environment or before returning

back to home country by imagining the environment beforehand by utilizing predictive control to reduce both the uncertainty and perceived loss of control in anticipation of the move. The anticipatory adjustment processes focus on forming and modifying expectations about the repatriation work, social interactions, how things will be like at home, and what the likely consequences will be for various behaviors (Black et al., 1992a). Formation of expectations about the new situation is one of the initial steps in the uncertainty-reducing process according to Black et al. (1992b). Concept of which will be discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter.

## **2.5 Role of expectations**

Expectations have been regarded as a crucial factor in determining psychological adjustment during cross-cultural transition (Rogers & Ward, 1993). The central role of expectations has also been stressed in expatriates' repatriation process (Black et al., 1992b; Suutari & Brewster, 2003).

The main reason why people often find returning back home so difficult is because they do not expect things to be so difficult but rather expect re-entry to be easy and the readjustment back home smooth. As repatriation is a process of return to a country the repatriate has previous living experience the repatriate may have also more strict expectations about the repatriation compared to the initial move to the foreign country (Black et al., 1992b; Black & Gregersen, 1991).

Martin's Expectancy-Value and Expectancy-Violation models (1993), and the repatriation adjustment model by Black et al. (1992a, 1992b) clarify the important role expectations can play in the adaptation process at re-entry.



According to the Expectancy-Value model (Martin, 1993), the extent to which a person experiences dissonance may depend on their expectations and whether the expectations are met or unfulfilled. According to this theory, fulfilled expectations lead to positive evaluations of the experience and good adjustment (Martin, 1993). While the Expectancy-Violation model explains that not all unfulfilled expectations lead to negative evaluations and outcomes (Martin, 1993). Re-entry expectations that are violated positively upon return are hypothesized to result in positive evaluations of the re-entry experience and leading to positive outcomes. Similarly, expectations that are violated negatively are stated to result in negative evaluations leading to poorer repatriate adjustment (Hammer et al., 1998).

Based on Louis (1980), accurate expectations will facilitate adjustment, as uncertainty is reduced if the expectations are based on accurate or met expectations since accurate expectations reduce the chance of surprises. The repatriation adjustment model by Black et al. (1992a, 1992b), discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter, also suggests that expectations which are realistic and accurate, reduce uncertainty and result in successful readjustment.

## **2.6 Framework of repatriation adjustment theory**

The theoretical framework for repatriation adjustment developed by Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall (1992b) focuses on repatriates' readjustment to home country. See Figure 5. Black et al., (1992b) proposed that repatriation adjustment is multifaceted, involving adjustment to three dimensions: adjustment to interacting with home country nationals, adjustment to the general living environment and culture, such as food, weather, housing,

transportation, schools etc., and adjustment to work, which Suutari and Välimaa (2002) further divided into two separate dimensions: job adjustment and organizational adjustment.

### Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment

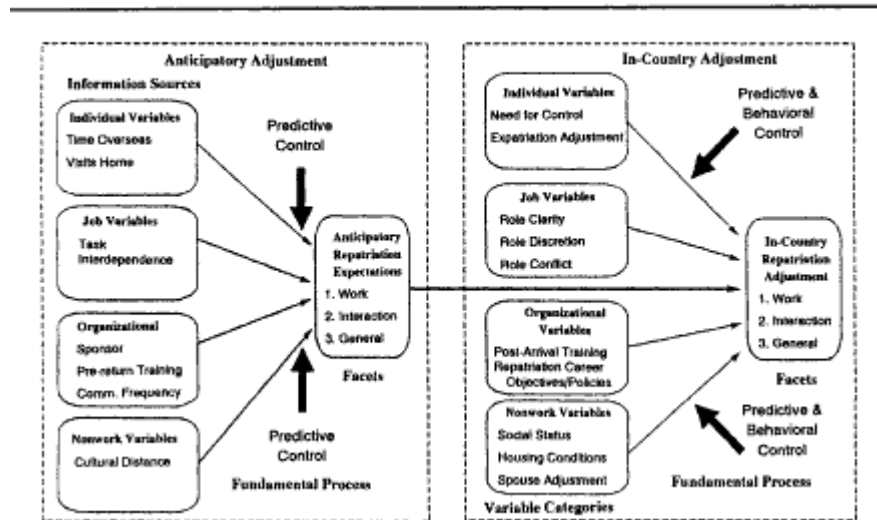


FIGURE 5. Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment (Black et al., 1992b, p. 745)

The model emphasises the situation of the employee during and after the process of returning to the home country. Repatriation adjustment is therefore divided into anticipatory adjustment made prior to returning home, also called pre-return adjustment, and in-country adjustment made post-return. According to the model, anticipatory cognitive adjustments prior to return are done by utilizing predictive control to reduce both uncertainty and perceived loss of control in anticipation of the move, while in the post-return phase of adjustment the focus is on both predictive and behavioral control (Black et al., 1992b) where the adjustment is influenced by the accuracy of pre-return expectations. Formation of accurate expectations of the different facets of adjustment will therefore facilitate the adjustment process back to the home

country (Black et al., 1992b) while the most important vehicle for forming the accurate expectations is considered to be information (Black et al., 1992b).

The model further postulates that the repatriation adjustment is a phenomenon where the re-entry experience and readjustment process is influenced by different variables affecting the formation of repatriation expectations prior to the actual return and variables influencing the repatriation process when already back in the home country by either inhibiting or exhibiting the readjustment process (Black et al., 1992b). Variables affecting the repatriation, pre- and post-return, are categorized into four: individual variables, job variables, organizational variables, and non-work variables.

According to the model, the repatriation adjustment is multifaceted where a variable might affect several dimensions or a variable might only influence a certain dimension but not all (Black et al., 1992b). The following sub-chapters focus on the anticipatory and in-country adjustment variables, described by Black et al. (1992a, 1992b). In addition, results from various repatriation studies are discussed.

### **2.6.1 Anticipatory Adjustment**

According to Black et al. (1992b), several factors can facilitate or inhibit the repatriation adjustment pre-return. Anticipatory variables affecting the repatriation expectations are grouped into four different categories: individual-, job-, organizational-, and non-work variables (Black et al., 1992a)

*Individual variables* said to affect the process of establishing accurate anticipatory expectations include the length of time away from home, and

effort to keep up with the events at home including the frequency of visits back to the home country during the assignment (Black et al., 1992b).

Based on previous studies, time overseas significantly correlated with Finnish repatriates' readjustment (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002). Gregersen and Stroh (1997) argue that the longer an individual has stayed abroad, the more distress and uncertainty the individual would encounter upon return. Results from earlier studies support also the fact that interaction and keeping up with events in the home country during foreign assignment positively influence the general repatriation process for Finnish repatriates (Suutari & Välimaa, 2002). Based on Suutari and Välimaa (2002), in order to avoid alienation which may cause unrealistic expectations, expatriates should therefore keep up on events at home.

According to Black et al. (1992b), also the frequency and lengths of visits back home have a positive effect on accurate expectations. Also results of Finnish repatriates (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997) support periodic visits home to re-familiarize with the culture, as this may reduce some of the uncertainty associated with returning home after an assignment.

Furthermore, demographical factors such as the sojourner's age, gender, family status and educational level (Cox, 2004) and willingness to relocate internationally (Suutari & Välimaa, 2002) have often been included to the individual variables affecting the process of forming accurate expectations. While studies of American managers suggest that older repatriates have an easier time readjusting to the US than younger individuals (Black & Gregersen, 1991), results of Gregersen and Stroh (1997) argue that older Finnish repatriates do not necessarily have an easier time readjusting to Finland. This

view was also supported by the study of Suutari and Välimaa (2002) who argued that age negatively correlated with the general adjustment of Finnish repatriates.

Based on Gregersen and Stroh (1991), results of American repatriates might be due to a fact that older people generally have more information and experience about their home country and they might have also gained more experience in dealing with changes in those areas, as one would expect the information and knowledge to reduce some uncertainty associated with repatriation adjustment. While according to Suutari and Välimaa (2002), the negative correlation of Finnish repatriates might be explained by some companies not willing to recruit older people, thus making adjustment to Finnish society more difficult for older repatriates.

*Job variables* mentioned to influence expectations sojourners create and develop prior return according to the model of Black et al. (1992b) include task interdependency related to the interaction between home organization and foreign operation. Based on the model, in case the work during the assignment requires extensive communication and change of information between the employee and home country organization, one would expect the returning employee to possess more accurate expectations at repatriation than a person who has not been in touch with the home organization during the foreign assignment (Black et al. 1992b). The study of Adler (1981) reaffirmed that employees who were kept regularly informed by the home office during assignment had fewer surprises and fewer unmet expectations at re-entry.

*Organizational variables* such as orientation and training provided by the organization prior to returning home is yet another source of information

that influence the formation of accurate expectations about the home country according to Black et al. (1992b). The multifaceted approach of the repatriation adjustment suggests depending on the content of the training one can influence the repatriation adaptation to one or to all facets of the re-entry (Black et al., 1992b).

As frequent communication with home country people is likely to assist the adjustment to work at repatriation, a sponsor or mentor assigned to an employee for the duration of the foreign assignment might also assist in the adaptation at re-entry (Black et al., 1992b). Earlier research of Finnish expatriates confirm that those individuals who had a sponsor during the foreign assignment were better adjusted at work after repatriation than those without one (Black et al, 1992a).

*Non-work variables* is the fourth information source category according to the model of Black et al. (1992b), which includes cultural distance or dissimilarity of the home and host country. Although Adler (1981) argued employees suffer equally from re-entry shock, regardless of their overseas location or type of assignment, re-entry from cultures similar to the home culture has been described to be easier than from dissimilar cultures. As Louis (1980) argued, the greater the contrast between the countries the greater the uncertainty, unfamiliarity, and difficulty in repatriation adjustment. Results from previous studies have indicated cultural novelty to be quite relevant to the readjustment for Finnish repatriates (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997). According to Gregersen and Stroh (1997), the reason for the difference might be due Finland being relatively small and homogeneous country where changes may be more significant when compared with more heterogeneous countries. In this study,

however, whether the destination is a “cosmopolitan” urban area with excessive resources of support, entertainment, and recreation compared to assignments in war locations might have stronger an effect on how the Finnish sojourners adapt to the host country and how they experience re-entry than the differences argued between cultures.

In addition to the four variables presented by Black et al. (1992a, 1992b), repatriation adjustment model further developed by Hyder and Lövblad (2007) claim the repatriation experience also depending on the repatriates’ motives. According to Hyder and Lövblad (2007), individuals will form their work-, interaction, and general expectations based on information, motives, and earlier experiences—and the repatriation process is judged according to how well the expectations are met. Therefore, a person might have higher expectations regarding the position at repatriation in case his or her main motive for the foreign assignment is to proceed further in his or her career compared to a person who has taken the assignment for the experience of living in another culture (Hyder & Lövblad, 2007). According to Hyder and Lövblad (2007), earlier experiences might also influence the re-entry experience as inexperienced repatriates may have difficulties in assessing which expectations are realistic.

Most of the information sources categorized to affect the formation of accurate expectation pre-return appear to relate significantly to the communication between the sojourner and home in one way or another, as frequent communication, task interdependence, and home visits all relate to interaction and exchange of information between the sojourner and home. As the methods of communication have developed substantially since the creation

of the original repatriation adjustment model by Black and his colleagues (Black et al., 1992a; Black et al., 1992b), and as several new mediated forms of communication such as Facebook, email and Skype have been taken into extensive use, one could assume this having an influence to the communication frequency and therefore also to the repatriation adjustment of the sojourners. Due to increased amount of information, repatriates of today might be more aware of changes occurred during the foreign assignment and therefore also more competent in creating more accurate expectations about the re-entry.

### **2.6.2 In-country adjustment**

According to Black et al. (1992b), several factors can facilitate or inhibit the repatriation adjustment also post-return. These in-country adjustment variables are grouped into four different categories similarly as in the pre-return stage: individual-, job-, organizational-, and non-work variables (Black et al., 1992a)

*Individual variables* such as extended international experience and past adjustment to the host country have been reported to influence the repatriation adjustment post return (Black et al. 1992b). Successful overseas adjustment might facilitate the readjustment back home as individual might become experienced in adjusting and readjusting (Black et al., 1992b). However, the opposite might also be possible as successful adjustment to a country very different compared to one's own might cause substantial change in individual's attitudes and perceptions producing difficulties at re-entry (Black et al., 1992b). Nevertheless, the studies of Finnish repatriates by Suutari and Välimaa (2002) found no proof that successful adjustment to the foreign country would lead to difficulties in the repatriation adjustment.



Individual variables such as individual's own belief in his or her capabilities to gain control over the situation, and elements such as language proficiency, willingness to communicate with home country nationals, and an ability to understand invisible cultural rules are also related to repatriation adjustment described by Black et al. (1992a). In addition, as individuals gradually adjust back to his or her home country (Black & Gregersen, 1991) time since returning home is also often included as a factor related to the repatriation adjustment. As explained by Black and Gregersen (1991), the longer time since returning home, the more information individuals would have acquired through experience about the home country, which would reduce uncertainty and ease the re-entry process.

Nevertheless, according to Black et al. (1992a) one of the most central components of successful repatriation is the selection of a return job. According to a quantitative study among Finnish expatriates (Riusala & Suutari, 2000), the expatriates' main concern with regard to their future is undoubtedly the question of job arrangements upon repatriation. Other *job variables* mentioned to influence the repatriation adjustment post return according to the model of Black et al. (1992b) include elements such as role conflict, role clarity, and role discretion.

While role conflict has been categorized to increase the uncertainty, unfamiliarity, unpredictability, and uncontrollability of the new work role and thus inhibit the adjustment (Black, 1988), clear job description (Black et al., 1992a) and role clarity (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997) after re-entry have been confirmed relevant to the effective repatriation adjustment for Finnish repatriates (Black et al., 1992a). However, previous results have shown that

over half of Finnish expatriates did not know what their return job would be after return (Black et al., 1992a; Suutari & Brewster, 2003). In addition, based on earlier studies, greater role discretion upon repatriation has facilitated work adjustment especially for Finnish repatriates (Black et al., 1992a; Gregersen & Stroh, 1999; Suutari & Välimaa, 2002). Role discretion allows individuals to adjust to their work role by changing the role to fit the individual and therefore making it easier for the individual to utilize past and familiar behaviours that could reduce some of the uncertainty associated with work (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Black, 1988). However, based on earlier research by Black et al. (1992a) only 53% of Finnish managers were given an opportunity to utilize the skill and experience acquired during foreign assignment.

*In-country organizational variables* such as post-arrival training and clarity of repatriation process and policies (Black et al., 1992b) together with financial compensation, promotion and utilization of international skills (Black et al., 1992a) have yet been categorized as important factors affecting the re-entry experience and adaptation at re-entry.

According to Black and Gregersen (1991), counseling the repatriates about the re-entry process and likely problems to be encountered would be expected to reduce the normal level of uncertainty and thereby facilitate re-entry adjustment. However, surprisingly few multinational firms provide training or orientation during repatriation as earlier studies of Finnish expatriates reported 77 percent of Finnish expatriates receiving absolutely no training prior return to their home countries (Black et al., 1992a). According to Harvey (1989), most frequently mentioned reasons why firms lack repatriation

programs are lack of expertise in establishing such programs, cost of the program, and belief by top management that such programs are not needed.

Furthermore, financial compensation has been highlighted an important factor influencing the repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992a). Although studies of Finnish repatriates have shown possible career advancement opportunities more important motives than monetary compensation to leave on foreign assignment (Suutari & Brewster, 2003), many Finnish repatriates have indicated to be concerned about the compensation equity based on earlier research (Black et al., 1992a).

*Non-work variables*, which is the fourth in-country variable described by Black et al. (1992 a; 1992b) include elements such as social status, standard of living, and adjustment of the spouse and family. For example, a downward shift in social status, poorer housing conditions, and adjustment of the spouse might negatively affect the repatriation adjustment of the sojourner (Black et al., 1992a; Black et al., 1992b).

While housing conditions related significantly to the general adjustment of Finnish spouses (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997), the downward shift in social status was not shown in earlier studies of Finns possibly due to the fact that social status is seen as less relevant in societies such as the Nordic countries who value equality (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997; Suutari & Välimaa, 2007).

Earlier studies of Black et al. (1992a) suggested that many Finnish spouses make significant career sacrifices in order to go on global assignment and find it difficult to return to work after repatriation. In addition, Gregersen and Stroh (1997) found a strong spillover effect among Finnish repatriates and their spouses, which imply that expatriate's and spouse's interaction and

general adjustment are related to each other (Black & Gregersen, 1991). Therefore, one could assume the more easily the spouse from Finland adjusts to interacting with home country nationals and the general environment during repatriation, the more easily also the repatriate adjusts to work (Black et al., 1992a).

As most academic research on repatriation is based on, or is an extension of the theoretical framework created by Black et al. (1992a, 1992b), the original repatriation adjustment model could be modified to include also other researched elements reported to affect the repatriation adjustment process by various other academic scholars. The modified model including several other sources of information, reported earlier in this paper to affect the adjustment process prior- and post-return, is presented in Figure 6. In addition to adding additional information sources to the readjustment process, the modified model also links other components, such as “components of change” to the original Repatriation Adjustment Model. Furthermore, “motivation” has been included as a separate information source prior to return.

Some items have also been re-worded, e.g. the pre- and post-return training has been modified to “support,” which better applies to repatriation, as repatriate hardly needs structural training but merely support to settle. In the modified model, reality versus expectation evaluation is also highlighted, as successful repatriation is related to repatriates’ perception on how well the reality match with the earlier formed expectations. The degree of dissonance between the faced reality and earlier formed expectations therefore affects the level of experienced uncertainty, culture shock, and adaptation at re-entry.

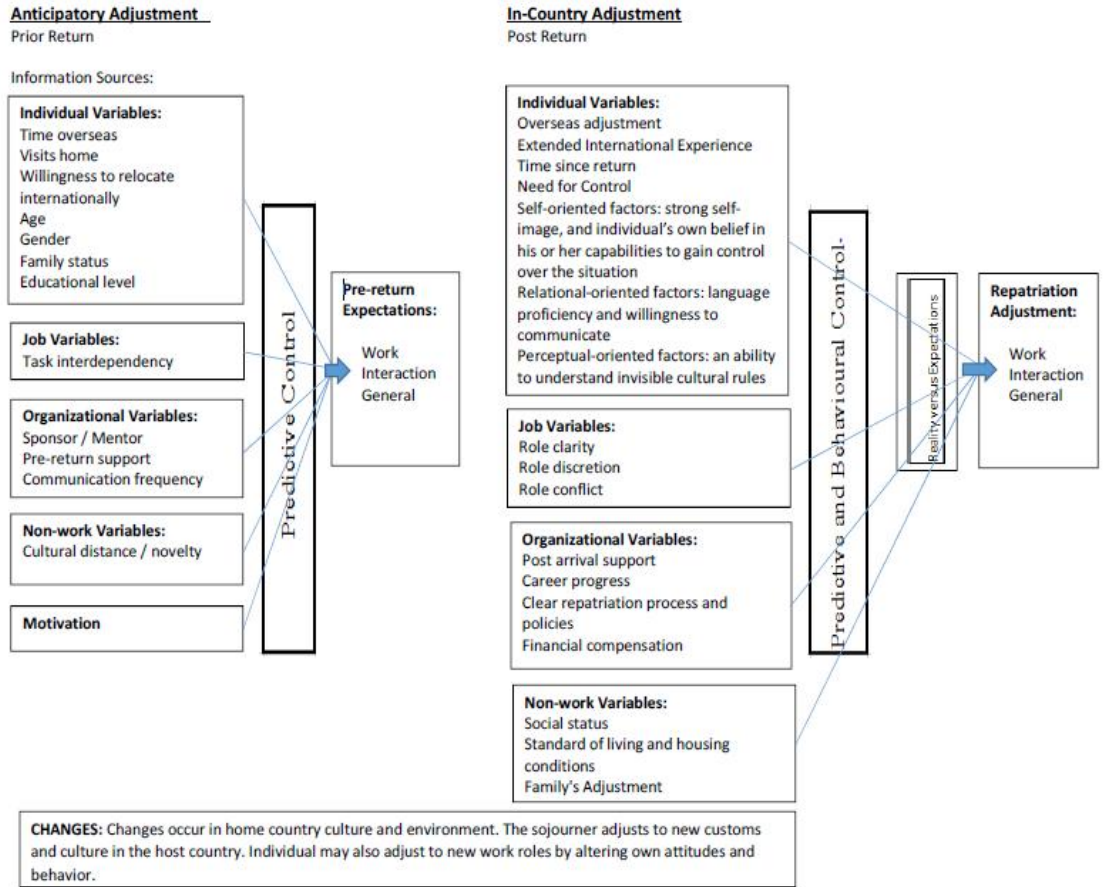


FIGURE 6. Modified framework of repatriation adjustment (modified from Black et al., 1992a, p.230, and Black et al, 1992b, p. 745)

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology part of the thesis outlines the general research strategy and the manner in which the research is undertaken, and identifies the methods used. In this chapter, the main research questions, methods, and process of the research are presented.

#### 3.1 Research questions

Based on the above literature, and the grounded theory of Black et al. (1992b) in particular, the basic argument is that repatriation process and readjustment to work, to general life, and interaction with others might be challenging for a repatriate due to changes occurring during the foreign assignment that might lead the repatriate to feel uncertain and uncomfortable in previously familiar situations. According to Black et al. (1992b), the re-entry experience and readjustment process is influenced by different variables affecting the formation of repatriation expectations prior to the actual return and variables influencing the repatriation process when already back in the home country.

As re-entry is deeply personal experience, different sojourners and sojourner groups might experience re-entry differently depending on the motivation and purpose for the foreign assignment. However, there might also be similarities in the re-entry process. To clarify whether Finnish repatriates share similar re-entry experiences or whether there are differences in the re-entry experiences the following main research questions are posed:

- 1) How do repatriates experience re-entry?
- 2) What are the main issues related to the re-entry process of the returning sojourners?
- 3) What do the returning sojourners perceive as the main challenges in the re-entry and readjustment process?

While the second question refers to both positive and negative aspects, the third question focuses solely on the aspects of experienced challenges of the repatriation process. Although re-entry is often described as challenging and difficult, re-entry might not always be such a stressful experience, at least if we believe previous studies of Finnish repatriates (Nieminen, 2007; Siljanen 2009), thus the research questions were formulated to investigate both positive and negative aspects of the re-entry experience.

As the chosen groups of study may differ in how they experience the re-entry, and as the chosen groups of study may consider adaptation to one aspect or category more challenging than to another, the following sub-question regarding the repatriation adjustment was formulated:

Are the issues and challenges in the re-entry process mainly related to:

- a. professional life
- b. personal life, or
- c. life in general

In this thesis adjustment to job and organization is categorized as adjustment professionally, while adjustment personally is used to refer e.g. to changes in the repatriates' own attitudes, behavior, and health—and adjustment

generally to interaction with friends and family, and with the general environment and society.

