

Returning home after a civilian crisis management mission

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Finnish civilian crisis management experts represent a unique group of professionals who participate in temporary international assignments. Repatriation, the return back to the home country after living abroad, represents an important stage in the civilian crisis management cycle. Still, the repatriation of Finnish experts has received surprisingly little attention even though it can involve some difficulties personally and professionally, for instance if the experts' home organisations do not appreciate and value the skills and talents the expert has gained, or further developed, during the mission. This article offers insight into the repatriation process of the Finnish experts, leaning on a conceptual framework of the repatriation process, which takes into account prior research on repatriation, as well as on empirical evidence, primarily in the form of a study on police experts. In addition, this article provides information and support not only to the experts themselves, but also to the experts' home organisations, as well as to Crisis Management Centre (CMC) Finland, on how to prepare for and facilitate the repatriation process of the experts.

1 Introduction

Civilian crisis management (CCM) missions represent a unique form of international assignments in which individuals are not only confronted with a new culture and challenging tasks, but they also have to act in a demanding, and sometimes dangerous, environment. In the year 2009, the mental wellbeing of Finnish peacekeepers was under discussion and an incident was quoted in which the stress from a peacekeeping mission was taken out on bystanders in Finland, resulting in one injury and two deaths.¹ While peacekeeping and CCM missions are two very different types of international assignments, both in terms of tasks and equipment-wise, there are many similarities as well: CCM experts still serve in post-conflict zones, sometimes alongside peacekeepers, and thus can be faced with similar risks as peacekeepers during the international assignment.

On the fifth of August 2010, there were 159 Finns, hereafter Finnish experts, abroad working in CCM missions around the world.² Finnish experts are unique from many expatriates because during the mission they are employed by CMC Finland and after the mission they return to their home organisation and job, which by law they retain while on the mission.³ In addition, it is CMC Finland, as opposed to the home organisation, which is responsible for the expenses of the expert during the mission. While these experts serve in different countries with varying tasks and duties, as well as possess diverse personal characteristics, they all have one thing in common: all these experts will at one stage return back to their home country, they will "become repatriates."⁴

Repatriation, the return to one's home country from the foreign country, represents the last stage of the experts' CCM mission, which has proceeded in the following manner: CCM training;⁵ decision on a political level, usually by the

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA), regarding Finnish participation in a specific mission; recruitment by CMC Finland; pre-deployment training, usually arranged by CMC Finland; the mission; and finally repatriation, which includes a debriefing session organised by CMC Finland.⁶ Interestingly, it is this last stage that has been referred to as "arguably the most challenging and important transition in a global career. During the crucial repatriation period, overseas development is connected with prior experience to form an integrated career path."⁷ Although the Finnish experts may have found the mission to be a good experience, an experience in which they were able to use their skills and talents as well as possibly acquire new ones, research has found that on return the repatriates reception back to the home organisation is often less than favourable.⁸ In fact, the analysis on repatriated Finnish experts presented later in this article provides preliminary evidence that this may also be the case among Finnish experts working as police officers in Finland.

At first glance one might wonder whether the reception of the repatriates back to the home organisation is of any real importance. That is, why would the home organisations need to "cater to the special needs" of their returning employees? The thing is, these experts have most likely developed professionally during the CCM mission and could be a valuable asset to the organisation in today's increasingly global world. Moreover, if this does not motivate home organisations to take an interest in their repatriates, perhaps the following will:

As a result of traumatic repatriation experiences or limited career advancement opportunities, a substantial percentage of expatriates [individuals who move to a foreign country] leave the company upon completion of the international assignment. Past research on U.S. companies suggests that between 20 and 25% of repatriated employees leave their firm within a year after return.⁹

1 Helsingin Sanomat 28.12.2008; Bergqvist 2009, 36.

2 CMC Finland statistics 5.8.2010. Cf. Table 1 and Figure 2.

3 Siljanen 2009, 57. Cf. Finlex 12.2004/1287, 7§. Obviously, not all Finnish experts have a home organisation or job where to return.

4 Hyder & Lövblad 2007; Suutari & Brewster 2003, 1132.

5 Such as the European Union (EU) Core Course or the EU Civilian Police Course.

6 The civilian crisis management cycle was presented in CMC Finland 2010, 3.

7 Herman & Tetrick 2009, 69.

8 Stahl et al. 2009.

9 Stahl et al. 2009, 91.

The Finnish experts are likely to have a great deal to offer to their home organisations, but if the experts feel that their expertise remains unvalued, then they may leave their home organisation. This, in fact would be contrary to Finland's national strategy for civilian crisis management which states that the "time spent abroad in international postings should be viewed as a positive factor in terms of career development."¹⁰ Furthermore, if the expert decides to leave his/her home organisation, then the organisation would not only experience financial losses but would also lose the expertise of the expert.

The main purpose of this article is to serve as an aid to all those who are involved in the repatriation process of Finnish experts. More specifically, this article offers insight into the repatriation phenomenon, its complexity and dynamism as well as its multi-faceted nature. In addition, it provides information and support for organisations, especially CMC Finland and the experts' national employers (home organisations), on how to prepare for and facilitate the repatriation process of their experts (returning employees); a process which requires attention already before the expert has left for his/her mission.

The aforementioned aims are achieved by presenting a new conceptual framework of the repatriation process, with reference to current literature on repatriation (and expatriation). It is also achieved by exploring the repatriation of Finnish experts through empirical evidence, which primarily focuses on a study of a specific professional group of Finnish experts, police. In addition, reference will be made to other empirical studies on Finnish experts.¹¹

10 Mol 2008, 13.

11 This article is primarily a summary of the Master's thesis "Exploring the Repatriation of Finnish Civilian Crisis Management Personnel and Introducing a Conceptual Framework of the Repatriation Process" written in 2009 by Eeva-Maria Siljanen. In addition, this article incorporates some new research findings.

2 The repatriation process

2.1 *How can repatriation be explained?*

The return to one's home country after living in a foreign country has received far less academic attention than expatriation, which is the move or transition to a foreign country. Since the repatriate is returning to a place in which s/he has, in most cases, spent the majority of his/her life, the return back home was expected to progress relative smoothly.¹² In addition, repatriation adjustment was thought to occur in a similar fashion as adjustment within one's home country or to a foreign country. Research, however, has actually demonstrated that adjustment during repatriation can be problematic and present more difficulties than those experienced during expatriation.¹³ Repatriation adjustment can even be more challenging¹⁴ and stressful¹⁵. In the case of expatriation, difficulties are almost expected as the expatriate is confronted with a new culture. Juan Sanchez, Paul Spector and Cary Cooper, for instance, remark that "learning to manage in and cope with a foreign environment involves such a profound personal transformation that it has an analogue in the process of human development throughout the life-span."¹⁶ Interestingly enough, this cannot be applied to repatriation, since the repatriate is returning home. The question therefore remains, what makes returning home problematic for some repatriates?

