

Understanding International Willingness

A Case Study of Norwegian Expatriates in Statoil

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Master Thesis in Organization, Leadership and Work

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Executive Summary

This case study illuminates an understanding of international willingness, why Statoil managers decide to seek or accept international assignments. As a global actor in an expanding global market, Statoil has identified a growing need of managers willing to travel outside the home country in order to fulfill the demands beyond national borders. This thesis puts emphasis on why they go, which expatriation path they choose, and in what way Statoil's approach to expatriation serves the need of the expat and the organization.

The study is based on 8 interview of Norwegian expatriates asked to reflect around their motives and experiences of being an expat on behalf of the organization. The analysis is based on these reflections, including Statoil's internal documents and the literature on the field. The theoretical framework is based on former empirical research, as well as a typology that includes the individual and organizational aspect of expatriation. The expatriation paths refer to the career orientation of the individual, which is discussed in line with individual motives, and Statoil's approach to international activity.

The findings show that motives for expatriation are multiple. The expressed reasons were attached to the importance of job involvement, increased responsibility, the feeling of independency, and professional and personal development. In evaluation of career motives, the expat of Statoil did not couple the expatriation with a corporate career. Some stated that the acceptance of an international assignment was rather a risk career wise, grounded in distance to the network at home. They did however express a career motive of gaining international experience as something of personal value. Family and the *dual career* issue (spouse not willing to sacrifice their career) inhibit the international willingness of the expats, and location needed to fulfill certain criteria of personal and professional development, in addition to an ensured safety.

The expatriation paths of the informants seemed to be diversified. The majority was placed within the Professional, recognized by independent individuals with a desire to acquire international experience for own gain. Statoil's approach to expatriation is discussed to be ad hoc (Expedient) lacking a clarified expatriation philosophy, which causes the individuals to establish own personal reason for taking on international assignments. The characteristics of

Statoil's approach can make the organization dependent on a certain set of individuals, those willing to opt for a global career outside of the organizational "core".

The paths indicated by the informants are discussed to create needs and expectations of what an international expatriation will consist of. The expat focusing on professional and self-development will evaluate the risks and benefits in line with that. The expectations created between the expat and the organization might become ambiguous, increasing the probability for the expats to focus on the risks connected to the assignments. This is grounded in that the benefits are not clarified. Statoil's approach to expatriation compared to the informants paths gives indications that the organization "pushes" the international out of the national organization, grounded in lack of international competence transaction and utilization. This is also discussed to create a distance between the international and national part of the organization. It is pointed out that Statoil facilitate for the expat need to gain international experience and development, as well as their own need for task performance and knowledge transfer. They do not however, facilitate for their future need of establishing "a global mindset" that would lead to international willingness. As a result the "global" is something that is performed in Statoil, rather than a description of what the company is.

Preface

I would like to use this section to show gratitude to the informants. Their openness and reflections has been the cornerstone in making this study possible. I would also like to thank my student-advisors, Øystein Fossen and Torben Hviid Nielsen for helpful guidance and academically input through this four-month study, as well as my father and sister for their contribution. Gratitude is also directed to my co-students at OLA for productive and unproductive discussions, added motivation and solidarity.

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1 Introduction

Internationalization and expatriation are closely related. The traditional triggers are numerous. Securing key supplies, market seeking to secure growth, and accessing lower cost factors are viewed as traditional driving forces for the multinational corporation (MNC) seeking expansion overseas (Bartlett & Beamish, 2011, p. 5). Organizational strategies differ in terms of operating on a global basis. Taking history into account, firms progress through four distinct phases of global strategies: *domestic*, *international*, *multinational* and *transnational* (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992; Bartlett & Beamish, 2011; Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989). As the global strategy modifies, the organizational structure and systems adapts, creating a parallel shift in the skills required by the managers (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 54). Although many corporations start out internationally in the present market, such as global internet-based firms, the historical storyline starts with a domestic focus.

As competition increases, an underlying compulsion forces the business to search for new markets, and could result in an *international* expansion. By establishing foreign facilities designed to serve these markets, the organization creates a need to reorganize. The activities performed abroad, are often seen as an extension, or a replication of the domestic operations, and the hierarchical structure between the firm's headquarters and its subsidiaries dominates this connection. Corporate headquarter is primarily staffed by people of home country nationality, and manager expatriation becomes highly relevant (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 55). During the international phase, expatriation is the synonym for international management, and the managers tend to view the international operation as a distant outpost, with a main role of supporting the domestic parent company (Bartlett & Beamish, 2011, p. 11).

The *multinational* phase occurs when least-cost products or services comes as a result of further increase in market competition. As a result, benefitting from other potential economies becomes relevant, seeking to produce standardized products and services (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 55). The hierarchical relationship continues to dominate the context surrounding headquarters and the subsidiaries, with HQ tightly controlling the global decisions. At the same time, a wider range of cultures, with the use of "inpatriates"¹, now makes these decisions. These "inpatriates" are not encouraged to express their diversity, but are asked to adapt to the organizational culture, which often is dominated by the headquarters

¹ Local managers from foreign subsidiaries posted on temporary assignments at corporate headquarters (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 55).

nationality. The multinational corporation needs managers to understand the global business environment, and the mentality adopts a flexible approach to the international assignments modifying management practices country by country (Bartlett & Beamish, 2011, p. 12). Standardizing of operations and integration of people from all over the world into a common organizational culture becomes the objective (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 55).

As the organization reaches the *transnational* phase, the competition has increased on a global level. The transnational firm distributes their headquarters across a number of nations, and becomes less hierarchical structured as a result. Power is no longer centered in one distinct national culture, which means that both structural and cultural dominance is minimized, and the hierarchy no longer defines cross-cultured interaction. The expatriates become more or less “transpatriates” and aims to develop a worldwide perspective as well as developing the organization’s unit of global managers. The assignment is no longer used to “get the job done”, but to enhance individual and organizational learning in all parts of the system (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 56).

When defining the stage of a multinational corporation, criteria are often set on the basis of international presence, number of nationals overseas or percentage of investment in foreign markets (Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979, p. 15). Perlmutter (1969, p. 11) argues that the orientation towards foreign people and ideas both in home country and in subsidiaries defines the corporation, and the attitudes people hold becomes more relevant than their passports. He distinguishes three different attitudes towards expatriation, *ethnocentric* (home-country oriented), *polycentric* (host-country oriented) and *geocentric* (world-oriented).

The ethnocentric approach is based on the skepticism of “foreign management”, withdrawing the possibility of host country nationals² (HCN) leading the on going project. Maintaining control over international investments is done with the use of individuals that are pervaded with the organizations specific skills and values. These are the only one that can be trusted with the responsibility. The justification of the approach are narrowed down to three conditions; (i) high technical capability required is not located on a local level, (ii) the operation demand a proprietary knowledge that can only be attained through a extended period of time within the company, and (iii) in the case of new ventures in the developing countries lacks the host country lacks people with managerial experience (Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003, p. 299). The ethnocentric approach over time might lead to drawbacks on a

² Employees from subsidiary location (Collings, Scullion, & Dowling, 2009, p. 1253).

global level, where host country nationals could come to perceive the MNC as a dead-end towards their career development. Another drawback is the difficulty in maintaining a pool of expatriates with international willingness to accept foreign assignments (Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003, p. 299).

With a *polycentric* approach the focus shifts from close control to appearing as local as possible. This leads to the domination of HCN in managerial positions and gives the subsidiary a more local appearance (Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979, p. 20). This gives the MNC a number of advantages, such as knowledge of language, local culture and existing local networks. It also removes the glass ceiling that is created in the ethnocentric approach regarding loyalty to the MNC and possible development opportunities among the HCN (Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003, p. 300). In addition, the costs involved are significantly lower. A disadvantage is coordination between parent and subsidiary, which becomes problematic, as the headquarters employees do not have direct experience of the subsidiary. Being polycentric also inhibits the managers at the headquarters in acquiring value from global experience. The result is continuous expatriation from headquarters to management positions at the subsidiaries (Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003, p. 300).

MNCs that focuses on ability rather than nationality has adopted a *geocentric* approach. In other words they have the whole worlds as their market (Perlmutter, 1969). This approach captures the strong need of coordination by MNCs recruitment of Third Country Nationals³ (TCN) who can be fully integrated in the organization. The main focus lies in the knowledge and skills of the individual, as well as their commitment to the organization. The use of TCN gives an advantage to the MNC, bringing a larger pool of candidates to the recruitment process (Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003, p. 300). The pool can also be designed to include individuals that are motivated to an expatriate career over a longer period of time. By acquiring individuals who are multilingual, cultural flexible and equipped with a global orientation, the MNC attains an advantage, which can reduce recruitment difficulties (Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003, p. 300).

The internationalization of a corporation is commonly put in context with the use of expatriates. They become an important part of the management, knowledge transfer and control of subsidiaries on behalf of their home corporation (Bonache, Brewster, & Suutari, 2001; Collings et al., 2009). Traditionally, there have been three functions of expatriate use:

³ Employees from another country other than the host or the home country, operating in the host country (Collings et al., 2009, p. 1253).

position filling, organizational development and management development (Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003, p. 296). Position filling is a remedy for the lack of local managers at the foreign location, and contributes to transfer technical skills (the know how) to the subsidiary. Organizational development often concerns the building and sustaining of the corporate culture at the subsidiary, as well as implementation and coordination of corporate practices and policies (Collings, Scullion, & Morley, 2007; Edstrom & Galbraith, 1977). Management development refers to the importance of developing global competent managers that understand the international business of the corporation (Edstrom & Galbraith, 1977; Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003, p. 297). Although all three are frequently used by multinational corporations, Harzing (2001, p. 373) found that knowledge transfer was the most frequently motive for expat use, especially when the subsidiary was dependent on the headquarters.

It is not only the organizational aspect that is of importance within expatriation and global staffing, it also involves an individual performing the activity. The literature distinguishes between two main expatriation forms, the corporate initiated expatriation (traditional expatriation) and self-initiated expatriation (SIE) (Altman & Baruch, 2012, 2013; Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld, & Dickmann, 2014; Jokinen, Brewster, & Suutari, 2008). Traditional expatriation address the mentioned organizational initiation of international assignments with an objective to perform business development, subsidiary control, position filling, knowledge transfer, or management development (Collings et al., 2009; Edstrom & Galbraith, 1977; Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003; Pinto, Cabral Cardoso, & Werther, 2012). SIE is connected to individual preferences and the expatriation is self-driven without any organizational support (Altman & Baruch, 2013, p. 21; Yehuda Baruch, Dickmann, Altman, & Bournois, 2013, p. 2377). Altman and Baruch (2012, p. 240) identified a third expatriation alternative, termed *corporate SIEs*, described as individuals who “*self-initiate their international assignment within the organization*”. The motives for taking on international assignments differ dependent on the expatriation form (Collings et al., 2009, p. 1266). They differ in the view of career, expected outcome and expectations upon return (Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills, 2011; Hippler, 2009; Pinto et al., 2012). Expatriation is also linked to the corporation’s global characteristics and career management, which differentiates the expat motives in terms of benefits within the organization and the individual value of assignments (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002; Yehuda Baruch et al., 2013). Evidently, there are a lot of factors playing a part in international relocation that is worthwhile exploring further.

As one of Norway's most well known corporations, Statoil is the driving force of Norwegian petroleum industry, and operates in 34 different countries all over the world. Its international activities are expected to increase in the future, and Statoil needs a mobile workforce that is willing to operate and be expatriated to their production facilities and subsidiaries. This study investigates this willingness. The literature uses different terms to elucidate the physical mobility aspect, using expatriation willingness (Froese, Jommersbach, & Klautzsch, 2013), willingness to accept international assignments (Konopaske, Robie, & Ivancevich, 2009), willingness to accept mobility opportunities (Noe, Noe, & Barber, 1993), or willingness to relocate (Brett & Reilly, 1988). In this study, *international willingness* is used to cover all of the above, addressing a general willingness to relocate physically outside the individual's home country for an extended period of time. International willingness is distinguished from actual acceptance of an international assignment, meaning that an individual could be international willing, but the act itself is not feasible for different reasons. This separation will become more apparent throughout the thesis. While writing the thesis it came to my attention that international willingness is mostly studied by viewing separate factors of influence through quantitative studies, not taking account the relations between them, and the importance of the corporation's international approach and facilitation for "global acting". This thesis will also try to shed some light into this gap.

2 Background and Refinement

The idea for this thesis came as a result of project study of an organizational change within Statoil in the course “OLA4050 Prosjektforum – Lederskap og organisering” fall 2013. At the end of the project I maintained contact with Statoil, with an idea of a possible master thesis in the future. After submitting a conceptual design addressing various topics within change management, I received feedback from the department of Technology, Projects and Drilling (TPD), People and Organization, and was asked to illuminate an international aspect of management, the field of expatriation and global mobility.

Having in mind that the field was new to me, I evaluated the potential knowledge value the thesis would give, and if the topic could have any transfer value beyond the case. I put effort in investigating the field, before deciding that it could become a valuable part of my master degree. To ensure independency from the organization, I established a mutual understanding concerning the methodical framework, research design and process. This was independently driven, with support regarding information and access to informants.

A basic outline was formed, focusing on dimensions that could influence the willingness to expatriate, or a “global mindset” that would characterize those traveling abroad. The initial ambition was to capture this mindset. Through reflections and gathering information from empirical studies surrounding expatriation, I expanded the focus. It was evident that it was more to the mindset than individual characteristics. In the literature, the “global mindset” was described as a highly complex individual-level cognitive structure, a composition of attitudes, dispositions, skills, competencies and behavior connected to the *interaction* in a global context (Levy, Taylor, Boyacigiller, & Beechler, 2007, p. 36). I especially identified methodical difficulties when trying to define, operationalize and identify this “global mindset”, and to put it in context with the willingness to travel. Difficulties surrounding whether or not an individual had it, or whether it was something that would stand out as a major asset in determine international willingness seemed to be a complex dimension to uncover.

This made me to take a step back, viewing the field with a more open mind. As I began to collect the data from the informants, it became even clearer that expatriation willingness is tied to a more complex composition of factors. The main objective became to

understand the international willingness, and to elaborate the dimensions constituting this. The main purpose is not to study how to “create” international willingness, but to understand the factors that influence it. A separate discussion is therefor directed towards Statoil’s facilitation for international willingness.

The level of analysis is limited to the data collected from the informants, their reflections of being an expat and descriptions of what influence their willingness to travel abroad. The analysis is also angled towards Statoil’s approach to expatriation, their International Assignment Process (IAP) (Statoil, 2013a), and their portrayed mobility need. The analysis and discussion are based on the empirical data, former research and theories within the field. The theories used are limited to the field of expatriation and international activity. The limitation is set on the basis of the complexity of variables, as well as my own restricted prior knowledge on expatriation.

3 Case Presentation

3.1 Statoil History

The Norwegian national oil company Statoil was established by the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) in 1972, acknowledging the importance of having national control over the Norwegian petroleum resources and the ambition to build up a national oil industry. Statoil have since been the driving force of the petroleum-industry in Norway (OED, 2013; Statoil, 2012). Two years after the establishment, the Statfjord field was found in the North Sea, and put into production in 1979. In 1981, Statoil became the first Norwegian oil company with operational responsibility on the Gullfaks field in the North Sea, and have later on also been responsible for production and development of several large offshore facilities such as Sleipner, Snøhvit and the Troll fields, among others (Statoil, 2012).