In addition to clarifying the repatriates' re-entry experience and identifying the most important aspects of the re-entry process, the study also aspires to clarify the possible reasons behind the re-entry experiences of the respondents based on the chosen theories of the study. Clarifying the elements possibly influencing the re-entry experiences of the repatriates might have implications for practice. As the results of the study hope to assist the organizations to develop their re-entry assistance and support provided for their returning employees, also the following research question is posed:

- 4) What are the possible elements influencing the repatriates' re-entry experience?

### **3.2 Research method and procedure**

The research is mainly descriptive in nature. The research hopes to reveal and explain the repatriates' special situation and possible challenges by studying and comparing the re-entry process of three different Finnish professional sojourner groups: Corporate Expatriates, employees of Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and employees of the Finnish Defence Forces; Military Observers. Approximately 5–10 employees returning back to Finland during the past year from each group were used as a sample for the study.

The research method used is mainly qualitative, where the main goal is to find a greater understanding of the phenomenon (Soininen, 1995). The main survey is done with an extensive semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix A) including both closed and open-ended questions. In addition, the research



included a few individual interviews from organization representatives involved in administering the foreign assignment process, and a separate interview with an Intercultural Consultant specialised in coaching and preparing expatriates for their international assignments.

According to Yin (1994), one can generalise information acquired from qualitative case studies, although the method does not thoroughly fulfil the requirements of generalizations of material. However, by thoroughly studying an independent event one gets a sight of what is noteworthy, common or recurring in the phenomenon (Hirsjärvi et al., 1998). Therefore, also this study can be considered to give insight and first-hand information of the general situation and circumstances of the re-entry process of the chosen groups of Finnish repatriates.

### **3.2.1 Data collection**

One tried to acquire the qualitative material as systematically and structurally as possible. The main research method used to acquire information in this study was a questionnaire distributed for the Finnish repatriates and interviews held with the consultant and representatives of the organizations involved.

The questionnaire was distributed for participants that were to represent the parent group of Finnish repatriates of Corporate Expatriates, Employees of Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Employees of the Finnish Defence Forces; Military Observers who who had all returned to Finland in the past year, as based on earlier studies time since returning home has related significantly to the repatriation adjustment of Finnish repatriates (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997).

While the researcher distributed the questionnaires with an introduction letter directly to the Corporate repatriates with an email, Military Observers received the questionnaires with prepaid reply envelopes via a contact person at Finnish Defence Forces. At the Ministry for Foreign Affairs an advertisement was placed in the organization's intranet "Otto" when employees who had repatriated during the past year and were interested in participating in the study were advised to contact the researcher directly for more information.

While Corporate Expatriates is typically a married man in his thirties or forties, single men comprise the second largest group of employees sent abroad (Adler, 1997). According to Adler (1997), single women represent around 7–10%, and married women 5–10% of the expatriate population. Respondents of the Corporate Expatriates used in this study corresponded with general estimates of the expatriates as responses were received from 8 male and 1 female repatriates. The Corporate expatriate respondents were all married or co-habiting. Seven of the respondents had children, and all but one had family (spouse, or spouse and children) accompanying the expatriate on the foreign assignment. Also the age structure corresponded somewhat with the general estimates as the corporate expatriate respondents were mostly 30–39 years of age. All respondents from the Corporate Expatriate study group had a degree in higher education, and most had very long service years within the company while the service years within the company varied from 5 to 28 years.

The respondents of the Foreign Ministry study group consisted of responses from 1 male and 7 female respondents. Employees were mostly 30–39 years of age and all had a degree in higher education. Two of the

respondents were single. The rest were either married or co-habiting. Two of the respondents had children, and only two had family members (spouse, or spouse and children) accompanying the employee on the foreign assignment. Also from this sample group most had very long service years within the company. The service years within the company varied from 7,5 to 29 years.

According to the Finnish Military Forces (2013), the average age of Finnish Military Observers is 38 years. All of the 7 responses received from the Military study group were male 30–59 years of age. From the respondents all but one had a degree in higher education. Three of the respondents were married, three single, and one was divorced. Four of the respondents had children but none of the respondents had family members accompanying them on the foreign assignment. This was most likely due to the fact that the assignment locations of the respondents were all high-risk war locations where the respondents would most likely live in a military base where the family would not accompany. From Military Observers the service years within the company varied from 7 to 30 years. However, in here one must be cautious whether the long tenure in the company relates to work within military.

In summary, the age variation in each survey groups was 30–59 years. All but one respondent had a degree in higher education. While the Foreign Ministry group was mainly female, the other group members were mostly male, and while most Corporate Expatriates and Foreign Ministry employees were married or co-habiting, under half of the Military Observers were married or co-habiting. Compared to other groups only the Military Observers did not have family members accompanying them on the assignment.

Prior to finalizing the research questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with a Finnish Nokia Siemens Networks employee who repatriated from an expatriate assignment from the United States in the past year. With a pilot study one refers to testing the method used in the experiment or study prior the official research (Soininen, 1995). According to Soininen (1995), this part of the research is too often forgotten or its importance is underestimated. In this study testing the questionnaire was relevant, as it helped to clarify some of the questions in the questionnaire prior the questionnaire was put into use.

The design of the questionnaire included both open and structured close-ended questions. All of the questions and statements of the questionnaire are not presented thoroughly in this paper. However, the whole questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

The questionnaire was divided onto four main sections. The first part of the questionnaire collected general information, such as “Demographics” of the participants, including previous international experience, while the second part “Foreign Assignment” asked details of the latest foreign assignment with adjustment to the host country, motivation, purpose, and satisfaction with the foreign assignment. In addition to this, communication with the home country during the assignment was evaluated. Motivation is really hard to measure since there is no scale to measure it. Therefore, motivation was studied with both open and closed questions. In addition, satisfaction was measured with both open and closed questions.

The third section “Repatriation Back Home” concentrated on the return including questions regarding reason and motivation for return, benefits from the assignment, expectations about re-entry, adaptation and adjustment back

home in general and to work, and experienced components of change. The third section is the central part of the questionnaire focusing on the re-entry experience while the other parts in the questionnaire were to clarify the re-entry process and highlight the possible causes or reasons behind the experience. Most of the questions in this section were presented as open questions. However, closed ended questions were also used.

The third section of the questionnaire included questions about the impact of the international assignment on respondents' career. Five different options about the assignment's influence to career were given (a. very positively, b. positively, c. no influence, d. negatively, e. very negatively) and the respondents were asked to choose an alternative that best indicated their opinion.

Repatriation and readjustment to personal life, professional life and organization was evaluated with a seven-point Likert scale as the response format. Some of these questions were taken from the studies of Suutari and Brewster (2003), Suutari and Välimaa (2002), and Napier and Peterson (2002), in order to be able to possibly compare the results received with previous research results of Finnish repatriates. The respondents were asked to circle an alternative of the statements that best described the respondent's own opinion (1. strongly agree, 2. agree, 3. somewhat agree, 4. does not relate to me/cannot say, 5. somewhat disagree, 6. disagree, and 7. strongly disagree). In addition, Likert scale questions were used to inquire about aspects that are often mentioned to be challenging at repatriation. Respondents were asked to circle an alternative that best described their feelings of how much the mentioned issues affected the respondents in bringing them stress or discomfort after

returning back (1. issued does not relate to me at all, 2. extremely little, 3. very little, 4. little, 5. much, 6. very much; 7. extremely). Furthermore, different repatriation support practices or general practicalities were described and respondents were asked to circle the extent to which they saw such practices challenging at repatriation.

Due to the small size of the samples, judgements based on quantitative methods and statistical figures were not possible. However, answers given to the structured closed ended questions regarding readjustment to personal-, and professional life and to the organization can be found in Appendix C.

Adaptation and possible culture shock was evaluated based on a drawing exercise also in the third section of the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to draw a curve representing their own adaptation process back home. However, there were some challenges in analysing the drawings, as most of the pictures did not clearly state the point of the time of return back home.

Some challenges were also encountered in the question regarding the motivation and purpose for the latest foreign assignment. Eight different alternatives were given and the respondents were advised to choose two of which best described the reasons that had influenced the respondent's decision to consider the foreign assignment. However, respondents from Corporate Expatriate and from the Foreign Ministry population often gave more than two answers.

“Training and Mentoring” was the final section of the questionnaire. Whether cultural training or mentoring was offered prior the assignment, or prior- or after return were inquired and whether the respondent had participated

to the training and had they found it useful. In addition, the respondents were asked to describe what kind of support or assistance they would have required at re-entry.

In order to acquire a general picture of the re-entry process, also from the organization's point of view, a short interview was made with a representative managing the foreign assignment process in each organization involved (Appendix B). While an hour face-to-face interview was held in Jyväskylä with a representative of Metso, the other company representatives were interviewed via email. In addition, to further clarify the re-entry process and possible challenges of Finnish repatriates in general, an hour face-to-face interview was also conducted in Helsinki with the Managing Director of Sinkkonen Consulting Oy, Reeta Sinkkonen, specialized in coaching and preparing expatriates for their international assignment and repatriation. Simiire interview questions (Appendix B) were used also in this interview.

### **3.2.2 Data analysis**

The data analysis is the core of the research. During the analysis answers to the research questions are revealed (Hirsjärvi et al., 1889). According to Yin (1994), the analysis of case study is often one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies (Yin, 1994). Also in this research, analysis was the most time-consuming part of the study.

Conclusions about the data in empirical research can only be made after preliminary work has been done (Hirsjärvi et al., 1998). In this study, as the questionnaire and all the interviews were conducted in Finnish, the findings needed to be translated into English by the researcher. In addition, as the

interviews were digitally recorded, prior translation they needed first to be transcribed.

According to Hirsjärvi et al. (1998), the first phase after data collection is for the researcher to qualify the data. In this study, the researcher needed to abandon one questionnaire filled out by a Finnish Foreign Ministry employee due to the fact that the person did not qualify for the study as the person did not return to work for the Ministry after repatriation and the re-entry process did not reflect the re-entry to the organization of the Finnish Foreign Ministry. The second stage after data collection is for the researcher to consider whether additional, supplementary, information is needed (Hirsjärvi et al., 1998). In this survey, the Finnish Defence Forces gave a one-year permission for the data collection. Therefore, the researcher had a possibility to acquire additional information from the Finnish Defence Forces had she felt it necessary. The third phase of the data collection according to Hirsjärvi et al. (1998) is organizing and storing the data for analysis that is an extensive and laborious process in qualitative research.

One can analyse the data and identify possible patterns or similarities and/or differences in the content of data in various ways. A disastrous flaw in doing case studies is to produce statistical generalizations as the method of generalizing the results. According to Yin (1994) one should try to avoid thinking in terms of “the sample of cases” or the “small sample size of cases” (Yin, 1994, p. 32-33), as while quantitative study method is about amounts and statistics, qualitative research is about finding meaning (Frey et al., 2000)

The small sample size was also the reason behind that the answers to the structured closed end questions in the questionnaire, formulated with a



Likert scale as the response format, were not taken into consideration in this study. According to Soininen (1995) samples smaller than 30 may cause misjudgments in qualification, and thus statistical figures or judgements based on quantitative methods should not be created. Instead, analytical generalizations in which previously developed theory was used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the study were used in this study (Yin, 1994).

The most suitable method to analyse and organize the collected data in this study was to first organize the answers by the questionnaire. The empirical and analysis part of the thesis was then organized around the main theory (Black et al., 1992b) and research questions, which helped to focus the attention on certain data and ignore other. The strategy chosen to assist in the data presentation and analysis was to rely on the theoretical propositions and theory that had led to the study as described by Yin (1995).

According to Yin (1994), the Linear-Analytical technique is an applicable strategy in explanatory, descriptive, or exploratory case studies. In addition, it is comfortable to most investigators and most advantageous in many dissertations (Yin, 1994). With the Linear-Analytical technique “the sequence of subtopics starts with the issue problem being studied and a review of the relevant prior literature. The sub-topics then proceed to cover the methods used, the finding from the data collected and analysed, and the conclusions and implications from the findings” (Yin, 1994, p. 152-153). Linear-Analytical technique assisted in composing the research report also in this study, although in here the empirical findings and analyses were both combined under the research questions.

According to Hirsjärvi et al. (1998), the research is not yet finished and ready when the results are analysed as the results should not only be presented but also interpreted and explained. Also, in this study the researcher tried to formulate a synthesis from the results that compiled together the main issues and considerations. According to Hirsjärvi et al. (1998) this is often left with too little attention.

### **3.2.3 Reliability, validity and ethical considerations**

Reliability of research is extremely important because if the research is not reliable it has no actual meaning. Reliability refers to the permanence of the results received from the research. This means that if the research was carried out again in exactly the same circumstances, the results should be the same. In this case the reliability of the research would be high (Jewell & Siegall, 1985).

The reliability of research is influenced by various factors. The reliability is affected by how the research is conducted and also by the conduct and behaviour of the researcher and participants (Soininen, 1995). The reliability can be affected, for example, if the questionnaire is not well formed or the interview is badly organized and, because of this, the respondents understand the questions in a different way the researcher intended. A number of different questions (open and closed) were used in this study, as it gave a possibility to cross-check the findings to make sure the questions were understood correctly. However, even if respondents do not give misleading answers intentionally, situational variables can affect the extent to which they understand the questions and therefore the accuracy of the responses (Jewell & Siegal, 1985).

There is a correlation between the reliability and validity. Reliability is a precondition for validity, but even good reliability does not guarantee that the validity of the research is good (Jewell & Siegall, 1985). Validity of the research refers to the ability to measure the factors that the survey was intended to measure. According to Frey et al. (2000) the best studies should be high on both internal and external validity. While internal validity, or “credibility” as described by Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Soininen, 1995 p. 125), refers to the accuracy of the conclusions drawn from the group of people or texts studied (Frey et al., 2000) external validity, or “transferability” as described by Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Soininen 1995 p. 125), refers to the generalizability of the findings from study (Frey et al., 2000).

One often tries to evaluate the validity of research by comparing the received results with the answers received from previous studies or surveys. When comparing the results received with the previous Master’s studies (Nieminen, 2007; Siljanen, 2009) the findings did not differ. This would appear to suggest the results of the thesis to be valid.

However, as people with different cultural backgrounds are influenced by their response styles (Chun et al., 1974), when making comparisons between earlier results, one must take into account that the answers might differ due to the different response styles. For example, US nationals have been categorized to score high on Extreme Response Style (ERS) in multiple response category questions, such as Likert-scale questions (Harzing, 2006), so when comparing the results from a qualitative study of Finnish repatriates, this should be taken into account. In addition, there are differences also in

responses styles between countries in relation to the tendency to agree or disagree with an item regardless of the content (Harzing, 2006).

As there are differences in response styles between countries (Chun et al., 1974), one should also consider whether different groups might differ in their response styles, i.e. whether different Finnish groups would have a tendency to prefer or endorse middle or extreme responses in multiple response category questions. Furthermore, there might also be differences in response styles between genders. According to Harzing (2006) males have been shown to have a higher tendency to agree with questions than females.

It has also been studied that the language in which the questionnaire is processed might also influence the response styles, and respondents would be more likely to choose extreme responses when replying to questionnaire in their native language than when replying to the same questionnaire in a non-native language (Harzing, 2006). In this study, the questionnaire given to the respondents was in their native language, Finnish, so one could expect the respondents being more likely to choose extreme responses in questions with rating scales.

Item sensitivity can also cause problems in analysing the material (Jewell & Siegall, 1985). Item sensitivity is a factor that might have also influenced the research results of Corporate Expatriates in particular in this study, as the researcher was working in the same company as a HR specialist assisting Metso expatriates in their international assignments. However, the reliability of the research was improved by giving the respondents a possibility to answer the questions anonymously.

Anonymity is an ethical principle that should be followed in research. To guarantee the anonymity of the respondents, copies of the questionnaire were sent via email to the participants of the Corporate Expatriates and employees of Ministry for Foreign Affairs accompanied with an introduction letter clearly informing that the participation to the study was voluntary, and that the data would be treated anonymously and confidentially. In addition, the contact details of the researcher were also provided in case the participants needed more information regarding the study, and in case they wanted to use post instead of email for returning the questionnaires. To guarantee the anonymity of the respondents of the Military Observers the questionnaires were sent with prepaid reply envelopes to a contact person at the Finnish Defence Forces who then distributed the questionnaires together with the prepaid reply envelopes to the possible participants with a similar introduction letter that was sent to the Corporate Expatriates and employees of Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

In addition to treating research participants with respect, other ethical considerations that need to be taken into account in any research involve treating the research findings with care (Frey et al., 2000). While data should be correctly collected, standards in analyzing and reporting the findings must also be good. The researcher needs to be honest when collecting information, analysing the results and when drawing conclusions, as only the researcher sees the actual data being collected. (Frey et al., 2000). The researcher should not “sugar-coat” the study results or alter the results into a desired direction (Soininen, 1995). A false assumption is that a study is insignificant in case the hypothesis is not supported or in case desired results are not received, while the

opposite results might be utmost important and the most fundamental discovery (Soininen, 1955).

Public nature of the research should also be taken into account (Frey et al., 2000). Companies involved may need to withhold findings from competitors. In this research an agreement was made that the Finnish Defence Forces was given permission to read the study prior publication.

#### 4 EMPIRICAL STUDY & FINDINGS

The empirical part of the study was collected mainly from three different sources: the questionnaire (Appendix A), interviews (Appendix B), and previous empirical studies. In the following, the results from the questionnaire and interviews are presented, discussed, and analysed together with the results from previous studies.

The chosen sample of Corporate Expatriates used in this study was Finnish Metso repatriates. A general email was sent to all Finnish Expatriates of Metso who returned to the home organization from a foreign assignment over the past year. From these general emails, all (17) replied and 12 agreed to answer to some additional questions with a questionnaire. The questionnaire was therefore sent out to 12 repatriates. Replies were received from 9 returned expatriates. Assignment host countries of Corporate Expatriates included the United States, China, Australia, and Germany. While expatriate assignments of Corporate Employees are often described to be longer than one year (Hellsten, 2009) they have often been described with a maximum duration, such as 5 years in Metso (Avenue, 2013). Commonly the expatriate assignments are from 2 to 5 years (Black et al., 1992a). In this study most assignments (7) lasted from 1 to 2 years although the actual assignment durations varied from 9 months to 5 years.

From employees of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs the researcher sent out the questionnaire to 12 employees and responses were received from 9

respondents. However, only 8 responses to the questionnaire were used, as one of the respondent's answers did not indicate the repatriation process related to the work at the Foreign Ministry. Foreign Ministry assignment host countries included Indonesia, Singapore, India, South Africa, Russia, and China. While foreign assignments of the Foreign Ministry normally last from 4 to 7 years (Ulkoasianmisteriö, 2009), most of the respondents in this study had been abroad for over 4 years. However, 3 of the respondents had been abroad longer than 7 years, which is the maximum assignment duration at the Foreign Ministry. This was due to the fact that some of the respondents had worked on two different foreign assignments in two different host locations prior to repatriation.

Also some employees from the Military had been on an assignment in two different host locations prior the repatriation. Assignment locations of this study group included Pakistan, India, Syria, and South Lebanon. The normal assignment duration for Military Observers is 6 months, which is possible to be extended for another 6 months (Puolustusvoimat, 2013). In this study, most of the respondents had been on the assignment for 12 months. From the Finnish United Nations Military Observers the questionnaire was distributed to 15 Military Observers while responses were received from 7 respondents. Although 2 of the respondents retired after return, all responses were used in this study. As Finnish peacekeepers and Military Observers include both soldiers working at the Military and reservist (Leskinen, 2011), and the questionnaire did not separate the two, the return experience to work might somewhat differ. However, as a both soldiers working at the Military and



reservist are offered the repatriation support by the Military, all the responses were taken into account and included in this study.

#### **4.1 How do repatriates experience re-entry?**

Re-entry is often described to be difficult and adjustment to work, social life, and life in general can be challenging (Black et al., 1992b). As was described by Neovius (1996), global assignments can be extremely rewarding and beneficial experiences for an individual, but they can also be stressful and problematic life-events with discontinuities in work and private life.

Based on R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), repatriates report that the first year back home is the most difficult one, especially if one has been away for more than a year. R. Sinkkonen argues further, that return from abroad after the third year, and the years after, is not actually repatriation or return to the home country, it is a transfer relative to a move between countries (R. Sinkkonen, personal communication, August 30, 2012). The view is supported by the study results of Black et al. (1992a) where a respondent described that repatriation should be treated as another foreign assignment.

According to R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), people often experience the repatriation conversely as strongly as the adaptation to the new environment. The more a person complains during their foreign assignment, especially during the period of culture shock, can imply how much the person will complain when returning back home. This claim is consistent with the argument by Andreason and Kinneer (2005), who propose

that those who experience significant problems during the foreign assignment are also more likely to have adjustment problems at repatriation.

Based on the interviews held with the organization representatives who assist with the foreign assignments, there are individual- and family-related differences how the repatriates experience the return. While some repatriates might experience adaptation difficulties, for others, the adaptation back home may go rather painlessly, and adaptation difficulties may be temporary and disappear in a couple of weeks, causing only little inconvenient or harm to the everyday life. However, as some readjustment problems are anticipated, recommendation from the representative from the Military is that in case one has been on a mission for 6 months, one should stay at home for 1 year; and in case one has been on a mission for 1 year, one should give it 2 years before leaving again. This gives sufficient time for the return and also enough time to prepare for a new assignment (SKJL, 2012).

According to the Foreign Ministry representative, Foreign Ministry repatriates experience somewhat re-entry difficulties, but as the career at the Foreign Ministry involves internal work rotation between different host locations at various posts abroad, adaptation to foreign assignments and re-adaptation back become everyday life for the employees—whereas foreign assignments in the private sector might be regarded as “one-time” transfers, and so adjustment issues could be stronger compared to those who are used to this kind of rotation of service. According to the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009), the job rotation might also bring some challenges to employees with families such as their spouses' careers and children's schooling.

The intercultural consultant was also asked whether she considers that different sojourner groups differ in their repatriation experiences. According to R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), the consultant could assume that there probably aren't major differences, as it is more about what it means to be a human. According to R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), repatriation is more related to personal qualities and characteristics of a repatriate and to the preparedness of the sending and receiving units to assist the person, and give him or her tools to process the experience.

When asking whether the representatives managing the foreign assignment process for each organization involved would see adjustment professionally, personally or generally being the most challenging aspect of the repatriation process for the repatriates, according to the Foreign Ministry representative adjustment professionally and generally to the social life and to the Finnish society might be the most challenges aspects for the Foreign Ministry repatriates.