Although research on repatriation is in its early days in comparison to research on expatriation, the research that has been carried out up to this date offers some possible clues for why the return home can be so difficult. The words of Nelson Mandela serve as an illustrative opening in this respect: "There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged only to find the ways in which you yourself have altered."¹⁷ If one has ever experienced the return home following a brief,

or not so brief, spell abroad, one may relate to the words of Nelson Mandela for it is on return, and when confronted with one's compatriots, that one notices the changes in oneself, that is one has the peculiar sense of not quite belonging or "fitting in."¹⁸ As for home remaining "the same", repatriates sometimes expect life to stay the same while they are away: "It is as if they had pressed the 'pause' button as they flew out of the country and expected life at home to remain in 'freeze frame'."¹⁹ Furthermore, repatriates can sometimes have idealised memories of their home country, which may cause problems on return as the reality turns out to be different to the one expected. In addition to the aforementioned variables, repatriates have other individual, work and organisational, as well as non-work factors which may influence their adjustment during repatriation.²⁰

The first theoretical model on repatriation adjustment was offered by Stewart Black, Hal Gregersen and Mark Mendenhall in 1992. By distinguishing repatriation adjustment from other types of adjustment (expatriation adjustment and adjustment occurring during home country moves), this model laid the ground for repatriation research. It was proposed that during repatriation individuals had to face "adjustment to work, adjustment to interacting with home nationals, and adjustment to the general environment and culture," thus making the adjustment multifaceted.²¹ In addition, repatriation adjustment was explained using uncertainty reduction, which could occur both on return (in-country adjustment) and prior to returning home (anticipatory adjustment) and which could be explained using job, organisational, work and non-work variables (antecedent variables).²²

The original framework presented by Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall has been extended by other researchers and some new variables, in addition to new models, have been introduced as explanations for repatriation adjustment.

12 Andreason & Kinneer 2005; Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall (1992) quoted in Siljanen 2009, 10; Hyder & Lövblad 2007; Siljanen 2009, 10 & 25.

13 Siljanen 2009, 25 & 10.

14 Herman & Tetrick 2009, 69.

15 Sanchez, Cooper & Spector 2000, 104.

16 Ibid., 96.

17 Mandela 2010.

18 Sussman 2000, 365 (cf. 364).

19 Dowling & Welch quoted in Andreason & Kinneer 2005, 6.

20 cf. Siljanen 2009, 25–54.

21 Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall (1992) in Siljanen 2009, 13 & 26–27.

22 Siljanen 2009, 27–28.

As these models approached repatriation adjustment from more detailed and focused perspectives, there seemed to be a need for a more holistic approach to the repatriation process. Therefore, a new conceptual framework of the repatriation process was presented in 2009, which 1) takes into account the whole repatriation process yet explains it in a concise and simple manner, 2) is based on prior academic research on repatriation and 3) is based on the researcher's own understanding of the repatriation process.²³

Since repatriation has been studied less than expatriation, existing research on repatriation represents a combination of both empirical and more theoretical attempts towards explaining the repatriation phenomenon. Translated into practice, this means that there are many fine ideas and hypotheses regarding repatriation, some of which have been empirically tested and some which have not. Together, these sources form a complex and intertwined web which is difficult to unravel. Thus, for the sake of clarity, and also to avoid repetition, the repatriation process will be presented using the aforementioned conceptual framework, rather than by first presenting a thorough literature review of repatriation research and then presenting the framework. Although this framework is yet to be empirically tested, the framework was chosen as a tool to present the repatriation process because the framework represents an attempt to bring all the variables identified or hypothesised as relating to repatriation adjustment, as well as new ones, together to explain the repatriation process in a more holistic, or comprehensive, manner. Moreover, due to its conceptual nature this framework offers suggestions, or hypotheses, on how specific variables might influence repatriation adjustment. Lastly, however, it is important to note that the empirical study of police officers, presented later in this article, does not represent an empirical testing of the conceptual framework. Rather, it represents one of the first, if not the first, explorations into the repatriation of Finnish experts working in CCM missions.

2.2 The new conceptual framework

In this new conceptual framework the repatriation process is divided into three stages (before the expatriate assignment, during the expatriate assignment and during repatriation), which together form the repatriation experience (cf. Figure 1).²⁴

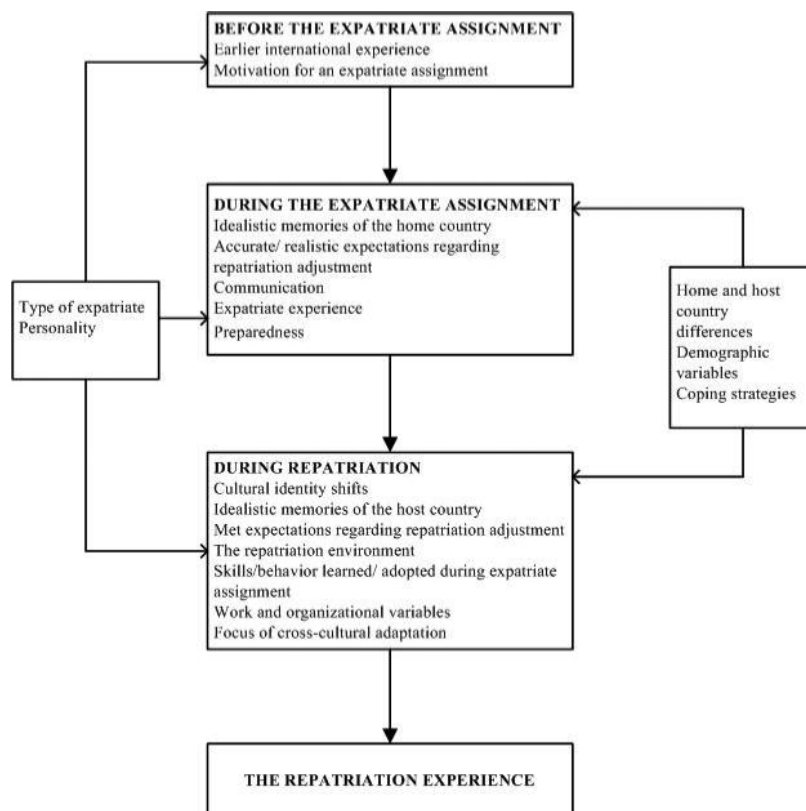


Figure 1: The repatriation process

2.2.1 Before the expatriate assignment

In this stage two variables are proposed to influence repatriation adjustment:

- 1) earlier international experience;
- 2) motivation for the expatriate assignment (including interest in the assignment and assignment motivators).²⁵

Prior research has offered differing opinions on the influence of earlier experience on repatriation adjustment. The culture-learning theory proposed that repatriation adjustment becomes easier following successful expatriate adjustment since the individual has acquired "cultural coping skills."²⁶ Empirical evidence for this was provided by Nancy Adler, who found that those individuals who succeeded in adjustment during expatriation, in comparison to the less successful individuals, "were assessed as more effective, as more satisfied, and as being in a better mood at the re-entry."²⁷ Nan Sussman, on the other hand, proposed that repatriation adjustment becomes more difficult following successful adjustment during expatriation due to changes in one's cultural identity.²⁸ In fact, Sussman later found that neither

²³ The conceptual framework was originally presented in 2009 by Siljanen (cf. Siljanen 2009, 63 & 83–96).