In 2001, Statoil became partly privatized by own initiative, and was listed on the Oslo and New York stock exchange. The background was partly that they had developed into a more mature company that had a desire to grow more internationally, but globalization (and Europeanization) of the international economy and the EEA agreement also played a significant role (Austvik, 2007; OED, 2013). The Government shares was reduced to 81.7%, while the remaining shares was controlled by several institutional and private investors. The Government shares was again reduced to 70.9% after a new investor offering in 2005 (OED, 2013). On October 1st 2007, Statoil merged with Norsk Hydro's oil and gas industry, and the temporary name StatoilHydro was established. The Government shares was yet again reduced to 62.5%, but in line with Stortingets decision dated back to 2001, it was an underlying goal that the Government should eventually own at least 67% of the shares. This was accomplished 5. Of March 2009 (OED, 2013). The merger with Hydro gave the company a size and the power to an extensive international expansion. The name of the company was eventually changed back to Statoil ASA in 2009 (Statoil, 2012).

Statoil is competing on equal terms with other actors on the Norwegian Continental Shelf, and the Government ownership still plays a significant (and political) role in order to reassure that the company has a significant national anchoring in Norway (OED, 2013). Statoil is presented as an international actor with representation in 34 countries worldwide. Their headquarters are based in Stavanger, Norway, with approximately 23.000 employees spread all over the world (Statoil, 2014a).

3.2 Statoil's International Strategy

Statoil is among the world's largest net sellers of crude oil and condensate, and the second largest supplier of natural gas in the European market. Processing and refining is also a part of their operations, as well as offshore wind and carbon capture and storage (Statoil, 2014b).

Statoil's plan to grow is a technology-based upstream strategy, supplemented by selective positions in the midstream and low-carbon technologies. Their immediate priority is to conduct safe and reliable operations with zero harm to people and environment, and deliver profitable growth through "disciplined investments" and "prudent financial management" (Statoil, 2014b). In order to ensure growth and value enhancement, Statoil states that international growth will be of focus beyond 2012, but they will still have a balance between international business development and activity on the Norwegian Continental Shelf (Statoil, 2009, 2013b). Statoil aims to benefit on the acquired competence and knowledge developed on national ground and transfer this knowledge to local companies around the world, and are establishing businesses in countries of higher risk and further distance (geographically and culturally) from Norway. As a result, Statoil identifies a need for a more flexible and mobile workforce, and are reliant on highly experienced expatriates who are acquainted with the company culture, values and are able to transfer the acquired knowledge from home base to its subsidiaries (Statoil, 2013b).

3.3 Expat Situation and Mobility Need

Given the increased focus on the international growth strategy, Statoil has deployed an increasing amount of expatriates. In the department of Technology, Projects and Drilling (TPD), the object of this study, 50% of their international workforces are expatriates, with the largest part on long term commuter assignments⁴ (83%) (Statoil, 2013b). 78% of the expats are of Norwegian nationality, and are outbound from Norway. The average age is 47,6 years, the age of female expatriates and Non-Norwegians being significantly lower. Men are represented with a significant majority of 84%. The majority of expats holds positions from middle line and above (79%). The expats are spread throughout different business areas and departments within TPD, with "Projects" being the largest user of expatriates (Statoil, 2013c).

⁴ Commuting period is 1-3 years with home trips regularity depending on assignment (Statoil, 2013a).

The immediate mobility need within Statoil is expressed to be highly reliant on expatriation activity, where the targeted group is highly experienced personnel. The various business clusters require different types of mobility needs, ranging from short-term presence to an intention to establish long-term presence. According to Statoil (2013b) the use of expats is mainly to ensure knowledge transfer, quality assurance (QA), technology implementation and establishment of the Statoil culture.

3.4 International Assignment Process

As a consequence of expatriation use, Statoil has developed an International Assignment Process (IAP), with the purpose of setting the corporate standards for international assignments (IA) (Statoil, 2013a). According to the document, Statoil expects the assignee and their accompanying families to be “ambassadors” for the group, representing the corporate values and ethical standards. Statoil’s guidelines for the expat selection is based on the significance of the cost involved and highlights the vital part of ensuring that the employee not only has the core professional skills required for the job, but also has the social and cultural ability to adapt to the assignment location and culture. The assignee should be resilient, flexible and able to take the initiative when required.

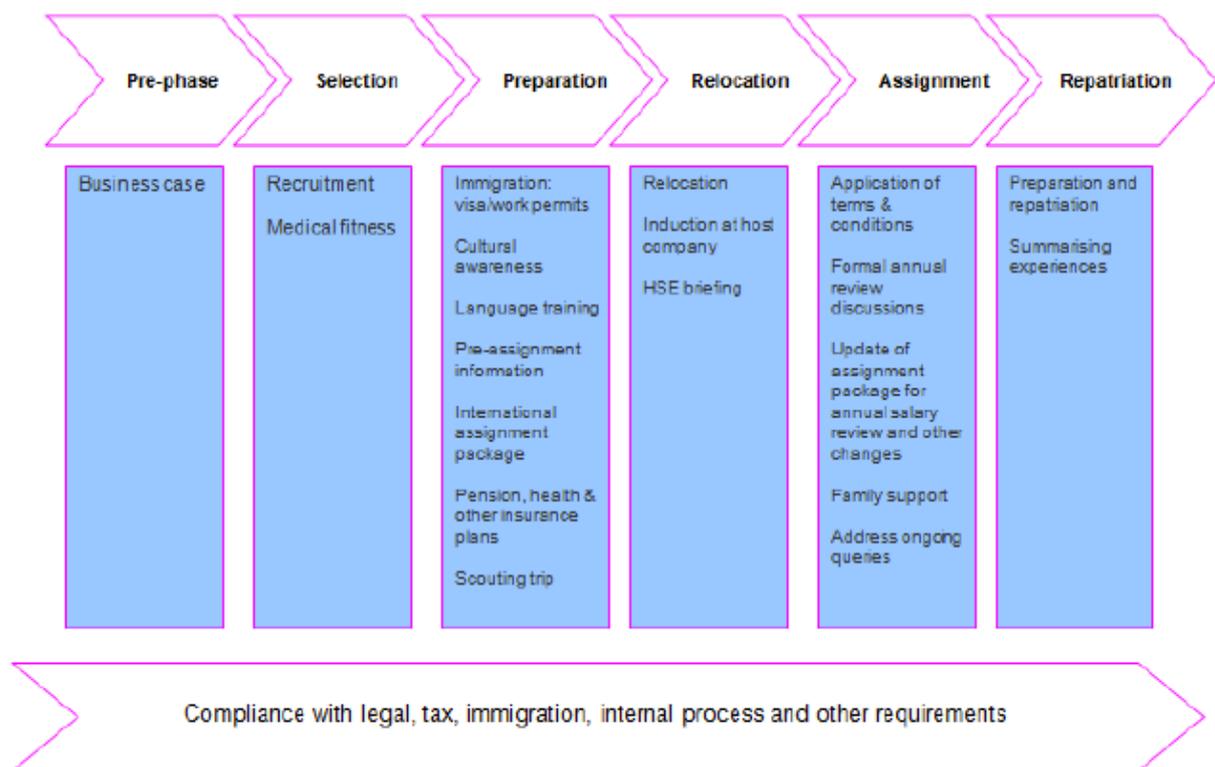


Fig. 1: International Assignment Process. (Statoil, 2013a)

As figure 1 shows, the IAP of Statoil starts with identifying organizational needs in a pre-phase, ending with repatriation (return). The IAP state: *“International assignments are used as temporary solution when either business travel, or a transfer to a local position, are not practical or relevant alternatives”*. For Statoil there are different drivers for an international assignment, and the examples given are:

Business needs drivers:

- Technical or commercial expertise to temporarily fill a skill gap in the given location.
- Corporate governance/management requirement
- Technology/Knowledge transfer

Career development drivers:

- Career development
- Training/ studies/ scholarships

Statoil highlights the importance of determining the primary driver for the IA because of the impact it may have on the applicable terms and condition. The organizational support given to the assignee is directed towards culture and language training, family relocation support on the location, offered scouting-trips and house hunting. Regarding the repatriation phase, the current line manager is responsible for the successful repatriation of the assignee, assisted and facilitated by the current HR manager. It is stated that repatriation should be discussed regularly throughout the IA, and specific discussion on timing and accountabilities for deployment into a new role on return should be initiated at least six months prior to the end of the assignment. Alternatively, the assignee may be offered a position in another Statoil location instead of returning to base country. The employee is expected to take initiative to search for new opportunities in Statoil and apply for vacant position, in good time before completion. Statoil offers repatriation preparation, and is recommended for those who have been abroad for more than two years. They also provide relocation support for the assignee and family upon return. Statoil’s global department will work with the assignee to summarize the experience from the IA.

4 Research Questions

The thesis seeks to create a holistic understanding of international willingness including the individual and the organizational aspect. The following research questions are formed:

- 1. Why do Statoil managers choose to expatriate?*
- 2. What are the different expatriation paths for Statoil expatriates?*
- 3. In what ways does Statoil's expatriation approach serve the need of both the expat and the organization?*

The first research question will be analyzed and answered through data collected from interviews with expats in Statoil, with a focus on motives for taking on international assignments. The second question will be answered by analyzing these motives and elaborated value of expatriation, comparing it with Statoil's international approach, and then outline the different paths indicated. The latter will focus on the experience of being an expat in Statoil, discussing underlying expectations, and explore how both the needs of the company and the expatriates are met.

5 Theoretical Framework

5.1 Motives and Attitudes Influencing International Willingness

Studies of motives and international willingness are diverse. Hippler (2009) found 18 motivation categories, with multiple underlying dimensions influencing expatriates to seek or accept international assignments. Brett and Reilly (1988) identified factors that had direct and indirect influence. Their study predicted that the actual decision to accept was strongly connected to the willingness to relocate, and that willingness was associated with career attributes and attitudinal variables.

Yehuda Baruch (Altman & Baruch, 2013, p. 23; 1995) established that individual motives could be split into two *fields* of forces *pushing* (lack of positions or opportunities) and *pulling* (learning and development) the individual to expatriate. The first field is the *person's environment*, including personal values, needs, preferences and organizational milieu (Altman & Baruch, 2013, p. 23). The second field regarded the *foreign location environment*, its culture, legal system and economy. Through the last decades, a third equivalent dimension has emerged. This dimension is labeled *transactional trends, prospects and aspirations*. This dimension has its roots in globalization, argued to be a key process that impacts decisions on a personal level. "Being global" is portrayed as a human capital, which creates, drives and enshrines expectations (Altman & Baruch, 2013, p. 23). As a consequence, the factors that influence a person's international willingness have become a complex matter.

Certain motives are highlighted to be more consistent and emphasized, as the gaining of personal and professional challenges, and career prospects (Pinto et al., 2012; Stahl, Miller, & Tung, 2002). Unlike other studies, Pinto and his colleagues (2012, p. 2301) identified that the third most frequent motive was an organizational pressure to accept. It was argued that reluctance could have serious consequences for career prospects, closing doors that may not be opened in the future. As a contrast to this, Hippler (2009, p. 1393) identified *altruism* as a motive, a feeling of necessity or a general desire to contribute to the company's success (Fee & Karsaklian, 2013, p. 106).

Konopaske, Robie and Ivancevich (2009) tried to distinguish different individual motives for the assignment. They formed hypothetical relationships between individual (e.g. Adventurousness, importance of location), family (e.g. children at home, spouse willingness,

relatives) and organizational factors (e.g. Compensation, career planning and repatriation planning), and provided strong support for these having an affect on international willingness.

Based on empirical studies and the reflections given by the informants, figure 2 portrays different factors influencing international willingness.



Fig. 2: Factors influencing international willingness.

Job Involvement

Job involvement can be defined as “*the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work, or the importance of work in his total self image*” (Lodahl & Kejnar, 1965, p. 1). Studies have differed on the relation between job involvement and willingness to relocate. Gould and Penley (1985, p. 477) found a negative correlation between the two variables, while Brett and Reilly (1988, p. 617) found that the more involved an employee was in his work, the more willing he/she was to move.

Challenges and Development

Under the category of “*motives rooted in the person*”, Hippler (2009, p. 1393) differentiate between professional and private motives for relocation. He found that individuals seek or accept international assignments with a motive for professional challenges, to affirm or prove something to one self, such as mastering of difficult technical problems or carry out a task

under difficult circumstances. The study also emphasize a professional development motive, expecting or acquiring improvement on knowledge, skills or abilities in either area of expertise or “knowledge base” (Hippler, 2009, p. 1394). The motive can also be private seeking non-professional challenges like handling new cultures, personal development or gaining extended knowledge and insights. Leaning towards Self Determination Theory (E. Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989; E. L. Deci & Ryan, 1980), Haines, Saba and Choquette (2008, p. 456) outline that individuals driven by intrinsic motivation tend to seek optimal challenges. Intrinsic motivation creates a greater willingness to accept an international assignment.

Career

The career aspect of expatriation is a complex dimension studied extensively. The importance of career advancement, or the risk of losing career opportunities when being expatriated, have both been shown to have significant impact on the willingness to travel abroad (Hippler, 2009). The importance of the international assignment being “a fit” for career has also been found as significant. This signals that global managers place importance on the potential career benefits of the expatriation before agreeing to it (Konopaske et al., 2009, p. 378). The career motive has also been studied to be a part of a long-term global career, developing career capital through multiple international assignments (Yehuda Baruch et al., 2013; Dickmann & Harris, 2005). The literature tends to differentiate this gathering of capital between the different expatriation forms. Self initiated expats (SIE) are labeled “protean” careerist, managing their own career, while the corporate-initiated are “boundaryless” careerist (Doherty et al., 2011, p. 608). A boundaryless career refers to the individual gathering career capital through developing the *knowing why* (career motivation, personal interest and values), *knowing how* (skills and job-related knowledge) and *knowing whom* (career relevant networks) (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994). Due to a lack of career planning and advancement within the organization these competencies becomes independent from the organization, and are to be used by the individual both internal and external of the organizational context (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Stahl et al., 2002).

Family

The international human resource literature has emphasized that family has become a barrier for expatriation, because of unwanted disruption of family equilibrium, barriers of children living at home, responsibility for elderly relatives and spouses unwillingness to move (Konopaske et al., 2009). Spouses unwillingness is linked to the term “*dual career*”,

emphasizing that both parties having career focus, leaving the spouse unwilling to put the career on hold (Mäkelä, Käsälä, & Suutari, 2011).

Location

Studies report a significant correlation between the destination country and willingness to relocate to foreign locations (Konopaske et al., 2009; Noe et al., 1993). Noe and Barber (1993, p. 167) found a negative correlation between the willingness to relocate and the perceived dissimilarity to the destination country. The differences between the countries culture, economic and political stability is also found to have influence on the respective spouse willingness to move globally, as well as the concern for personal safety, health care and children's education (Konopaske et al., 2009).

Repatriation Planning:

The repatriation process is set to be the end of working internationally (being expatriated), but a valuable asset in the middle of a global career, creating continuous willingness to go abroad (Dickmann & Point, 2012). Several repatriation issues are identified, one being the disappointment of not being able to use the acquired competence when returning to the home base after successful assignments (Black & Gregersen, 1999, p. 60). Another is the “reverse culture shock” caused by a need to adjust to changes that have occurred at home, both within the organization and socially (Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003, p. 311). The feeling of being “out of sight out of mind” is also a relevant repatriation issue, directed towards lack of possible career advancement or positions due to the distance away from the network at the home country (Jokinen et al., 2008, p. 984).

5.2 The Taxonomy of Expatriation and Repatriation

Inspired by the field of expatriation, Baruch and Altman (2002) developed a conceptual framework, which takes organizational characteristics and operational needs into account with the different aspects of a globalized organization. Baruch and Altman (2002, p. 240) proposed a need for a framework that was more bounded to reality, referring to Bartlett and Ghoshal's (Bartlett & Ghoshal) advocated stages of development, from the domestic to the transnational phase. They acknowledge how different organizational imperatives, strategies, policies and practices lead to expatriation consequences and circumstances. This resulting taxonomy of different operational responses is an attempt to weave the individual perspective

together with the organizational facet of operating internationally (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

They pay tribute to Perlmutter's (Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979; 1969) differentiation of the ethnocentric, polycentric and geocentric global organization.