According to the representative from the Finnish Defence Forces, it is difficult to analyse whether any cluster would be more challenging than another, yet almost every repatriate will face some challenges. While challenges in adjustment generally are often related to issues at home, friends and traffic, challenges personally could include thoughts of being no longer a hero. Furthermore, as described by the representative from the Finnish Defence Forces, challenges professionally might relate to workplace being unable to welcome the employee back. In addition, common comments such as "my

work does not bring me challenges" and "the workdays are not exiting" could also relate to the professional challenges experienced by the respondents.

According to the corporate representative the return back to the Finnish society has not been that difficult for the repatriating Corporate Expatriates. Also the return to the work community has not been too difficult due to Finnish low level of hierarchy. According to the corporate representative attitude among the people leaving on a foreign assignment and then repatriating back to work has generally been rather easy. "One returns and begins to work as always, although there are always exceptions." However, as the voluntary resignation rate of repatriates is rather high at Metso, one must question whether there is some dissatisfaction among the repatriates towards the organization or challenges with issues at work the repatriates are reluctant to speak about.

Responses from the sample group respondents regarding how they experienced the re-entry in general and to the work life, and how they felt they had readjusted back to the general and work life were rather positive. Three quarters of the Corporate Expatriates reported the general return having been very easy, easy or neutral, while two respondents found the repatriation experience in general "somewhat" difficult, although this was not an option given. In addition, they felt they adapted to the general life in Finland either very well, well or moderately. Three quarters of the Corporate Expatriates reported also the repatriation experience to work very easy, easy or neutral, and most respondents found they adapted well to work at return while two respondents found the repatriation to work "somewhat" difficult and third of

the respondents from the Corporate Expatriates reported having experienced adaptation difficulties at re-entry.

From Foreign Ministry less than half of the respondents described having experienced some adaptation difficulties at re-entry. Majority of the Foreign Ministry sample mentioned the general return having been either very easy or easy and all of the respondents felt they had adapted to the life in general either well or very well. The return to work was reported either easy or neutral, and 75% felt they had adapted well also to work.

Military Observers found the return back to Finland, in general, either very easy or easy (6). The same amount of respondents felt they had adapted back to Finland either very well or well. Although one respondent reported the repatriation experience to work difficult, most Military Observers (4) reported the repatriation to work having been easy, and that they had adapted back to work either very well, well or somewhat. Some answers were missing as two of the respondents had retired and hence left this question unanswered.

The groups seemed to prefer extreme response style related to positive evaluations to questions with rating scales as none of the respondents from any of the groups reported the repatriation experience to work or in general “very difficult”, while “very easy” responses were given more often. Although none of the study groups expressed having experience very difficult re-adaptation and repatriation experiences when comparing the groups together Military Observers seemed to have the easiest repatriation experience and adaptation back home in general, and Foreign Ministry respondents had the easiest adaptation to work while Corporate Expatriates reported the most difficult repatriation experience both professionally and generally.

The perceptions of the repatriates are consistent with the views of organization as representatives assisting with the foreign assignments who indicated that as the foreign assignments are an integral part of the career at Foreign Ministry the employees at the Foreign Ministry get used to the repatriation while the corporate expatriates who often see the assignment as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, might experience more challenges professionally during re-entry.

Appendix D represents the answers given regarding the adaptation and repatriation experience to work and, in general, in more detail. However, as repatriation experience is difficult to evaluate with closed questions and as it is not possible to make judgements based on such small statistical figures, the repatriation experience was also measured with a number of open questions described later in this paper.

#### **4.1.1 Repatriation adjustment of the repatriates**

Findings from earlier research conducted by Black et al. (1992a) found that as many as 71% of Finnish expatriates experienced some degree of culture shock during repatriation. Repatriation adjustment and possible culture shock experienced was evaluated in this study with a drawing exercise.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) argued that the cross-cultural adjustment and repatriation adjustment process follow a W-curve where the adaptation process is presented as descending and ascending lines or curves representing the possible high and low moods in the adaptation process, and where the bottom of the curve is the strongest point of culture shock. The model was utilized in this study as respondents were requested to describe with

a drawing how they experienced the adjustment and adaptation to the host country and the return back to the home country.

The drawings (presented in Appendix E) illustrate that most sojourners had ups and downs during their adaptation process to the host country and at repatriation back to the home country. While most of the respondents from Metso had experienced a mood below the neutral level at some point in time, only two respondents from the Foreign Ministry and three from the Military Observers reported very low moods. While all respondents from each group started with high or neutral mood, all but one respondent from Foreign Ministry ended the drawing with a neutral or high mood. In the end, most had also returned to the similar mood level from where they had left.

Although an example was given in the questionnaire where the re-entry point back home was clearly defined, this was not followed similarly in the exercise by the respondents. As the figure did not represent a clear timeline of repatriation—and as some respondents had been on two different foreign assignment prior returning to Finland—the drawings were difficult to compare.

According to Andreason and Kinner (2005), individuals may experience cross-cultural adaptation in different ways and may not follow the U- and W-curve. However, most responses showed a clear U or W-curve of adaptation for many respondents. Although it has been argued that it is impossible to draw any specific timeframes for the duration of the stages, as the re-entry process is as individual as the initial adaptation process (Adler, 1997; Black & Mendenhall, 1991), it would have been interesting to obtain more information about the duration of the different adaptation stages that were not visible in the responses received in this study.

Furthermore, as the answers represented the general comprehensive experience of the adaptation process and the drawings did not separate the adaptation personally, professionally or in general, one could argue that the drawings are not consistent with the answers given to the other questionnaire questions as the person who reported the return experience in general having been difficult draw a picture representing the highest mood during the whole process.

Another important element to consider when analysing the results is the Military Observers' unique timeframe of the re-adaptation process and possible posttraumatic stress experienced. While for Corporate Expatriates and Military Observes the reverse culture shock could be temporary and pass over a period of time, for Military Observers the symptoms and effects of the war can suddenly appear after months or years (Hirshon et al., 1997). As the questionnaires were distributed to respondents who had all returned to Finland over the past year, one must consider whether one year is sufficient time for the Military Observers to report on possible re-entry challenges.

#### **4.1.2 Changes noticed**

As the cross-cultural readjustment to one's home culture is often described challenging due to changes occurred during the foreign assignment (Black et al., 1992a; Hammer et al., 1998; Martin, 1984), in addition to the drawing exercise, the repatriation experience was investigated also with open questions regarding possible surprises and changes noticed at repatriation. As the repatriation adjustment theories deal mostly with repatriation problems, by



requesting information regarding possible changes the respondents were given a chance to report also positive issues.

A common feature of re-entry is that changes are unexpected and that a repatriate will confront all the changes at once (Storti, 1997; Black et al., 1992b), as was explained by R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012) with “a cake of change” example (muutoskakku in Finnish); if one gets to eat a large cake slice by slice the cake might taste good. But, if one is forced to eat the whole cake at once, one might experience digestion problems.

Respondents’ answers to the open questions regarding surprises and changes noticed at repatriation followed the earlier results from the drawing exercise. Although several factors have been mentioned to influence the return experience by causing stress and discomfort during repatriation, neither major surprises nor major changes were noticed or found from the results.

Five of the Corporate Expatriate respondents stated they did not find anything surprising at repatriation. One of the respondent commented that this was mostly due to the fact that it was the respondent’s third return from a foreign assignment. However, the most common change the Corporate Expatriate respondents reported was that Finland is expensive. Also the Foreign Ministry respondents were surprised of how easy the repatriation had been. Yet, Foreign Ministry responses showed some evidence of culture shock, as one respondent listed noticing changes such as emotional depression, decay of manners, vandalism, lack of respect toward other people, and poor quality of restaurants. Only one response was received from the Military Observers to the question regarding general changes noticed after return, while it was reported that when normal routines are disturbed, it will take a while to get back into the

normal rhythm of life. This comment is consistent with Storti's statement that when routines are disrupted one has to create new ones before one can feel settled again (Storti, 1997).

Re-entry is deeply personal experience (Storti, 1997). Previous researches has suggested that repatriation does not always result in negative responses as several studies have indicated positive changes among repatriates, including accepting cultural differences and having more appreciation of the home culture (Sussman, 2000). This was also visible in this study, as the changes the respondents noticed in their own attitude or behaviour after repatriation were mainly positive. Corporate Expatriates described that their own attitude had become more positive towards different countries. In addition, respondents both from the Corporate Expatriates and Foreign Ministry believed to have gained a wider perspective in looking at things. However, also the opposite results were received. From the Military Observers only one response was received, where the respondent claimed becoming critically more disposed towards foreigners. Feelings of being somewhat estranged were also reported after repatriation. In addition, all the groups mentioned having noticed that people in Finland complain "a lot and for nothing."

The questionnaire inquired also the foreign assignment's influence to the repatriates' health, as the foreign assignments might affect the health of the sojourner and thus the repatriation experience. Even though the Military Observers do not have a mandate to carry a weapon or take part to the conflict, they are not immune to combat or operational stress, and although soldiers are frequently report suffering from various difficulties such as marital difficulties, financial problems, problems with alcohol or substance abuse, medical

problems, behavioural problems, or of symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorders several months or years after operation (Doyle & Peterson, 2005), none of the Military Observers in this study indicated having experienced adaptation difficulties or mental problems at re-entry. Both Corporate Expatriates and Foreign Ministry employees reported more personal health issues. In addition, only one of the respondents from the Military Observers reported having been injured on the foreign assignment and needing an operation at the home country.

Six respondents from the Foreign Ministry illustrated that the foreign assignment had affected them physically or mentally, as hardship locations tested one's health. Some experienced several flues during the assignment while others stated having suffered from constant stomach problems due to lower levels of hygiene. Couple respondents commented also of problems of allergy. Some comments were also received about the great amount of work and too little exercise. However, one comment was also received about improved health due to taking more exercise.

Also Corporate Expatriate respondents described that the foreign assignment had affected their health positively, although also opposite comments were received. While one of the respondents noticed having gained weight during the assignment, another respondent argued suffering from various psychosomatic symptoms. Reasons for this was explained as the work was mentally very stressful and workload exhausting. Yet another reported experiencing physical stress reactions after repatriation to which one was described medicine and therapy.

Furthermore, difficulty in adjusting to social life and resentment by peers due to envy and fear have often been suggested to cause difficulties at re-entry (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987; Howard, 1986). However, this was not reported by the respondents in this study as most of the respondents from the sample groups stated that friends or peers did not treat them any differently after return although Foreign Ministry respondent described being no longer “a celebrity” or a rarity that people arrange time to meet specially. The concept of celebrity status was also portrayed by Storti (1997), according to whom at repatriation the sojourner often loses the attention and celebrity status many enjoy abroad as back home the repatriate melts into the crowd again, being ordinary and anonymous. One respondent commented friends having asked a lot of questions about life abroad and about the foreign assignment, which is surprising as lack of interest by colleagues and friends in the sojourn experience is frequently a source of disappointment and frustration, and as it is often reported that friends at home are not interested in the repatriate’s stories (Sussman, 1986)

Regarding changes noticed in relationships after repatriation, a respondent from the group of Military Observers reported that people had treated the repatriate with more caution and care. In addition, it was also mentioned by Military Observers that the relationships at home needed some new rules. While only one response was received from Corporate Expatriate, who reported that a wife who had stayed at home had filed for a divorce, Foreign Ministry respondents commented that friends had become more important. While one commented meeting friends now more often and that the meetings do not require as much planning as before, another stated having

realized that as everyone is very busy, one needs to make an initiative to be able to meet people.

The personal side of coming home is only one dimension of the re-entry experience. The return to work might be quite distinct from personal re-entry as described by Storti (1997), and repatriates might experience organizational culture shock at the same time they are experiencing societal culture shock (Adler, 1997). According to Adler (1997), professional re-entry is often more difficult than personal re-entry. In addition, as described by R. Sinkkonen, organizations do not necessarily know where to place the repatriate, the repatriation position might not be clear, and the organization might not be able to utilize the skills and experience the expatriate has acquired during the assignment (R. Sinkkonen, personal communication, August 30, 2012). As argued by R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), when starting the foreign assignment one often knows very well what is expected and the work starts immediately with the speed of 100 km/hour. But at repatriation, the speed normally slows down to 20 km/hour.

Changes in technology also often take the sojourners by surprise at repatriation. According to R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), repatriation from the foreign assignment is often like returning to a completely new workplace, particularly, if a person has not visited the home organization during the assignment. Also according to Pohjola (2008), the phase of technology and office technologies in particular estrange the sojourner very quickly. Alienation and inadequacy in company operations, policies and processes, and being out of touch with advancements in corporation are often listed as issues causing stress and discomfort among repatriates (Gomez-Mejia,

1987; Howard, 1986; Harvey, 1982). In addition to losing touch with the advancements in corporation, the expatriates might fall off from the professional education, as they might have not received similar level of training and professional education compared with colleagues back at home and therefore at repatriation the repatriate might have some catching up to do (R. Sinkkonen, personal communication, August 30, 2012). As described by Engen (1995), when you are gone for 5 years, you lose touch with the day-to-day operations of the company. In addition, based on Forster (1994) difficulties encountered after starting work back home have often been regarding possessing outdated work-skills, adapting to new management styles, and problems with junior colleagues, as many expatriate managers may have developed inappropriate management styles for their subordinates (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987)

When asked what were the changes the respondents noticed back at work after returning to Finland a respondent from Corporate Expatriate sample stated having noticed that working hours from 7 am to 4 pm was the norm in Finland. In addition, one of the respondents from the Corporate Expatriate sample group stated that during the foreign assignment, the organisation at home had changed and that there were many new faces. Also respondents from the Foreign Ministry reported having noticed that many new young colleagues had joined the organization.

Criticism was received also regarding employers' taciturnity and weak management from Corporate Expatriates and Foreign Ministry respondents. While respondent from the Military Observers reported the amount of work and the phase of work being totally different in Finland, and that there is much

work and the work is performed in a hurry, Foreign Ministry respondent described the phase and amount of work being much smaller in Finland. In addition Foreign Ministry respondent reported that the responsibility level was lower and work somewhat mind-numbing.

Based on the reported changes noticed at repatriation one cannot argue that the respondents would have suffered greatly from reverse culture shock, although the results showed some evidence of culture shock. However, as major surprises or changes and challenges were not found from the results, one cannot argue that a certain group would be more incline than another to report about changes occurred in any specific cluster, and therefore experience more adaptation difficulties personally, professionally or generally.

Although mental problems are often reported among Military respondents (Nash, 2007), no mental problems and personal adjustment challenges were shown among the Military Observers in this study as Military Observers reported experiencing the least adaptation problems at repatriation among the survey groups. One must question whether this is due to the fact that the Finnish Military Observers had not experienced great amount of stress, I.e. being exposed with traumatic events, or witnessed life threatening situations, as was commented by one of the respondents who reported being glad that nothing bad or that no serious accidents happened to him or his colleagues. This explanation is consistent with the Kousa's argument that the reason for the low occurrence of adaptation problems such as posttraumatic stress disorders among the Finnish crisis management veterans during repatriation could be due that Finns have not participated to the most dangerous peacekeeping operations (Kousa, 2008, p. 21-22). Also according to Vähä-Mäkilä (2013), even in

Afghanistan the area of responsibility for the Finnish peacekeepers was located in more peaceful north Afghanistan, although also this area is categorized as unstable and volatile. Another reason could be that sufficient amount of home trips were offered during assignment during which the respondents have had the opportunity to recover from the stress experienced. Yet another reason for the Military Observers not to report any problems might be due that this group could be more reluctant to seek for help as they might be afraid of the social stigma possibly following for reporting problems. As a repatriate, Santeri Niemi, from Afghanistan commented (MTV, 2014), the fear of being imprinted for not having enough mental courage might influence people not reporting about their problems, as in case one gets a reputation of not being mentally fit this might influence their career, as it might be difficult to obtain future posts. In addition, the mentality and culture in the military to complain can be rather different compared to the other groups, and therefore people serving in the crisis management missions might be reluctant to complain and report any problems. However, one must also question whether for repatriates of this sample group denial, cognitive and physiological tactic learned during an operational theater to reduce the stress experienced (Nash, 2007), would still be a common method to use also during repatriation.

#### **4.2 What are the main issues related to the re-entry process of the returning sojourners?**

Although the questionnaire gave an opportunity for the respondents to report aspects the repatriates were pleased with and found easy to adapt to at repatriation, all survey groups listed more aspects that they were displeased



with or found challenging to adapt to, regardless that they had reported the re-entry experience to be rather smooth in other parts of the questionnaire.

Common aspects all study groups, regardless of the assignment location one had been with, were pleased with and found easy to adapt to at repatriation, related to the general adjustment, e.g. easiness of everyday life, climate with fresh air, clean environment, and possibility to meet with friends. Other reported issues were more influenced by the host location one had been assigned to. For example, both the Military Observers and Foreign Ministry respondents who had been assigned in more dangerous locations reported being pleased to return to safe environment where also children had a normal safe freedom. The claim is consistent with R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), who reported that clean nature and blue sky are factors people are often satisfied with at repatriation, especially if one is returning from China or India. Also according to R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), in case the repatriate is coming from Latin America security issue is an aspect the repatriates often value. The respondents travelling with family were also pleased with having a support network around. Furthermore, public transportation and small distances were described as positive aspects in addition to the fact that Finland had become more international.

While most of the aspects all repatriate groups reported being satisfied with and found easy to adapt to at repatriation related to interaction with friend and with the general environment and society, some positive comments were received also regarding adaptation professionally to work and organization. When inquired about the issues at work the respondents felt pleased and

satisfied with, the Corporate Expatriates responded the amount of work, as one did not need to take the work home and work 24-hour days anymore, although it was also commented that it was tricky to get used to the work rhythm from 7 to 4. Moreover, although Corporate repatriates' main concern has often been associated with readjustment to work (Gomez-Mejia & Balking, 1987; Suutari & Brewster, 2003 in Szkudlarek, 2010), both Corporate Expatriate and Foreign Ministry answers included also comments regarding repatriates being pleased with interesting, independent and challenging work. However, also opposite comments were received. These will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

#### **4.3 What do the returning sojourners perceive as the main challenges in the re-entry and readjustment process?**

Limited number of career possibilities upon return and difficulty in finding suitable placement, including appropriate level of responsibility and autonomy, has regularly been reported to cause stress and discomfort among repatriates (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987; Howards, 1986; Harvey, 1982). Finding a new good work position was argued challenging also by some of the Corporate Expatriates in this study. Criticism was also given to superior still being unclear after two months of repatriation and that there was no career development, pay raise, or initiation and introduction to work, and that a new superior did not seem to understand or appreciate the experience and know-how acquired abroad. This is not surprising as, based on earlier studies (Adler, 1981; Linehan & Scullion, 2002), home-country organization often tends neither to recognize nor utilize the skills acquired while working abroad.

These findings are consistent also with the views of organization, as finding a suitable repatriation position was seen as the most challenging aspect of the repatriation process for returning Corporate Expatriates also from the organization's point of view. The view is further supported by R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), who argues that the main repatriation challenges expatriates often face relate to disappointments in repatriation positions. According to R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), people often leave on an assignment with a mood that the foreign assignment will affect positively the employee's career development. However, at re-entry one does not necessarily move upwards on the career ladder. Although many sojourners feel that they received an abasement or degradation at repatriation, one should take into account that there are only few very high position at an organization, therefore the higher position one has had during the assignment, the less changes there are receiving as high position at repatriation as stated by R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012).

Also Foreign Ministry representative saw the repatriating employee's main challenge in adjustment to work and to the organization and obtaining an interesting and pleasing position after spending several years abroad. In addition, based on Foreign Ministry representative the repatriates might find it difficult to adapt to lower level of income and possibly also to the accompanying spouse's unemployment at repatriation. According to the representative of Foreign Ministry, in case family members have accompanied the employee on the foreign assignment, challenges the repatriating families face might be related to possible lack of social security coverage, children's

schooling, and lack of Finnish or Swedish language skills. Especially when considering repatriation with very small children Finland might be a completely new country for them. According to the Foreign Ministry representative, challenges experienced by the family are often matters or aspects related to surrounding society, while from the repatriating employee's part challenges often relate to personal adjustment, such as unmet personal expectations, rather than challenges related to changes that have happened during the foreign assignment at the organization level in the Ministry and in the ways of working. Having said that, according to the Foreign Ministry representative challenges in personal adjustment might also reflect to work life. Therefore, the spouse and children play a pivotal role in the repatriate's re-entry adaptation due to spill-over effect as described by Black and Gregersen (1991).

Issues the respondents of the Foreign Ministry sample group found difficult to adapt to were bureaucracy, routines and inflexibility at work. The organization structure at the head office was commented to be more stiff and multi-layered than abroad and technical equipment is of poor standard. Work was also described as less challenging and not as well paid as during the assignment. Some also mentioned being unpleased with that the work itself does not require as much traveling as on the assignment, and that there are less interests groups to work with, and that the professional space is smaller. Lower responsibility level at work was also reported. In addition to that the pace of work was reported lower, the amount of work was described much less than during the foreign assignment. Surprising was also that the Finnish work

community does not spend time together, and that colleagues do not bend their private goings due to work responsibilities.

Issues the Military Observers reported challenging were mainly related to personal adjustment. Military Observers reported having missed the great team spirit and atmosphere during the first week back in Finland while being pleased with that no serious accidents happened to oneself or to others during the assignment. In addition, factors that brought some difficulties for Military Observer respondents were the fast phase of living and getting adjusted to the life of a civil person instead of a soldier. The view was also supported by the representative of the Finnish Defence Forces who argued issues bringing the most challenges for returning Military Observers are regarding the basic routines: language, culture and everyday chores that one has not needed to do at the mission.

The questionnaire inquired also possible adaptation challenges experienced during re-entry. Although majority (6) of the Corporate Expatriate respondents did not report any adaptation difficulties at repatriation, issues such as Finnish quietness, lack of color and bad service in stores and restaurants irritated. Elements the families found difficulties with related to home finding, as could be hypothesised based on Gregersen and Stroh (1997), who claimed housing conditions to relate significantly to the general adjustment of Finnish spouses. One response was also received regarding that the return had been difficult for the spouse who had got used to the life in the host country. Also one respondent reported experiencing mental problems as the family had split up and there was no one to speak to.

Three of the respondents from the Foreign Ministry reported having experienced adaptation challenges at re-entry. Aspects the respondents found difficult to adapt to in general were the cold climate and the opening hours of shops and supermarkets. The timetable life and routines were also mentioned as somewhat oppressive. Several respondents commented also that it had been difficult to get used to manners of the Finns and the consumption of alcohol. As was described and listed by one of the respondent: “The uncivilized behavior of Finns, excessive use of alcohol, poor quality of conversations, and the complaining mentality.”

While most Military Observers reported the return having been easy without any adaptation difficulties, it was indicated that adaptation always takes time, as the rhythm of the armed forces is different; at foreign mission life is more relaxed and there seems to be more time to do things, and people seem to have more time for each. The argument is consistent with Storti (1997), according to whom the pace of life back home is often a surprise for many returnees coming back to developed and industrialized countries.