²⁴ Siljanen 2009, 83–84.

²⁵ Ibid., 84–86.

²⁶ Sussman 2000, 365.

²⁷ Adler 1981, 352.

²⁸ Sussman 2000, 365.

of the aforementioned relations was correct.²⁹ Meanwhile, Vesa Suutari and Katja Välimaa found that "willingness to relocate internationally appeared to be a positive correlate of organisation adjustment."³⁰ Lastly, it has been proposed that motivation for the expatriate assignment, as well as earlier experience and information, would influence the repatriates' expectations regarding interacting with people in the home country, the actual home environment, and work. Expectations regarding work, for instance, would be completely different for an individual who partook in the international assignment in order to experience new cultures in comparison to an individual who participated in an international assignment in the hopes of career advancement on return.³¹

What does this mean for the Finnish experts? Firstly, if the expert has earlier international experience, then this experience will influence the three dimensions of repatriation adjustment (adjustment to work, to the general environment and to interaction with home nationals). However, the direction of the influence, whether positive or negative, depends not only on how the expert perceived the assignment, but also on other variables influencing the repatriation process. Secondly, it is safe to say that most of the experts, if not all, have had a definite interest in participating in the CCM mission. In comparison to other types of international assignments, such as business assignments, the Finnish experts have themselves applied for the mission, rather than being assigned, or "forced", on an assignment. Therefore, this interest, in addition to the freedom to decide whether to attend the mission or not, are expected to positively influence repatriation adjustment to work. As for assignment motivators, the experts are likely to possess varied reasons for participating in the mission.³² In fact, in recent interviews from Finnish experts participating in CCM missions some of the following were listed as reasons for participating in the mission: interest in an international assignment³³, favourable life situation³⁴, new professional skills³⁵ and the opportunity to use one's training³⁶. In addition, one study revealed that professional development was an assignment motivator for all the respondents.³⁷

The reason why these motivators are important during repatriation is because they are likely to either facilitate or hinder adjustment. Imagine for instance an expert who participated in the mission in order to be able to use all his/her skills, abilities and talents. Even if this was fulfilled during the mission, on return, the expert may be disappointed, and

frustrated, if the tasks in the home organisation are less challenging than those during the mission.

2.2.2 During the expatriate assignment

Five variables are proposed to influence repatriation adjustment in this stage:

- 1) idealistic memories of the home country;
- 2) accurate and realistic expectations regarding repatriation adjustment;
- 3) communication;
- 4) the expatriate experience;
- 5) preparedness for repatriation.³⁸

During the assignment, idealistic memories of the home country may be formed by some expatriates in such a way that the negative aspects vanish and "only the good aspects of home" remain.³⁹ These idealistic memories are expected to negatively influence all three dimensions of adjustment: adjustment to the general environment, adjustment to work and adjustment to interaction with home nationals.⁴⁰ It remains uncertain, however, if this is applicable to Finnish experts. The reason for this is that in most cases the expert's family remains in Finland while the expert is away on the mission as opposed to some other types of international assignments, in which the expatriate's family accompanies them abroad. It is likely, therefore, that the expert considers his/her "real life" to be back in Finland, in which case idealistic memories of the home country might remain unformed.

In the case of expectations regarding repatriation adjustment, a recent repatriation model has proposed that expectations regarding all three aspects of adjustment will influence the "repatriation experience."⁴¹ The new conceptual framework therefore proposes that accurate and realistic expectations regarding all three dimensions of repatriation adjustment will positively influence each dimension. Adjustment back to work would therefore be positively affected by the expert's realistic view of his/her tasks in the home organisation on return.⁴²

It has also been suggested that repatriation adjustment is influenced by the expatriates' communication behaviour. This framework proposes that 1) repatriation adjustment to work and to interaction with home nationals will be positively influenced by interpersonal communication with the home organisation, 2) repatriation adjustment to the general environment and to interacting with home nationals will be positively influenced by interpersonal communication with loved ones (friends and family), and 3) all three dimensions

29 Sussman 2002.

30 Suutari & Välimaa 2002, 628.

31 Hyder & Lövblad 2007.

32 Siljanen 2009, 85-86.

33 CMC Finland: Legal Officer at District Court Level.

34 CMC Finland: Police Adviser.

35 CMC Finland: Border Guard Expert.

36 CMC Finland: Rule of Law Adviser.

37 This study, conducted by CMC Finland and Tampere Peace Research Institute (Tapri), compared the characteristics and experiences of soldiers and civilians, and the study group consisted primarily of participants in certain crisis management training courses (CMC Finland & Tapri 2009, 7 & 9).

38 Siljanen 2009, 86-89.

39 Adler in Andreason & Kinneer 2005, as quoted in Siljanen 2009, 38.

40 Siljanen 2009, 86.

41 Hyder & Lövblad 2007.

42 Siljanen 2009, 87.

of adjustment will be positively influenced by frequent mass communication.⁴³

In fact, the Finnish expert satisfaction study (response rate of 62%, 139 experts), conducted by CMC Finland in the year 2009, shed some light on how the experts view communication behaviour. This study investigated expert satisfaction with recruitment and human resource management (HRM) after the responsibility of recruitment was transferred to CMC Finland from the Mol on the first of August 2008.⁴⁴ When asked to assess the human resources (HR) department's success in certain duties,⁴⁵ those experts, who started in their tasks after 1.1.2009 and during 1.8.–31.12.2008 were least satisfied with communication with the experts during the mission.⁴⁶ While the conclusion of the study was that the majority of the experts were satisfied with recruitment and HRM, improvements to communication with the experts was recommended, for instance in the form of a newsletter to the experts, which could include current information about CMC Finland. In addition, a web-based environment was proposed as a means of communication between CMC Finland and both expatriated and repatriated Finnish experts. In this environment those experts already working abroad could, for instance, give advice to those who are only just leaving for a mission. In addition, experts could share what they had learned and network with others.⁴⁷ This proposition is worthwhile considering, because it could assist experts going to a mission as well as those returning from a mission. Even if the Finnish experts experience a smooth repatriation process, this web-based environment could offer an arena for professional development through self-reflection and learning from the experiences of others.