Baruch and Altman (2002) propose a model based on five alternative options, each representing a different approach to the issue of expatriation and repatriation. Each option implies a different set of prior organizational assumptions, concerns and ideologies that translate into different policies and practices. They are grouped into the labels: *Global, Emissary, Peripheral, Professional and Expedient*, each of them representing critical features within each option. Inspired by different authors, they justify their approach by constituting: "*The use of taxonomies and typologies are considered as a sound basis for theory development and hypothesis testing. They provide a means for ordering and comparing organizations and clustering them into categorical types without losing sight of their underlying richness and diversity* (Baruch and Altman, 2002 p. 242). As their typologies crosses the attitudes and values with approached to international activities, the theory stands out as a way to analyze both the individual and the organizational aspect of international activity. It becomes a useful tool to understand the international willingness of the Statoil expatriates.

5.2.1 Five Distinguishing Principles

Baruch and Altman (2002, p. 243) use five principles distinguishing the different options: (1) *values*, (2) *time*, (3) *global vs. local focus*, (4) *individual vs. company criterion* and (5) *nature of the psychological contract*. (1) There is a general assumption that *values* underpin attitudes and behavior. Values could be established on the individual and organizational level, and becomes a pillar of a company's philosophy as well as their strategies. (2) Time refers the duration of the international assignments, distinguishing between long-term, short-term or a string of multiple assignments, dependent on the preferred option by the organization. (3) Where the organization looks for expatriates seem to distinguish organizations. Both the Global and the Professional option are globally oriented. For the Peripheral and the Emissary the solution is internal sourcing but for different reason. While the Peripheral is eager for their employees to experience the big world, the Emissary expects its people to give up the security and convenience of the home country. The Expedient, is likely to be somewhat inconsistent in its sourcing of expatriates. (4) The individual is the core of the Peripheral and

Professional options where it is the Professional expatriates or the expectations of the employees (Peripheral) that drive expatriation. For both the Emissary and the Global it is the company's requirements driving the process. For the Expedient resolutions will be ad hoc and variable (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

(5) Psychological Contracts

The literature portray the idea of psychological contracts as the center of career theories and organizational studies, and was first proposed by Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl and Solley (1962), and further studied by others (Guzzo, Noonan, & Elron, 1994; Haslberger & Brewster, 2009; Kotter, 1973; Rousseau, 1989). A psychological contract can be defined as *“an individual's beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party”* (Rousseau, 1989, p. 121). There are different views on how the psychological contract is created and how it is maintained. Rousseau (1989) describes how the psychological contract is subjective and therefore will vary considerably based on the fact that it is defined by the individual. It should therefore be interpreted from the employee's point of view, with the organization only providing the context of which the individual's psychological contract exists. The psychological contract is argued to have a big impact on the individual's commitment to the organization. The expatriates are experiencing these contracts in a broad sense when traveling abroad. These are both tangible aspects (e.g. written guarantees minimizing the tax burdens of foreign income, salary, housing) and less tangible aspect and forms expectations towards ones career, employers responsibility regarding safety, minimal damaging consequences of living abroad, family well-being, and the return (Guzzo et al., 1994, p. 618).

The psychological contract is argued to be dependent on organizational choice of strategic option (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002, p. 244). In the Global option, the psychological contract will be open ended, anticipating a long-term career connected to expatriation. In the Emissary, its relational and are experienced as a mutual commitment between the individual and the organization. In the Professional option, the contract is transactional and forms a “give or take” relationship. This also characterizes the Peripheral approach, but is contingent on past performance. In the Expedient the psychological contract is ambiguous (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

5.2.2 The Five “Ideal” Options

The Global

This is the “archetype” large global-player MNC, with an established reputation in expatriation management. The company will have a comprehensive set of procedures and practices in place. Moreover, employees would expect expatriation to be at the core of their professional and managerial career (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002, p. 242).

The philosophy spins around the idea of the Organizational Man (Whyte, 1956) emphasizing that the collectivistic mindset underpins individualism. Expatriation is viewed as being an integrated part of life within the organization and both individual and organizational expectations are built around it. Periods of expatriation are viewed as a vital part of the career path of executives and those who do not wish to travel abroad are deviating from the norm and there is nothing special or unique attached to accepting expatriation. The willingness to expatriate is high within the Global organization, and unwillingness could have serious career damages (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

The Global is recognized by an established and well-developed set of policies, which is a consequence of its size, connected to their bureaucratization. These are developed through experience gathered from former activity. For an employee, global “trotting” becomes the core of an organizational process and the notion of a “home base” loses its meaning as the HQ may be geographically located “nowhere”. The home base only represents a fraction of the corporation business activity (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

For key positions a Global company have well-established procedures for whether or not these are to be staffed by locals or expatriates. In principle only the internal labor market applies and the selection process will be laid out and followed rigorously. The Global has well developed training & development practices, which serves also as a reinforcement of their organizational culture, “the way we do things”. Expatriation management is an integral part of the organizations HRM practices, and career is defined as a string of expatriate positions. Expatriation is a norm, and viewed as a necessity (Altman & Baruch, 2012). An employee in senior position is almost certain to have been abroad and becomes an inherent part of the career progression. As a principle, the management of expatriation for Global organization is a routinized operation. The Global represents a symbol for job stability, continuous learning and a long-term HR planning, also in line with the “*transnational*” organization (Bartlett & Beamish, 2011; Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989). The period required to

reach the Global state is extensive, often measured in decades (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

The Emissary

The emissary company has established overseas markets with a long-term view as to its international positioning; however, it is firmly rooted in a particular “home” culture and this serves as its repository ideology, power base and expatriation source (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002, p. 243).

The Emissary organization is characterized by a sense of duty, backed with high commitment and loyalty. People may be asked to expatriate, with expectations of acceptance. Unlike the Global option, refusal may be accepted under certain circumstances, because the globalization objective is different. The Emissary has an apparent national identity, operating across borders, in need of individuals who can represent and control operations in subsidiaries (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002, p. 245).

Expatriation is seen as a mission away from the center of the power base, the home country of the organization. Acceptance out of pure patriotism or of lacking choices recognizes expat motivation. The connection to the home base is important, to restrict the risk of “becoming native”. Organizational support and facilitation at the location becomes a vital part, in exchange for accepting an international assignment. Expatriation may dominate one’s career, becoming a part of a long-term career path, where frequent travels abroad are often followed by a need to travel “back home”. The individual might end up spending his/hers entire career abroad, while the personal and cultural loyalty are embedded within the home country or home company.

First choice of recruitment is internal and “special” hiring is unusual. Individuals from the home country hold the “Positions of Power”. Career prospects for host country employees will be determined by their attitudinal and behavioral resemblance to the home country nationals. The training & development will be concentrated towards adjusting to foreign environment, which is country specific and cultural oriented. Viewing expatriation from the management side of the organization, the prime advantage is an available pool of assignees, as a result of long-term commitment and loyalty. The critical challenge is the maintenance of motivation abroad, due to the expats detachment from the home base (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

The Professional

A buy-in knowledge and expertise strategic option where the corporation prefer to use external people and in effect tend to outsource their expatriation process (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002, p. 243).

The Professional approach concentrates on home-country strengths and keeps their employees within specific geographical borders, which drives them to outsource foreign activities to people external to the company. The Professional option distinguishes between “core” (home activity) and “periphery” (outside of home), which is the center of their operational culture. The Professional model builds on the notion of hiring external people to handle the activities across borders, which have resemblance to the use of SIE’s to perform the activities needed (Yehuda Baruch et al., 2013; Doherty et al., 2011). The relationship is bound by a “give and take”, creating transactional psychological contracts (Altman & Baruch, 2012, p. 247) and the approach might fit the companies that are not Emissary and do not seek to become Global. It might also suit the companies that seek a short-term practical solution and are cost driven.

For the expatriate, the tasks that are being performed are of importance, not the organizational frame. For the “Professional” a career path exists of a string of multiple assignments, not necessarily through the same company, and instability have to be encountered for. The career focus of the expatriate is mainly directed to professional challenges and financial gains. The core (internals) is separated from the peripheral (externals), but a possibility lies in being included or transferred into an internal core job. The organization operates with a double career ladder, one for internals operating within the boundaries of the organization, another designed for external “professionals” who are almost permanently stationed abroad. The selection is based on “needs” and are often ad-hoc.

As an advantage, the Professional option opts for a way to attain cost-effective and flexible solutions for the organization, without exposing the “core” for the turbulence connected to expatriation. As a major saving, the company is in no concern with the career management of the expatriation cycle, but a critical challenge is that of commitment and loyalty, as the expatriate no longer belongs to the corporation.

The Peripheral

The model is characterized by companies that operate in peripheral geographies and expatriation is a sought-after career option. Here the expatriation experience will be a reward in its own sense (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002, p. 243).

For the organization, globalization is viewed as an expansion strategy, as the local markets are insufficient to offer growth. In the Peripheral option the people of the organization will queue up to get a chance to expatriate, and will be perceived as a perk both by the individuals and the organization. The organizations are typically operating in niche markets distanced far from the center of activity (either geographically or mentally), and are often from smaller countries (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002, p. 248).

A great propensity to travel abroad is often connected to this option, and the need to operate globally is existential creating a pro-foreign attitude. The circumstances facilitate expatriation practices, and a critical success factor lies within the ability to export their people, product and the know-how to foreign markets. The policies of this option are likely to emphasize equality of access and equal opportunity. Personal differences apart, expatriates in the Peripheral option are likely to be tolerant to new experiences, tolerant to new unfamiliar environments and tolerant to the difficulties regarded cultural diversity (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

The Peripheral organization is likely to employ their own people in key expatriate positions, recruited from their internal market. A justification of a de-selection is needed because of the expatriation being a favorable opportunity. In training and development, the combat of the “culture shock” is of highest priority, because the eagerness of traveling abroad the employees with their high expectations and potential disappointment are in risk of failure when combating the unknown. The challenge for the Peripheral lies in the repatriation phase, where some expatriates might not want to leave their locations and others might experience difficulties with a feeling of boredom when returning to their home country (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

The Expedient

This is the emergent approach for the newcomers to the global scene that characterizes most firms in the process of developing their overseas policies and strategies. At present, their approach is more ad hoc and pragmatic (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002, p. 243).

The *Expedient* strategy is driven by pragmatism and thrives on entrepreneurial values. Unlike the other four options recognized by distinct features, the Expedient is a “mixed bag” that recognizes a wide range of companies entering the global market or wishing to become a global actor. The option should therefor be seen as an emerging category, a developmental stage in the globalization of a company. The option should be interpreted as residual, when

none of the other options seem to apply. The Expedient strategy might even become a deliberate choice for some organizations when facing the question of whether they should choose one of the other options or an ad hoc strategy. The philosophy of the Expedient is therefor unclear (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002, p. 249).

For the employee an international assignment could pose a risk, evaluating if it is worth taking. The international assignment is viewed as optional, and often as an uncommon event and each opportunity will be judged on pros and cons. Agreeing to an expatriation may be viewed as real commitment since it's not a part of the normal or mainstream career, and its association with a large amount of risks. Within the organization, globalization is not self-evident, and expatriation a debatable theme and under constantly investigation.

The company might rely on external resources for selection, training and preparation. The organization would be expected not to have a comprehensive view of their expatriation within their resource strategy and the recruitment and selection process is based on availability and cost. The natural preference is the internal candidate, but externals might be used in terms of high amount of refusals, lack of experience, no clear career path or inadequate support. The expedient expatriate might be left with little or insufficient training and development. Career management and the retention will be based on the current and emerging (not long term) prospects. As a critical factor, repatriation is here expected to be the weakness for retention of the expatriates. The main challenge is the task of creating order out of chaos (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

For a majority of organizations the Global model is difficult to adopt, because of the size of the company. As for the Emissary, it is a matter of philosophy, and could also be difficult for some. The Peripheral is culturally driven, and therefor not universal in its use, while the Professional option might become to cost-driven and risky. As a result, organizations that enter as international actors will most likely form ad hoc strategies along with their practices (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

The internationalization of a corporation is expected to undergo *transitions*. Corporations move from one strategy to another, gradually over time in line with market strategies and emerging business opportunities (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002). The different business environments are likely to require different options in different circumstances, and during the transitions almost all options could be feasible. However, Baruch and Altman (Yehuda Baruch & Altman) underlines that an organization tend to choose a particular approach towards expatriation, because it represents its business philosophy, market strategy,

organizational culture and tradition. The expatriation approach is therefore said to be manifested in the particular worldview and do not change over night (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

5.2.3 Expatriation Paths

Altman and Baruch (2012) added a contribution to their taxonomy on the basis of career systems in societies shifting from collectivism to individualism. They highlight that individuals seem to acquire individual human capital, such as generic knowledge, firm-specific knowledge and task-specific knowledge, within the context and processes of the organization. They claim that expatriation has become an arena for such acquisition, and based their findings on their own taxonomy in order to explain the expatriations paths of the international assignees.

Work Attractor	Expat. as CALLING (wider career)	#1 TRADITIONAL PATH <i>organizational commitment</i> Stress on organizational objectives/Strategic fit of assignment <u>Key aspects</u> Knowledge transfer Business Development Aligned with firm's expat. type: EMISSARY	#4 NEW PATH <i>self-development</i> Stress on non-career focus; personal development <u>Key aspects</u> Life experience enrichment Aligned with form's expat. type: PERIPHERAL
	Expat. as VOCATIONAL (generic career)	#2 TRADITIONAL PATH <i>expat. structured career path</i> Stress on career development by gaining relevant experience (initiated by organization) <u>Key aspects</u> Long term career development Continuous career with <i>GIB</i> Aligned with firm's expat type: GLOBAL	#3 NEW PATH <i>career centered</i> Stress on career development by gaining relevant experience (initiated by individual) <u>Key aspects</u> Continuous career with <i>GIB</i> or generic career build up Aligned with firm's expat. type: PROFESSIONAL
		Traditional; Continuous RELATIONAL	Emerging; Interrupted TRANSACTIONAL
Psychological Contract			

Fig.3: Traditional and new expatriate paths (Altman & Baruch, 2012, p. 240).

The charted path of the expatriate is closely linked to career, and may be aligned or differentiated with the firm's strategic expatriation option (Altman & Baruch, 2012, p. 240).

The axis termed “*Work Attractor*” characterizes the driving force of the expatriation, while the other axis differentiates the expectations (psychological contract) created as relational or transactional dependent on the path trajectory. The traditional paths, #1 and #2, expatriation is entirely initiated by the organization, falling under the Global and Emissary strategic option. The new paths #3 and #4 differs foremost in the initiation phase, as those who follow them are likely to be proactive in getting expatriated within the organization, which are termed corporate self-initiation (Altman & Baruch, 2012, p. 246).

6 Method

To create an understanding of the international willingness, I chose a qualitative approach to the case study. This chapter will describe the methodical framework, to give the reader an insight on how the research questions are answered.

6.1 Qualitative Approach

Tjora (2012, p. 18) describes how qualitative methods relates to an interpretative paradigm, with focus on the informant's experience and establishment of meaning, and what consequence these meanings have. The objective of the study is to interpret aspects of an action, including motives, attitudes and experiences of being an expat, within a certain context. In a qualitative perspective, this is best derived by asking those who have experienced it directly (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 27). The thesis is based on qualitative interviews with informants who have or are experiencing this reality, as well as documents describing the context for these actions.