In summary, although the respondents reported hardly any serious adaptation difficulties at re-entry adjustment challenges both personally and generally received most comments from the Military Observers, while both the Corporate Expatriate and Foreign Ministry respondents’ experienced challenges at repatriation were mostly related to professional adaptation, and finding a suitable position was reported as the most challenging aspect of the re-entry for both of these groups. Controversy to study results of Foreign Ministry’s easy repatriation experience to work and organization based on closed questions (Appendix C), the Foreign Ministry respondents seemed to

complain much more, when given an opportunity to report issues they were unsatisfied and displeased with, with open questions.

#### **4.4 What are the possible elements influencing the repatriates' re-entry experience?**

According to the study results, repatriates of this study experienced rather smooth re-entry and readjustment to the home country. Based on the readjustment theory of Black et al. (1992b), this could be explained by different variables affecting the formation of expectations sojourners create and develop prior re-entry. Anticipatory variables such as communication between the sojourner and home country during the assignment, and motivation for the assignment could have influenced the repatriates of this study, as most respondents kept in touch regularly with the home country and were motivated to relocate internationally.

In addition to variables affecting the formation of repatriation expectations prior to the actual return, the re-entry experience and readjustment process of the repatriates of this study could have been affected also by variables influencing the repatriation process after return, such as overseas adjustment and satisfaction with the assignment, and previous re-entry experience together with family members' re-entry experience (Black et al., 1992b).

While Military Observers seemed to experience the easiest repatriation and readjustment in general, and Corporate Expatriates reported most difficulties in adjustment professionally, this could suggest elements such as frequent home visits, shorter assignment duration, training and support

provided, and assignment's influence to career affecting the re-adaptation of the Finnish repatriates of this study as described by Black et al. (1992b). In the following, the study results regarding the above variables are discussed more thoroughly.

#### **4.4.1 Communication during foreign assignment**

Interaction and keeping up with events in the home country during foreign assignment, including periodic visits home, have positively influenced the repatriation process for Finnish repatriates (Suutari & Välimaa, 2002; Gregersen & Stroh, 1997). Communication frequency and interaction with home country nationals and with home organization during the foreign assignment, together with home visits offered, were therefore surveyed in the questionnaire. In addition, frequency and types of communication models used were also inquired, as one could expect communication via some other forms as satisfying during overseas assignments as face-to-face communication during personal visits (Cox, 2004). Furthermore, it was inquired if the respondents were assigned a mentor or a contact person during their assignment.

While over half (5) of the respondents from the Corporate Expatriates, six of the Foreign Ministry respondents, and five of the Military Observers reported that they were kept in touch regularly by the home organization. Home visits were offered to six of the Corporate Expatriate respondents, while all the Foreign Ministry persons and Military Observers were offered home visits. None of the respondents from any of the study groups were assigned an official contact person back in the home country during the foreign assignment,



although earlier research of Finnish expatriates have confirmed that those individuals who had a sponsors during the foreign assignment were better adjusted after repatriation than those without one (Black et al., 1992a).

To the questions how and how often the respondents kept in touch with their family members and peers at home country respondents were able to give several answers. Only the main methods are stated in here. During the assignment, Corporate Expatriates kept in touch with their friends and relatives mainly on a weekly (7) basis and with their home organization and peers on a weekly (5) basis. While the main method Corporate Expatriates used for keeping in touch with the friends and relatives were via devices such as phone (5), Skype (5), email (4), and Facebook (4), the main method to keep in touch with home organization and peers at home was by phone (6) and email (7).

The Foreign Ministry employees, kept in touch with their friends and relatives mainly on a weekly (6) basis, and with their home organization and peers daily (5). For keeping in touch with the friends and family varied. Most Foreign Ministry employees commented having used phone (7), email (7), Skype (6), and Facebook (6) as main methods. For keeping in touch with home organization and peers at home the respondents used mainly email (8) and phone (6).

The Military Observers kept in touch with the friends and family mainly daily (3), or on a weekly (3) basis, while the Military Observers kept in touch with the home organization and peers weekly (4) or on 2–6–months basis (3). For keeping in touch with home organization and peers at home the Military Observers used phone (6), email (6), and Skype (4), while keeping in

touch with their home organization and peers they used mainly email (7) and phone (6).

Although mentors were not assigned for the respondents of this study, and although home visits were not offered to all sojourners, as communication methods have improved significantly and people nowadays keep more in touch via email, Facebook and Skype, which were not yet invented or as commonly in use when the original theoretical framework of Black et al. was developed in 1992, one could assume this having a strong influence to the positive repatriation experiences of the repatriates of this study. As compared to the 1990s, repatriates today who have been in touch with the home country extensively during the foreign assignment are bound to have obtained more accurate information about how things will be at home at repatriation that could influence both the expectations and the level of stress and uncertainty experienced during re-entry.

#### **4.4.2 Motivation for the foreign assignment and for the return**

Repatriation adjustment model, further developed by Hyder and Lövblad (2007), claim that the repatriation experience depends also on the repatriates' motives. Motivation for the foreign assignment and about repatriation may vary between individuals. In addition, there might be differences in the motivations and expectations of the expatriate and those of the company (Paik et al., 2002). While an expatriate may accept the assignment for career advancement, compensation and adventure, the company's motivation and purpose for the transfer might be project-driven, e.g. the business might be expanding into global markets (Paik et al., 2002). As most of the repatriates in

this study had very long service years within the organization according to Black et al. (2000), this could imply the individuals are at a stage in their career where they might have considerable professional expectations.

Both closed and open questions were used in the questionnaire to survey the motivations and expectations influencing the decision to apply for the Foreign Assignment. Although instructions were given to choose two alternatives, which best described the reasons influencing the respondent to apply and leave for the foreign assignment, many of the respondents from the Corporate Expatriate and from the Foreign Ministry gave more than two answers in the questionnaire. New experience was the main reason influencing the Corporate Expatriates' decision. This was mentioned by five of the respondents. The second biggest reason influencing Corporate Expatriates to apply for the foreign assignment was the development of expertise (4). Other reasons mentioned to have influenced the decision were better income and merit (3), wishes from family members (2), company wishes and expectations (1), and possibility to move abroad (1).

The responses from the open questions regarding why the respondents applied to the foreign assignment and what the respondents expected to gain from the foreign assignment followed the previous answers. Expatriates applied since they felt it was "once-in-a-lifetime experience" and a great opportunity to live and work abroad. The respondents also felt the foreign assignment could assist them in developing their career, and influence positively also their income level. Some also stated that they applied since the project was interesting, there was a need for their expertise in the host location, and as the job was offered for them. The results are consistent with earlier

studies of Finnish expatriates where promotional development and career progress were more important motives than economic benefits in the decision to go abroad (Suutari & Brewster, 2003).

The Foreign Ministry sample group described the main reasons influencing the decision to apply to the foreign assignment as the possibility to move abroad (5), development of expertise (4), new experience (4), and income and merit (4). Also expectations and wished from the employer (1), and from the family members (1) were mentioned.

The responses to the open questions regarding why the Foreign Ministry respondents had applied to and what they expected to gain from the foreign assignment were as the foreign assignments are part of their work life and career, and as they wanted to gain a new experience. Development of professionalism and career, and improvement of language skills were also expected. To learn more about new countries and cultures, and about themselves was also expected. Many reported also that, in addition to living and working in the host country, they were interested in the position they applied for. Better income, climate, and better quality of life were also stated as reasons for applying for the foreign assignment. One of the respondents described having wished not to get further with the career but to get more free time, which did not happen. In addition, another respondent stated having wanted to get out of Finland.

From the Military Observers the main motivator influencing the decision to apply for the foreign assignment was new experience (5), and development of expertise (4). Income and merit (3), willingness to help, and

the current situation at work at the home location were also mentioned as aspects influencing the decision to apply for the foreign assignment.

Responses from the open questions regarding the reasons why the Military Observers applied to the foreign assignment followed the previous answers: new experiences and development of professionalism. Reasons such as the position suited well with the current family situation and career, the work is appreciated and it has a purpose were also commented. Couple of respondents stated also having applied since the job was offered for them as they had previous experience with the area. Reasons such as better income level, getting away from the everyday working life routines, and confusing work situation at home were also mentioned as reasons to apply for the foreign assignment.

In addition to the motivation for the foreign assignment, as described by Hyder and Lövblad (2007), reasons and motivation for the return might also influence the formation of re-entry expectations. A natural end to the foreign assignment was the main reason for return for most Corporate Expatriates (7), while two of the respondents reported having returned early. Four of the respondents stated they were glad to return back home from the assignment, while three of the respondents felt neutral regarding the repatriation. Two of the respondents would have wanted to stay longer but at the same time one of them was glad to return.

From the Foreign Ministry six of the respondents repatriated due to the natural end of the foreign assignment, while two had returned early per employee's own request. Five of the respondents stated they were glad to

return, while two felt neutral about the return, and one would have wanted to stay longer.

From the Military Observers, all but one had repatriated due to the natural end of the foreign assignment. One had repatriated prematurely due to organizational reasons. Five of the respondents stated that they were glad to return, while one felt neutral about the return. One of the respondents reported having wanted to stay but being glad about the return at the same time.

Although the re-adaptation theory of Black (1992b) suggests monetary compensation to be an important variable for many employees to accept an international assignment, for many respondents of this study accepting the assignment had to do mostly with international experience, personal growth, and development of expertise. Compensation and monetary rewards was only the third item having influenced the sojourners' decision to pursue the overseas assignment. The findings reflect the earlier studies by Suutari and Brewster (2003) according to which professional development and career progress were more important motives to go abroad than economic benefits. However, for the Foreign Ministry the monetary reward was a slightly more important factor influencing the decision to pursue the overseas assignment when compared with the other study groups. As personal interest for new experience was the main motivator for accepting a foreign assignment, and as most of the respondents also felt positive about the return, one could assume this having influenced the respondents' rather positive repatriation experience.

#### **4.4.3 Overseas adjustment and satisfaction with the foreign assignment**

Researchers have found that sojourner's re-entry adaptation is also significantly influenced by their experience in the foreign country (Adler 1976). Adjustment overseas might either facilitate or inhibit the re-entry adaptation. Based on Suutari and Välimaa (2002) dissatisfaction with expatriate assignment could create negative attitudes towards the organization and thus reflect in difficulties in adjusting to home organization. However, a person who adapts well during the foreign assignment might experience a smooth re-entry as the repatriate might have become experienced in adjusting and readjusting, and therefore be able to re-use these adaptive skills learned at re-entry (Szkudlarek, 2010). Yet a successful adjustment to a host country can also result in adjustment challenges during repatriation for those who have completed the assignment in cultures which are very different from their own and who have stayed abroad for longer time (Black et al., 1992a; Paik et al., 2002), as adjustment to a country very different compared to the one's own may cause substantial changes in the individual that could produce difficulties at re-entry (Black et al., 1992b).

Based on earlier studies, cultural novelty of the host country compared to the home predict difficulties in repatriation adjustment particularly for the Finnish repatriates (Gregersen & Stroh, 1997. p. 635). Re-entry from cultures similar to the home culture could therefore be easier than from dissimilar cultures for Finnish repatriates. However, when considering differences in the assignment locations, i.e. assignments for Military Observers in high-risk war locations, where the employees most likely live in a military base, one must question whether the Military Observers can truly adjust to the host country.

As stated by R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), the more different, poorer or more primitive country one is located, the less the person might truly integrate (R. Sinkkonen, personal communication, August 30, 2012). In addition, although a sojourner might live and work under conditions similar to those of the host country people whom they serve, one must question whether six months is sufficient time to successfully adjust oneself to a foreign country.

For majority of the repatriates in this study, the foreign assignment was a positive experience and the respondents felt they adapted well to the host country. When inquiring how the respondents felt they had adapted to the host country, all reported having adapted either very well, well or moderately. See Table 1.

| <b>Corporate Expatriates</b> |   | <b>Foreign Ministry</b> |   | <b>Military Observers</b> |   |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| not at all                   |   | not at all              |   | not at all                |   |
| somewhat                     |   | somewhat                |   | somewhat                  |   |
| moderate                     | 2 | moderate                | 2 | moderate                  | 1 |
| well                         | 4 | well                    | 5 | well                      | 5 |
| very well                    | 3 | very well               | 1 | very well                 | 1 |

TABLE 1: Adaptation to the host country

To the question whether the respondents experienced any adaptation difficulties to the host country, none of the Corporate Expatriates who had been to the United States or Australia reported any difficulties, while respondents to the other countries reported difficulties, mainly due to language barriers and lack of support network. Regardless of the host country involved, none of the respondents from the Foreign Ministry described any adaptation difficulties to the host country while from the Military Observers two reported some



adaptation challenges, particularly due to the amount of violence and attitude to death, which differed from what one was used to.

The questionnaire also included a question regarding whether the respondents had experienced difficult situations during the assignment that could have affected the respondent and thus possibly also affecting the person still at re-entry. While only one Foreign Ministry respondent described experiencing a difficult situation during the assignment, colleagues being treated badly at the assignment location that was shocking, from Corporate Expatriates four respondents reported having experienced difficult situations during their foreign assignment, which were still on their mind at repatriation: local HRs or organizations reluctance to assist them during the assignment; bullying at the work place on the assignment; and a robbery. One of the Military Observers respondents reported a need to worry about the subordinates' security. In addition, an incident was outlined where a mountain road collapsed below a car. According to Military Observers at work at war zones, there is always a risk of been in danger of being shot or becoming a victim of a suicide bomber.

When evaluating how satisfied the respondents were to the foreign assignment, Foreign Ministry respondents seemed most satisfied with 7 extremely satisfied and very satisfied replies, while the Military Observers seemed most dissatisfied with the assignment with 2 dissatisfied replies - although 5 of them reported being extremely satisfied, very satisfied or satisfied. See Table 2.

| Corporate Expatriates  |   | Foreign Ministry       |   | Military Observers     |   |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Extremely satisfied    | 1 | Extremely satisfied    | 5 | Extremely satisfied    | 2 |
| Very satisfied         | 3 | Very satisfied         | 2 | Very satisfied         | 2 |
| Satisfied              | 3 | Satisfied              | 1 | Satisfied              | 1 |
| Cannot say             |   | Cannot say             |   | Cannot say             |   |
| Dissatisfied           | 1 | Dissatisfied           |   | Dissatisfied           | 2 |
| Very dissatisfied      |   | Very dissatisfied      |   | Very dissatisfied      |   |
| Extremely Dissatisfied |   | Extremely Dissatisfied |   | Extremely Dissatisfied |   |

TABLE 2: Satisfaction with the foreign assignment

As only few respondent reported readjustment difficulties at repatriation the results are coherent with earlier studies of Finnish repatriates by Suutari and Välimaa (2002) who found no proof that successful adjustment to the foreign country would lead to difficulties in the repatriation adjustment. The results are also in line with the findings from earlier studies of Finnish repatriates by Suutari and Brewster (2003) which indicated that the level of satisfaction positively correlated with recommending such assignments and accepting a new assignment, as also in here the level of satisfaction correlated with the respondents' answers to a question whether they could consider leaving on another foreign assignment in the future, as all sample groups could consider leaving on another foreign assignment in the future.

#### 4.4.4 Previous re-entry experience

Previous adaptation and re-adaptation experience might also influence the repatriation process according to Hyder and Lövblad (2007), as people might become experienced in adjusting and readjusting and thus able to form more accurate expectations about the re-entry. Previous living and working experience abroad was inquired from the participants of this study. While 78 percent of the Corporate Expatriate respondents in this study had previous

working or living experience abroad, all respondents from the Foreign Ministry and five respondents from the Military Observers had previous working or living experience abroad.

Repatriates who had previous re-entry experience were also asked to compare the latest re-entry experience to their previous re-entry experience(s). Most of the Military Observers stated their latest repatriation experience did not differ much from their earlier repatriation experiences. However, one longer response was received where the respondent described experiencing a slight depression and feeling of yearning back for about 1,5 months after repatriating from an earlier foreign assignment.

A respondent from the Corporate Expatriates, who had previous repatriation experience, stated that every return experience had been the same, while another described that as the latest assignment was longer in duration there was more byrocracy to go through and to take care of at re-entry. Another respondent reported that during the latest repatriation there was dispute about the salary and expenses. Yet another reported having returned to a position which did not meet the expectations.

Respondents from the Foreign Ministry stated that the latest return experience had been more tiring and stressful than one had remembered or had expected. The whole removal process took time and it took some time to learn tasks at the new work position. Others stated that there had not been major difficulties as one is experienced to repatriate, but at repatriation one always needs to find their own place again and get used to the little things such as how to behave in trams or shops. Respondents from the Foreign Ministry used the

following sentences in describing their repatriation expectations to the earlier repatriation experiences (original statements in Appendix F):

Previously culture shock and outburst of emotions, now, eventually, my soul is more calm and the land below my feet does not burn to travel. I enjoy with every cell of the return back to Finland.

Differs clearly possibly due to being older. From earlier two returns, I transferred directly to maternity leave, thus there was hardly any time to think about the past. Now many issues feel previously experienced.

It was less emotional than the previous experiences. At younger age / as a student the moves and returns from abroad feel more powerful. All in all I take it more "coolly" than previously, less expectations, less anxiety.

Now the time away was longer (7 years) and I have lost track of many things such as digital TV.

It felt more heavy=tiring, but emotionally easier than before. Returns are always stressful, in a way or another.

As Foster (cited in Brein and David, 1971, p. 218) claims, one re-entry and one culture-shock experience will not immunize against future shocks. However, as most of the respondents had previous working and living experience abroad, this could suggest having moderated the re-entry experience of the repatriates in this study. In addition, Corporate Expatriates who reported most challenges during repatriation reported also fewer working and living experience abroad. This could suggest that compared with those employees who consider international assignment as an integral part of the work life, the Corporate Expatriates might not be as accustomed to repatriate and thus experience more distress at re-entry as described by Gregersen and Stroh (1997).

#### **4.4.5 Re-entry expectations**

Reason why the entry experience of all these study group was reported as rather smooth might also be due to the repatriation expectations as the role of expectations have been in repatriation adjustment reported crucial (Black et al., 2000; Suutari & Brewster, 2003).

When asking what kind of expectations the Corporate Expatriates had about coming home, some of the respondents did not expect anything special, while others reported having expected the return to work to be easy, planned and organized. One of the respondents stated having expected life to continue in a similar ways as it had before leaving to the assignment, as the foreign assignment lasted only for a year. Only one of the Corporate Expatriate respondents expected to experience culture shock based on his previous repatriation experiences.

All in all, the Corporate Expatriates respondents' expectations about the return were well met; two reported the expectations having been met fully, while six stated their expectations were met a little, or to some extent.

The Foreign Ministry respondents' expectations about return were either met fully (3), to some extent (4) or only a little (1). While one of the Foreign Ministry respondents expected a culture shock, another one expected things to be easy and to go smoothly. Some also expected a good work position and that the children would adapt well to the home country. They were also looking forward to meeting relatives and friends, and in general the return to the Finnish climate and to the normal Finnish everyday life.

Respondents from the Foreign Ministry respondents used the following

sentences to describe their repatriation expectations (original statements in Appendix G):

I mostly looked forward to the return to the well-functioning everyday life and familiar culture. The climate I was looking forward to rather submissively: soon I will be freezing again;-) I was happy in advance of the things that are better in Finland.

I expected work in Finland to be less interesting and demanding. Life in general more strict and routine so called "timetable - life".

Workwise I expected a return to slow, taciturn, but friendly head office. I expected a return to a country where the 7.28 tram will show at 7.28, in other words, the easiness of life but also slight dullness.

Most of the Military Observers did not have any special expectations about how the re-entry back to Finland would be like. While many (3) stated that they had no expectations, over half (4) commented that they were looking forward to the return back to the normal routines of life. One described having expected "joy, euphoria, and new perspective." Also in this study group goals were met well, as the respondents from the Military Observers stated their expectations having been fully met (5), or that the reality matched with the expectation to some extent (2).

Although repatriation does not always meet the assignee's expectations (Ernst & Young, 2009), in this study the reality seemed to match with the repatriates' expectations. The re-entry expectations of the respondent were rather realistic while most expectations in this study were related to the adjustment to the general well-functioning and punctual environment and society. As realistic and accurate expectations are reported to reduce uncertainty and result in successful readjustment (Black et al., 1992b), this could have influenced the smooth readjustment experience of the respondents.

#### **4.4.6 Family members' repatriation experience**

According to Black et al. (1992b), adjustment of the spouse might affect the repatriation adjustment of the sojourner. Transition to a new location and back to original home affects the accompanying partner's career and also children's education plans. In addition, the return back for children might not be the same as for their parents. While the parents are returning home, their children might be leaving home (McGraig, 1996).

Based on the rather positive re-entry experiences reported in this study, one could expect the family member's re-adaptation experience having rather facilitated than inhibited the adjustment process of the studied sojourners, as when asking the respondents travelling with family about their opinion on how difficult or easy the repatriation was for the family members, only one Corporate Expatriate respondent stated it having been difficult while six of the respondents commented this having been very easy, easy, or neutral. Repatriation for the Foreign Ministry's accompanying family members was also reported as easy. However, one must be aware that the answers given represent only the sample group repatriates' views and not the actual experiences of the family members.

As problems sometimes occur when a family has been left at home (Hurn, 1999) for those sojourners whose family members stayed at home the return might cause some challenges as the family relationships and dynamics might have radically changed because of the growth in independence of the home-based family (Hurn, 1999; Adler et al., 2001). The family might therefore find it difficult to receive the family member back home. However, based on the responses from the Military Observers, whose family members

stayed at home, the families felt the father's return to be important and were glad and relieved the father came home.

#### **4.4.7 Repatriation training and support provided**

Relatively few multinational firms provide training or orientation for the returning employees during repatriation (Black et al., 1992a), although this has been categorized as an important element for acquiring accurate information about the re-entry process both prior and during repatriation. The main argument for using cross-cultural training is that it allows individuals to adjust more rapidly to the new culture and, therefore, to be more effective in their new roles (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). In addition, based on Vidal et al. (as cited in Osman-Gania and Hyder, 2008, p. 458), training is a way to reduce uncertainty and increase the psychological comfort of the repatriates in adjusting back to the home environment.

In this study, support and training was offered to most of the Corporate Expatriates (6) prior to the assignment. All of those who were offered the training also took part in this. While all Military Observers of this study were offered cultural training prior the foreign assignment, all also participated to this training. From the Foreign Ministry, three (3) respondents were offered training prior to the assignment which one took part in.

In this study, however, the most remarkable difference in the variables between the groups was regarding the amount of training offered for the repatriates during the re-entry process, and in particular post return. While all returned Military Observers were offered repatriation training after the return,



repatriation training was offered to four Foreign Ministry respondents and only to two Corporate Expatriates after return.