Regarding the influence of the expatriate experience, Suutari and Välimaa have proposed a positive relation between repatriation adjustment and expatriate assignment satisfaction. While this proposition remained unsupported by

their empirical investigation, this framework proposes that repatriation adjustment will be either positively or negatively influenced by 1) satisfaction with all three dimensions of expatriate adjustment and 2) by high expatriate adjustment.⁴⁸ Furthermore, as empirical evidence from a Finnish sample has found all dimensions of repatriation adjustment to be negatively influenced by the duration of the assignment abroad,⁴⁹ this framework proposes that repatriation adjustment to the general environment, work, and interacting with home nationals will be negatively influenced by a longer stay abroad.⁵⁰ Finally, this framework proposes a new variable, the expatriate environment, to influence repatriation adjustment.⁵¹ As was discussed in the beginning of this article, the Finnish experts sometimes serve in dangerous, stressful and demanding environments, currently in Afghanistan and Iraq, and therefore this framework proposes that all dimensions of repatriation adjustment will be negatively influenced by this type of environment.⁵²

Lastly, this framework proposes that all dimensions of repatriation adjustment will be positively influenced by higher preparedness for repatriation.⁵³ This proposition is based on an empirical study which revealed that "the less the preparedness, the more distressing the repatriation experience."⁵⁴

2.2.3 During repatriation

Seven variables are proposed to relate to the final stage of the framework:

- 1) cultural identity shifts;
- 2) idealistic memories of the host country;
- 3) met expectations regarding repatriation adjustment;
- 4) the repatriation environment;
- 5) new skills and behaviours adopted during the expatriate assignment;
- 6) work and organisational factors;
- 7) the focus of the cross-cultural adaptation.⁵⁵

Changes in an individual's cultural identity have been proposed to influence repatriation adjustment.⁵⁶ According to Sussman, these changes, which are recognised on return, can be affirmative (sense of being a Finn strengthened), subtractive (sense of being a Finn lessened), additive (sense of the host country strengthened) and intercultural (sense of belonging to the whole world). Individuals who experience additive or subtractive shifts in their identity will find repatriation

43 Communication variables proposed by Cox 2004; Siljanen 2009, 87. Interpersonal communication includes for instance phone calls, loved ones visiting the expatriate and emails, while mass communication includes for instance films, news from the home country via different communication forms and television shows (Cox 2004). Nowadays, one could also add Skype and Facebook as means of keeping in touch with people.

44 CMC Finland 2010.

45 Luggage and travel guidance/arrangements, communication both before and during the mission and specification of the contract (CMC Finland 2010, 9).

46 The majority, 41%, of those who started after 1.1.2009 assessed the HR department as succeeding adequately in communication during the mission, while success in other duties was rated as either well or very well by the majority (scale: not at all, badly, adequately, well, very well). The majority, 52%, of those who started between 1.8.–31.12.2008 assessed success to be adequate in communication during the mission, while success in other duties was assessed by the majority as either well or very well, apart from communication before the assignment which 29% assessed as succeeding adequately, 29% as well and 29% as very well. The majority of those who started before 1.8.2008 assessed success in all duties adequately (CMC Finland 2010, 9–10).

47 CMC Finland 2010, 17.

48 Siljanen 2009, 87–88; Suutari & Välimaa 2002, 630.

49 Gregersen & Stroh 1997, 647.

50 Siljanen 2009, 87–88.

51 The influence of the expatriate environment was first proposed by Esko Siljanen in a discussion regarding the new conceptual framework.

52 Siljanen 2009, 88.

53 Ibid.

54 Sussman 2001.

55 Siljanen 2009, 89–93.

56 Sussman 2000; 2001; 2002.

more challenging than those experiencing intercultural and affirmative shifts, yet they will adapt well to the host country. In the case of affirmative and intercultural shifts, repatriation will be easier because those experiencing an affirmative shift will be happy to return home and those experiencing an intercultural shift will feel as though they can live anywhere. Therefore, this framework proposes that all the dimensions of repatriation adjustment will be positively influenced by intercultural and affirmative shifts, yet negatively influenced by additive and subtractive shifts.⁵⁷

As has already been stated, expatriates sometimes have idealistic memories of their home countries. The same can occur in the opposite direction: repatriates may have idealistic memories of the host country. Therefore, this framework proposes that all dimensions of repatriation adjustment will be negatively influenced by these memories.⁵⁸ Could the Finnish experts have such memories of the mission? As it is said, "time makes memories more golden." One need not use travels abroad as an example of more positive memories developing, since more likely than not every individual has "more golden" memories of a certain stage in his/her life, be that for instance from ones first job or some other significant life event.

As for expectations, this framework proposes that all three dimensions of repatriation adjustment will be influenced by met expectations regarding each dimension. For instance, if expectations regarding interacting with home nationals are met on return, then this will positively influence repatriation adjustment to interacting with home nationals. This proposition is based on the aforementioned model created by Akmal Hyder and Mikael Lövblad.⁵⁹ For instance, a repatriate may have expected career advancement on return: if this expectation is met, then this will have a positive effect on repatriation adjustment to work.

Empirical evidence has found that repatriation adjustment to work and to the general environment is positively affected by how long ago the repatriate returned home: the uncertainty provoked by the move back will decrease as knowledge of the home country increases.⁶⁰ In addition, often during international assignments the expatriates have a better social status and living conditions in comparison to those in the home country. In empirical studies, repatriation adjustment has either been uninfluenced or negatively influenced by a decrease in social status and living conditions. Therefore, this framework proposes that all dimensions of repatriation adjustment will be positively influenced by the return home occurring a longer time ago, and similar social status and living conditions on return to that during the expatriate assignment. The last variable relating to the repatriation environment is the repatriates' reception back home: the home organisation's welcoming reception will positively influence adjustment to work while the family and friends welcoming and warm reception will positively influence adjustment to interaction

with home nationals and adjustment to the general environment.⁶¹ This proposition was based on the remark that the level of interest, on the part of friends and family, in the repatriates' experiences abroad is often low.⁶²

Expatriates often learn or adopt new behaviour and skills during the expatriate assignment. This framework proposes that these skills and behaviours will influence all three dimensions of repatriation adjustment either in a positive or negative manner. For instance, a specific behaviour, which was accepted in the host country, may be inappropriate back in Finland, thus negatively effecting repatriation adjustment. Meanwhile, repatriation adjustment could be facilitated by certain skills and behaviours, such as the ability to get along with many types of people.⁶³

During repatriation the repatriate also faces the return back to the home organisation. Many work variables have been proposed to influence repatriation adjustment, and some have been empirically proven.⁶⁴ This framework proposes the following variables to influence adjustment to work positively: the repatriate can utilise the skills developed during the assignment, repatriation support practices are offered, home and host task interdependence, role clarity/ negotiations/ discretion, the repatriation situation is weakly constraining, and the repatriate is offered opportunities for career advancement. On the other hand, adjustment would be negatively influenced by new or conflicting job roles.⁶⁵

Finally, repatriation adjustment is proposed to be positively or negatively influenced by the focus of the cross-cultural adaptation.⁶⁶ It has been proposed that adaptation during the expatriate assignment succeeds if the expatriate has a focus for the adaptation, for instance other expatriates or one's career.⁶⁷ Applied to the Finnish experts, the focus of adaptation means that by focusing on one thing one may be more resistant to the influence of other variables.⁶⁸ For instance, if an expert focuses on his/her family, then difficulties in the home organisation, although influential, may be deemed less important in comparison to one's family.