6.1.1 Case Study

A case study puts focus on one particular unit of research, and could be restricted to time and space. This restriction can create units on different levels, such as *absolute units*, often individuals, and do not refer to anything but themselves, while organizations are *collective units*, existing of multiple absolute units and subgroups (Jacobsen, 2010, p. 57). Statoil can be understood as a collective unit, while the expats of Statoil can be interpreted as a subgroup, consisting of an absolute unit, the individual. This study has focus on the expats as a case, being a part of collective unit, Statoil. A case study is suitable when theory testing or generalizability is not the objective, but when trying to get a deeper understanding of a complex social phenomenon (Yin, 2003, p. 13), such as the international willingness of the informants.

Yin (2003, p. 1) argues that a case method is applicable when the researcher is trying to uncover the "how" or the "why", and the objective of the study is to get a holistic explanatory understanding. To understand the phenomenon, a case study should include more than one data source, such as documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation and physical artifacts (Yin, 2003, p. 85). Given the extent and time limit of the thesis, I have

focused on interviews and documents. The primary focus is informant interviews, to understand their story. The documents are used to understand the context.

6.2 Data Gathering

6.2.1 Internal Documents

In order to understand Statoil's approach to expatriation as well as their present and future strategy to the staffing of international assignments, internal documents have been used. The relevant information from the documents is presented in chapter 3, and are used to understand international willingness (the phenomenon) in connection with the organizational approach (intentions) within a specific context (Tjora, 2012, p. 169). The documents were also used to determine the sample of informants and some of the questions in the interview guide.

Documents created by an organization are open for interpretation, and some of the information might only bring meaning to those embedded in the culture or employed in the corporation. To prevent misunderstandings I established contact with the work group of Statoil, where incomprehensible organizational terms were clarified.

The documents reflect Statoil's international approach to expatriation, and are used as a substitute for interviewing informants from corporate HR or international mobility departments. This decision was made in conjunction with time and extent of the thesis, as well as the primary focus was given to the expats. As the documents are distributed as policies within the corporation they were evaluated as sufficient.

6.2.2 Informants

It was desired that the informants should reflect Statoil's expatriation target group, and are defined as a strategic sample (Ringdal, 2013, p. 178; Tjora, 2012, p. 145). Some of the expats were located on national ground on an appropriate time, and the sample was partly determined by convenience. The sample consisted of 8 informants, 5 expatriates on international assignments and 3 repatriates returned to home country. The sample is not used to represent a general population, but primarily themselves with their own opinions and experience of being an expatriate (Tjora, 2012, p. 128). The informants used in the study followed two criteria:

- Having shown international willingness through being or have been expatriated more than one year coherently.

- Represents the characteristics of the expat majority used within the organization.

The majority of expats within the department studied (TPD) are Norwegian nationals, having positions within the middle line management. The informants were Norwegian nationals, four male and four female. Even though the expatriate situation in Statoil is dominated by a majority of men, it was desired that the genders were equally represented.

On the basis of time limit and my limited access to Statoil employees, the choice of individuals was done by a workgroup in Statoil. This may create certain methodological weaknesses. As the informants are aware that they have been chosen by their organization, this might inflict their answers and reflections. I evaluated the information gathered not to be of sensitive character, and the informants were ensured confidentiality to dilute the risk of this happening. Having the Statoil group choosing the informants was also viewed as a necessity to ensure that they represented the pre set criteria, and could contribute to secure a greater validity within the specific case studied (Tjora, 2012, p. 128).

6.2.3 Semi Structural Interviews

The interviews were performed on Statoil's facilities at Fornebu, five through physical presence, and three were performed using videoconference call. The timespan of the interviews varied from 40 to 60 minutes. In order to concentrate on the informant's reflections (Tjora, 2012, p. 120), the interview was recorded using an iPhone 5s. The informants had agreed to this in advance and were ensured that the data material would be transferred to a password protected memory stick and deleted after it had been transcribed. The transcription was also stored on this memory stick, and deleted after it had served its purpose.

The interview guide used captured both the individual aspect of being international willing, as well as the organizational aspect of being an expatriate in Statoil. The questions were inspired by former empirical studies within the field of expatriation, formed as open ended to give the informant a freedom to reflect around his/hers expatriation experience. The interview was performed as semi-structured, giving the informants a possibility to tell their own story in their own words and manner. In order to capture a deeper assessment, some of the questions were formed as hypothesis based on former studies. The informants were asked to reflect around the statement linking it to their own expatriation situation. From a theoretical point of view, this kind of approach could affect the answers given by the

informants, but will in this study be viewed as a positive resource contributing to form precise questions that could increase the quality of the study (Tjora, 2012, p. 113).

The informants were asked to give an individual rating on factors that have had or would have influence on their international willingness. They were asked to rate the factors on a scale from one to six, six being highly influential and one being not influential at all. This was done to paint a picture of the most and least important factors for the informant when deciding to take on international assignments. The rating was followed by a follow-up question asking them to reflect around why these factors were important or not important. They were also given the opportunity to reflect around the influencing factors. This approach was meant to “open the mind” of the informants, making them reflect more around factors that could have had influence on a retrospective stage, not only focusing on the present.

6.3 Data Handling

The data collected from the interviews was fully transcribed, coded and categorized through the use of HyperRESEARCH version 3.5, a qualitative analysis tool. The sample of 8 informants is on the limit of such a tool being necessary, but the justification is grounded in two aspects. The first aspect is to uncovering a field with multiple variables in consideration. In order to systemize the reflections given by the informants, this tool gives the possibility to view specific reflections without losing the holistic meaning of the data. The second aspect is that the tool gave an educational outcome for me as a student.

As the interview guide was based on former empirical studies, the coding process was concept driven, based on key thematic ideas (Gibbs, 2007, p. 44). Coupling of synonyms was used in order to arrange reflections describing similar thematic, each placed within a categories that describing the underlying codes. One example is “job involvement” as category consisting of codes as “pre participation” or “familiarity with project”.

6.3.1 Analyzing Strategy

This study is rooted in empirical data collected from the informants as well as former empirical studies, and started out with an inductive inspiration (Tjora, 2012, p. 26). The typology theory (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002) came into account during the research process, after the collection of data and performed coding. The same applies for the internal documents included in the analysis, even though some of the information was studied in advance as a tool to decide the sample and form the interview guide. They were used as

additional data, analyzed in line with the theoretical framework in order understand the willingness within the organizational context. The typology theory was chosen on the basis of including the individual and the organizational aspect of expatriation.

6.3.2 Translation

On the basis of the informants' Norwegian nationality, all of the interviews were held in their mother tongue. This was believed to increase the chance of detailed reflections, excluding the risk of a language barrier. The reflections of the informants have been translated to English, complementing the written language of this thesis. This decision was made based on the belief that a translation would not extract the meaning of the reflection. It is however a risk, which was taken into account by performing a citation check. The informants were given the possibility to read the translated quotes to ensure that the meaning of the reflection was safeguarded. This precaution is believed to increase the validity of the thesis.

6.4 Ethics

The ideal researcher should face the data material with an open mind, but this ideal is argued to be utopian. Qualitative research will be influenced by the researcher interpretation and preconceptions regarding the topic studied (Nilssen, 2012, p. 137). One influencing factor was the topic presented by the organization, which made me reflect around an underlying "issue" that needed an "answer". As Statoil expresses a need of a more "globally mobile" workforce, this contributed in shaping this thought.

Performing qualitative interviews carries responsibility, where trust, confidentiality, respect and reciprocity characterize the relationship between the researcher and the informant (Tjora, 2012, p. 31). To establish trust the informant was given a declaration of consent, describing the purpose of the study, usage of data, and rights. The declaration ensured confidentiality, and is followed through by excluding name, position and specific department. Excluding this information from the thesis was not evaluated consequential for the outcome, and was done to reduce the risk of the informant holding back information. They were also ensured that their participation in the study would not have any consequences for their employee relationship and was offered the opportunity to withdraw from the interview and study at any time. Before accepting to participate, the informants received an information letter describing the topic and purpose of the study, highlighting that participation was voluntary. This was done establish a mutual understanding in advance of the interview.

Because of the collection, storage and electronic handling of personal data, the project was reported to Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (NSD), and approved 24/2-2014.

6.5 Transferability and Limitations

The purpose of this study is to view expatriation within its given context, Statoil. Generalization is not the purpose, as it focuses on individual activity within a specific organization (Tjora, 2012, p. 180). The influencing factors on international willingness analyzed in chapter 7, could however be transferable to individuals in similar situations as the findings are supported by empirical studies done in the field of expatriation.

Some of the questions were of retrospective character, which could influence the answers given. As people evaluate events from the past, it is not guaranteed that the answers reflect the actual behavior or attitude, which might be viewed as a limitation within this study (Trost & Jeremiassen, 2010). Although this bias is likely to happen, the information derived will still give an image on the factors that are of importance in the informants' decision, whether this is linked to the present or the past. In addition, it gives the informant an opportunity to reflect on whether this is still relevant, or if it has changed through gained experience.

7 Analysis 1: Why do they go?

The first analysis tries to capture a picture of the expat in Statoil, the factors that influence the willingness to travel abroad and elaborates reflections on being an expatriate.

The informants were asked whether the expatriation was self-selected or a decided by the organization. The majority of the expats seemed to regard the expatriation as a deliberate choice, either through active search or former indication of mobility, while some indicated that it was determined by the organization.

I2: *With the first job at [the location], I chose it deliberately, because I wanted to travel. When you did that, and you got back, you were kind of incorporated in the international department. (...) And then it became somewhat randomly, that you were asked [to expatriate again] afterwards. (Own choice)*

I4: *It is something I've been asking for, for a long time. (...) Because I think it is exciting to live abroad. As I said, I did it through studies and before I started working in StatoilHydro. (Mobility indication)*

I5: *No, I chose- It's a mixture. I indicated that I wanted more- I felt that I had been working a lot abroad on commuter basis, so I wanted to be more stationed overseas. (Mobility indication and behavior)*

I1: *I was recruited in to it. It wasn't something I chose, I was asked to. (...) They didn't think that I was required there, but then they suddenly said: "we need you to be there after all". So that's the way it happened. (Organizational determined)*

In total, six of the informants highlighted that the choice was theirs. Informant 1 clearly states that the expatriation was decided by the organization. Informant 3 stated: *"The first assignment, they just sent me out. I had been employed for two days before they sent me out. The second one, I was asked to take a job. Then it was all about the competence."* The first assignment could be viewed as organizational determined, but the informant also reflected upon an underlying openness that had been expressed, indicating a combination of organizational and individual choice.

7.1 Elaborated Motives

7.1.1 Job Involvement

Former empirical research highlights that job involvement has a positive influence on the willingness to relocate on a general level (Brett & Reilly, 1988). Brett & Reilly (1988) did not, however, find any significant relation to the actual decision to accept or reject the transfer or the new job. The informants of Statoil also stated that involvement in their projects increased the willingness to travel abroad. An interesting remark is that involvement, for some, was directly related to acceptance.

I8: I had been working on this project from [home] a lot of years. Approximately four years with an enormous amount of travels to [the location]. (...) Then they began talking about moving there and travel back home every other weekend. So it was a smooth transition at the time. (...) I don't think I would travel out to a project I didn't know in advance. So in my case this was instrumental.

I6: The reason why I have this assignment was that I was leading a workgroup and participated in another one, and both recommended establishing a so-called HUB [at the location]. Those groups were handled on to our other established jobs, so it was something supplementary. Given the recommendations, there was a need for a dedicated person who could begin to develop this HUB. Some time went and then I was asked to take this responsibility and I said yes.

I7: I participated in the concept study, which took place [at home location]. I knew the project very well, and it entered a new phase with international actors, and I felt that it was appropriate for me to go out.

I4: I didn't have a choice to enter that position or not, basically. I was working on a project for building the platform to a field [at the location], so it was in the cards that the project- I first started where we constructed the platforms, and then I would eventually end up where we were going to build them up and put them to use, and that was [the location]. So I followed the project.

I8 highlights the prior experience within the project and the involvement over a period of time was “instrumental” for the decision to accept. The informant describes it as a “smooth transition” and that the familiarity and connection to the project was essential in the decision to accept the assignment on a longer term. I6, I7 and I4 were a part of the pre-planning of the projects and the expatriation became a consequence of being involved in the process before the position was moved abroad. It felt as a natural part of their responsibility, wanting to follow the project that they were already involved in. To I6, it became an extension of a participated planned project, which the informant initiated. As an interesting comparison,

Hippler (2009) explains how the feeling of *autonomy* rooted in the tasks or position increases the willingness to relocate, especially when the individual has an opportunity to introduce or realize own ideas. I7 explains how the acquaintance with the project created an appropriate feeling that contributed to the decision. I4 on the other hand, states a series of events connecting him/her to follow the projects' development, knowing that the position would eventually end up at the foreign location, or "in the cards" as the informant puts it. Although the studies of Brett & Reilly (1988) did not find a significant relation between involvement and acceptance, they did however find a positive relation towards the willingness, projecting as well that willingness has a direct effect on acceptance. In the case of Statoil, it might be argued that it is also an indirect effect, through increased willingness. I6 elaborates this as a "momentum":

I6: *I speak of former experience, and what I see around me, and that is that [involvement] is clearly a momentum that pulls you along. If they decide that the project or your position is to be moved out, your mobility capability would increase off that reason. (...) You get some drivers that you wouldn't otherwise receive.*

Informant 3 also quotes that involvement is of importance, being able to affect the product becomes a driver when you are being involved at an earlier stage:

I3: *It is evident that if you get to be involved at an early stage you could affect the final product in another way. It is different to create the way forward than to arrive at a later stage to "clean up". It is easier to do a job when you have created the basics, when you know the details, you know why things are like they are and you have the historical view of it.*

In addition to having a larger effect on the "product", it is also indicated that "being involved earlier" lets the expatriate create the way forward. This could be argued to create stronger ties to the job because the expat has a larger possibility to influence the outcome. Other informants also elaborated that their motivation is strongly connected to the task and that they want to be located where "*it all happens*" (I7), or have started something they want to finish (I6).

I7: *The main thing now is that I want to follow the project and be located where it all happens. It is of course exciting being here, but the task and the project is the driving force, and the result of our performance becomes visible.*

I6: *A point is that you have started something that you want to finish. Because the job is not done now, it's only a part of the start-up phase actually. So you are into*

something that you get, if not locked to, the threshold of getting out becomes much higher.

The degree of pre-involvement and connection to the project or task have had an impact on either their willingness or actual acceptance of that matter. In addition to being closely attached to the projects, the informants elaborated that there was a larger responsibility involved when being a global actor on behalf of the organization.

7.1.2 At the Responsible End of the Organization

The informants were asked to compare a position back home with the position abroad and reflect whether or not this had any influence on their willingness. For some the felt increased responsibility was vital:

I6: In a way you encounter a very concentrated and strategically important part of the company and it is relatively few who represents Statoil this way. It is a lot attached to the people in those situations. I feel that these positions are vital, which in itself are motivating.

I5: It's not only one thing that makes you do a thing like this. But [responsibility] is a factor that is important. I think that, if the position had been like- If it hadn't been any kind of increase of responsibility or complexity, it would clearly drag it towards a negative direction.

Informant 6 elaborate how the position abroad is “vital”, with an increased responsibility attached to those few traveling abroad. The position abroad is viewed of higher importance, and the informant expresses an underlying feeling of being privileged to possess this role. I5 states that the increase in responsibility and complexity is a positive aspect about being an expat, and if this not present, it would be perceived negative.

It also gives the expat a feeling of independency to be located away from the headquarters, acting on behalf of the organization. This independency adds to the former mentioned experience of having increased responsibility.

I3: I recognize that you'll have multiple roles [abroad] and you become more determined. You have to make the decisions and you don't have the same kind of support as back home, which makes you more independent. You have to stand by the mistakes that you do. I think that this makes you even stronger, as a person and as a human being. (...) That's one of the things I enjoy. You aren't surrounded by people that interfere and it gives you a freedom of action. And you actually receive a mandate to do your job; I think that's a positive thing.