For the Military Observers, training is an integral part of the foreign assignment process and, according to the Finnish Defence Forces representative, there is plenty of training organized that should assist the repatriating employees' adaptation back home. The process for psychosocial support offered for the Finnish peacekeeping repatriates commenced in 2008 and currently all repatriating Military Observers are offered a demobilization/repatriation training 2–3 months after return including both individual- and group discussions, and lectures from experts. In addition, a separate info package is also distributed to the repatriates during arrival to Finland (SKJL, 2012).

Although the training and support offered for the Military Observers can be assumed to influence the positive repatriation experience of the repatriates of this study group, also some criticism has been raised. In addition, that the two-day re-entry training course is voluntary, in practice the official process for re-entry ends with the two-day training course (Granqvist, 2014), after which the re-entry and re-adaptation back to home and work remains largely as the repatriate's own responsibility (Westersund, 2011). While the repatriates working for the military are advised to contact the Pori Brigade's occupational health care, the reservist are advised to contact public health care, if there are any problems or if they need further support (Granqvist, 2014).

“Training needs” were not investigated in this study thoroughly, as there was a risk that although the respondents might be able to evaluate the challenges encountered, they might not be able to analyse the possible reasons

and implications of training offered. However, when asking what kind of support the respondents would have required, the Military Observers reported the repatriation support currently organized is sufficient. It was commented that the Finnish Defence Forces manages the repatriation rather well and that the debriefings organized are sufficient. Five of the Foreign Ministry respondents left the question unanswered or stated they did not feel any need for the repatriation training. The rest stated having required a possibility for career development discussion, possibility to discuss with other repatriates and persons who had previous repatriation experience. In addition, general introduction to the work, career development discussions, and a forum to discuss with other repatriates were also listed as requests from the Corporate Expatriates. Repatriates of this group would have found a discussion about the new position and tasks at least three months prior repatriation useful. Introduction to the society and to possible changes in general were also something that was needed. Expatriate respondents also wished for an introduction or assistance, for example, with regards to taxation matters. In addition, a contact person assigned and available for the whole duration of the assignment was something that the Corporate Expatriates believed could also have assisted them in the repatriation.

#### **4.4.8 Foreign assignments' influence on career**

A restricted number of career possibilities with a limited number of opportunities upon return have been reported to cause problems, stress and discomfort during repatriation (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1987). Most managers expect a global assignment to help their career and many hope for promotion

after successful assignment, yet historically they have returned to discover that at best it had a neutral effect, and some even impact their career negatively (Adler, 1997).

Based on earlier studies, 16% of expatriates on long-term assignment (over 12 months) leave their employer within two years of repatriation (Ernst & Young, 2013), and the main reasons for the assignees to leave the organization after return are often related to difficulties in finding a re-entry position (KPMG, 2013). According to Linehan and Scullion (2002), a key problem for the majority of companies is often to find a suitable posts for repatriates, particularly posts of similar status and responsibility to these they held abroad. The re-entry jobs often bore the returnees and they find the re-entry position often less satisfying than their foreign assignment.

Responses to the foreign assignment's influence to respondent's career were as follows: while four of the Corporate Expatriate respondents commented that the foreign assignment had good or very positive influence on their career, five of the respondents stated that the foreign assignment did not have any influence on their career. While six of the respondents had returned to their old position before the assignment, two had returned to a lower position than before the assignment, and only one was promoted. The results are in line with earlier studies, as according to Black et al. (1992a) fewer than 25 % of Finnish expatriates returning home received promotion, while based on the study results from Suutari and Brewster (2003), 77% of the repatriates agreed that their international assignment still had positively influenced their career progress.

Four of the Foreign Ministry respondents stated that the foreign assignment had extremely good or good influence to their career, while three reported it having no influence. Four of the respondents from the Foreign Ministry started with a higher position upon return, while three returned to a corresponding position from where they left, and one reported having started in a lower position.

From the Military Observers group a respondent commented that the foreign assignment had either a good influence on their career (3) or no influence (2). Four of the respondents returned to the previous position, while three were promoted, and only one returned to a lower position from where he left.

Although many of the respondents reported that the foreign assignment assisted them further in their career, the foreign assignment had the smallest influence on the repatriates' career among Corporate Expatriates as only one repatriate from this group received a promotion after repatriation. Having said that, an important finding of this study was the positive influence Corporate repatriates saw the foreign assignment had had on their career, despite the relatively modest effect the assignment had on their career advancement. Thus, one needs to consider how important an element the promotion is considered to be among these respondents. As highlighted by R. Sinkkonen (personal communication, August 30, 2012), although the development of expertise is the main reason influencing the decision to leave for the foreign assignment, moving upwards in the career might mean different things to different people and promotion might also mean meaningful things and tasks to do. In addition, as Paik et al. (2002) stressed, for Scandinavians with a flatter organizational

structure, promotions might not be as highly sought after among repatriates. Moreover, expatriates might not necessarily expect a promotion, as they are familiar with the changing corporate environment and recognize there may not always be an ideal position available upon return and therefore although most expatriates would welcome a promotion based on their foreign assignment they might not view promotion as an essential element to successful repatriation (Paik et al., 2002). Moreover, as was commented by Boussard and Peterson (2005) expatriates may view their overseas position as an opportunity to acquire skills and experiences that were not available at home, even if these skills will not help them later to be promoted within their own organization. Repatriates might also be positive about their experience and outcome of their repatriation while being confident that the assignment will have an impact on their future career opportunities among other possible employers (Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007).

## 5 DISCUSSION

There is a general belief that in order for the organizations to be able to exploit the enormous possibilities internationalisation and the global markets offer they might need to create new ways to further moderate the re-entry process of their repatriates. However, as “boundaryless” careers, as described by Lazarova and Cerdin (2007), are present-day and many employees might view foreign assignments primarily as an opportunity for personal and professional development and career advancement, there is a risk employees moving from one company to another for better opportunities for their professional development (Ståhl et al., 2002) despite companies best efforts to devote more attention to their repatriates.

As international experience is a competitive asset that makes repatriates more valuable for the external labor market (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001), and as lifetime employment seem to belong to the past, employees might be more committed to the development of their own careers than being committed to any specific company (Pohjola, 2007), and also more ready to change employers if a better position is offered within another organization. Thus, companies that do not provide adequate assistance and opportunities for professional growth and career advancement upon repatriation may lose a valuable human capital investment to a competitor.

Albeit today’s world differs from the 1990s, it is still important for organizations to retain the people they have invested in. One can argue that the

time and effort it takes for the organization to support the repatriate with the re-entry is worthwhile, as organization's investment to assist the repatriate to quickly gain balance, and ability to function in the new situation back at home, and to fully utilize the experience and human capital acquired from the foreign assignment will assist both the repatriate, the organization, and also the close social environment.

### **5.1 Implications for practice**

The readjustment theory of Black et al. (1992b) proved applicable in evaluating and comparing the re-entry experience of the Finnish sojourners of this study. The readjustment theory of Black et al. (1992b) provided a relevant and applicable framework also for analysing the results and possible reasons behind the different re-entry experiences of the chosen survey groups.

Based on the results of the present study and by using the theory of Black et al. (1992a), the following implications for practice could be suggested to be taken into account. As sojourner's personal interest and motivation for the assignment appeared to be an important element influencing the re-entry experience of the Finnish sojourners in this study, this imply that organizations might benefit from further focusing on the application process to ensure they are recruiting and selecting candidates suitable for the foreign assignment. As repatriation depends in large part on how well the firm and individual have handled earlier stages in the process (Napier, 2002), during the time of current economical regression when assignment packages offered might not be as attractive as they used to be; the process of selecting suitable candidates motivated for the foreign assignment cannot be emphasized too much.

Since the re-entry experience was rather smooth for the repatriates of this study who were mostly of similar age, motivated, and experienced in relocating internationally—and who all kept in touch regularly with the home country—this could suggest the anticipatory variables originally defined by Black et al. (1992b) influencing the re-entry experience and readjustment of the Finnish repatriates of this study. The results of this study could therefore imply that organizations might benefit from recruiting motivated, middle-aged people with previous international relocation and re-entry experience.

In addition, as the re-entry experience was reported particularly easy for the Military Observers, this could imply also additional factors described by Black et al. (1992b), such as frequent home visits, shorter assignment durations, and training and support provided influencing the Finnish repatriates of this study. Therefore, organizations might also profit from keeping regularly in contact with the sojourners by, for example, assigning a mentor and offering them frequent home trips—and by offering sufficient training and support.

Moreover, as based on the results of this study, Corporate Expatriates whose assignment had the least influence on the career progress reported most difficulties in adjustment professionally. This could suggest also assignment's influence to career affecting the re-adaptation of the Finnish repatriates of this study and opportunities for professional growth and career advancement upon repatriation important. Organizations might therefore also profit from including the assignment to the employees normal career development by, for example, linking the employees to home country annual and developmental review processes while working abroad.



Furthermore, as the shorter assignment duration might have influenced re-entry experience of the respondents of this study, it might also be advisable for the organization to consider substituting some of the traditional long-term assignments with shorter assignment types which are often also more cost-effective when compared with the traditional longer assignments with benefit (Tahvanainen et al., 2005). Moreover, due to the spill-over effect of Finnish repatriates and as family members readjustment impacts on the productivity and satisfaction level of the repatriate upon return (Osman-Gania and Hyder, 2008), it would also appear that organizations might gain advantage if they focus on assisting the whole family in their re-entry process.

## **5.2 Limitations of the study**

Although the results of this study support and are consistent with the theory of Black et al. (1992b), as the variables described by Black et al. (1992b) were confirmed to influence the repatriation experience of the Finnish repatriates of this study, one must question whether the theory is still applicable and whether it still reflects the current work life, which is rather different from 1992 when the original theoretical model was constructed.

Many academic research of repatriation is based on, or is an extension of, the original theoretical framework of Black et al. (1992b) which describes repatriation challenging due to unexpected changes that people do not anticipate and expect. Sudden surprises at repatriation, which make people feel uncertain how to behave in the new but previously familiar situations, is reduced by frequent communication during the foreign assignment. According to the theory of Black et al. (1992b), information obtained during the foreign

assignment assists, in forming more accurate and realistic expectations about how things will be back at home, and thus the repatriate does not experience as much uncertainty and stress compared to those individuals, who have not kept in touch with home country during the foreign assignment. As communication technology and methods of communication have improved significantly since 1992, and as people are more used to travel, one might argue that the repatriates of today might not experience as much uncertainty at repatriation as in the 90s. Therefore, although the main elements influencing the readjustment by Black et al. (1992b) are still valid, and although the results of this study showed a clear U or W-curve of adaptation for many respondents as described by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), one could argue that with the current technical developments and environment with increased globalization people might be less uncertain and experience fewer challenges during the re-entry, as was the result in this study. However, as the present study investigated only a relatively small sample of three Finnish professional groups, the responses can only reflect the responses of the chosen sojourner groups. In order to acquire broader understanding of the phenomena and a greater picture of the Finnish repatriates' special situation, further study of the subject would be required.

### **5.3 Future research**

All sojourner groups of this study reported being most satisfied with issues such as interaction with friends, and with the general environment and society during re-entry. While the challenges experienced during readjustment process among Corporate Expatriate and Foreign Ministry respondents' were mostly related to professional adaptation and finding a suitable position, adjustment

challenges such as getting adjusted to the life of a civil person instead of a soldier received most comments from the Military Observers.

Since the Military Observers reported very little difficulties compared to the other groups, one must question whether the duration since return from the assignment had an influence to the issues reported. For Military Observers problems might surface suddenly, after years since repatriation. Thus, to give sufficient time for the Military Observers to report on possible challenges a longitudinal study of the group would be interesting. In addition, one must question who were the individuals who did not reply? Were those people who experienced the most challenges?

It would also be noteworthy to study whether the different offset, such as whether the Military Observer is a reservist or regular military employee, or whether the Foreign Ministry employee is a diplomat or a general officer, affects the re-entry experience and re-adaptation of the repatriates. Furthermore, it would also be important to research those who have voluntarily terminated the assignment, and those who leave the company after the return.

Due to the relatively small sample size the responses to the closed questions could not be used. In order to further clarify the re-entry experience of Finnish sojourners, a larger quantitative study would be required. It would also be interesting to include several other sojourner groups to the study in the future, in order to gain a broader cross-section of opinions of the Finnish repatriates. Furthermore, in order to be able to clearly compare the new results to previous studies made, a quantitative research would be needed.

In addition, further research could also investigate aspects such as the adaptation experience of family members who were left home, as it is

noteworthy to understand the impact and influence the non-accompanying family members have on the sojourner's adaptation and welfare during the assignment and re-entry. However, such a study would be a completely new research and an extensive 360-degree evaluation was deliberately not used in this study.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The qualitative research was mainly descriptive in nature where the main goal was to find a greater understanding of the re-entry phenomenon of the three Finnish professional sojourner groups: Corporate Expatriates, employees of Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and employees of the Finnish Defence Forces; Military Observers. As with qualitative research one cannot make statistical comparisons, the study was mainly to understand, explain, describe, illustrate and explore the phenomena, and speculate with possible differences and similarities.

The main research question was to define the repatriates' re-entry experience, identify the most important aspects of the re-entry process, and illustrate the main issues and possible challenges related to the re-entry process of the returning sojourners. In addition, the research questions were to define whether the issues and challenges in the re-entry process related mainly to the sojourners' personal life, professional life, or life in general. Furthermore, the study's aim was to clarify whether there are similarities or differences how the different sojourner groups consider the re-entry and possible reasons behind these experiences.

Contradicting to the general belief that re-entry is challenging, the re-entry experiences of the repatriates in this study appeared rather smooth. Returnees of this study were better adapted than one could have expected based on previous studies and literature of the subject. However, based on results

from earlier Master's studies (Nieminen 2007; Siljanen 2009), which revealed that the re-entry experience for Finnish repatriates was not very challenging and that the return did not produce considerable difficulties, the results are not surprising.

Yet, more thorough investigation into the subject gave evidence that there are also challenges and difficulties in the readjustment process of the repatriates of this study. Although at first it appeared that Finnish repatriates of the chosen groups do not complain much, when given an opportunity to discuss and report issues they were unsatisfied or displeased with it was revealed that there are issues the repatriates consider challenging and difficult to adapt to.

Some issues were reported to cause frustration in the beginning of the re-entry. At first sight this might indicate the re-entry challenges experienced being somewhat mild and temporary. Nevertheless, also mild and temporary problems can be considerable, and substantial for the repatriate, particularly during the time experienced. Hence, managers and supervisors should not settle for the first impression, and take it at face value when a repatriate reports that everything is well. Instead, the first impression might give reason for the managers to inquire the topic more broadly and also follow up on a regular basis. One way to secure that the needed follow up is organized could be for the organizations to provide the repatriates structural training and support sometime after repatriation. As results of this study imply, repatriation training was an important element assisting the repatriates to adapt back home. In addition, as requested by the respondents of this study, forum to discuss with other repatriates and persons with previous repatriation experience could also be useful.

In addition to offering some suggestions for organization to further assist the repatriates in their re-entry process, the study results should mitigate the possible re-entry stress experienced by the repatriates, as acknowledging that the phenomena is alike, in some form or another, among the repatriates might reduce the amount of “stress” experienced.

The findings obtained from this study revealed that although the re-entry is a deeply personal experience, and the amount of time it takes to make the transition is highly individualistic, the re-entry experience seems as challenging or easy for all sojourners regardless of the field. The results revealed no major differences between the re-entry experience and adaptation process back to the home country between the study groups. Although the research found that there are some differences between the groups, there are also many similarities. While Military Observers seemed to experience the easiest repatriation and readjustment in general, Corporate Expatriates seemed to have experienced most challenging repatriation to work, although also Foreign Ministry employees, who reported the easiest adaptation to work and organization, reported also many challenges. One reason for the repatriates of this study not to complain and report extensively on the challenges might be related to the organizations involved and their culture to complain as, military in particular, might have mentality not to complain.

Although qualitative research does not thoroughly fulfil the requirements of generalizations of material (Yin, 1994), this study provided some new and useful insights into the repatriation experiences of Finnish repatriates and advanced the current understanding of the re-entry experience of various Finnish sojourner groups. However, one cannot draw a conclusion

that the results of this study would apply to all Finnish repatriates. Results of this study can only give insight and reflect the responses of the selected privileged, voluntary, temporary groups of sojourners who were all personally motivated to sojourn due to professional reasons. While there is deviation on the re-entry experiences between the chosen study groups, even greater dispersion might be found between groups from other sectors where people might not relocate voluntarily or due to professional reasons.

To date, comparative research, and of Finnish sojourner groups in particular, has been scarce, so this study could be suggested to be considered to act as a pioneering study in Finland. In addition, as the response rate for the study was better than it had been expected, and as it was easy to get both the respondents and the organizations involved, this implies that organizations found the topic interesting and important. This clearly indicates there is reason to further investigate the topic and that there is room for further studies in the field.



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## APPENDIX A

### Questionnaire in English and in Finnish

Hello

I am an Intercultural Communications Master student from the University of Jyväskylä and I am currently working on my final thesis investigating the re-entry experiences and thoughts of Finnish repatriates. The study is to compare the experiences of different sojourner groups to see whether there are significant differences in the return experiences of different groups, regardless of the occupation or organization the person is working.

You've been through a major life experience and to share your experiences is valuable and important. Thus I hope that you are willing to participate in the study by answering the following questionnaire.

By answering the questionnaire you consent to the research participation. The answers are confidential. The study data obtained will be generalized and used anonymously.

The form does not need to be fill out completely at the same time, but you can print out the form and continue to answer when you feel like it. However, I hope that you return the form to me by **xxxxx**.

I hope that you answer each question as thoroughly as possible, because it has a significant impact on the success of the study. If there is more to describe than the lines permit, you can continue answers on a separate sheet. Mark, however, clearly, the questionnaire number on which question the answer relates to.

Thank you for taking the time.

Yours Sincerely,

Riikka Hermunen

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

1.) Sex:  male  female

2.) Marital status:  single  
 married  
 common law marriage  
 registered relationship  
 divorced  
 widowed

3.) Age:  20-29 years  
 30-39 years  
 40-49 years  
 50-59 years  
 60 or over

4.) Education:  comprehensive school  
 high school  
 vocational school/secondary school  
 polytechnic  
 university level  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

5.) Children:  no  yes

If yes, please state ages of children: \_\_\_\_\_

6.) How long have you worked for the current company (months or years)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Previous international experience:**

7.) Please comment whether you have earlier experience about living or working abroad?  
 no  yes

If yes, please mention the countries you have lived/worked in, and the duration (months or years) in the country.

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8.) Have you lived abroad (away from Finland) as a child (under the age of 18)?  
 (for example as an accompanying family member on parent's foreign assignment)  
 no  yes

If yes, please state where (country) and duration (months or years):

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**FOREIGN ASSIGNMENT:****Latest foreign assignment:**

9.) Assignment location (host country): \_\_\_\_\_

10.) Assignment duration (years or months): \_\_\_\_\_

11.) Time back in Finland after the latest foreign assignment (months): \_\_\_\_\_

12.) Did you experience challenges in adjusting to the host country during your latest international assignment?

no  yes

If yes, could you please describe this shortly?

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13.) In your opinion, how well did you adjust to the host country? Please circle the alternative that best suits you:

a.) not at all    b.) somewhat    c.) moderate    d.) well    e.) very well

14.) How much contact did you have with the people back in Finland during your assignment? Please circle an alternative that best suits you. Please choose only one alternative.

- I kept contact with my family, friends, and relatives back home in Finland:

a.) Not at all    b.) Every 2-6 months    c.) Monthly    d.) Weekly    e.) Daily

- I kept contact with my family, friends, and relatives back home in Finland mainly via:

a.) Normal Post    b.) E-mail    c.) Skype    d.) Facebook    e.) Phone

- I kept contact with my work colleagues and home company in Finland:

a.) Not at all    b.) Every 2-6 months    c.) Monthly    d.) Weekly    e.) Daily

- I kept contact with my work colleagues and home company back in Finland mainly via:

a.) Normal Post    b.) E-mail    c.) Skype    d.) Facebook    e.) Phone

15.) Were you regularly kept informed by the home organization in Finland about changes at work in home front (e.g. organizational changes) during your latest foreign assignment?

no     yes

16.) Were you assigned a contact person "mentor" in Finland during your latest foreign assignment?

no     yes

17.) Were you offered possibility for home visits back to Finland during your latest foreign assignment?

no       yes

**Motivation and purpose for the latest foreign assignment:**

18.) Please choose two of the alternatives given which in your opinion best describes the reasons that influenced you to leave for the foreign assignment:

- development of expertise  
 income and merit  
 new experiences  
 possibility to move abroad  
 wishes from family members  
 expectations and wish from the employer  
 work situation at home country  
 other, please clarify: \_\_\_\_\_

19.) Please explain why you did apply to work abroad and particularly to this position?

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20.) What did you expect to benefit from the international assignment?

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**Satisfaction with the foreign assignment:**

21.) Overall, how satisfied or unsatisfied were you with the latest international assignment? Please circle an alternative that best describes your thoughts.

- a.) Extremely satisfied    b.) Very Satisfied    c.) Satisfied    d.) Cannot say  
e.) Dissatisfied            f.) Very dissatisfied            g.) Extremely Dissatisfied

22.) What factors were you particularly pleased with in your foreign assignment?

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23.) What factors were particularly displeased with in your foreign assignment?

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24.) Family accompanying at the latest assignment:

Spouse/Partner \_\_\_\_\_  
 Children \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse/Partner and children \_\_\_\_\_  
 I traveled alone \_\_\_\_\_ (please proceed to question number 26)

Where there changes in your family status during your foreign assignment?

\_\_\_ no      \_\_\_ yes

If yes, please describe shortly.

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25.) How would you evaluate the experiences of the accompanying family members in regards to the foreign assignment? Please circle an alternative that best describes your thoughts.

- a.) Experience was extremely good    b.) Experience was good    c.) Experience was varying  
 d.) Experience was not good          e.) Experience was unsuccessful

#### **REPATRIATION BACK HOME:**

**Latest foreign assignment:**

**Reason for return:**

26.) Please choose an alternative which best describes the reason for your repatriation:

- \_\_\_ End of foreign assignment  
 \_\_\_ Premature early termination due to the organizational reasons  
 \_\_\_ Self-initiated early termination, due to: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Motivation for return:**

27.) Please describe your motivation for return?

- \_\_\_ I was glad to return back home  
 \_\_\_ I would have liked to stay abroad  
 \_\_\_ Neutral attitude

**Benefits from international assignment:**

28.) How do you feel that you benefited from the international assignment? Please describe shortly.

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**Expectations:**

29.) What did you expect your re-entry to Finland be like? Please describe shortly.

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To what extent have your expectations of the return to Finland been matched by the actual outcome?

- a.) Fully    b.) To some extent    c.) A little    d.) Not at all

30.) In **general**, how easy or difficult was it for you to adapt to life in Finland again?