2.2.4 During the expatriate assignment and repatriation

Three variables are proposed to influence the first two stages (during the expatriate assignment and during repatriation) in the framework:

- 1) differences between the home and host countries;
- 2) demographic variables;
- 3) coping strategies.⁶⁹

57 Siljanen 2009, 31–33 & 89–90.

58 Ibid., 90.

59 Hyder & Lövblad 2007.

60 Gregersen & Stroh 1997, 639 & 647–648.

61 Siljanen 2009, 90.

62 Andreason & Kinneer 2005, 6.

63 Siljanen 2009, 91.

64 Cf. Siljanen 2009, 42–48.

65 Siljanen 2009, 91.

66 Ibid., 91–92.

67 Siljanen & Lämsä in Siljanen 2009, 44.

68 Siljanen 2009, 92.

69 Ibid., 95–96.

Both stages are proposed to be negatively influenced by large differences between home and the host country (both in degree and cultural novelty).⁷⁰ The influence of demographic variables on repatriation adjustment has received many suggestions and some empirical investigations have been carried out with different results.⁷¹ Nevertheless, this framework proposes that repatriation adjustment will be either negatively or positively influenced by the repatriate possessing a higher level of education, being younger in age, being single, being female.⁷² Lastly, based on the findings of Jeffrey Herman and Lois Tetrick, who explored repatriation adjustment and coping strategies, this framework proposes that repatriation adjustment will be negatively influenced by emotion-focused strategies (strategies which focus on emotionally managing a stressor, for example withdrawing from a situation), and positively influenced by problem-focused coping strategies (strategies which focus on dealing with the actual stressor, for example trying to get to know people).⁷³

2.2.5 *The entire repatriation experience*

Two variables are proposed to influence the entire repatriation experience:

- 1) type of expatriate;
- 2) personality.⁷⁴

In a recent study, Tuula Siljanen proposed that the type of expatriate influences expatriate adjustment. Four types were identified as: global careerists (adapt easily to a foreign country, career oriented, multiple assignments in different countries, realistic world view, and broad expertise); idealisers (adapt easily, optimistic, ideologically driven, and satisfied with life); balanced experts (realistic, well-rounded and stay in one country for longer periods of time); and drifters (unsure of who they are and what they should do, searching for self).⁷⁵ This framework proposes that drifters will have a more difficult adjustment back home than the other three types of expatriates.⁷⁶ However, this proposition needs to be investigated further and the Finnish experts would serve as an interesting case because determining what drives these experts to CCM missions could facilitate their recruitment.

Secondly, an individual's personality, namely the Big Five personality, is proposed to influence all dimensions of repatriation adjustment positively. The specific characteristics which would facilitate adjustment derive from the proposition by Sharon Leiba-O'Sullivan who discussed the relation between proactive behaviour and the Big Five personality: "extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability, and agreeableness."⁷⁷

70 Siljanen 2009, 95.

71 Cf. Siljanen 2009, 28–29 & 41.

72 Siljanen 2009, 95.

73 Herman & Tetrick 2009, 70 & 75–76; Siljanen 2009, 96.

74 Siljanen 2009, 94.

75 Siljanen & Lämsä (2007) in Siljanen 2009, 43–44.

76 Siljanen 2009, 94.

77 Leiba-O'Sullivan (2002) quoted in Siljanen 2009, 94.

3 An exploration of the repatriation of Finnish experts

Professional group	Male	Female	Percentage %	Total
Rule of Law	15	9	15,1	24
Police	47	5	32,7	52
Border	10	3	8,1	13
Customs	4	0	2,0	4
Civilian Administration	1	0	0,6	1
Human Rights	0	5	3,1	5
Monitors	10	10	12,6	20
Mission Support	12	7	11,9	19
Mission/ Office Heads and their Advisers	9	7	10,1	16
Secretariats	0	5	3,1	5
MFA Officials	0	1	0,6	1
Total	106	53	100	159

Table 1: Finnish experts currently on mission by professional group 22.10.2010⁸⁰

3.1 Presenting the Finnish experts

On October 22nd, 2010, 159 Finnish experts were serving in various CCM missions around the world (cf. Table 1 and Figure 2). In fact, CMC Finland has now reached the goal set in *Finland's national strategy for civilian crisis management*, which declared the minimum number of Finnish experts to be 150.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the number of Finnish experts has remained above this goal since October 2009.⁷⁹ In terms of location and duties, the majority of the experts were concentrated to Europe (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo), Afghanistan and East-Caucasus and police represented the largest professional group of Finnish experts (cf. Figure 2).

78 Mol 2008, 13.

79 E-mail communication with CMC Finland Head of Research and Development Kirsi Henriksson, 20.7.2010.

80 CMC Finland Statistics, 22.10.2010.



Figure 2: Finnish experts' participation in civilian crisis management missions⁸¹

Year	Number	Gender		Percentage
		Male	Female	
2010	42	36	6	29
2009	73	59	14	50
2008	30	21	9	21
Total	145 ⁸³	116	29	100

Table 2: Repatriated Finnish experts according to year of repatriation⁸²

In terms of repatriated Finnish experts, 146 experts have returned during the years 2008 and 2010: 116 were males and 29 were females (cf. Table 2).

The experts had served in twenty different countries in missions organised by five organisations, with diverse tasks ranging from police advisors, deputy head of missions, and monitors to judges and legal officers (Cf. Tables 3 and 4).

81 Updated 22.10.2010.

82 CMC Finland statistics of repatriated experts, 22.10.2010.

83 The date of repatriation was missing for one expert, who was then excluded from the following tables of repatriated Finnish experts. Therefore, in reality, the total number of repatriated experts amounts to 146.

Country	Number of experts (N=145)
Kosovo	47
Afghanistan	23
Bosnia-Herzegovina	14
Georgia	13
Sudan	12
Palestinian Territories	10
Moldova & Ukraine	5
Other countries with less than 5 experts	21

Table 3: Repatriated Finnish experts according to location of the mission⁸⁴

Organisation	Number of experts (N=145)
European Union	98
United Nations	25
Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe	16
North Atlantic Treaty Organization	4
International Humanitarian Partnership	2

Table 4: Repatriated Finnish experts according to the organisation responsible for the mission⁸⁵

3.2 Repatriated police officers

3.2.1 Design of the study

A study explored the repatriation of all Finnish experts who had worked as police officers during a CCM mission and returned to Finland in the years 2008 to 2009. This group was selected because 1) on May 31, 2008 the majority of the experts on a CCM mission (47,9%) were police officers, and 2) the largest professional group to repatriate in the years 2008 and 2009 were police officers.⁸⁶ This study was conducted because the repatriation phenomenon represented an under-researched field, in which a great deal of the research has concentrated on repatriates from American multinational corporations.⁸⁷ Moreover, the Finnish experts represented a professional group whose repatriation remained unexplored. Therefore, the aims of the study were:

- How did these Finnish experts experience the civilian crisis management mission and the repatriation process?
- What assistance was offered to these experts during the civilian crisis management mission and the repatriation process, and did these experts feel that they needed any assistance?
- Can current theoretical knowledge of the repatriation process explain the repatriation of Finnish experts?

Data was collected using a quantitative survey, which was chosen because the researcher felt most at ease with this method and because the sample size was expected to be high. The survey, which included Likert-scale, open-ended and multiple-choice questions, was based on the researcher's experiences and understanding of the repatriation phenomenon as well as on the variables tested, or proposed, by academic research on repatriation.