***I5:** You get an extended authorization because you're on site and that is nice because it makes it easier to make decisions. But at the same time I have to be accountable for the management duties. (...) It is a little more complicated to get professional support both leadership-wise and technical, because you are all by your self. You have some greater responsibility and a larger mandate but a more difficult access to resources and support.*

As both of the informants express, being more independent without the support you would have back home adds a positive value. I3 quotes that the independency adds a value in the form of making him/her “stronger” and forces the informant to become more determined in decision-making. A greater freedom of action is expressed. Being an expat is filled with a possibility to act more independently on behalf of the organization. I5 also explains that the extended responsibility eases the decision-making, not depending on the professional support back home. This is closely linked to the motive of autonomy, giving the individual a higher sense of freedom in decision-making (Hippler, 2009).

The informants have expressed that the responsibility and the possibility to act as a more independent (or autonomous) actor on behalf of the organization is positive. Some of the informants elaborated further that the amount of responsibility makes you more influential.

***I5:** (...) Among many other factors, the fact that you have an established mandate and a possibility to influence the outcome of what you are doing, it contributes.*

***I6:** It gives a possibility to take part in exciting tasks and have a feeling of influencing the corporation's success or failure, to put it in that way. If not directly then at least to a greater extent that others, which I think is the fascinating and exciting part. (...) It is a way to make a difference to the company and be located at the “pointy” end. Those are the elements that have led me to my decision.*

Informant 5 explains how the established mandate produces a personal influential possibility directed towards influencing the outcome of own performance. Informant 6 explains how the expatriation gives a possibility to influence the organizational development. The latter is closely linked to the term “altruism”, motivated in the sense of having a possibility to affect the organization's success or failure, which Hippler (2009) found as a motive to travel abroad. This motive could be interpreted as intrinsically driven, where expatriation becomes a self-actualization experience (Fee & Karsaklian, 2013, p. 106). Another informant also highlights that the possibility to influence increases when traveling abroad, adding that the challenges are different when expatriating.

I4: When you travel abroad you face a whole different challenges. You are likely to be a part of a small and relatively independent Statoil unit, and you have to sort out your own challenges without support from the big machinery in Norway. And you are likely to receive other and wider types of tasks, where you have a greater possibility of influence, and larger risks for the decisions you make (...)

According to the informant, the sense of independency is partly due to the “lack” of support by the “machinery” (HQ), possibility of influence and freedom of decision-making, which leads to a different set of challenges compared to working at home. Both personal and professional challenges, and personal development have been found to opt individuals for international assignments (Hippler, 2009; Pinto et al., 2012). The informants of Statoil are no exception.

7.1.3 Personal Development and Professional Challenges

Discussed in the previous chapter, the importance of feeling autonomous (Hippler, 2009) is pointed out to be of positive value for the informants, both connected to the tasks and responsibility. Haines et al. (2008) studied the importance of intrinsic motivation leaning on Self Determination Theory (E. Deci et al., 1989; E. Deci & Gagné, 2005). They projected that individuals driven by an intrinsic need, seek to engage in optimal challenges performing the action for its own sake because it gives the individual a value in it self (Haines et al., 2008). Some of the expatriates of Statoil indicate the same.

I2: I think it is exciting to travel to other countries. And the challenges connected to the job, that's the primary thing. It is new tasks even though the job is kind of the same. It becomes a different job when you're [at the location] doing it, versus here [at home]. You get closer to the people and my job changes a whole lot in the international projects.

I7: It's to challenge my self a little, in relation to adapting and facilitating to make my self thrive. That challenge, deciding to make it all right for myself and to see the possibilities instead of the limitations, that's a trigger. (...) And then it is the cultural aspect, learning to work under different circumstances than in Norway. That was a challenge I wanted to take.

Both of the informants use the word challenges in a positive manner, informant 2 projecting that it is of primary importance. Informant 2 describes how the job changes because it is being performed at a different location under other circumstances, adding a challenging but exciting momentum. While informant 2 focuses on the job, informant 7 focuses on challenges with personal and cultural adaption. As an interesting comparison, Konopaske et al. (2009, p.

377) projected that the sense of *adventurousness*, connected to the Openness to Experience (Big Five personality dimension) determines one's predisposition towards travel. They found this to be significant predictor of managerial willingness to travel abroad, especially long-term travel. It may be argued that these informants indicates this predisposition, being more open to face the challenges, performing their job in a different environment, and viewing it as a source of professional and personal development.

One informant points at the feeling of accomplishment:

I3: It's the excitement to be able to achieve things and to deliver on the assignment you are sent out to. The excitement attached to living at a new location, and the new colleagues. I'm a little curious working with other cultures, and to succeed and achieve something. It's a kick when you're working in projects and get to say "we have managed to deliver on this in a good way". That's the driving force.

According to empirical studies, professional challenges and achievement, to master difficult technical problems or to carry out one's task under difficult circumstances has been found to be one of the most important motives affecting the willingness of expatriates (Hippler, 2009; Pinto et al., 2012).

One of the informants expressed viewpoints rooted in a perception of Statoil's ambition to be a global actor: "*Luckily Statoil have set out a goal to become more of a international corporation, so I feel that this is a natural way of adapting to that reality*"(I5). This statement adds a possible organizational motivation, differentiating it from most responses expressing individual motives for expatriation. Although the informants are sent abroad on behalf of their organization, most of the motives expressed are internal factors. An interesting observation done by Altman and Baruch (Altman & Baruch, 2012, p. 245), is that expatriates increasingly perceive travelling abroad as a personal choice rather than driven by organizational incentives. Among the informants, very few of them mentioned other external factors as primary motives (e.g. salary, tax benefits, career advancement, organizational pressure), unless they were asked directly about it. Informant 6 did however mention that the professional challenges created a basis for further career: "*Professional speaking, it's the professional challenges. To get a wider basis, getting to work with other cultures and yes, to build a basis for a further career.*" The informants' different views on career motives will be discussed in the next chapter.

7.2 Expatriation, Career and Repatriation Planning

The relevance of career in connection to expatriation has been studied extensively (Altman & Baruch, 2012, 2013; Yehuda Baruch et al., 2013; Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Dickmann & Point, 2012; Jokinen et al., 2008; Makela, Suutari, & Mäkelä, 2009; Stahl et al., 2002; Suutari, Tornikoski, & Makela, 2012). The empirical research has highlighted a distinction between certain career motives. One motive is so-called corporate or internal career capital, focusing on benefits or advancement inside the organization. The other is related to the motive of generic capital that gives the expatriate capital for one's own personal career path, external to the organization (Altman & Baruch, 2012; Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Haslberger & Brewster, 2009). The following quote illuminates the influence and importance of this career aspect.

I7: It's mostly for my own sake. I have expanded my network, but from Statoil's point of view I'm not quite sure. Well it is two aspects in this, one is that you have actually gained an experience that you're pleased with. The other aspect is that it is not certain that Statoil, in a way, have even detected that you have been abroad right? You come back, you might be forgotten, so its more connected to what you do actively yourself, in the internal labor marked. I don't think that Statoil searches with lights and lanterns after those who has international experience, and puts them into jobs, offer them jobs or place them where they should be. It is a huge system, so it is easy to drown in such a large corporation.

The informant indicates that expatriation creates a career capital where valuable experience attained can be used as a capital in the internal labor market. It is although interesting that the informant indicates the capital value is dependent on the individual's own effort. Though it is connected to benefits within the organization, it can become a capital for the individual's own use, which the "system" might not catch up on. Informant 1 explicitly saw expatriation as adding to a generic career capital: "I think that it is an advantage to have an expatriation on your CV. I have no intention to switch jobs and leave Statoil, but you never know. So I think that it's clearly beneficial". The statement of I1 clarifies that international assignments may help you to gather competence that could be used in the future for personal benefit. One informant elaborated on how career and expatriation was connected within the organization.

I6: Well it is expressed that there is a connection between expatriation and career opportunities. But then you have to ask yourself the question whether or not there is a connection between words and action. I would say that there are some examples of this connection. But when I think back in time, it was perhaps a little less visible. And there was examples where people didn't fall completely in place within the

organization when they came back from expatriation. I do think that this may happen now as well, but still I do see some connection there.

The connection between career and expatriation is somewhat inconsistent within the organization even though it is expressed, leaving an impression of a sporadic connection between corporate career and expatriation. Other informants express a complete lack.

I3: *I can be honest and the honest answer is that it is not that much to gain career-wise to go abroad. You get out of sight out of mind, and when new leading positions are being handed out they are very much concerned about those who are close, those they see daily and have excelled. So, in a way, you are a bit outside the organization when you're abroad. It means that you have to be very consciously aware of keeping contact with your network [back home], because it is this network that will bring you your new job.*

I8: *No, it has only been in a negative direction. [Career] has not been a factor that have shaped the direction I have now, I would rather say that I've been relegated. Career-wise in Statoil, [my expatriation] have only had a negative impact. I do not identify any upsides connected with being abroad in that manner, on the contrary.*

I2: *I cannot put [career] in context with expatriation. Because if you travel abroad and stay out for two years, it is difficult to say if this have any effect when you return. Things change drastically, so I do not view this as a motivational factor at all.*

An interesting observation of the quotes is that they all seem to link the lack of corporate career motive with the return to their home country. Is not that surprising that the corporate-career is seen in relation to “home” on the basis that the international assignment is said to be temporary (Statoil, 2013a). As a result a missing link between expatriation and corporate career emerges. One informant shared an interesting reflection on this issue, expressing how expatriation could create career issues upon return, as well as how the global expansion of Statoil seem to form a new career path:

I3: *Statoil is a corporation that has a big step to take in facilitating for those who return. It doesn't mean that you should have a great new career when you return but you should enter into the same kind of assignments you had before you left. But then again, you could say that now when we are building a lot abroad, it's quite clear that they prefer someone that have been abroad at an earlier point. And then you would get a competitive advantage, if you have been. So the competence you acquire becomes, in a way, competence on new assignment abroad. And then there is the question: which career should you choose?*

This is supported in several studies, finding that organizations saw international assignments as good for a global career, while most of the expats did not agree (Black & Gregersen, 1999, p. 60; Dickmann & Harris, 2005, p. 407). This was rooted in the minimal possibility to use the acquired skills in the position they returned to, emphasized by informant 3 as a split between global and national career. As the literature describes, the repatriation phase is often distinguished from those who are solely working on an international assignment and those opting for a global career (Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Dickmann & Point, 2012; Suutari et al., 2012). As the international assignment is temporary in its nature (Statoil, 2013a), it might be argued that the career motive will differ among those who view the expatriation as only a task performing assignment, and those who are viewing it as a part of a longer global career.

7.3 Family, Location and Home Country Connection

Having to travel away from the home country, the family aspect is found to have a major impact, creating challenges associated with expatriation (Hippler, 2009; Konopaske et al., 2009; Mäkelä et al., 2011). When the informants were asked what could inhibit them from accepting an international assignment, all except one answered the family aspect as an inhibitor, in addition to ranging it as the top-influencing factor on willingness to travel abroad. Three of the informants pointed to the fact of having small children, saying that they would not move at a point where the children was still living at home or were unwilling to move. One informant stated that the mobility was unilaterally dependent on the private situation.

***I6:** My choice and mobility capacity is very dependent on my private situation. My children are now in their 20's, and both have moved out. It was not relevant for me at all to move abroad as long as one of them lived at home.*

Those traveling with family, elaborate how family issues as divorce or illness would prevent them, as well as poor facilitation for the family. Even though the informants are characterized as globally mobile, there were continuous indications that the willingness was highly dependent on family factors.

***I1:** I've said no now to move to Korea for an example. Because I don't want to be half a year away from my family. I would like to go down there but then I had to bring my [spouse], because I don't want to travel all by myself. I don't think that would be healthy for the family.*

I7: *If I had been any younger, with small children, I wouldn't have done it. And certainly not if I was to travel to a location that is so far away that I wouldn't have the possibility to travel back home every other week. Take Korea, as an example. Then I would have said no. Because trips back home every sixth week isn't worth it.*

One informant traveling with the spouse emphasized that implications and facilitation became a factor when bringing a family member along.

I2: *For an example, last time I traveled [to the destination], I got the message that my [spouse] wasn't under Statoil's umbrella, in relation to health [programs]. So if a heart attack would occur we had to take care of it ourselves. I can't be working at [the location] if my [spouse] doesn't receive the same help as I would (...) So it is a lot of those details related to the agreement. So if you make that too difficult, then yeah.*

The fact that all of the informants are expatriates, and have indicated through their action that they are mobile, they were asked what they thought would differentiate their willingness from those who are unwilling. The answers reinforced the influence of the family issue:

I4: *What I experience, when talking to my colleagues, as the biggest challenges, is that the wife doesn't want to leave her job or that the kids are thriving at school, and that they don't want to risk a disruption and they are afraid that they won't like it there and so on.*

I1: *(...) if you're 35 years old and have a spouse who is in the middle of something exciting back home, or you have kids who don't want to move, you will probably choose family before expatriation. But if you have the possibility and your family would come along- I think most people who get the opportunity would like to go. That's my impression.*

I3: *But off course, if you are a young couple right, and both parts wants a career, and when we as a corporation can only offer one of them a career, it becomes difficult to justify that only the one should be aloud to develop. While the other have to take out a leave back home. So it becomes difficult to make that decision.*

As the informants expresses, wish for “dual career” can be a troublesome issue. Although all of the informants speak of the issue as something “someone else” is experiencing or using a hypothetical approach when reflecting around the issue, it is highly believable that it has been or is an influential factor among those who accept assignments, as well as those who do not. Informant 3 points out that “*it becomes difficult to justify that only the one should be aloud to develop*”, and that the company is only able to offer the one career. As gender equality have increased over the decades, the proportion of highly educated woman, and woman in management position has become a norm throughout the country. Some might argue that the

equality is not established within every field and line of work, but generally speaking it is believed that woman and men have equal opportunities for education and management positions. With this in mind, the dual career issue is likely to be a greater challenge within a country where both partners are likely to have a career focus. To overcome the challenge, one spouse is likely to be or become “flexible”, meaning “*stretching to accommodate the other spouses career*” (Mäkelä et al., 2011, p. 186), if the expat is to bring their family along. Regarding this issue, one informant raises a skeptical view on how the expatriation and its facilitation is perceived.

I2: (...) you had to fix all of this regarding school and stuff yourselves, and I thought: I'm traveling to a new country, new job, I had to get a place to live. When I got the apartment it was empty, so in addition to work and taking care of [a child] who needed to attend school, I had to furnish the apartment. (...) It became a major job, so it's clearly facilitated towards men traveling and bringing their wife, and that she take's care of everything. (...) Men and woman are more equal now than before, and the man is no longer the only provider for the family. I think that have made a lot of woman, and especially a lot of men not willing to come along, because he then per definition cannot work, and I do not think a lot of them are willing to do so. (...) In addition, a lot of these environments are “built” towards “female spouses”, so they would feel like an outsider very easily.

As the dual career issue seems to be prominent, both the facilitations towards it and individual handling of the issue seem to be of importance. On the other hand, some of the informants expressed that overcoming these issues and bringing the family along would have a positive influence:

I7: Now we are having a mobilization in Korea, in our project, and the majority of those who will travel bring their family. That is a huge opportunity for the whole family, as long as the spouse has the opportunity to join, and I think it means a lot actually. Then you get the opportunity to establish a life there, and an interesting period in life at the location. Instead of being abroad and having to travel back home to have participate in the social life.

I4: As long as you travel to a location that your family wants to go to, and everyone is on board, and you get it right, it is an experience that I think would strengthen the family as well. You'll have this common project, traveling abroad and doing something together. It becomes something positive.