- Very difficult  
 Difficult  
 Neutral  
 Easy  
 Very easy

What factors were you particularly pleased with/ were easy to adapt to?

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What factors were you particularly displeased with / were difficult to adapt to?

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31.) How easy or difficult was it for you to adapt to **work life** in Finland again?

- Very difficult  
 Difficult  
 Neutral  
 Easy  
 Very easy

What factors were you particularly pleased with/ were easy to adapt to?

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What factors were you particularly displeased with / were difficult to adapt to?

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32.) In case your family members accompanied you during your foreign assignment, how easy or difficult was it for your family members to adapt to life in Finland again? (in case family members did not accompany, please proceed to question 37)

- Very difficult  
 Difficult  
 Neutral  
 Easy  
 Very easy

In your opinion, with which factors were the family members particularly pleased?

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In your opinion, with which factors were the family members particularly displeased?

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33.) In case your family members did not accompany you during your foreign assignment, please describe shortly how your family members experienced your return back home after your foreign assignment.

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**Components of Change:**

34.) What were the changes you noticed back home after returning to Finland? Please describe.

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35.) What were the changes you noticed back at work after returning to Finland? Please describe.

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36.) What were the changes in yourself, in your attitudes, and behaviour after you returned to Finland? Please describe.

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37.) What were the changes in your relationships with family, friends or co-workers after you returned to Finland? Please describe.

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38.) Do you feel your family, friends, or co-workers treat you differently upon returning home?

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39.) What surprised you during your re-entry experience?

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40.) Did the foreign assignment influence your health (physical and mental)?

no       yes

If it influenced you, please describe how:

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41.) Did you experience any difficult situations or events during the foreign assignment, which affected you personally or your job, and which were on your mind on your return back to Finland?

no       yes

If yes, please describe:

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42.) Were you offered/did you receive support to handle these events?

no       yes

If yes, what kind and by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

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#### **Adaptation:**

43.) How would you describe your re-entry and adjustment back to Finland? Did you experience challenges in adjusting back to the home country after your international assignment? Please describe shortly.

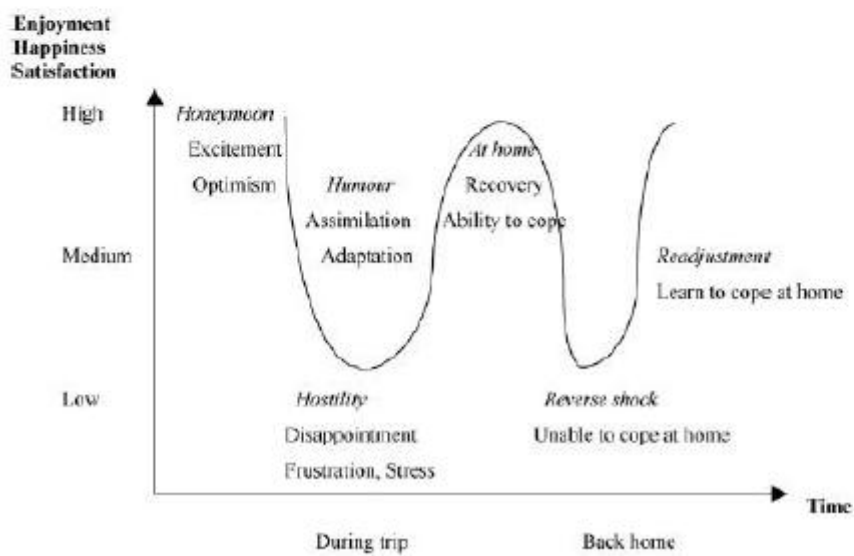
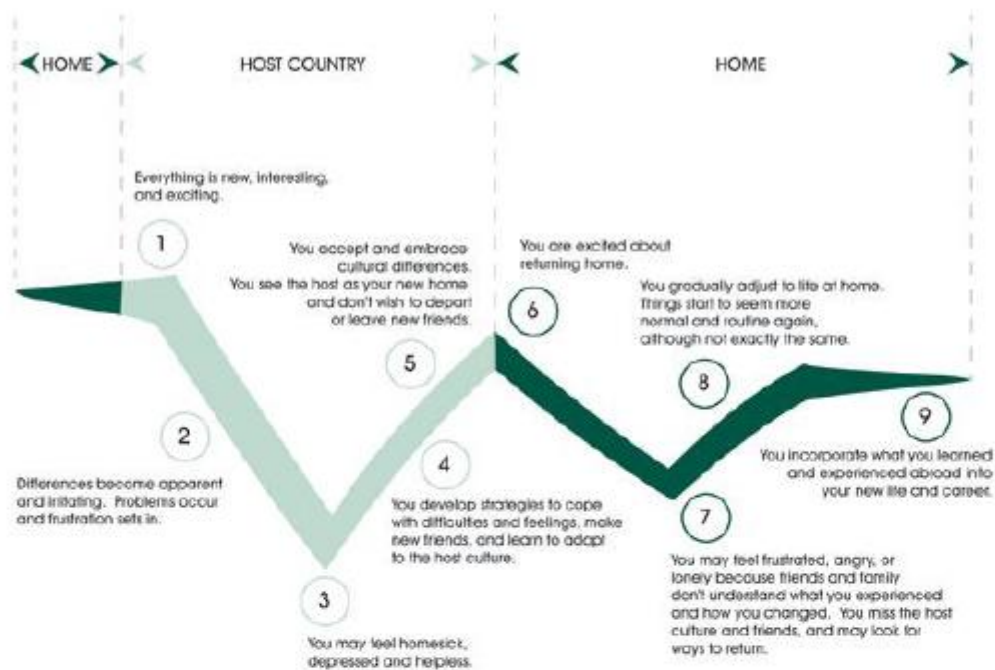
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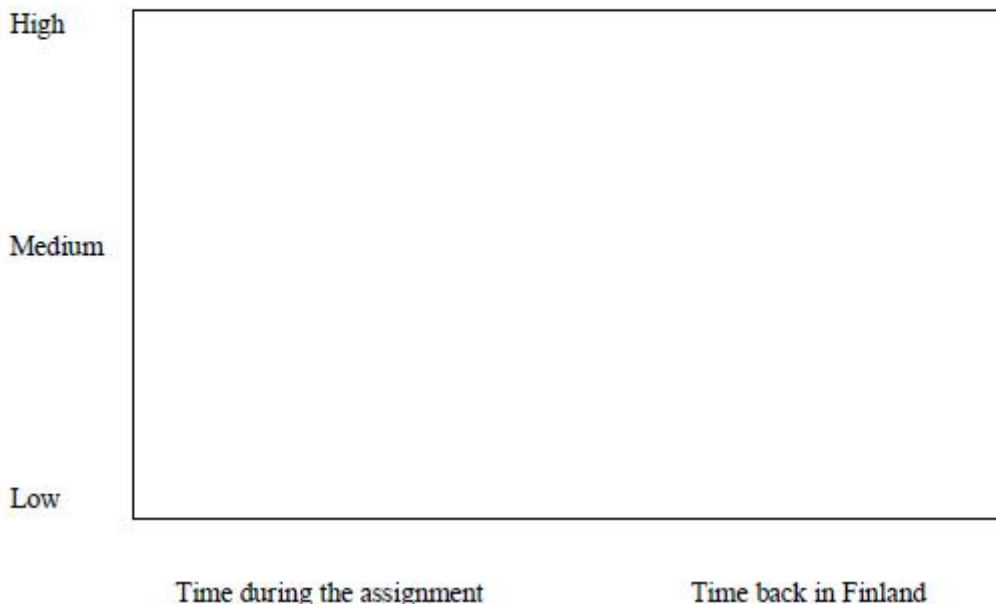
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44.) Following two figures represent a W-curve of adaptation, including the re-entry adjustment. The W-curve is often used in describing the adjustment to the host country and back to the home country.

When moving to a new country, a person might go through various stages: from periods of excitement, to very low moods of culture shock, before he/she finally adjusts to the new environment. The person might go through similar feelings when repatriating back to the home country.



Not all people experience the adjustment in similar way. Please draw your own curve of adaptation to the following box, representing your feelings when entering the new country and upon returning back home to Finland.



45.) How would you describe you have adjusted **generally** back to Finland? Please chose an alternative that best suits you?

- a.) not at all    b.) somewhat    c.) moderate/average    d.) well    e.) very well

How would you describe you have adjusted back to **work** and home organization? Please chose an alternative that best suits you?

- a.) not at all    b.) somewhat    c.) moderate/average    d.) well    e.) very well

46.) In case you have earlier repatriation experience, please describe in what way did the latest repatriation experience differ from the earlier repatriation experiences?

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47.) How would you evaluate that the foreign assignment has influenced your career progress? Please choose an alternative that best suits you.

Foreign Assignment has influence my career:

- a.) very positively    b.) positively    c.) no influence    d.) negatively    e.) very negatively

48.) What kind of work positions was offered for you in Finland after your return?

I returned to my previous position

I was promoted

I started with a lower position than from where I left

I was not offered a position with the company after I returned back from the assignment

49.) How would you describe starting work after your repatriation?

Please choose an alternative that best suits you.

The beginning was:

a.) very easy   b.) easy   c.) neutral   d.) difficult   f.) very difficult

50.) What were the benefits given to you during your assignment? How were these handled after your return?

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54.) This part of the survey looks at the re-entry back home to Finland from several viewpoints. Please circle an alternative that best suits you.

Strongly agree = 1

Agree = 2

Somewhat agree = 3

Does not relate to me / cannot say = 4

Somewhat disagree = 5

Disagree = 6

Strongly disagree = 7

Personal Life

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| I feel that I have adjusted well back home   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| It was easy for me to adjust back to the Finnish life style  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| I had difficulties in adjusting to Finland   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| I found my home country to be unfamiliar in the beginning of my repatriation   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| My family and friends back home were interested in hearing about my overseas living experiences                              | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| I feel that I have changes a lot due to my international assignment  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| I felt that I had changed so much during my international assignment that returning to old friends circles did not go easily | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| I felt lonely and homesick towards my assignment location  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| I have been more anxious and irritated after my return back from the assignment  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| Life abroad felt more interesting than life back at the home country   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| Since I was abroad I have become more critical towards Finnish cultural differences  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| I could consider leaving on another foreign assignment in the future   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |



Professional life:

Strongly agree = 1

Agree = 2

Somewhat agree = 3

Does not relate to me / cannot say = 4

Somewhat disagree = 5

Disagree = 6

Strongly disagree = 7

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My job after repatriation was very different in comparison with my job abroad                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel I could influence my job tasks after repatriation in such a way that the job suited me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My work place recognize and value my experiences abroad                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel that the foreign assignment assisted me further in my career                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| It was clear to me what permanent job I would have when I returned from overseas              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| It is clear what is expected of me in my current work role and tasks                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| There were conflicting opinions on what my job consisted of after my repatriation             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I adjusted myself very easily to my new job   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| In my current job I can utilize the skills and knowledge which I learned abroad               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am satisfied with my current work position and tasks  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My responsibilities are clearly defined   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am satisfied with the level of responsibility of my position                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel my current work is challenging   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel satisfied with the level of autonomy in my present job                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I experience more autonomy in my new job than had been the case in my foreign assignment      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I had more autonomy in my foreign assignment than in the job I held prior to going overseas   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I was financially better off in my foreign assignment than in the job I held prior to going overseas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am now financially better off than during my foreign assignment                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I had more responsibilities in my foreign assignment than in the job I held prior to going overseas  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My job status is lower in my new job than had been the case in the foreign Assignment                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| After the foreign assignment I had trouble in concentrating to my work                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Organizational life:

Strongly agree = 1

Agree = 2

Somewhat agree = 3

Does not relate to me = 4

Somewhat disagree = 5

Disagree = 6

Strongly disagree = 7

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I was satisfied with the way in which my workplace received me back   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Repatriation and adjustment to the home organization was challenging  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I received repatriation support from the organization   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I was offered an opportunity to discuss my experiences and feelings with a professional after returning back home | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My company provided my spouse career counselling when we returned   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel that the repatriation process was clear  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

52.) Following is a list of aspects that are often mentioned to be challenging at repatriation. How much or often these issues affect you by giving you more stress or discomfort after returning back home to Finland. Please circle an alternative that best describes your feelings.

- 1 = Issue does not relate to me at all  
 2 = Extremely little  
 3 = Very little  
 4 = Little  
 5 = Much  
 6 = Very much  
 7 = Extremely

|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Minor possibilities to influence issues with own work  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lower level of responsibility at job after repatriation  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lower income level at home after repatriation  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lower standard of living   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Downward shift in social status  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Loss of domestic help (servants, cooks, chauffeurs)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Poorer housing conditions at home compared to host country   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Envy and fear by peers   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Different educational system for children  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Uncertainty about own cultural identity (one is uncertain which national one considers to be more: home or host) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Feeling of being different   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Culture shock  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Depression   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Loneliness   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Adjustment to work tasks   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Adjustment socially<br>(E.g. social expectations in regards to rules and regulations)                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**General Practicalities:**

|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Housing arrangements                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Methods of taxation                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Childrens' schooling                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Banking and telecommunication arrangements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Customs duties                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**TRAINING / MENTORING:****Before the foreign assignment:**

53.) Were you offered cultural training or mentoring prior to the departure to the foreign assignment?

no       yes

If yes, did you participate in the cultural training or mentoring prior to the departure to the foreign assignment?

no       yes

**At post / during the foreign assignment prior return:**

54.) Were you offered training or mentoring abroad in regards to repatriation back to Finland prior to your return?

no       yes

If this was not offered, would you have found this useful?

no       yes

If it was offered, did you participate in the repatriation training or mentoring prior to your return?

no       yes

If participated, did you find this useful:

no       yes

**After returning back to Finland:**

55.) Were you offered training or mentoring after your return to Finland?

no       yes

If this was not offered, would you have found this useful?

no       yes

If it was offered, did you participate in the repatriation training or mentoring after your return to Finland?

no       yes

If participated, did you find this useful:

no       yes

56.) Please describe what kind of support or assistance you would have required at your return?

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Hei,

Olen Jyväskylän yliopiston Intercultural Communications Maister -linjan opiskelija, ja teen lopputyötä suomalaisten ulkomaantyökomennukselta palanneiden kokemuksista ja ajatuksista. Vertailen eri ryhmien paluukokemuksia nähdäkseni onko paluukokemuksissa huomattavia eroja, riippumatta siitä, missä ammatissa tai yrityksessä henkilöt toimivat.

Olet käynyt elämässä läpi merkittävän kokemuksen josta kertominen on arvokasta ja tärkeää. Toivonkin, että olet halukas osallistumaan tutkimukseen vastaamalla seuraavaan kyselyyn.

Vastaamalla kyselyyn annat samalla suostumuksen tutkimukseen osallistumisesta. Vastaukset ovat luottamuksellisia. Tutkimuksessa saatuja tietoja tullaan käyttämään yleistettyinä sekä nimettöminä.

Lomaketta ei tarvitse täyttää kokonaan samalla kerralla, vaan voit printata lomakkeen ja jatkaa vastauksia kun siltä tuntuu. Toivon kuitenkin, että palautat lomakkeen minulle xxxx mennessä.

Toivon, että vastaat jokaiseen kysymykseen mahdollisimman huolellisesti, koska sillä on huomattava vaikutus tutkimuksen onnistumiseen. Mikäli asiaa on enemmän kun rivit antavat myöden, voit jatkaa vastauksia erilliselle paperille. Merkitse kuitenkin selvästi, kyselykaavakkeen numeroa käyttäen, mihin kysymykseen vastaus kuuluu.

Ystävällisin terveisin ja ajastasi kiittäen,

Riikka Hermunen

**HENKILÖTIEDOT:**

1.) Sukupuoli:           \_\_ mies                               \_\_ nainen

2.) Siviilisääty:       \_\_ naimaton  
                           \_\_ naimisissa  
                           \_\_ avoliitossa  
                           \_\_ rekisteröity parisuhde  
                           \_\_ eronnut  
                           \_\_ leski

3.) Ikä:                   \_\_ 20-29  
                               \_\_ 30-39  
                               \_\_ 40-49  
                               \_\_ 50-59  
                               \_\_ 60 vuotta, tai yli

4.) Koulutustausta:    \_\_ peruskoulu  
                               \_\_ ylioppilas  
                               \_\_ ammattikoulu  
                               \_\_ ammattikorkeakoulu  
                               \_\_ yliopisto  
                               muu: \_\_\_\_\_

5.) Lapsia:               \_\_ ei                   \_\_ kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, mainitse lasten ikä: \_\_\_\_\_

6.) Miten pitkään olet työskennellyt nykyisessä yrityksessä (kuukausissa tai vuosissa)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Aiempi kansainvälinen kokemus:**

7.) Oletko aiemmin (ennen viimeistä ulkomaankomennusta jolta olet juuri palannut) asunut tai työskennellyt ulkomailla?  
 \_\_ ei                   \_\_ kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, mainitse maat missä olet mahdollisesti asunut/työskennellyt, sekä aika (kuukausissa tai vuosissa) näissä maissa.

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8.) Oletko asunut osan lapsuudestasi (alle 18 vuotiaana) ulkomailla/ Suomen ulkopuolella?  
 (esim. vanhempien mukana ulkomaankomennuksella)  
 \_\_ ei                   \_\_ kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, mainitse missä (maa) ja kuinka kauan (kuukausissa tai vuosissa):

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**ULKOMAILLA TYÖSKENTELY:****Viimeisin ulkomaankomennus**

9.) Ulkomaankomennuksen kohtamaa: \_\_\_\_\_

10.) Ulkomaankomennuksen pituus (vuosissa tai kuukausissa): \_\_\_\_\_

11.) Paluunjälkeinen aika Suomessa viimeisimmän ulkomaankomennuksen jälkeen (kuukausina):  
\_\_\_\_\_

12.) Koitko sopeutumisen vieraaseen kulttuuriin viimeisimmän ulkomaankomennuksesi aikana vaikeaksi?

\_\_ ei      \_\_ kyllä

Jos kyllä, kuvaile tapahtumia:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13.) Miten luonnehtisit kykyäsi sopeutua yleisesti kohtamaan viimeisimmän ulkomaankomennuksesi aikana? Ympyröi vaihtoehto joka kuvaa sopeutumistasi parhaiten.

a.) en ollenkaan      b.) jotenkin      c.) kesinkertaisesti      d.) hyvin      e.) todella hyvin

14) Miten paljon pidit yhteyttä ihmisiin kotimaassa viimeisimmän ulkomaankomennuksesi aikana? Valitse vaihtoehto joka kuvaa sinua parhaiten. Valitse vain yksi vaihtoehto.

• Pidin yhteyttä perheeseeni, ystäviini tai sukulaisiin Suomessa:

a.) en ollenkaan      b.) 2-6 kk välein      c.) kuukausittain      d.) viikottain      e.) päivittäin

• Pidin yhteyttä perheeseeni, ystäviini tai sukulaisiin Suomessa:

a.) normaalilla postilla      b.) sähköpostilla      c.) skype      d.) facebook      e.) puhelimella

• Pidin yhteyttä työtovereihini sekä kotimaan organisaatioon Suomessa:

a.) en ollenkaan      b.) 2-6 kk välein      c.) kuukausittain      d.) viikottain      e.) päivittäin

• Pidin yhteyttä työtovereihini sekä kotimaan organisaatioon Suomessa:

a.) normaalilla postilla      b.) sähköpostilla      c.) skype      d.) facebook      e.) puhelimella

15.) Pidettiinkö sinua säännöllisesti ajantasalla muutoksista kotiorganisaatioissa viimeisimmän ulkomaankomennuksesi aikana?

\_\_ ei      \_\_ kyllä

16.) Määrättiinkö sinulle kontakti henkilö ”mentori” Suomessa viimeisimmän ulkomaankomennuksesi ajaksi?

\_\_ ei      \_\_ kyllä



17.) Tarjottiinko teille mahdollisuuksia kotimaanmatkoihin Suomeen viimeisimmän ulkomaankomennuksenne aikana?

ei  kyllä

**Motivaatio ja syy viimeisimmälle ulkomaankomennukselle:**

18.) Valitse seuraavista vaihtoehdoista kaksi tärkeintä tekijää jotka mielestäsi parhaiten kuvaavat syitä jotka vaikuttivat päätökseesi lähteä ulkomaankomennukselle.

- ammattitaidon kehittäminen
- hyvä ansiotaso
- uudet kokemukset
- mahdollisuus muuttaa ulkomaille
- perheenjäsenten toiveet
- työnantajan odotukset ja toiveet
- kotimaan työtilanne
- muu, mikä: \_\_\_\_\_

19.) Mainitse miksi hait ulkomaankomennukselle ja juuri tähän työtehtävään?

\_\_\_\_\_

20.) Miten ajattelit hyötyväsi ulkomaankomennuksestasi?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Tyytyväisyys ulkomaankomennukseen:**

21.) Yleisesti, miten tyytyväinen tai tyytymätön olit viimeisimpään ulkomaankomennukseen? Valitse vaihtoehto joka kuvaa sinua parhaiten.

- a.) Erittäin tyytyväinen b.) Hyvin tyytyväinen c.) Tyytyväinen d.) ei osaa sanoa
- e.) Tyytymätön f.) Erittäin tyytymätön g.) Hyvin tyytymätön

22.) Mihin asioihin olit erityisen tyytyväinen ulkomaankomennuksessasi?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

23.) Mihin asioihin olit erityisen tyytymätön ulkomaankomennuksessasi?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24.) Viimeisimmällä ulkomaankomennuksella mukana matkustavat perheenjäsenet:

Puoliso \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lapset \_\_\_\_\_  
 Puoliso ja lapset \_\_\_\_\_  
 Matkustin yksin \_\_\_\_\_ (siirry kysymykseen 26)

Tapahtuiko perhetilanteessa muutoksia ulkomaankomennuksen aikana?

\_\_\_ ei      \_\_\_ kyllä

Jos kyllä, kuvaile tapahtumia:

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25.) Kuinka arvioisit mukanasi matkustaneiden perheenjäsenten kokemuksia ulkomaankomennuksesta? Valitse vaihtoehto joka kuvastaa ajatuksiasi perheenjäsenten kokemuksista parhaiten.

- a.) Kokemus oli erittäin hyvä
- b.) Kokemus oli hyvä
- c.) Kokemukset olivat vaihtelevia
- d.) Kokemus ei ollut hyvä
- e.) Kokemus oli epäonnistunut

### **PALUU ULKOMAANKOMENNUKSELTA**

**Viimeisin ulkomaankomennus**

**Paluun syy:**

26.) Valitse seuraavista vaihtoehdoista tekijä, mikä mielestäsi parhaiten kuvaa viimeisimmän ulkomaankomennuksen paluusi syytä:

- \_\_\_ Komennuksen päättyminen
- \_\_\_ Komennuksen ennenaikainen päättyminen yrityssyistä
- \_\_\_ Komennuksen ennenaikainen päättyminen komennuslaisen pyynnöstä, syy: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paluumotivaatio:**

27.) Kommentoi omaa motivaatiotasi palata?