Participation in the study was voluntary. CMC Finland sent a bulletin of the study to the repatriated police officers, who could respond to the questionnaire using the link provided in the bulletin. One important issue that had to be considered was the confidentiality and anonymity of the experts, especially because the number of experts participating in CCM missions

84 CMC Finland statistics of repatriated experts, 22.10.2010.

85 CMC Finland statistics of repatriated experts, 22.10.2010.

86 Siljanen 2009, 55–96.

87 Ibid., 12.

was quite low at the time of the study. The survey was filled in anonymously and specific details of missions, such as the country, were omitted from the study questions. Another issue to be considered was the experts and how the study would influence these experts. The possibility of the experts having to reminisce on difficult experiences during or after the mission was duly noted, yet this study was also considered an arena in which the experts could reflect on their experiences. Lastly, in considering the role of the client, CMC Finland, it was decided that CMC Finland would receive the final version of the thesis, while the responses to the survey would remain with the researcher in order to retain the confidentiality of the experts.

In terms of data collection, the study took a surprising twist during this phase as the number of repatriated police officers turned out to be less than expected: the survey was sent to only twelve experts. However, as the study represented, to the researcher's knowledge, one of the first (if not the first) study on the repatriation of Finnish experts, a decision was made to continue, rather than end the study. For this reason, no correlations were calculated during data analysis and greater focus was placed on qualitative analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the value of this study lies not in its sample size, but in the fact that it offers insight into the repatriation of Finnish experts, which has previously been undocumented (at least to the researcher's knowledge). Although the results of the study cannot directly be applied to concern all Finnish experts, it definitely opens the field for future research and discussion on the repatriation, and wellbeing, of our Finnish experts.

The survey was sent to twelve experts and the final response rate was ten experts:⁸⁹ seven were male and three were female. The majority of the experts (N=7) were either married or living in co-habitation, and all the experts were aged 35 or over. The highest educational level of the experts was diverse, as were the occupations of the experts (although two were in Police Command positions and three were police officers). In terms of international experience, eight of the experts had previous experience, which ranged from around one year to almost ten years. In addition, seven experts had participated in CCM missions before, ranging from two to seven missions.

3.2.2 Outcomes of the study

Motivation for the latest CCM mission

For all ten experts the initiative for participating in the mission derived from themselves as opposed to elsewhere. The reasons for participating in the mission were diverse,

with the most common one being a change, or break from their regular work and life (4 experts): "I sought a break from everyday work routines." Three experts discussed the international environment: "developing my skills of working in an international environment", "testing my ability to cope in an international police mission", and "I wanted an experience of an international work environment." In addition, for two experts a reason for participating in the mission was gaining new experiences. Furthermore, one of the reasons for one expert was "Seek more strength to continue in the home land tasks, which sometimes seem stagnant," while another expert noted that, "My own position feels familiar and safe after a chaotic operation." Other reasons included the development of language skills, pay, self-motivation, a CCM mission (in comparison to Finland) providing a better chance to help ones clientele, and contributing to "improving the situation in a crisis area."

Latest mission

The experts had different responsibilities during the mission, which ranged from leadership to administrative tasks and training. Four of the experts had been on a mission in Europe, one in Asia and five in the continent of Africa. For eight of the experts,⁹⁰ the length of the mission ranged from 12 to 35 months.

In terms of communication behaviour the experts kept the most contact with their friends and family (40% weekly and 60% daily)⁹¹. Contact with work occurred less (10% never; 80% every 2–6 months; 10% monthly). Meanwhile, 50% of the experts kept their knowledge of events (social/current) happening in Finland updated daily, while for 40% this occurred weekly and for 10% every 2–6 months.

Eight of the experts were satisfied with their latest mission while one could not say and one was not satisfied with the mission. This question, however, should have been phrased differently as one expert noted later in the survey that "there are some parts which you can be pleased with, but some parts which did not work."

When asked about pre-expectations regarding the return to Finland, five experts had no pre-expectations, which according to one of the experts was "because I have been in the same situation many times before." Two experts described some pre-expectations: "I expected some adjustment problems at work (new organisation at the local level) and at home (new everyday routines)" and "I thought returning home would be more difficult than going on the mission and adjusting to a new environment." On the other hand, three experts appeared to have no pre-expectations, but their feelings regarding returning to Finland appeared as either positive or neutral: "It is always nice to return home," "After I came home I did not

88 The survey was conducted in Finnish and the answers to the open-ended questions were translated into English. While care was taken to preserve the essence of the responses, there is always the possibility that something was lost during translation.

89 Eleven responses were received but two were identical, word for word: this was considered to be an error and so one of these responses was omitted (Siljanen 2009, 64).

90 The question regarding the length of the mission was confused with the previous question regarding location of the mission so some experts wrote down the location of the mission instead of the length of the mission (Siljanen 2009, 68).

91 Scale: never, every 2–6 months, monthly, weekly and daily.

During the operation (N=10)	Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Cannot say	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
I felt more Finnish than before the operation	60%	40%			
I felt more global than before the operation	50%	20%		30%	
I felt like an outsider both in Finland and the host country	90%			10%	

Table 5: Cultural identity and the CCM mission⁹²

even remember being away," and "I returned to my old work tasks back to being with my family."

Repatriation

The experts had returned to Finland recently, with their return occurring from less than one month to around one year ago. In terms of adjustment back to Finland, two experts had adjusted very well, two experts had adjusted well and six had adjusted moderately.

The cultural identity of the experts seemed to be uninfluenced by the mission (cf. Table 5), although one expert commented on the last proposition of feeling like an outsider in both countries and noted:

I somewhat agree, because I feel like an outsider in Finland and of course felt so in the operation's host country... but as a correction: Within the mission I did not feel like an outsider at all, but rather a part of an international community/ family, which was formed both among Finnish colleagues living together and with my work unit. Returning home: I have experienced the same frustration and repatriation difficulties feelings when I returned home after a year as an exchange-student and so I knew to expect this neg. reaction to returning from myself. Therefore I do not even take any stress about it. This probably comes with the territory when you have enjoyed the trip...⁹²

When asked about matched pre-expectations, three experts referred to having no pre-expectations, yet one noted that "It is nice to come home." In addition, for one expert the return home was something s/he was accustomed to. Meanwhile, for two experts the expectations matched reality completely, although one remarked that "Maybe after the operation I viewed matters more critically." For one expert the pre-expectations were pretty well met, although s/he noted that "adjustment difficulties lasted longer than I expected." The

expectations of two other experts were well met and finally, the expectations of one expert were met and this expert concluded that "therefore it is more difficult to return to the old than adjust to the new."

The experts were also asked about how they were treated on return. Nine experts experienced no change in the way their co-workers, friends or family treated them. However, two of these experts made the following comments: "everyone is already used to the fact that I sometimes go on foreign missions" and "the changes have occurred in me not in my neighbours." Meanwhile, one expert had experienced some changes in treatment by friends and co-workers, but not family: "friends were interested in my different experiences and my work colleagues did not really know how to take it." In addition, the experts were asked whether on return changes had occurred in their relationships with co-workers, friends or family. Seven experts reported no such changes while two experts had experienced some changes. In the case of one of these experts, sharing experiences from the mission was sometimes difficult since "the spectrum of events and people was so immense – in both good and bad," while the other expert observed that "Work colleagues keep more distance at least in the beginning," in addition to some changes occurring with his/her family who was "more sensitive to me planning a new mission." Lastly, one expert noted "Not as such. I do maybe appreciate my life in Finland more than before the operation."