The family importance is not a groundbreaking finding within expatriation, and it is said that the issue has become a rule rather than an exception (Lesnard, 2008; Mäkelä et al., 2011, p. 185). There are special features attached to international assignments and careers, where

moving abroad not only has a major impact on the expatriate, but also creates adjustment pressure on the family. They are faced with living in a different culture without the same amount of social connections, and the adjustment process is believed to acquire more time and support, and becomes a vital part in order to secure a successful expatriation (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009; Sinangil & Ones, 1997). In this case, this aspect influences the international willingness, giving an impression that the timing of the expatriation has to fit the current life-situation.

7.3.1 The Location Threshold

Konopaske et al. (2009, p. 375) found that targeted location was an important predictor of the willingness to travel abroad, and that managers concerned about the location are less likely to accept an international assignment. Other studies have established that communities that are perceived as too much dissimilar to the individual's current one, decreases the willingness (Noe et al., 1993, p. 168). According to the informants of Statoil, the location seemed to have importance for some, and not for others. Through further elaboration it became evident that a threshold was involved. Locations need to meet certain criteria, mostly connected to safety and the opportunity to develop on a personal and professional level.

I5: *It's kind of this step-function for me. Either it is good enough. Good enough schools, security and those things, and then it's not that important. If it falls under that threshold, as Angola or-, where it's not suitable to bring family, it would have been a no-go. (...) But once it is safe, adequate school programs, and a tactical good oil and gas environment it is not that important anymore. (Personal and professional development)*

I2: *Other things that could stop you from doing this could actually be the safety at the location you travel to. Angola for an example, where I have been, it's a lot of criminality, it is dangerous traffic, stabbing, bag snatching and those things. If that gets too high, I would at one point say "I do not wish to do that". I do not wish to expose my family to that, simply put. (Safety)*

I3: *I'm mobile pretty much anywhere. But I am mobile to that degree that the country has both a culture and a religion that will allow me, as a woman, to do my job. So I have told them that I do not wish to work in those countries. (...) I work in the field, and it is a huge difference between working in the field as a woman, than working in an office. So I would have said no to travel to those countries that are very Muslim, or perhaps extremists. But otherwise I will go where the need is. (Professional development, cultural distance)*

I4: *(...) it's an advantage if we are at a location where I think it's exciting to be and where we can develop personally, learn something and have a good time. And that's where I think the locations differ. (...) There are some locations, like Nigeria and*

Angola, that's off the limit. And there are others where I don't think it's very developing to bring my family to, like Azerbaijan. (Personal development)

As some of the informants quote, the safety and personal development was mostly relevant when deciding to bring family along. For Informant 3 travelling alone, it was more important with a professional work culture, which allows for the full participation of women. An interesting observation is that the informants also lists countries that are “*off the limit*”, and that these countries are in fact off a great dissimilarity compared to Norway. This clearly has an affect on their willingness and attitude towards an expatriation to these locations (Noe et al., 1993).

7.3.2 Connection to Home

The informants expressed a need to travel back home regularly, and the amount of this need was expressed to distinguish expats from each other.

I1: *(...) some of the men they travel back home every weekend and are kind of just working here, from Monday to Friday, and then they live at home. So I think there is a difference in whom you are. You can do this if you're in a European country a couple of flight hours away, but if you were to travel further away it becomes different. Then you would have to choose to stay there, for real, to live there.*

The informant distinguishes between two forms of expats, those who choose to work abroad and live at home, and those who choose to live at the location. Even though this is stated, the importance of having the opportunity to visit the home country tended to be a crucial factor. Even I1 contradicts the former quote when stating the importance:

I1: *The fact that you get to travel back home every weekend is of course an advantage. Or else I don't think you would get as many to expatriate. If you're not aloud to travel home to your family I mean.*

I3: *Some are very concerned about benefits, and what you get, and some are not. I have never been very concerned about those things. You get paid more than you get at home, you get housing and food, and you get to travel back home. Then I'm satisfied.*

I7: *As long as I commute on my own, without my family, it's important that I could travel back home reasonably frequent.*

The possibility of home travel and the need to maintain social connections in the home country are among the most important family factors. The connection to the home country can also be perceived negative, as when you import cultural artifacts from back home (“the brunost syndrome”).

I6: It's a condition for success, that you are interested in others, that you have a tolerance for things being performed on other terms than you are used to back home and that you eat different food as an example. That has been an issue within the project. Some think that it's very challenging that you eat different and bring their 40 packs of crisp bread in their suitcase. And if you ask me, that's a sign that you lack a certain global mindset.

The home country orientation observed by the informant could be a cause of multiple variables, such as the cultural distance between home country and host country (Noe et al., 1993) or personality factors (e.g. Openness to New Experiences) (Konopaske et al., 2009). Even though it is stated in Statoil's IAP (Statoil, 2013a) that in addition to technical skills, the expats should be fit to adapt to the location culture, there is a risk that the importance of "hard skills" (technical) overshadows the importance of "soft skills" (cultural awareness and adaptation), especially if the recruitment is done ad-hoc in order to cover a occurring need (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002). Another informant reflects around how expats differ from each other.

I3: (...) it's all about your driver for why you are there. Some choose to travel to earn some extra money, to buy a house or to pay debt. While others travel abroad of pure adventurousness. And some travel abroad because they are told that it's something that they are supposed to do. So it's all about your driving force when accepting the assignment, what your concerns are.

It is interesting that I3 expresses that acceptance is connected with multiple drivers, conditioning expatriation as a mean to attain a wanted outcome. Differences in drivers might also difference the expats from each other, in terms of what an expatriation consists of. Some are working abroad to perform the given tasks, others choosing the adventurous path.

7.4 The Norwegian Expat of Statoil

In order to take the next step, viewing the paths of expatriation, this chapter describes the informants as a group. The construed "narrative" has no intention to generalize expatriates throughout the organization. The objective is to display the diversity, and paint a picture of the Norwegian expat of Statoil, based on the empirical data collected.

The expat of Statoil seems to be pulled, and not pushed towards the international assignment (Altman & Baruch, 2013; Y. Baruch, 1995). The Statoil expat is a manager located in the middle line management, being expatriated for business needs, hence technical expertise to

fill temporary gaps at a given location, required corporate management, or to transfer knowledge to subsidiaries (Statoil, 2013a). The expatriate is driven by mainly personal and professional incentives, as well as the search for optimal challenges connected to self-development. In addition, the targeted project or task has a prescribed meaning for the expat, either through involvement in the pre-phase, or a connection to the performance involved. The tasks and responsibility connected to the international assignment increases the willingness of the expat. The fact that the responsibility increases when traveling abroad, fulfills the challenges that the expat seeks, and establishes a positive attitude towards expatriating. The expatriation also adds a feature of independency, expressed in becoming a part of a smaller organization where they are able to be more influential. This gives a freedom of decision-making, creating a feeling of being “in front” of the organization. The expat might as well feel a responsibility connected to the success and failure of the organization, because they represent a position of strategic importance as the organization have set out to focus on international growth.

The willingness of the Statoil expat is not corporate career dependent. In fact, the corporate career or corporate career advancement seems to be absent, even though it is expressed within the organization that a connection exists. Some even claim that traveling abroad involves a risk, or might even be experienced as a loss career-wise. The career “issue” involved is mostly concerning the repatriation process, and the corporate-career opportunities are mostly connected to the career within the home country. However, the expat of Statoil do consider the experience as a generic career capital, which can be used either in other international projects within Statoil or as an individual competence that reinforces the expats career opportunities in the future.

For the expat of Statoil, family is of great importance, and is expressed to be a contingent factor that influences the willingness directly. The expats have strong bonds to their home country, and express the importance of being able to take trips home in order to maintain their social connections. If the expat has decided to bring the family along, the connection to home becomes less visible, making the expatriation a family project, portrayed as a developing and enriching experience. The location has an impact on the expatriates’ willingness, especially when family is involved. The expat of Statoil experiences a location threshold, where willingness is dependent on the location fulfilling requirements above certain levels. These requirements are directed towards safety, and the possibility to develop personally and professionally. The expat of Statoil seems to identify different attitudes toward being expatriated within the organization, some are just “working” abroad, while

someone embraces the opportunity an international assignment offers by “choosing to live there”. There are different reasons for accepting the assignment. The attitude derived is that expatriation could have a great personal value, but that there is not that much to gain corporate wise on national ground. This could give the expat a feeling of a career split between a corporate career at home and a global career within the international projects.

8 Analysis 2: The Expatriation Path(s)

In Statoil's IAP (2013a) it is in the pre-phase distinguished between business drivers and career development as objectives for expatriation. Based on the impression given by the informants, there was little evidence of career development being the primary goal of their expatriation. It is also indicated in Statoil's internal documents (Statoil, 2013b, 2013c) that the mobility need is for highly skilled personnel. This indicates that business need drivers are predominant and in line with a traditional approach to expatriation (Altman & Baruch, 2012). Both the Global and Emissary organization tend to use this approach, where the expatriation process is fully initiated and coordinated by the company. The statements of the expats as: *"I followed the project"* or *"They needed me to be here"*, support the impression that Statoil has a traditional approach to their expatriation. The Global approach uses expatriation as an *"inevitable part of the career path of any executive"* (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002). This perspective was not found among the Statoil informants. In addition, the Global approach embeds that the home base only represents a fraction of the organization's business activities, which could be said to be a complete mismatch regarding Statoil's position and national activity. As for the Emissary option, an organization will exist of an ingrained obligation to expatriate, and refusal is not expected to occur (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002). Having Statoil's national history in mind, the organization per se could be expected to adopt the Emissary option. This is based on their national identity established in Norway, and the fact that the people sent abroad are to represent and control their operations in subsidiaries (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002). One informant stated: *"In a way you encounter a very concentrated and strategically important part of the company"* (I6). Yet another said: *"you have to sort out your own challenges without support from the big machinery in Norway"* (I4). This indicates that the expats are sent out to represent this "big machinery" on a strategic level, placing Statoil close to the Emissary organization.

A deeper assessment of the expatriates' reflections, contradicts the Emissary organization in some ways. Contrary to the prediction that the international assignments are assigned out of patriotism or lack of choice, the majority viewed the expatriation as their own choice. The Emissary organization views the expatriation as part of a long-term career path, which have been absent through the eyes of the informants. One did however express that there is a "communicated" link, which could place the career issue as a possible latent case within the organization. A majority states that they do not see any connection between career and

expatriation within the organization. There is a theoretical possibility that there is, but that the visibility of the connection not yet is present for the informant. Baruch and Altman, as well as others (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992; Bartlett & Beamish, 2011; Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989) indicates that organizations progress or makes transitions through different global strategies in the search of globalization, and that the different strategies creates a shift of the required skills of the managers. A possibility is that the connection to career outcome lacking in the present, becomes more visible in the future.

As introduced in the case description chapter, Statoil aim at making their employees more mobile. This can almost exclude the Peripheral option, where employees are likely to queue up to get the chance to expatriate (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002). It can be multiple reasons for this approach not being a natural option for Statoil. For Statoil, the Norwegian Continental Shelf has been the “core” of its activity. Expatriation has naturally not been a crucial factor for organizational growth, neither a crucial factor for development among the employees.

8.1 The “Professional”

Comparing the different paths presented in figure 3 (Altman & Baruch, 2012, p. 240) to the IAP of Statoil, there is an indication that Statoil’s strategic approach promotes the traditional expatriation paths. In order to be aligned towards these paths, the expats is placed within the position without little choice (path #1), associated with organizational commitment, or indication of a choice that becomes an inevitable part of their corporate career, with consequences upon refusal (path #2) (Altman & Baruch, 2012). One informant did mention that expatriation was a response to the globalization of the organization (I5), and another indicated that “*It wasn’t something I chose*” (I1), which could indicate some traces of organizational commitment, recognizing path #1. The majority of the informants had more of an individualistic motive. The informants were asked to range the influence of organizational expectations or pressure on their decision to move abroad. The majority ranged this as relatively unimportant. The relevance of encouragement from co-workers or leaders was also ranged as of little importance, reinforcing the impression of the expatriation as more of an individual choice.

Viewing expatriation path #3 (Professional) and #4 (Peripheral) in the light of the informants expressed motives, the expat of Statoil seem to focus on the value of personal development, as well as development of generic career capital. This is reflected in the search

for professional challenges, the excitement of traveling to other countries and the lack of corporate career motive. The objective for the international assignment is located within the Emissary, constituted in the organizational objective of performing a task or following a project. Still, the paths that the informants elaborate when asked about the “why”, are directed towards new paths of expatriation. The theory expresses this as an emerging group of corporate self-initiated expatriates (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002; Yehuda Baruch et al., 2013, p. 2377). It could seem like the individuals self-construct their expatriation paths along the way of expatriation experience, with a mixture of the organizational objective (Emissary), generic career focus (Professional) and self-development (Peripheral). Personal development (Peripheral) was highlighted in the aspect of location threshold, the location offering a chance to develop personally, also connecting it to the family aspect displaying it as “enrichment” or a “change” in life. Although the job itself seemed to be of highest importance for the informant, possible personal development seemed to be an underlying dimension that recognized their willingness. This shows that the expats of Statoil can run different paths in a parallel, their willingness being influenced by different career perspectives (Altman & Baruch, 2012). It can be argued that the self-development path is predominant as part of a “family project”, whereas the professional path is more likely when the expat travels alone. Altman and Baruch (2012, p. 243) highlighted that “first time expatriates” emphasizing the Peripheral path of self-development, pointed out that future assignments would be considered in a wider career context. This aspect was reflected by some of the Statoil expats.

I2: (...) *I have the experience now, and it allows me to require a little bit more. Because the first time you go, you travel a bit haphazardly.*

I3: *You traveled to [the location], lived a short week in a hotel, found yourself an apartment, and thought it was very okay. But I think we should have gotten some more information before we left, because we traveled a bit haphazardly, but it was okay.*

The reflections given, underlines the assumption that the expat could travel for self-development reasons, traveling haphazardly on exciting new experiences having this as a motivation on the first trip, whereas continuation of an international career follows a different path, requiring the assignments to be more directed towards their individual drivers (I2), tending towards the Professional path.

Baruch and Altman (2002) theorizes that the organizations who uses the Professional option is recognized by outsourcing their cross-borders activity, which is not the case among

the informants as they are employed within the company. However, the Professional option has some similarities that require a discussion. Statoil's national position within the Norwegian Continental Shelf has required the company's full attention throughout their corporate history, where both the Government and Statoil's interests lies in controlling and developing the national oil resources (OED, 2013). As a label, it has been the "core" of the organization throughout the years, while international development is a recent objective for growth (Statoil, 2009), and could be labeled as the "periphery" (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002). Viewing the characteristics of the Professional option, the motives of professional challenges and the expressed gaining of generic career capital, it might be argued that Statoil falls into this option, even though the expatriation activity is not outsourced. This point is supported by the fact that most expats are sent out to perform a task on the organizations behalf with an uncertain length connected to the assignment, with little or none expressed corporate career motive. In addition, a Professional is recognized through a string of such assignments, which seem to fit with the some of the informants' reflections.

I7: *It is more about developing your international experience towards new and exciting assignments in Statoil.*

I1: *Now I get competence on this, on [activity] that might be of utility for me in another project.*

I2: *Work wise, the value [of expatriation] is very important, I think. And that show's in the fact that you "shop" projects, once you get into it. (...) You kind of get into this swarm, and once you are in, you are being asked to continue.*

Suutari et al. (2012) studied global careers in the context of social exchange theory, with much resemblance to the term of the psychological contract, using the term global careerist, which share the characteristics of the Professional path. Their findings suggested that the global careerist enjoys distance to the HQ, and the given opportunity of autonomy in international assignments. In addition, the global careerist emphasized that bad handling of the repatriation phase made them look for new international assignments instead of returning to their home country. One causal explanation was that they had developed a "global career identity", which made them unmotivated for jobs without international flavor (Suutari et al., 2012, p. 3471). In resemblance, one informant indicated this attitude.