- \_\_\_ Olin iloinen paluusta
- \_\_\_ Olisin halunnut jäädä ulkomaankomennukselle
- \_\_\_ Neutraali asenne

**Ulkomaankomennuksen hyödyt:**

28.) Miten tunnet hyötyneesi viimeisimmästä ulkomaankomennuksestasi? Kuvaile lyhyesti.

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**Odotukset:**

29.) Minkälaisen odotit paluun takaisin Suomeen olevan? Kuvaile mahdollisia odotuksia kotiinpaluusta.

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Onko paluu Suomeen vastannut odotuksia?

- a.) täysin    b.) jokseenkin    c.) vähän    d.) ei ollenkaan

30.) Miten helppoa tai vaikeaa paluu Suomeen yleisesti on ollut?

- Todella vaikeaa  
 Vaikeaa  
 Neutraalia  
 Helppoa  
 Todella helppoa

Mihin asioihin olit erityisen tyytyväinen / mihin oli helppoa sopeutua?

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Mihin asioihin olit erityisen tyytymätön / mihin oli vaikea sopeutua?

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31.) Miten helppoa tai vaikeaa paluu Suomen työelämään on ollut?

- Todella vaikeaa  
 Vaikeaa  
 Neutraalia  
 Helppoa  
 Todella helppoa

Mihin asioihin olit erityisen tyytyväinen / mihin oli helppoa sopeutua?

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Mihin asioihin olit erityisen tyytymätön / mihin oli vaikea sopeutua?

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32.) Yleisesti, miten helpoksi tai vaikeaksi perheesi koki paluun Suomeen?  
(mikäli perhe ei matkustanut mukana komennukselle, siirry kysymykseen 37)

- Todella vaikeaa  
 Vaikeaa  
 Neutraalia  
 Helppoa  
 Todella helppoa

Omasta mielestäsi, mihin asioihin mukana matkustaneet perheenjäsenet olivat erityisen tyytyväisiä?

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Omasta mielestäsi, mihin asioihin perheenjäsenet olivat erityisen tyytymättömiä?

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33.) Mikäli perheesi ei matkustanut mukana ulkomaankomennukselle vaan pysyi kotimaassa, kuvaile lyhyesti miten perheesi koki paluusi takaisin kotiin ulkomaankomennuksen jälkeen?

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**Muutokset:**

34.) Mitä muutoksia huomasit yleisesti palatessasi takaisin Suomeen? Kuvaile lyhyesti.

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35.) Mitä muutoksia huomasit palatessasi takaisin työpaikallasi Suomeen? Kuvaile lyhyesti.

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36.) Huomasitko muutoksia itsessäsi, asenteissasi, tai käytöksessäsi palatessasi takaisin Suomeen? Kuvaile lyhyesti.

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37.) Huomasitko muutoksia ihmissuhteissasi; perheenjäseniin, ystäviin, tai työtovereihin paluusi jälkeen. Mikäli kyllä, kuvaile lyhyesti.

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38.) Tuntuuko siltä, että perhe, ystävät tai työtoverit kohtelevat/kohtelivat sinua erilalla ulkomaankomennuksesi jälkeen?

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39.) Tuntuiko joku asia yllättävältä paluusi yhteydessä?

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40.) Vaikuttiko ulkomaankomennus terveyteesi (fyysisesti tai henkisesti)?

ei  kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, kuvaile lyhyesti:

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41.) Koitko vaikeita tilanteita tai tapahtumia ulkomaankomennuksesi aikana mikä olisi vaikuttanut sinuun henkilökohtaisesti tai työhösi, ja mikä olisi ollut mielessäsi vielä palatessasi takaisin Suomeen?

ei  kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, kuvaile lyhyesti:

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42.) Tarjottiinko sinulle / saitko apua käsitellä näitä tilanteita tai tapahtumia?

ei  kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, minkälaista ja kenen taholta? :

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**Sopeutuminen:**

43.) Miten kuvailisit paluutasi takaisin Suomeen? Koitko vaikeuksia uudellensopeutumisessa Suomeen ulkomaankomennuksen jälkeen? Kuvaile lyhyesti.

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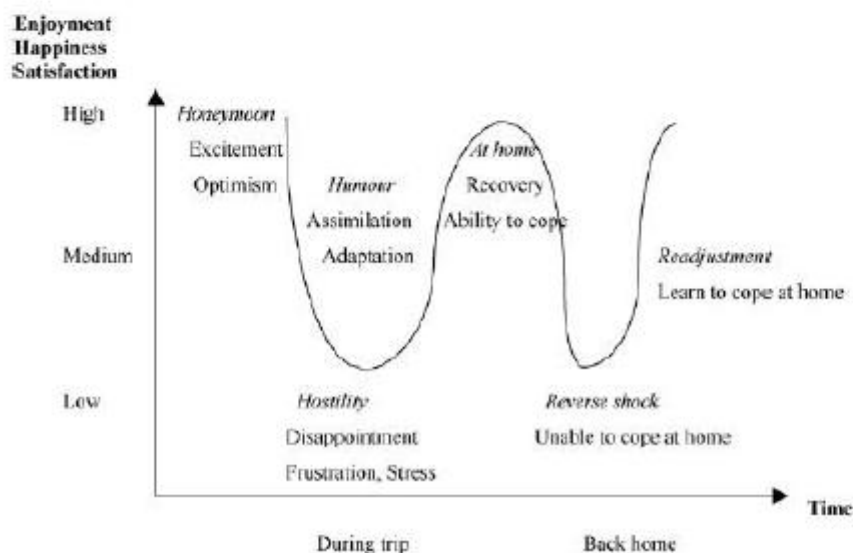
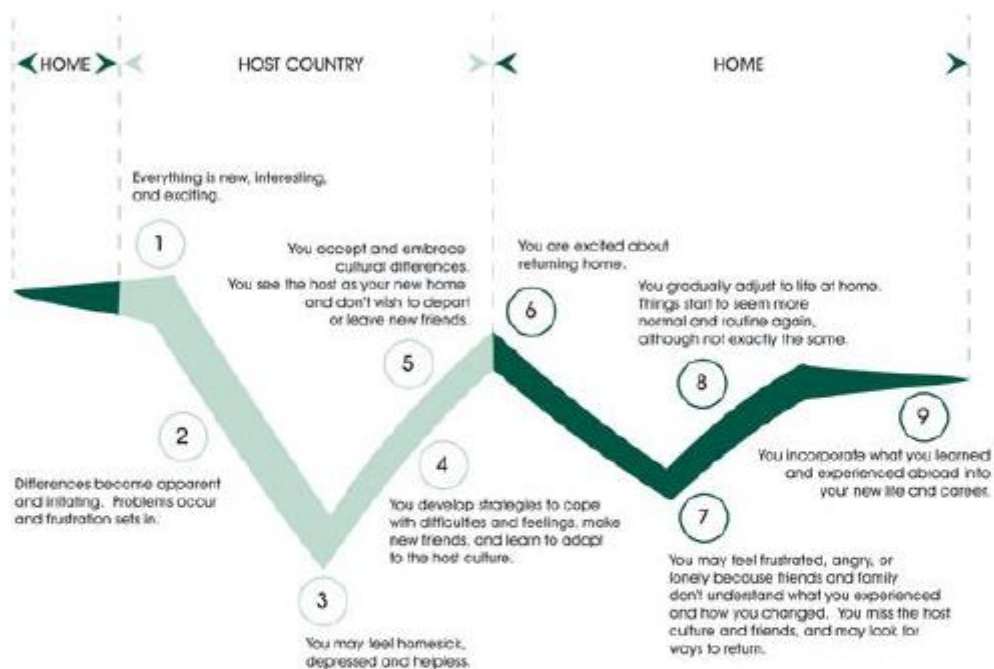
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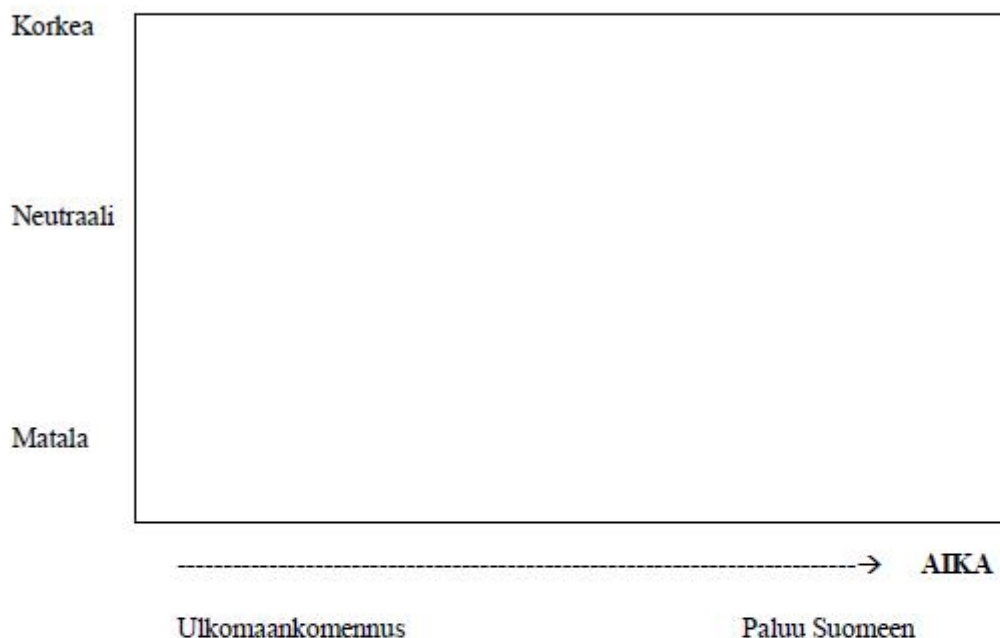
44.) Seuraavat kaksi kuvaa esittävät sopeutumisen vieraaseen kulttuuriin sekä takaisin kotimaahan W-kuviona.

Kun henkilö muuttaa uuteen maahan, hän saattaa käydä läpi useita sopeutumisen vaiheita (alkuinnostus, kulttuurishokki, sopeutuminen kulttuuriin). Henkilö saattaa käydä samanlaisia vaiheita läpi kun hän palaa takaisin kotimaahansa.



Kaikki ihmiset eivät käy läpi vaiheita samalla tavalla joten he eivät myöskään koe sopeutumista samoin. Piirrä seuraavaan laatikkoon oma sopeutumiskurvisi joka kuvaa ajatuksiasi sekä tunteitasi kun siirryit ulkomaille ja kun palasit takaisin Suomeen.

### MIELIALA



45.) Miten luonnehtisit kykyäsi sopeutua takaisin kotimaahan:

Kuinka hyvin olet mielestäsi sopeutunut elämään yleisesti Suomessa paluun jälkeen? Valitse vaihtoehto joka kuvaa sopeutumistasi parhaiten.

a.) en ollenkaan      b.) jotenkin      c.) keskinkertaisesti      d.) hyvin      e.) todella hyvin

Kuinka hyvin olet mielestäsi sopeutunut **työelämään** kotiorganisaatiossa Suomessa paluun jälkeen? Valitse vaihtoehto joka kuvaa sopeutumistasi parhaiten.

a.) en ollenkaan      b.) jotenkin      c.) keskinkertaisesti      d.) hyvin      e.) todella hyvin

46.) Mikäli sinulla on aiempaa kokemusta paluusta kotimaahan ulkomailla asumisen tai työskentelyn jälkeen, kuvaile erosiko viimeisin kotiinpaluuprosessi aikaisemmista ja millä tavoin?

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47.) Kuinka arvioisit ulkomailla työskentelyn vaikutuksia omaan urakehitykseen?

- Komennuksen vaikutukset urakehitykseeni ovat olleet erittäin positiivisia
- Komennuksen vaikutukset urakehitykseeni ovat olleet hyviä
- Komennuksella ei ole ollut vaikutusta urakehitykseeni
- Komennuksen vaikutukset urakehitykseeni ovat olleet huonoja
- Komennuksen vaikutukset urakehitykseeni ovat olleet erittäin huonoja

48.) Millainen työtehtävä sinulle tarjottiin kotimaan työnantajan palveluksessa komennuksen jälkeen?

- palasin entiseen asemaani
- aloitin aikaisempaa korkeammassa asemassa
- aloitin aikaisempaa huonommassa asemassa
- minulle ei tarjottu työpaikkaa kotimaan työnantajan palveluksessa

49.) Miten luonnehtisit työskentelyn aloittamista kotimaassa

- aloittaminen oli todella helppoa
- aloittaminen oli helppoa
- aloittaminen oli neutraalia
- aloittaminen oli vaikeaa
- aloittaminen oli todella vaikeaa

50.) Tarjottiinko sinulle erityisiä etuja ulkomaankomennuksesi aikana? Miten etuja kohdeltiin kotiin palatessa?

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51.) Tämä osa kyselyä arvioi kotiinpaluuta Suomeen usean eri osa-alueen kesken. Ympyröi vaihtoehto joka parhaiten kuvaa sinua.

Vahvasti samaa mieltä = 1  
 Samaa mieltä = 2  
 Jokseenkin samaa mieltä = 3  
 En osaa sanoa = 4  
 Jokseenkin eri mieltä = 5  
 Erimieltä = 6  
 Vahvasti eri mieltä = 7

Henkilökohtainen elämä

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tunnen, että olen sopeutunut hyvin takaisin Suomeen   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sopeuduin helposti takaisin suomalaiseen elämäntyyliin  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Minun oli vaikea sopeutua takaisin Suomeen  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Kotimaani tuntui vieraalta palatessani takaisin   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Ystäväni ja sukulaiseni kotona olivat kiinnostuneita kuulemaan ulkomailla saamistani kokemuksista                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tunnen muuttuneeni paljon johtuen ulkomaankomennuksesta   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Minusta tuntui, että olin muuttunut ulkomaankomennukseni aikana niin paljon, että paluu vanhoihin kaveripiireihin oli vaikeaa | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tunsin itseni yksinäiseksi ja tunsin koti-ikävää komennusmaata kohtaan  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Olen ollut /olin levottomampi ja ärtyneempi palattuani Suomeen  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Elämä ulkomailla tuntui kiinnostavammalta kuin elämä kotimaassa   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Koska olin ulkomailla, olen tullut kriittisemmäksi Suomen kulttuurieroja kohtaan  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Voisin harkita tulevaisuudessa lähteväni uudelle ulkomaankomennukselle  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Työelämä:

- Vahvasti samaa mieltä = 1  
 Samaa mieltä = 2  
 Jokseenkin samaa mieltä = 3  
 En osaa sanoa = 4  
 Jokseenkin eri mieltä = 5  
 Erimieltä = 6  
 Vahvasti eri mieltä = 7

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Paluunjälkeinen työni on hyvin erilaista verrattuna työhön jota tein ulkomailla                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Minusta tuntuu, että sain itse vaikuttaa paluun jälkeisiin työtehtäviini siten, että nykyinen työ sopii minulle | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Työympäristöni huomioi ja arvostaa ulkomailla hankittuja kokemuksiani   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Minusta tuntuu, että ulkomaankomennus vaikutti positiivisesti urakehitykseeni                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Minulle oli selkeää missä työtehtävissä aloittaisin vakituisesti ulkomaankomennukselta paluuni jälkeen          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Minulle on selkeää mitä minulta odotetaan nykyisessä työssäni ja roolissani                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Paluun jälkeisen työni sisällöstä oli epäselvyyttä  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sopeuduin hyvin uusiin työtehtäviini paluun jälkeen   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Pystyn hyödyntämään ulkomailta hankittuja taitoja nykyisessä työssäni   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Olen tyytyväinen nykyisiin työtehtäviini  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Vastuualueeni on selkeästi määritelty   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Olen tyytyväinen vastuun määrään nykyisessä työssäni  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Työni on haastavaa  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Olen tyytyväinen nykyisen työni itsenäisyyteen  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Työni on itsenäisempää kuin mitä se oli ulkomaankomennuksella   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Työtehtäväni komennuksella olivat itsenäisempiä verrattuna työtehtäviini ennen ulkomaankomennusta               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tienasin ulkomaankomennukseni aikan paremmin verrattuna työhöni ennen ulkomaankomennusta                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tienaan nykyään paremmin kuin ulkomaankomennuksella   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Työtehtäväni komennuksella olivat vastuullisempia verrattuna työtehtäviini ennen ulkomaankomennusta | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nykyinen työstatukseni on alhaisempi kuin ulkomaankomennuksella                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Minulla oli vaikeuksia keskittyä työhöni paluun jälkeen   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Organisaatio:

Vahvasti samaa mieltä = 1  
 Samaa mieltä = 2  
 Jokseenkin samaa mieltä = 3  
 En osaa sanoa = 4  
 Jokseenkin eri mieltä = 5  
 Erimieltä = 6  
 Vahvasti eri mieltä = 7

|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Olen tyytyväinen siihen miten minut vastaanotettiin takaisin työpaikalleni                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Paluu ja sopeutuminen työorganisaatioon oli haastavaa  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Minulle tarjottiin yrityksen puolelta tukea paluussa   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Minulle tarjottiin mahdollisuus keskustella asiantuntijan kanssa tunteistani ja ajatuksistani paluun jälkeen | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Yritys tarjosi apua puolisololleni työnhaussa paluumme jälkeen   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Paluuprosessi oli selkeää  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

52.) Seuraavana on listattu asioita jotka usein mainitaan haastaviksi paluuprosessissa. Miten paljon seuraavat asiat ovat vaikuttaneet sinuun paluun jälkeen tuoden stressiä tai epämukavuutta. Ympyröi vaihtoehto joka parhaiten kuvaa sinua.

- 1= Asia ei ole koskenut minua  
 2= Erittäin vähän  
 3 = Hyvin vähän  
 4 = Vähän  
 5= Paljon  
 6 = Hyvin paljon  
 7 = Erittäin paljon

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vähäiset mahdollisuudet vaikuttaa omaan työtehtäviin  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Alhaisempi työvastuu kotimaassa ulkomaankomennukselta palattua  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Alhaisempi palkka kotimaassa ulkomaankomennukselta palattua   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Elintason lasku ulkomaankomennukselta palattua  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Alhaisempi sosiaalinen status kotimaassa kuin ulkomaankomennuksella   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Kotiavun väheneminen<br>(mahdolliset kokit, autonkuljettajat, palvelijat ulkomaankomennuksella)                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Huonommat asumisolot kotimaassa kuin ulkomaankomennuksella  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Työkavereiden kateus tai pelko  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lasten koulutuksen erilaisuus   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Epävarmuus kulttuurisesta identiteetistä / ei tiedä kummanko maalaisena<br>itsensä enemmän tuntee: kotimaan vai kohdemaan | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Erilaisuuden tunne  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Kulttuurishokki   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Masennus  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Yksinäisyys   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sopeutuminen työtehtäviin   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sopeutuminen kotimaan sosiaalisiin odotuksiin<br>(esim. sosiaaliset säännöt ja tavat)                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <b>Käytännön järjestelyt:</b>   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Asunnon järjestely  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

|                        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Verotusasiat           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lasten koulunkäynti    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Pankki ja puhelinasiat | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tullimuodollisuudet    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**KOULUTUS:****Valmennus ennen ulkomaankomennusta**

53.) Tarjottiinko sinulle kulttuurikoulutusta/valmennusta ennen ulkomaankomennustasi?

 ei       kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, osallistuitko ko. valmennukseen ennen ulkomaankomennustasi?

 ei       kyllä**Valmennus ennen ulkomaankomennukselta paluuta**

54.) Tarjottiinko sinulle pahuvalmennusta ennen paluutasi ulkomaankomennukselta?

 ei       kyllä

Mikäli ei, olisitko kokenut tämän hyödylliseksi?

 ei       kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, osallistuitko ko. valmennukseen ennen paluutasi ulkomaankomennukselta?

 ei       kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, koitko tämän hyödylliseksi?

 ei       kyllä**Ulkomaankomennukselta paluun jälkeinen valmennus**

55.) Tarjottiinko sinulle pahuvalmennusta ulkomaankomennukselta paluun jälkeen?

 ei       kyllä

Mikäli ei, olisitko kokenut tämän hyödylliseksi?

 ei       kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, osallistuitko ko. valmennukseen ulkomaankomennukselta paluun jälkeen?

 ei       kyllä

Mikäli kyllä, koitko tämän hyödylliseksi?

 ei       kyllä

56.) Kuvaile lyhyesti minkäläistä valmennusta tai tukea olisit mahdollisesti kaivannut liittyen ulkomaankomennukselta paluuseen?

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## APPENDIX B

### Interview questions with a person involved in managing the foreign assignment

Haastattelukysymykset komennuslaisten kanssa toimiville henkilöille / sosiaaliterapeuteille:

- Kokevatko palaajat mielestäsi sopeutumisvaikeuksia palatessaan ulkomaankomennukselta takaisin Suomeen?
- Omasta mielestäsi, missä näet että palaajilla on eniten haasteita?
- Mistä näet mahdollisten haastaiden johtuvan?
- Omasta mielestäsi, mihin asioihin palaajien on helppo sopeutua palatessaan ulkomaankomennukselta takaisin Suomeen??
- Entä mihin asioihin palaajien on mielestäsi vaikea sopeutua palatessaan ulkomaankomennukselta takaisin Suomeen?
- Mikäli ajatellaan sopeutumista töihin tai yleisesti elämään Suomessa, mikä seuraavista osa-alueista näyttää tuottavan eniten haasteita palaavien kesken:
  - a.) Sopeutuminen ammatilliseen elämään (työ ja organisaatio)
  - b.) Sopeutuminen suomalaiseen yhteiskuntaan ja yleisesti sosiaaliseen elämään Suomessa, tai,
  - c.) Henkilökohtainen sopeutuminen (paluun psykologia sekä esimerkiksi kasvu, muutos ja stressitekijät).
- Miten määrittelisit mitä sisällytät paluukoulutukseen tietylle ryhmälle?

### **Interview Questions for the Organization Representatives:**

- In general, do the repatriates experience adaptation difficulties at re-entry?
- Where do you see that the repatriates have the most challenges?
- Where do you see the reason for this?
- Which factors are particularly easy for the repatriates to adapt to?
- Which factors are particularly difficult for the repatriates to adapt to?
- Regarding re-adaptation to work and to general life in Finland, which clusters would you consider to cause the most challenges among the repatriates:
  - adjustment professionally (work and organization)
  - adjustment to the Finnish society and to the general social life in Finland
  - adjustment personally (repatriation psychology, change, stress..)
- How would you define what to include into a repatriation training for a specific group?