In terms of positive and negative experiences of the return to Finland, one expert reported having neither, while one expert reported never having adjustment problems, either in Finland or elsewhere: "I strive to make my life resemble my own, wherever I am. In Finland there are less water- and electrical shortages than in the world. A traffic sign which is crooked does not bother me; in the posting all the traffic signs were more or less crooked." Furthermore, one expert noted that s/he had no negative, but many positive, experiences. One expert made an important comment stating that "The question is based on an assumption, which is not true in my case. There were no especially negative experiences." Examples of positive experiences included normal or old routines, relief of people that the expert was back, family's reception back, and "getting the central aspects of life back such as family, friends, hobbies and work." On the other hand, negative

92 Expert quote in Siljanen 2009, 71.

93 Almost an exact copy of the table in Siljanen 2009, 71.

On my return (N=10)	Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Cannot say	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
My work place was interested in my experiences abroad	50%	30%	10%	10%	
My work place recognised and valued my experiences abroad	60%	30%	10%		
My work place utilised my new skills	80%	10%	10%		
I received promotional opportunities on my return	90%		10%		
I felt I could influence my job tasks	40%	30%	20%	10%	
I was satisfied with the way in which my work place received me back	20%	30%	20%	30%	
I felt the operation influenced by career positively	60%	30%	10%		

Table 6: Home organisation's reception of the expert⁹⁵

experiences included decreased work motivation, changes in oneself and money.

What then facilitated the adjustment of these experts? Family was the most common facilitator, followed by everyday routines⁹⁴. One expert described his/her experiences in the following way: "Everyday routines and children keep you rooted in everyday life. The fact that you feel longed and loved from many directions is an important feeling." As for those factors which hinder adjustment, the responses of four experts included, for instance, their bank account being empty, being kept busy and settling the following conflict: "own life has gone forward – although now returned to the old."

Work

Apart from one expert, the rest of the experts had returned to their old job. It seems however, that although adjustment to the general environment and interaction with home nationals went relatively smoothly for the experts, adjustment to work caused more grievances. Table 6 describes the experts' experiences regarding home organisation reception back.

This question, was however, justly criticised by one expert who remarked that "The work place and its people are two different things: on an individual level, for example, which culminates to the manager level – at least until now no positive consequences of being on the mission are detected."

Although the reception from the home organisation could have been better, only four experts (out of the nine who responded to this question) had actually considered changing their jobs. For two of these experts the quest for new challenges influenced their desire to change their job: "During the mission I became accustomed to a managerial position, but also to completely new hands-on challenges and now I return to the bottom of the litter in my own unit and to the same slow paper rolling as before the mission feelings of frustration." In addition, career progression problems influenced one expert to desire to change jobs: career advancement "in my current work place is completely stuck, because like a dictator the leader of the unit does not like us employees who go on international assignments." An altered view of one expert's job appeared as his/her reason for the desire to change jobs: during the time away from the job the expert realised that s/he "can live completely happy also in another job." Lastly, one expert had considered changing his/her job as a consequence of "the altogether lukewarm reception in the work place." This expert, however, would stay in the same job because of "the possibility of going to new missions from police work," "financial security during these times" and "family's opinion to stay in the same area." While some of the experts had considered changing jobs, only one expert had. This had occurred because of an offer of a temporary job elsewhere; the expert was not satisfied with his/her new job and wished to return this his/her previous employer.

Lastly, the experts reflected on how the mission influenced their jobs in Finland (cf. Table 7). The majority of the experts found the mission useful for their normal job back in the home organisation, but only 30% felt as though the mission motivated this job in a new way.

94 A recent study conducted by CMC Finland and TAPRI also remarked that quickly commencing everyday routines, as well as work, facilitated repatriation adjustment (CMC Finland & Tapri 2009, 21).

95 Almost an exact copy of a table from Siljanen 2009, 75.

N=10 (one expert left all these answers blank)	Yes	No
The operation was useful for my own basic job	80%	10%
The operation changed my view of my own profession and job	30%	60%
The operation motivated me in a new way in my own basic job	40%	50%

Table 7: CCM mission and the expert's job⁹⁶

The ways in which the experts' opinions regarding their job and profession were altered by the mission included greater insight into the work of police as well as greater respect for the skills of Finnish police: "It appears that you can throw a Finnish police officer to any job and it will get done. We Finns received very positive feedback from the mission both from colleagues and from the mission's management and we knew we were doing a good job and results [or outcomes]."⁹⁷ Meanwhile, one expert experienced a weakened view of his/her profession.

Health

For five experts the mission did not influence their physical and mental health, although one expert noted a loss of muscle mass due to a bad diet and lower levels of physical activity. Meanwhile, two experts for instance had reported some health problems during the mission, while two other experts noted some changes in their mental health: they felt tired mentally. Only one expert stated that during the mission s/he had experienced a difficult situation, influencing him/her professionally or personally, which s/he was thinking about on return. During the mission the expert had however received support in dealing with this experience from his/her partner and colleagues.

Training

All the experts had received preparatory training before and at the start of the mission. In addition, nine out of the ten experts felt that at the start of the operation they had enough information about the culture in the host country.

Support and debriefing

Half of the experts had received enough support prior to the mission and the majority of the experts (7/10) had the opportunity to consult a professional and discuss their experiences from the latest mission. In addition, the majority of the experts (8/10) had participated in the debriefing organised by CMC Finland.⁹⁸ Only three of the experts found

the debriefing useful, for instance because it offered a chance to share ones experiences with others, while one expert did not really know "whether the debriefing was useful." The remaining four experts heavily criticised the debriefing because it was seen as lacking a practical basis. In terms of support on return, four of the experts felt that they required no support on return to Finland, while another expert noted that "previous experience seems to be the best trainer." On the other hand, one expert, for example, would have hoped for a longer debriefing and career management in the home organisation. In addition, this expert would have liked "Reality based descriptions of how different persons had experienced their return, both within their work and private life (peer stories)."

New mission?

Eight of the experts expressed interest in a new CCM mission and the assignment motivators were similar to the ones listed in the latest mission.

3.2.3 Repatriation – a positive or negative experience?

The evidence obtained from the responses of the ten Finnish experts seems to indicate that the experts were professional, pro-active, individuals whose repatriation process progressed relatively smoothly, apart from the less favourable work conditions. The assignment motivators of the experts expressed pro-activity, for instance by seeking motivation for homeland duties and by expressing a desire to develop ones skills. The majority of the experts were satisfied with their latest mission and none of the experts had experienced a poor or very poor adjustment back to Finland. As for the work related matters the experts experienced less favourable conditions at work, which was expected on the basis of prior research. For the majority of the experts, the mission did not influence their career positively. Lastly, the experts appeared fairly content with the amount of support offered during repatriation. The conclusion of this empirical study therefore was that based on these findings, the repatriation of Finnish experts cannot be explained by current theoretical research on repatriation. However, it was noted that due to the small sample size, no final or conclusive remarks can be made regarding the repatriation process of the Finnish experts.