I8: *I think we have been safeguarded in a poor way when being abroad. You get back here, and feel like a newly hired. Kind of like a stranger. (...) It doesn't make me less*

willing in that matter, it would rather feel like a recess, to travel out on and do something similar.

Altman and Baruch (2012, p. 246) also emphasize the repatriation phase as a critical junction, the expatriate being more prone to search for other opportunities, and the HR-department striving with issues of commitment and loyalty. On the basis of the diversity of paths indicated by the informants, as well as the indicated objectives from Statoil international strategy and mobility needs, it may be argued that the organization not yet have established a corporate philosophy regarding their expatriation practice (Altman & Baruch, 2012). This becomes more or less evident in the task and performance focus of the international assignments, an ambiguous connection to career development and the expats having individual focus. This may indicate that the organization might have an Expedient approach to staff their subsidiaries, building on technical expertise, ad hoc needs and the individual drive and fit to work internationally (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002). Following this perspective, it might be argued that those opting for international assignments distinguish themselves from a “normal” career path. As a consequence, Statoil becomes dependent on a particular set of individuals, the Professionals, seeking expatriation for their own benefit, willing to embrace a global career outside of the organization. They become a part of the periphery.

When individuals self-initiate their expatriation, an assumption is that the responsibility for action and outcome is placed upon the expats themselves, like identifying adequate positions when returning to their HQ. This is highlighted in Statoil’s IAP, emphasizing an individual responsibility for identifying opportunities, with support from the organization. This adds a facilitation aspect to bridge the gap between their international experience and their returning position (Statoil, 2013a). Described in earlier studies (Suutari et al., 2012, p. 3471) the “global career identity” established abroad might create a need for bridging this identity with a position of similar international character, which might be inaccessible on national ground. Perlmutter (1969, p. 17) argues that an international career can be hazardous if an ethnocentric attitude prevails at the headquarters, emphasizing the “out of sight out of mind” complex. The next chapter will take this into account and discuss this aspect within Statoil, and its relevance to international willingness within the organization.

9 Discussion: Facilitating the Professional and Organizational Need

Within their theories, Baruch and Altman (2012; 2002) elaborate how the expat can differentiate their path from the organizations approach to international assignments. They do not however, highlight any major consequences for this deviation. Although the majority of the informants seem to be self-initiated, they are sent abroad on behalf of their organization and might expect outcomes other than personal value. Altman and Baruch (2012, p. 244) did however expect a more flexible attitude toward the expatriation among self-initiated, and that expectations (psychological contract) upon return impact the repatriation. This chapter will try to connect Statoil's international strategy with expectations expressed from the informants as well as the mobility needs expressed from the organization. I explore the possibilities for a further development of an expat policy that is both favorable for the expat and for Statoil, combining means to enhance international willingness as well as securing both personal and organizational outcomes.

9.1 Reviewing the Psychological Contract

The psychological contract can be understood as a development of mental models about how a career will look like within the organization, based on both formal and informal promises and expectations made in writing or in speech (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009, p. 383). Expatriation poses as a significant transition in an employee's life and career, containing a level of uncertainty that would be interpreted in line with this psychological contract (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009, p. 381). From an employee's perspective, it is not uncommon to expect a career progression or new opportunities when returning to the home country (Doherty et al., 2011; Hippler, 2009; Konopaske et al., 2009). Taking on an international assignment is said to increase the prominence of the psychological contract, where the expat is believed to do a risk analysis of positive and negative consequences (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009, p. 384). Expats of Statoil view the risk of losing something at home (job opportunities, giving up a position, out of sight), safety issues and social connections, while gaining experience, responsibility, challenges and development was outlined as positive. As discussed in the previous chapter, the expats of Statoil are most similar to the Professional, also with traces of the Peripheral, where the expatriation fulfills personal development. The psychological contract influences the whole process of expatriation, starting with accepting

the IA, to expectations of outcomes upon return (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009, p. 381), and is therefore believed to have a significant impact on the international willingness. As the expat considers risks and benefits, they will as Professionals, and especially as Peripherals, take into account the importance of the location, but for different reasons. The Peripheral will focus on what the location has to offer for personal development while the Professional will evaluate the benefit of career capital. As the expat of Statoil have been expressing a mixture of both, it can be argued that they will have somewhat higher acceptance criteria for the international assignment. As Statoil establishes business in high-risk environment, towards countries with high dissimilarity from it's home country (Statoil, 2013b), it is believed that unwillingness will arise if the risks are outweighing the benefits (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002).

The expectations formed within the psychological contract are argued to be transactional in the Professional path (Altman & Baruch, 2012) based on a give and take relationship. The individual might expect something in return as increased salary, benefits or career advancement. While the expectation of the expat is based on transactions, the psychological contract typical the Expedient organization is ambiguous and might not be clarified in advance (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002). If this is the case in Statoil, this might lead to different expectations between the expat and the organization, regarding the outcome of the IA. As we have seen, some are rather disappointed by the lack of career planning, while others view the value of the experience itself as sufficient. If the outcome is perceived as ambiguous, it might be argued that some individuals will focus on the risks of traveling abroad, because they are clearer than the unidentified benefits.

9.2 Pushing the International Out of the National?

Statoil communicates that it aims towards an increasing globalization of the company, focusing on international growth in the years to come, establishing business in high risk and cultural diverse countries. To do so, they need highly skilled employees with a cultural ability to adapt, flexibility and a "global mindset" (Statoil, 2013b). In the terms of the psychological contract, the individuals' agreement to become this "global actor" creates expectations about what they will gain. They might as well develop expectations on multiple levels, before, during and after the assignment (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009). Baruch and Altman (2002, p. 253) suggests that a corporation develops its expatriation approach in line with the market strategy, as it represent the corporations world view based on philosophy, organizational

culture and tradition. The informants of Statoil shared their view on how they perceived Statoil's approach to international activity.

I6: *We are an offshore corporation, only having the opportunity to speak Norwegian or Scandinavian [at home], and that's a huge barrier if you ask me. Then again I do understand why it is like that, because you have different agendas. But it's quite clear that if you really want to build a global corporation, and a global mindset those things are unacceptable.*

I8: *It is strange to be out there, discussing with those at home and the answer you get is: "This is not the way Statoil does it" and "it's not according to Statoil procedures" and so on. It may differ from location to location if you're traveling to a Statoil Project, but in a joint venture, where you are the "little guy", it becomes really strange.*

I5: *We are not able to have a culture in Statoil that embraces all of the countries. But I see that our regulations and standards, with our chief engineer and all, are very tuned in to working in Norway. Working internationally, we have a larger need of deviation management and flexibility. That's something we are lacking, and it makes it even harder working abroad. (...) Sometimes we are met with the attitude of: "yes, but you just have to demand it", but that becomes completely utopian. You can't demand to change a large corporate here [at the location].*

The informants reflections can be interpreted on the basis of Perlmutter's (1969, p. 11) description of home country attitudes. A lack of flexibility is found within the processes being performed overseas, interpreted among the informants as a lack of globalism. An interesting observation is that the expats do not display this ethnocentric attitude; on the contrary they criticize it. Informant 6 uttered an interesting point of an underlying factor of "different agendas". This could be interpreted as a diversification between the organizational objective of expatriation and the individual's interpretation of what it means to be working internationally. This is reflected by I8 and I5 as well, indicating that the organizational flexibility is inadequate in their eyes. Their reflections indicate that the organizational approach to international assignments is too much based on the home country values and needs. As these reflections arouse from the surface, there was an underlying sense that the organization was not as international as it was communicated.

I5: *I feel that the signals portrayed are: "we are a global corporation" and we focus a lot on that part. But it is a lot more communicated than performed in practice.*

I6: *In light of Statoil being a global company, or are working in the direction of becoming a global company. (...) We have a lot to do in that direction though, but at the same time we are represented in over 40 countries.*

The informants' evaluation is quite interesting for two reasons. As I5 indicates, the global is more communicated than performed in practice. Second, I6 quote could be interpreted as being global has more to it than being represented at different locations. As previously discussed, Statoil use expatriation mainly to transfer knowledge from their home country to its subsidiaries. The literature describes how organizations move through different transitions, in order to become global, with different attitudes and mentalities following the different approaches (Bartlett & Beamish, 2011; Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002; Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979; Perlmutter, 1969). As Statoil indicate, they are looking for individuals with a certain mindset characterized by global mobility, flexibility and ability for cultural adaptation (Statoil, 2013a, 2013b). Paradoxically, this "flexibility" is expressed to be lacking within headquarters, where a "national mindset" are portrayed to be prevailing. One could argue that "mindsets" are individual, but it can also be argued that cognitive structures can be considered as an attribute on an organizational level (Angelmar & Schneider, 1993). In other words, the "mindset" established within the organization may become a factor of how people think and act, both on national and international basis, and could be influenced by the way the organization portrays itself towards their workforce. An organization wanting to establish this "global mindset" within its corporate culture need to overcome certain barriers of the prevailing ethnocentrism deeply rooted at the core of the organization (Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979; Perlmutter, 1969).

Adler and Bartholomew (1992, p. 57) stresses the fact that HR systems in firms are found to be less globalized than their strategies, and in order to fill this gap the organization must learn how to recognize, value and use globally competent managers (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 60). The informants were asked how they could utilize their international competence on national ground, and the reflections highlighted this aspect.

I2: *I do wish that they were a lot more "on", regarding the utility of the experience you have gained. Because it can be used, not only in other international projects when you travel, but it might as well be used in Norway. (...) I'm not that sure I will have that opportunity. I do not feel safe that [the experience] will be captured and ensured.*

I8: *I have established successful relations on Russian ground, where my experience is fairly acknowledged and seen, while at home it isn't approved or valued. So it's kind of a separate fulfillment, but from Statoil's side isn't worth anything at all. And that is*

said from several of those who have been abroad. When it has been new projects and new things we have participated in, we do not get involved in the root query in viewpoints or discussions. I think we are too big of a company to handle that actually, or that our systems aren't sufficient enough. I've heard that from several others that have been abroad.

Their reflections can be interpreted as a reinforcement of the experience gained abroad becoming a capital for the expatriate, rather than the organization on national ground. This might undermine the expectations of being a global corporation, reinforcing ambiguity, as the international becomes something “out there” not something incorporated within the organization. Other informants also seemed skeptical towards how their international experience was distributed:

I1: *Now I get competence on this, on document management that might be of utility in another project. But I don't know that for sure, but I think that there is no downside by getting this experience.*

I7: *You have a resource manager and a task manager in the projects, and the resource manager will know if you have been abroad, and also in relation to what competence you possess. I'm not that sure if this is systematically handled though.*

The reflections and the interpretation regarding the repatriation phase could be referred to as retention of competencies, such as the knowing-why, knowing-how and knowing-whom (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Haslberger & Brewster, 2009). These competencies have been expressed to become valuable and motivational for the individual, and IAs offers the opportunity to increase their international competencies. With an increased focus on globalization, the informants might build up expectations towards utilization of these competences upon return. As the informants express, this connection is perceived with ambiguity on national ground. This can create a “split” between the national and international part of the organization, both physically and mentally. Or as informant 3 put it: “*which career should you choose?*”.

Becoming international is a complex matter in Statoil's case. They are in need of their highly skilled employees to be globally mobile in order to perform the tasks abroad, as well as an established willingness to do so in the future, portrayed as “a global mindset”. The expat traveling abroad seems to be in need for professional and personal development in order to do so, gathering international competence along the way. This competence is expressed to be of high value for the organization, because of their increasingly amount of

international projects. As IAs are set to be temporary in Statoil, the returning to the home country marks the end of the assignment, and the repatriation and retention part could be viewed as vital for ensuring competencies and the opportunity to reinforce international willingness. As addressed earlier, it has been indicated a perception of a career split between international activity and working nationally, in addition to lack of competence utility at repatriation. As a result, Statoil creates a need for Professionals that view expatriation with individual value, gathering international experience that is to be used on other international assignments. This has been indicated to result in continuous expatriating or a negative repatriation experience. It could be argued that the same set of people constitutes the “international” part of Statoil, on their move to different locations around the world. As an unintended consequence, the “international” part of Statoil becomes “invisible” on the national ground, leaving few incentives within the national workforce to act global. The “global” becomes something *we perform*, not something *we are*.

9.3 Facilitating Divergent and Shared Needs

It has been indicated that Statoil’s approach to international assignments is placed close to the Expedient, being somewhat ad hoc, contingent on individuals that see an intrinsic value of traveling abroad. As the prominence of the psychological contract increases in connection with expatriation (Haslberger & Brewster, 2009), the positive consequences of self development and professional challenges might be sufficient for the Professional, constitution his/hers international willingness. For others the aspect might not be as simple. Within the Expedient, risk is connected to expatriation, especially connected to the return (Yehuda Baruch & Altman, 2002), which is also indicated by the Statoil expats. For employees not pursuing the Professional path, the “added value” could be viewed as missing. The international competence becomes “invisible”, or something within the individual and not the organization. In order to encounter this, the organization needs to make the “international” an integrated part of the organization. Figure 4 is an attempt to visualize this aspect, taking into account the need of the expats and the organization, as well as adding a *shared* need portrayed as *global learning*.

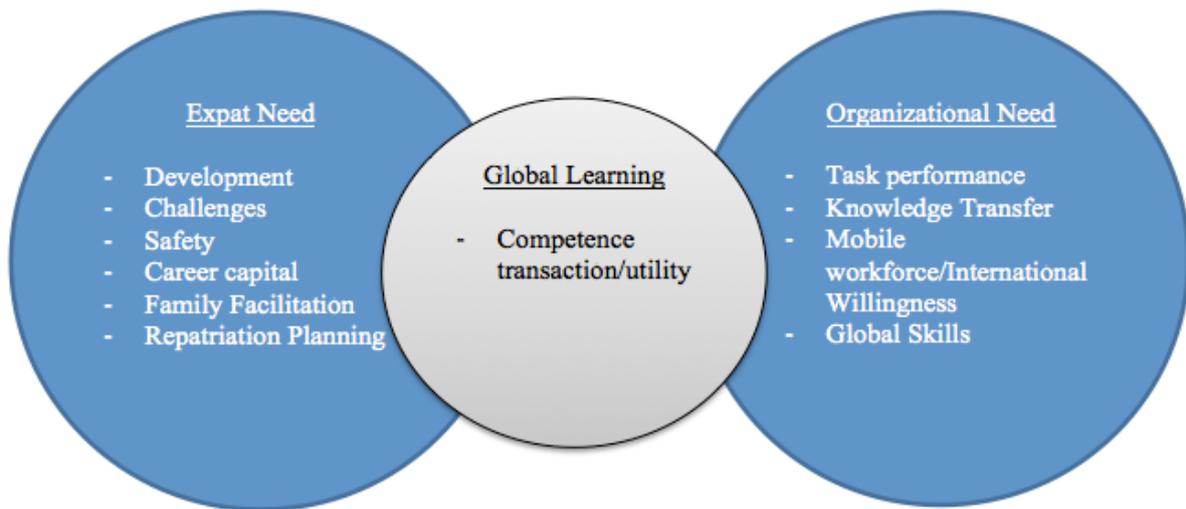


Fig. 4: Illustrated divergent and shared needs of expats and organization in context of International Assignments.