## APPENDIX C

### Results from the structured closed ended questions

Agree = 2  
 Somewhat agree = 3  
 Does not relate to me = 4  
 Somewhat disagree = 5  
 Disagree = 6  
 Strongly disagree = 7

| <b>Personal Life</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>7</b> |        |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|
| I feel that I have adjusted well back home   | 3        | 4        | 2        |          |          |          |          | Expats |
|  | 1        | 4        | 3        |          |          |          |          | Formin |
|  | 5        | 1        | 1        |          |          |          |          | MIL    |
| It was easy for me to adjust back to the Finnish life style  | 4        | 3        | 1        | 1        |          |          |          | Expats |
|  | 1        | 1        | 5        | 1        |          |          |          | Formin |
|  | 5        | 2        |          |          |          |          |          | MIL    |
| I had difficulties in adjusting to Finland   |          |          |          | 1        |          | 3        | 5        | Expats |
|  |          |          | 1        |          | 2        | 5        |          | Formin |
|  |          |          |          |          |          | 2        | 5        | MIL    |
| I found my home country to be unfamiliar in the beginning of my repatriation   |          | 1        |          | 2        | 2        | 2        | 2        | Expats |
|  |          | 1        | 2        | 1        | 1        | 2        | 1        | Formin |
|  |          |          |          |          |          | 2        | 5        | MIL    |
| My family and friends back home were interested in hearing about my Overseas living experiences                              | 2        | 1        | 3        |          | 3        |          |          | Expats |
|  |          | 4        | 2        |          | 2        |          |          | Formin |
|  | 1        | 5        | 1        |          |          |          |          | MIL    |
| I feel that I have changes a lot due to my international assignment  |          |          | 4        | 2        | 3        |          |          | Expats |
|  | 1        | 1        | 5        |          |          | 1        |          | Formin |
|  |          |          | 1        | 1        |          | 4        | 1        | MIL    |
| I feel that I had changed so much during my international assignment that returning to old friends circles did not go easily |          |          |          |          | 1        | 2        | 6        | Expats |
|  |          |          |          |          | 4        | 2        | 2        | Formin |
|  |          |          |          |          |          | 2        | 5        | MIL    |
| I felt lonely and homesick towards my assignment location  |          | 2        | 4        |          |          | 1        | 2        | Expats |
|  | 1        |          | 2        | 2        |          | 3        |          | Formin |
|  |          |          | 1        |          |          | 1        | 5        | MIL    |
| I have been more anxious and irritated after my return back from the assignment  |          | 1        | 1        | 2        | 2        |          | 3        | Expats |
|  |          |          | 1        |          | 2        | 3        | 2        | Formin |
|  |          |          |          | 2        |          | 1        | 4        | MIL    |
| Life abroad felt more interesting than life back at the home country   | 1        | 1        | 3        | 2        | 1        |          | 1        | Expats |
|  | 3        | 3        | 1        |          |          | 1        |          | Formin |
|  |          |          | 1        |          |          | 4        | 2        | MIL    |
| Since I was abroad I have become more critical towards Finnish cultural differences  | 1        | 3        | 2        |          | 1        | 1        | 1        | Expats |
|  | 1        | 3        | 1        |          | 1        | 1        |          | Formin |
|  |          |          | 2        | 1        |          | 2        | 2        | MIL    |
| I could consider leaving on another foreign assignment in the future   | 5        | 1        | 3        |          |          |          |          | Expats |
|  | 5        | 2        | 1        |          |          |          |          | Formin |
|  | 5        |          | 1        | 1        |          |          |          | MIL    |

**Work Life**

My job after repatriation was very different in comparison with my job abroad

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 2 | 1 |   | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | Expats |
| 2 | 5 | 1 |   |   |   |   | Formin |
| 2 |   | 1 |   |   | 3 |   | MIL    |

I feel I could influence my job tasks after repatriation in such a way that the job suited me

|   |   |   |  |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|--------|
|   |   | 2 |  | 1 | 2 | 4 | Expats |
| 1 | 1 | 2 |  | 2 | 2 |   | Formin |
|   | 2 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | MIL    |

My work place recognize and value my experiences abroad

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--------|
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 |  | Expats |
| 1 | 2 | 2 |   | 2 |   |  | Formin |
| 2 |   | 1 |   | 2 | 1 |  | MIL    |

I feel that the foreign assignment assisted me further in my career

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
|   |   | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | Expats |
| 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 |   |   | Formin |
|   | 2 | 1 | 3 |   |   |   | MIL    |

It was clear to me what permanent job I would have when I returned from overseas

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 |   | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | Expats |
| 1 | 1 | 2 |   | 2 | 2 |   | Formin |
| 3 | 1 | 1 |   |   | 1 |   | MIL    |

It is clear what is expected of me in my current work role and tasks

|   |   |   |  |  |  |   |        |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|--------|
| 1 | 3 | 4 |  |  |  |   | Expats |
| 1 | 3 | 4 |  |  |  |   | Formin |
| 3 | 2 |   |  |  |  | 1 | MIL    |

There were conflicting opinions on what my job consisted of after my repatriation

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |   | 1 | Expats |
|   | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | Formin |
| 1 |   |   |   |   | 2 | 3 | MIL    |

I adjusted myself very easily to my new job

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--------|
|   | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 |   |  | Expats |
|   | 5 | 3 |   |   |   |  | Formin |
| 2 | 3 |   |   |   | 1 |  | MIL    |

In my current job I can utilize the skills and knowledge which I learned abroad

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--------|
| 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 |   | 1 |  | Expats |
| 1 | 5 |   |   | 1 | 1 |  | Formin |
| 2 | 2 |   |   | 1 | 1 |  | MIL    |

I am satisfied with my current work position and tasks

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 |   | 1 | 1 | Expats |
|   | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |   | Formin |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |   | 1 |   | MIL    |

My responsibilities are clearly defined

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--------|
|   | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |  | Expats |
|   | 4 | 2 |   | 2 |   |  | Formin |
| 3 | 2 |   | 1 |   |   |  | MIL    |

I am satisfied with the level of responsibility of my position

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
|   | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |   | 1 | Expats |
|   | 2 | 2 |   | 2 | 2 |   | Formin |
| 2 | 3 | 1 |   |   |   |   | MIL    |

I feel my current work is challenging

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--------|
| 1 | 4 |   | 1 | 1 | 2 |  | Expats |
|   | 3 | 1 |   | 2 | 2 |  | Formin |
| 1 | 3 | 1 |   | 1 |   |  | MIL    |

I feel satisfied with the level of autonomy in my present job

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--------|
| 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 |   |   |  | Expats |
| 1 | 2 | 2 |   | 1 | 2 |  | Formin |
| 2 | 3 | 1 |   |   |   |  | MIL    |

I experience more autonomy in my new job than had been the case in my overseas assignment

|   |  |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 2 |  | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |   | Expats |
| 1 |  | 2 |   | 2 | 1 | 2 | Formin |
|   |  | 4 | 1 |   | 1 |   | MIL    |

I had more autonomy in my overseas assignment than in the job I held prior to going overseas

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--------|
|   | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |  | Expats |
| 2 | 2 | 2 |   | 1 | 1 |  | Formin |
|   | 1 |   | 2 | 3 |   |  | MIL    |

I was financially better off in my overseas assignment than in the job

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--------|
| 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | Expats |
| 6 | 2 |   |   |   |   |  | Formin |
| 6 | 1 |   |   |   |   |  | MIL    |

I am now financially better off than during my foreign assignment

|  |  |   |  |   |   |   |        |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|---|--------|
|  |  | 2 |  |   | 1 | 6 | Expats |
|  |  |   |  | 1 | 3 | 4 | Formin |
|  |  |   |  |   | 2 | 4 | MIL    |

I had more responsibilities in my overseas assignment than in the job I held prior to going overseas

|   |   |   |   |   |  |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|--------|
| 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |  | 1 | Expats |
| 2 | 2 |   | 2 | 2 |  |   | Formin |
|   | 2 | 2 | 2 |   |  |   | MIL    |

My job status is lower in my new job than had been the case in the overseas assignment

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | Expats |
| 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |   |   | Formin |
|   | 3 | 1 |   |   | 2 |   | MIL    |

After the foreign assignment I had trouble in concentrating to my work

|  |  |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
|  |  | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | Expats |
|  |  | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 |   | Formin |
|  |  | 1 |   |   | 2 | 3 | MIL    |

**Organization**

I was satisfied with the way in which my workplace received me back

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
|   | 2 | 3 |   | 3 | 1 |   | Expats |
| 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 |   |   |   | Formin |
| 2 | 2 | 1 |   |   |   | 1 | MIL    |

Repatriation and adjustment to the home organization was challenging

|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
|  |   | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 |   | Expats |
|  | 1 | 1 |   | 3 | 2 | 1 | Formin |
|  | 1 |   |   | 1 | 2 | 2 | MIL    |

I received repatriation support from the organization

|  |  |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
|  |  | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | Expats |
|  |  | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | Formin |
|  |  | 3 |   | 2 |   | 1 | MIL    |

I was offered an opportunity to discuss my experiences and feelings with a professional after returning back home

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
|   | 1 |   | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | Expats |
|   |   | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | Formin |
| 1 | 3 |   |   |   | 1 | 1 | MIL    |

My company provided my spouse career counselling when we returned

|  |  |  |   |   |   |   |        |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|--------|
|  |  |  | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | Expats |
|  |  |  |   | 1 |   | 4 | Formin |
|  |  |  |   | 1 | 1 | 1 | MIL    |

I feel that the repatriation process was clear

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
|   | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | Expats |
|   | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |   | Formin |
| 3 | 3 | 1 |   |   |   |   | MIL    |

- 1 = Issue does not relate to me at all
- 2 = Extremely little
- 3 = Very little
- 4 = Little
- 5 = Much
- 6 = Very much
- 7 = Extremely

How much or often these issues affect you by giving you more stress or discomfort after returning back home to Finland.

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |        |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Minor possibilities to influence issues with own work      | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |   |   | Expats |
|  |   |   | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 |   | Formin |
|  | 1 | 2 |   | 2 | 1 |   |   | MIL    |
| Lower level of responsibility at job after repatriation    | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |   | Expats |
|  |   | 1 |   | 1 | 5 | 1 |   | Formin |
|  | 2 | 1 | 1 |   | 2 |   |   | MIL    |
| Lower income level at home after repatriation              | 2 |   | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | Expats |
|  |   |   |   | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | Formin |
|  |   | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | MIL    |
| Lower standard of living                                   |   |   | 2 | 2 |   | 2 | 3 | Expats |
|  |   |   |   | 3 | 4 | 1 |   | Formin |
|  | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Downward shift in social status                            | 2 | 3 |   | 2 | 2 |   |   | Expats |
|  |   | 4 | 1 |   | 1 | 2 |   | Formin |
|  | 2 | 2 |   | 3 |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Loss of domestic help (servants, cooks, chauffeurs)        | 5 | 2 |   | 2 |   |   |   | Expats |
|  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |   | Formin |
|  | 3 | 2 |   | 2 |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Poorer housing conditions at home compared to host country | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |   |   | Expats |
|  | 1 | 3 |   | 3 | 1 | 1 |   | Formin |
|  | 5 | 1 | 1 |   |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Envy and fear by peers                                     | 3 | 3 |   | 3 |   |   |   | Expats |
|  | 3 | 4 | 1 |   |   |   |   | Formin |
|  | 4 | 1 |   | 1 |   |   | 1 | MIL    |
| Different educational system for children                  | 5 | 1 |   | 3 |   |   |   | Expats |
|  | 3 |   | 2 |   |   |   |   | Formin |
|  | 6 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Uncertainty about own cultural identity                    | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 |   |   |   | Expats |
|  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |   |   | Formin |
|  | 5 | 2 |   |   |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Feeling of being different                                 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 |   |   |   | Expats |
|  |   | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |   |   | Formin |
|  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Culture shock  | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |   |   | Expats |
|  | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 |   | 1 |   | Formin |
|  | 3 | 4 |   |   |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Depression   | 4 | 2 |   | 2 | 1 |   |   | Expats |
|  | 3 | 3 | 1 |   | 1 |   |   | Formin |
|  | 4 | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |   | MIL    |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Loneliness  | 4 | 1 |   | 4 |   |   |   | Expats |
|   | 2 | 4 |   | 2 |   |   |   | Formin |
|   | 4 | 1 | 2 |   |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Adjustment to work tasks  | 1 | 3 |   | 3 |   | 1 |   | Expats |
|   |   | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |   |   | Formin |
|   | 2 | 3 |   | 1 |   | 1 |   | MIL    |
| Adjustment socially<br>(E.g. social expectations in regards to rules and regulations) | 1 | 3 |   | 4 | 1 |   |   | Expats |
|   |   | 2 | 2 | 2 |   | 2 |   | Formin |
|   | 3 | 3 |   | 1 |   |   |   | MIL    |
| <b>General Practicalities:</b>  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |        |
| Housing arrangements  | 3 | 2 | 1 |   | 1 |   | 2 | Expats |
|   | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |   |   | Formin |
|   | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Methods of Taxation   |   | 1 | 1 |   | 2 | 3 | 2 | Expats |
|   | 3 | 3 |   |   |   | 1 |   | Formin |
|   | 1 | 4 | 2 |   |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Childrens' schooling  | 4 | 3 |   | 1 |   |   |   | Expats |
|   | 3 | 1 |   | 1 |   |   |   | Formin |
|   | 6 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Banking and Telecommunication arrangements  | 1 | 4 | 1 |   | 2 |   | 1 | Expats |
|   |   | 2 | 3 |   | 1 | 1 |   | Formin |
|   | 1 | 5 | 1 |   |   |   |   | MIL    |
| Customs Duties  |   | 1 | 2 | 4 |   | 1 | 1 | Expats |
|   | 3 |   | 1 | 1 |   | 2 |   | Formin |
|   | 2 | 3 | 2 |   |   |   |   | MIL    |

## APPENDIX D

### Repatriation and adaptation experience to work and in general

#### Repatriation Experience

|            | <b>Corporate Expatriates</b>          | <b>Foreign Ministry</b> | <b>Military Observers</b> |   |                            |   |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| in general | Very difficult                        |                         | Very difficult            |   | Very difficult             |   |
|            | Difficult (+ somewhat difficult)      | 2                       | Difficult                 |   | Difficult                  |   |
|            | Neutral                               | 3                       | Neutral                   | 2 | Neutral                    | 1 |
|            | Easy                                  | 3                       | Easy                      | 3 | Easy                       | 3 |
|            | Very easy                             | 1                       | Very easy                 | 2 | Very easy                  | 3 |
|            | <b>Experienced most difficulties!</b> |                         |                           |   | <b>Easiest experience!</b> |   |

|         | <b>Corporate Expatriates</b>     | <b>Foreign Ministry</b> | <b>Military Observers</b> |   |                |   |
|---------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| at work | Very difficult                   |                         | Very difficult            |   | Very difficult |   |
|         | Difficult (+ somewhat difficult) | 2                       | Difficult                 |   | Difficult      | 1 |
|         | Neutral                          | 3                       | Neutral                   | 4 | Neutral        | 1 |
|         | Easy                             | 2                       | Easy                      | 3 | Easy           | 4 |
|         | Very easy                        | 2                       | Very easy                 |   | Very easy      |   |

**Table 3:**  
**Adaptation at Return**

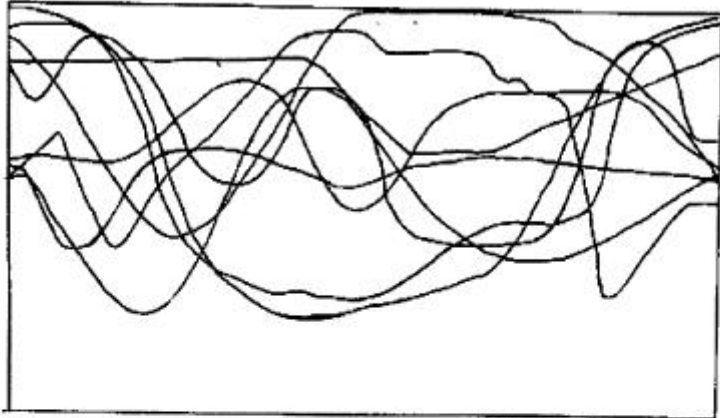
|            | <b>Corporate Expatriates</b> | <b>Foreign Ministry</b> | <b>Military Observers</b> |   |                            |   |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| in general | a.) not at all               |                         | a.) not at all            |   | a.) not at all             |   |
|            | b.) somewhat                 |                         | b.) somewhat              |   | b.) somewhat               |   |
|            | c.) moderate/average         | 2                       | c.) moderate/average      |   | c.) moderate/average       |   |
|            | d.) well                     | 5                       | d.) well                  | 6 | d.) well                   | 1 |
|            | e.) very well                | 2                       | e.) very well             | 1 | e.) very well              | 5 |
|            |                              |                         |                           |   | <b>Easiest experience!</b> |   |

|         | <b>Corporate Expatriates</b> | <b>Foreign Ministry</b> | <b>Military Observers</b> |   |                        |   |
|---------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| at work | a.) not at all               |                         | a.) not at all            |   | a.) not at all         |   |
|         | b.) somewhat                 | 1                       | b.) somewhat              | 1 | b.) somewhat           | 1 |
|         | c.) moderate/average         | 3                       | c.) moderate/average      |   | c.) moderate/average   |   |
|         | d.) well                     | 5                       | d.) well                  | 6 | d.) well               | 1 |
|         | e.) very well                |                         | e.) very well             |   | e.) very well          | 2 |
|         |                              |                         |                           |   | <b>Least problems!</b> |   |

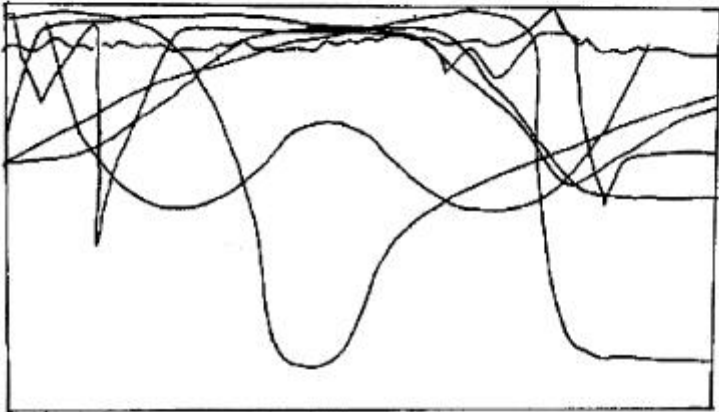
|                         | <b>Corporate Expats</b> | <b>Foreign Ministry</b> | <b>Military Observers</b> |   |                                |   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Adaptation difficulties | Yes:                    | 3                       | Some:                     | 3 | "Adjustment always takes time" | 1 |
|                         | No:                     | 6                       | No:                       | 4 | No:                            | 6 |

APPENDIX E

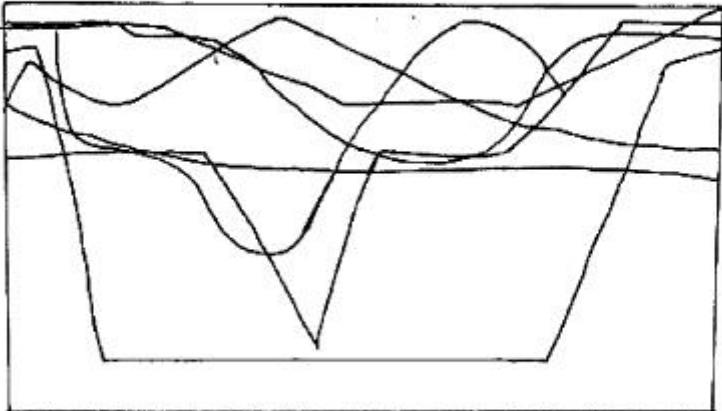
Drawings



Drawings from Metso



Drawings from Foreign Ministy



Drawings from Military Observers

## APPENDIX F

### Translations:

Aiemmin kulttuurishokki, sekä vastaavaa tunnevyöryä. Nyt vihdoin sielultani rauhoittunut, ei enää maa polta jalkojen alla matkustamaan. Nautin joka solulla Suomeen paluusta.

**Translation:** Previously culture shock and outburst of emotions, now, eventually, my soul is more calm and the land below my feet does not burn to travel. I enjoy with every cell of the return back to Finland.

Eroaa selvästi. Johtunee siitä, että ikää on enemmän. Aiemmin kahdella paluukerralla siirryin suoraan äitiyslomalle, joten en juuri ehtinyt pohdiskella menneitä. Nyt moni asia tuntuu koetulta.

**Translation:** Differs clearly possibly due to being older. From earlier two returns, I transferred directly to maternity leave, thus there was hardly any time to think about the past. Now many issues feel previously experienced.

Oli vähemmän tunteita herättävä kuin aikaisemmat kokemukset. Nuorena/opiskelijana muutot ulkomaille ja paluut olivat vaikuttavampia.

**Translation:** It was less emotional than the previous experiences. At younger age/ as a student the moves and returns from abroad feel more powerful.

Suhtaudun siihen kaiken kaikkiaan coolimmin kuin aiemmin, vähemmän odotuksia, vähemmän angstia

**Translation:** All in all I take it more "coolly" than previously, less expectations, less anxiety.

Nyt aika olla poissa oli aika pitkä (7v) ja olen "tippunut kärryiltä" monissa asioissa, esim digi-tv.

**Translation:** Now the time away was longer (7 years) and I have lost track of many things such as digital TV.

Tuntui raskaammalta=väsyttävämmältä, mutta henkisesti helpommalta kuin aikaisemmin. Paluut ovat aina stressaavia, tavalla tai toisella.

**Translation:** It felt more heavy=tiring, but emotionally easier than before. Returns are always stressful, in a way or another.



## APPENDIX G

### Translations:

Odotin eniten paluuta sujuvaan arkeen ja tutumpaan toimintakulttuuriin. Ilmasto odotin lähinnä alistuneesti: kohta palelee taas ;-)) Iloitsin jo etukäteen niistä asioista jotka Suomessa paremmin.

**Translation:** I mostly looked forward to the return to the well-functioning everyday life and familiar culture. The climate I was looking forward to rather submissively: soon I will be freezing again;-) I was happy in advance of the things that are better in Finland.

Odotin työni Suomessa olevan vähemmän kiinnostavaa ja vaativaa. Elämä tavallisesti tiukempaa ja rutiinivoittoisempaa ns. lukujärjestyselämää.

**Translation:** I expected work in Finland to be less interesting and demanding. Life in general more strict and routine so called "timetable - life".

Työn kannalta odotin paluuta hitaaseen, jäykähkään mutta toki ystävälliseen pääkonttoriin. Oman elämän kannalta odotin paluuta maahan, jossa klo 7.28 ratikka tulee klo 7.28 eli elämän helpouteen mutta myös lievään tylsyyteen.

**Translation:** Workwise I expected a return to slow, taciturn, but friendly head office. I expected a return to a country where the 7.28 tram will show at 7.28, in other words, the easiness of life but also slight dullness.