The figure takes into account what the expat has expressed as needs in order to engage in expatriation activity. Organizational support is also included as the need for safety, family facilitation and repatriation planning are components of the psychological contract. The shared need is based on the interpretation of the informant’s reflections on international assignments creating career capital (competence) for their own use, rather than translating it into specific corporate capital. It is believed that retention and acknowledgement/utilization of their competence on national ground fulfills the psychological contract of becoming “global” and may lead to future organizational commitment among expatriates (Guzzo et al., 1994). A visible valuation of international experience could have a function of branding the international career, as well as easing the repatriation by creating a link between the national and international. A potential risk, however, is the fact that employees of Statoil might view the international assignment as a one-time incident, returning home to a satisfying position that might lead to reduced willingness in the future. Contrary, the benefits are perceived to outweigh these risks. International competence becomes a valuable and visible part of the organization and unwilling employees might get incentives or perceive international experience as a necessity in order to align their career competencies with the organizations international development. Altogether, international assignments should be viewed as a *global learning process*, that can benefit the individual and the organization (Jokinen et al., 2008, p. 990), and not only a task/performance activity.

The figure should not be viewed as a simple answer on how to make employees more willing to travel abroad, because of the complexity of variables. The model is only a suggestion on how to make expatriation more appealing for managers, giving them incentives beyond the notion of the Professional and Peripheral path, and a sense that the IA has more value than performing a task under difficult circumstances. It offers them an opportunity to convert the generic career capital acquired to their development on national ground.

10 Conclusion

The objective of this study was to create an understanding of international willingness, viewed through the eyes of the expats in Statoil, in conjunction with the organizational context and literature on the field. The Norwegian expatriates of Statoil are dedicated individuals often pulled along by an identification with the project they are already involved in. The main reasons to travel is the importance of job involvement, increased responsibility, the feeling of independency, and professional and personal development. In evaluation of career motives, the expat of Statoil did not couple the expatriation with a corporate career. In fact some stated that the acceptance of an international assignment was rather a risk career wise, because of the distance to the network at home. They did however express a career motive of gaining international experience as generic career capital, something of personal value. Family motives and the dual career issue (spouse not willing to sacrifice their career) seem to inhibit the international willingness of the expats and the location needed to fulfill a threshold of possibility for personal and professional development, in addition to an ensured safety.

The expatriation paths of the informants seem to be diversified, tending towards self-development (Peripheral), indicating traces of the Emissary (commitment and strong connection to home), with a majority placed within the Professional (career for own gains). It has been claimed that Statoil have the characteristics of the Emissary, but indications of the Expedient approach was most visible analyzing the informants' reflections. This was grounded in a lack of corporate expatriate philosophy, with focus on filling ad hoc needs at given locations, which causes the individuals to establish own personal reasons for taking on assignments. The characteristic of Statoil's approach to expatriation can make the organization dependent on a certain set of individuals, people who view expatriation as something that gives individual value, willing to opt for a global career "outside" of the core.

The paths indicated by the informants create needs and expectations of what an expatriation will consist of. As the expat is focusing on professional- or self-development, they will evaluate the risk and benefits in line with that. Expectations might be ambiguous, which can cause a focus on risks because the benefits of accepting might not be clarified in advance. Statoil are striving to get their workforce to travel to high-risk countries. Statoil's approach to expatriation compared with the individuals' path indicates that the organization "pushes" the international out to the periphery of the organization, and that the international competencies acquired by the expats are not systematically utilized on national ground. This

may create a “distance” between the international and national part of the organization. It could be stated that Statoil facilitate for the expat need to gain international experience and development, as well as their own need for task performance and knowledge transfer. They do not however, facilitate for their future need of establishing a “global mindset” within the organization that would lead to international willingness. The barriers are already mentioned, as they push the global out of the national by attaching valuable international competence to the expats “outside” the organization, and to a lesser degree transfers it back into the “core”. As a result, the “global” is something that is *performed* in Statoil rather than a description of what the company is.

Heenan and Perlmutter (1979, p. 21; Perlmutter, 1969) express how every multinational organization are likely to consist of different attitudes, home country, host country and world-oriented and that categorizing the organization to one or the other would be naive and incorrect. In Statoil’s case, it can be argued that ethnocentrism is likely to prevail to a certain degree, especially at headquarters. Given their prominent position within Norwegian petroleum industry, an “internationalization” of a corporate culture might be difficult to comprehend on the basis of coercive isomorphism (Ghoshal & Westney, 2005, p. 48), where the organizational patterns and environment are partly controlled by a more powerful authority, the Norwegian Government. In other words, the attitudes prevailing within the organization are likely to be developed and institutionalized over a longer period of time, and may create a further distance between performing international activity and “being” global. Studying expatriation and international willingness through the “eyes” of institutionalism might bring the analysis of international willingness to another level. It is believed that institutional theories could enlighten the gap between the national and international of Statoil, formed as two different institutional environments, existing of different sets of values constituting different aspects of international willingness.

International willingness might also be studied on different levels. This study has been focusing on those who do travel. Other studies, with larger time and extent might enlighten the theme by including those who do not. This might reveal different aspects that might distinguish the groups from each other. In addition it would be interesting to compare Statoil with other multinational organizations of Norwegian identity, to study if it is the organizational or the national culture that inflects the degree of international willingness.

10.1 Recommendations

From an organizational point of view this study could be transformed into applicable recommendations. The recommendations concerns Statoil's present expatriation approach, and suggests some areas of improvement based on the data and analysis derived from this study.

1. Utilizing International Competence – Repatriation and beyond

In order to tighten the gap between the national and international part of the organization Statoil is recommended to add a more systematic approach in the repatriation phase of the internal IAP. As the informants have highlighted, the organizational support on return has been experienced as insufficient. This creates a lack of enthusiasm upon return, in addition to the feeling of having two separate careers within the organization. An acknowledgement of international competence on national ground is also believed to have a mirroring effect on employees "back home", and might increase the notion that international experience has value at the headquarters as well as within the international assignments. A concrete measure could be establishment of international work groups, composed of people of diverse backgrounds opting to utilize the international experience within the expatriates, and help them utilize their "global identity" within the organizational internal labor market.

2. Clarification of Expectations – The explicit psychological contract

Statoil should add a "clarification of expectations" within the pre-phase of their IAP. This is to be done in order to clarify the psychological contract for those who travel internationally. As the approach to expatriation tends to be ad hoc, the organizational support of the individual should be as well. People tend to travel for different reasons and expect the outcome to reflect their motivation. This should therefore be reflected in the repatriation phase of the process.

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12 Appendix

12.1 Interview Guide

Personalia

Alder?

Avdeling? Stilling?

Profesjonelle bakgrunn?

Hvor lenge har du jobbet i Statoil?

Tidligere internasjonal erfaring?

Motiver for internasjonal utstasjonering

1. Hvordan er din utstasjoneringssituasjon i dag? Hvor?
 - a. Hvilke betydning vil du si lokasjon har?

2. Hvilke betydning har oppdragets lengde for deg?
 - a. Hva er årsaken til denne lengden?
 - b. Ville dine holdninger til oppdraget endret seg på noe måte, dersom lengden var annerledes?

3. Valgte du å jobbe internasjonalt eller ble du rekruttert?
 - a. Hvis selvvalg: Hva var avgjørende for dette valget?
 - b. Hvis rekruttert: hvorfor akkurat deg?

4. Hvilke verdi tenker du at internasjonal utstasjonering gir deg?
 - a. Har dette endret seg på noen måte? Fra f.eks. før du startet i Statoil?

5. Det er en generell hypotese som trekker sammenhenger mellom det å være villig til internasjonale oppdrag og karriere. Hva tenker du om denne sammenhengen?
 - a. Hvor vil du plassere karriere i forbindelse med utstasjonering?
 - b. Er utstasjonering en del av din karriereplan på noen måte?
 - c. Hva er ditt generelle inntrykk av sammenhengen mellom internasjonal utstasjonering og karriere i Statoil?

6. Jeg skal nå liste opp noen faktorer som tidligere studier har diskutert å ha innvirkning på villigheten til å jobbe internasjonalt. Jeg ønsker at du skal evaluere dem på en skala fra 1-6 ifht. hvor viktige disse har vært for ditt valg. (hvor 6 er ”stor betydning”, og 1 er ”liten betydning”)
- i. Tilegne seg nye erfaringer
 - ii. Kompensasjon/fordeler
 - iii. Ektefelle og familiens støtte
 - iv. Mulige konsekvenser ved å takke nei
 - v. Søk etter faglige utfordringer
 - vi. Utvide dine kulturelle kunnskaper
 - vii. Destinasjonen/landet arbeidet skal foregå i
 - viii. Fremtidige karrieremuligheter
 - ix. Opplevd press/forventning fra organisasjon
 - x. Anbefalinger fra andre medarbeidere/ledere
 - xi. Oppholdets lengde
 - xii. Din tidligere internasjonale erfaring
 - xiii. Manglende utfordringer i stilling i hjemland
 - xiv. Friere rammer/ mindre restriksjoner i arbeidsmåte
7. Er det andre ting som har hatt betydning for deg?
- Spør om årsak til minst og høyest rangering – Hvorfor disse?

Før utstasjonering:

8. Andre hevder at villighet til å reise ut henger tett sammen med tidligere internasjonale erfaringer? Hvordan er dette i ditt tilfelle?
9. Hva skiller deg, som er villig til å jobbe internasjonalt, fra en person som ikke er villig?
- Innehar du noen form kompetanse eller ferdigheter som gjør deg mer kompetent?
 - Hva med holdninger ?
10. Noen opplever en grad av usikkerhet knyttet til internasjonal utstasjonering. Hvordan var dette i ditt tilfelle?

- Hva gjør slik usikkerhet med deg?
- Hva gjør at du velger å reise, selv om det er stor usikkerhet?

11. Åpenhet for andre kulturer er sagt å ha betydning i internasjonalt arbeid. Hvordan passer dette til dine erfaringer?

a. Hvordan var ditt første møtet med kulturen?

Under utstasjonering:

12. Noen rapporterer om utfordringer ved å tilpasse seg kulturen i landet man reiser til. Hva tenker du rundt dette?

a. Hva har vært essensielt for deg for å oppnå en tilpasning?

13. Hvordan opplever/opplevde du din rolle mot de lokale arbeiderne?

- Utviklet dette seg noe på noen måte?
- Hva har forårsaket denne utviklingen?

14. Opplever/Opplevde du noen forskjeller mellom ”de lokale” og dere norske på lokasjonen? Hvordan da?

15. Hvordan vil du sammenligne måten du jobber på ute, kontra hjemme?

16. Har dine motiver til å akseptere internasjonale oppdrag endret seg i den tiden du har vært utstasjonert? Hva førte til denne endringen?

Etter utstasjonering:

17. Repatrierte: Har din internasjonale erfaring endret måten du jobber på her hjemme? På hvilken måte?

Ekspatrierte: Tror du dine erfaringer vil endre måten du jobber på når du kommer hjem? På hvilken måte?

18. Noen hevder at måten man tenker på endrer seg etter man har vært utstasjonert. Hva er ditt syn på dette?

19. På hvilke måte tenker du at du får bruk for dine erfaringer hjemme i Norge?

- Når får du evt. bruk for dem?

20. Hva er ditt inntrykk av det å være globalt mobil?

- Hva er ditt inntrykk av global mobilitet i Statoil?

- Har dette endret seg på noen måte etter at du var utstasjonert?

21. Hvordan vil du sammenligne organisasjonens motiver for utstasjonering og ditt personlige mål?

Hjemme vs. ute

22. Hvordan vil du sammenligne stillingen du har hatt hjemme med den stillingen du har som utstasjonert? Eller visa versa?

23. Hvilke betydning hadde prosjektet for deg før du reiste ut?

- Involvert? Nytt?

24. Hvordan vil du si at din posisjon i Statoil nasjonalt, påvirkes av den internasjonale erfaringen du får fra utstasjoneringen?

25. Hvilke betydning har din fartstid i Statoil hatt på ditt valg om å reise utenlands?

Valg og barrierer

26. Hva kunne hindret deg fra å inngå i internasjonalt arbeid?

27. Hva er årsaken til at du valgte å utstasjoneres, kontra det å jobbe i Statoil i Norge.

28. Hvordan føler du det økonomiske, knyttet til utstasjonering, reflekterer det ansvaret og arbeid man utfører som utstasjonert?

12.2 Declaration of Consent

1. Som informant i studiet, har du krav på at informasjon som fremkommer ikke skal kunne spores tilbake til deg som enkeltperson og at informasjonen ikke skal brukes til andre formål enn det pågående studiet.

2. Som informant står du fritt til å trekke deg fra intervjuet til enhver tid. Du står også fritt til å legge inn anmodning om at informasjon som fremkommer blir slettet eller sensurert. Det vil også bli gjennomført sitatsjekk i forkant dersom dine refleksjoner blir brukt som direkte sitat i oppgaven, og du står da fritt til trekke ditt sitat dersom du ikke kjenner deg igjen i utsagnet eller føler deg feiltolket.

Du står også fritt til å be om at bruk av tale-opptaker ikke gjennomføres.

3. For å forsikre anonymitet vil data som innsamles behandles på følgende måte:

- Data som kommer frem under intervjuene vil slettes etter at de har tjent sitt formål.
- Lydopptak vil gjøres via iPhone, og vil slettes etter at data er transkribert.
- All data lagres på en passord beskyttet minnebrikke som kun undertegnede har tilgang på.
- Data som innhentes vil anonymiseres for å sikre informantens personvern.
- Studiet er meldt til Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (NSD)

4. Ved å underskrive denne erklæringen samtykker du til å inngå som informant i dette masterstudiet, og godkjenner at Magnus Breistein kan anvende informasjonen ut i fra de retningslinjer nevnt i pkt. 1-3.

Dato, sted: _____

Magnus Breistein

Informant

12.3 Cover Letter Informants

Hei,

Du er med denne mail invitert til å ta del som informant til min masteroppgave. Oppgaven er en avsluttende avhandling i masterstudiet: Organisasjon, ledelse og arbeid ved Universitetet i Oslo.

Oppgavens tema:

Oppgaven skrives i samarbeid med Statoil og avdelingen People and Organisation, People and Leadership Development (PO PLD). Temaet retter seg mot internasjonal utstasjonering, og søker å belyse "villigheten" til å bli utstasjonert, blant ansatte i Statoil.

Bakgrunn for utvalg:

Du er valgt på bakgrunn av din internasjonale erfaring, og det faktum at du er eller har vært utstasjonert på prosjekter i ditt arbeidsforhold.

Intervjuet:

Intervjuet vil ta form i et dybdeintervju, og varigheten er satt til ca. 60 minutter.

Personvern:

Som informant i studiet, vil ikke informasjon som kommer frem kunne spores tilbake til deg som enkeltperson, og materialet skal brukes til å belyse temaet i en større sammenheng. Det vil bli brukt en tale-opptaker under intervjuet, for å lettere kunne transkribere data i ettertid. Som informant, kan du etter ønske be om at denne bruken av tale-opptaker ikke gjennomføres.

Som informant står du fritt til å trekke deg fra intervjuet til enhver tid. Du står også fritt til å legge inn anmodning om at informasjon som fremkommer blir slettet eller sensurert. Det vil også bli gjennomført sitatsjekk i forkant dersom dine refleksjoner blir brukt som direkte sitat i oppgaven.

Behandling av data:

- Data som kommer frem under intervjuene vil slettes etter at de har tjent sitt formål.
- Lydopptakene vil gjøres via Iphone, og slettes etter at data er transkribert.
- All data lagres på en passord beskyttet minnebrikke som kun undertegnede har tilgang på.
- Data som innhentes vil anonymiseres for å sikre informantens personvern.

Jeg håper at du ønsker å være en bidragsyter i mitt studie, og ser frem til å treffe deg for å høre dine refleksjoner.

Studiet er meldt inn til Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste for å sikre etiske retningslinjer.

Med vennlig hilsen

Magnus Breistein