⁹⁶ Almost an exact copy of a table in Siljanen 2009, 76.

⁹⁷ Siljanen 2009, 77.

⁹⁸ One of the remaining two experts had not participated in the debriefing yet because of his/her recent return, but was waiting to do so.

4 Discussion

The repatriation process of Finnish experts has been explored with the aid of a conceptual framework of the repatriation process as well as with empirical findings, primarily from the study of police. Although neither the framework nor the empirical study are able to offer concrete facts regarding the repatriation of Finnish experts, they do shed light on how the process might proceed and what kind of experiences some experts may have. It must, however, be noted that the aforementioned case study represented one of the first, if not the first, studies conducted on the repatriation of Finnish experts. While acknowledging the lack of concrete evidence, as well as the fact that research on repatriation in general still has a long road ahead, this chapter will still proceed in presenting a summary of the repatriation process of Finnish experts. Keeping in mind that the following thoughts on the repatriation process of Finnish experts require further empirical testing, this summary is still built on prior theoretical and empirical evidence of the repatriation process, as well as the researcher's own understanding of the phenomenon.

On one hand, the repatriation process of Finnish experts appears to be slightly different than that of many other professional groups. The temporal nature of CCM missions could be one factor contributing to this difference, since for many experts their "real" home remains in Finland and the mission represents something temporary:

During the mission you in a way experience a new birth and everyone starts from a clean slate – defining, to a certain extent, their own destiny again without history – also aware of the fact that the mission lasts a certain time – the issue at hand is not an eternal project.⁹⁹

Furthermore, the environment and surroundings of the mission are often less fruitful for a deeper adjustment to the host culture and country to occur. One must also not forget those experts who participate in multiple missions: for some their permanent home continues to be Finland while for others their home changes with each mission (and country). Difficulties in

such a lifestyle arise when the expert is unable to uphold his/her professional skills and simply attends numerous missions, that is, s/he becomes a mission-junky.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, the Finnish experts in the case study did face less favourable work conditions, which is in line with the experiences of some other professional groups. But how exactly does the repatriation process of Finnish experts really proceed?

As all the experts are unique individuals with diverse personal characteristics and life experiences, they will naturally experience repatriation in different ways. In addition, the actual mission may influence the repatriation of some experts, especially if these experts have been under a great deal of stress or have experienced threatening events during the mission. Two key factors that are likely to influence the repatriation of all Finnish experts are assignment motivators and work conditions on return. Assignment motivators are expected to play an important role in repatriation because they influence the way in which the experts view their return to Finland. For instance, if an expert has attended the mission because his/her professional or personal life was problematic at home, then the return home will most likely be difficult.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, work conditions on return are likely to be very important in the repatriation process of Finnish experts, especially for those who have attended the mission for professional development. Imagine the frustration on return, if the job provides no new challenges or chances to fully apply one's skills.

To summarise, the repatriation process can be experienced in many ways, and to the surprise of some individuals, it can even be immensely difficult. Even though Finnish experts may find repatriation relatively easy, understanding what the process involves will be helpful not only for the experts themselves, but also for their home organisations, as well as for the experts' loved ones. The following chapter will present recommendations for the experts themselves as well as to CMC Finland and the experts' home organisations.

99 Empirical study of police in Siljanen 2009, 82.

100 CMC Finland & Tapri 2009, 21–22.

101 Ibid., 21.

5 Recommendations

5.1 *Experts calling – recommendations to CMC Finland*

CMC Finland has an important role to play in the repatriation process of the Finnish experts since it 1) is involved in the recruitment of most of the experts, 2) is responsible for HRM during the mission, and 3) organises a debriefing on return. The recommendations for CMC Finland are:

- Discuss the assignment motivators of the experts. This can help identify possible problems and help in developing the debriefing and facilitating the repatriation of the experts;
- Discuss the repatriation process in the pre-deployment training. In addition, the expert's family should also be involved at this, and other, stage(s);
- Keep in contact with the experts while they are on the CCM mission. The frequency of communication depends on each expert, but communication is important for the wellbeing of the experts, which will also influence their repatriation. The experts can be informed of current research in civilian crisis management as well as on current events organised at CMC Finland.¹⁰² The aforementioned web-based environment for the Finnish experts, as well as for repatriated experts, might prove very fruitful not only in facilitating the repatriation of the experts, but also in assisting new experts going on a CCM mission;
- Pay attention to how the debriefing is organised. Consult repatriated experts to determine what the debriefing should entail. If organised well, the debriefing will assist CMC Finland develop its activities as well as facilitate the repatriation of Finnish experts.

5.2 *The clock is ticking – recommendations to home organisations*

Finnish experts going on CCM missions can present a challenge to the HR of the home organisations, since a gap in expertise will be left in the organisation while the expert is away. The most important recommendation for the home organisations is valuing your employee, the Finnish expert, and showing an interest in him/her. With relatively simple measures, the home organisations can not only facilitate the repatriation of the expert but also take advantage of the experts' experiences and abilities/ skills. The recommendations for the home organisations are:

- Hold a meeting before the expert leaves for the mission. Discuss how the expert feels about his/her current job, what motivated him/her to go on the mission, for example, was it a lack of motivation at work, what the expert expects from the mission and its influence on the job on return, and lastly, what the expert expects from his/her job on return;
- Prior to the expert returning, or soon after the expert returns, hold another meeting with the expert to discuss what the expert has learned during the mission, what skills/ talents have further developed, have any new skills been learned, and how these skills/ talents could best be applied in the home organisation. In addition, discuss the expectations of the expert regarding his/her job. The home organisation can also keep in contact with the expert while s/he is on the mission, but this must be discussed with and approved by the expert before s/he leaves. If the expert for instance attends the mission in order to have a break from his normal work, then frequent contact by the home organisation may do more harm than good;
- View CCM missions positively and treat the experts fairly. For instance, in the case of career advancement and promotions, the CCM mission should not be considered a weakness or hindrance in situations where the expert completely matches

¹⁰² Based on the aforementioned expert satisfaction survey CMC Finland has already started sending a newsletter to the Finnish experts currently on mission.

the skills/talents of another employee who has stayed in the home country (compare this with the view presented in *Finland's national strategy of civilian crisis management* regarding the influence of a mission on careers¹⁰³).

5.3 *On this joyous occasion – recommendations to the Finnish experts*

Returning back home from a CCM mission evokes different feelings among the experts. For Finnish experts the recommendations are:

- Before applying for a CCM mission, consider your assignment motivators: are you looking to develop professionally, search for a “better” life elsewhere or gain new experiences?;
- On the mission, keep in contact with your loved ones (and your home organisation if you wish to do so), because this will facilitate your adjustment back to Finland;
- Prior to returning, spend some time reflecting on your assignment motivators, the mission and the upcoming return home. Consider the following questions: Were your expectations of the mission met? How do the assignment motivators reflect on the mission and the return home? What have you learnt during the mission and have you further developed already existing skills/ talents? What do you expect from your return, especially in relation to family, friends and work?;
- On return to the home organisation, make sure your employer is aware of your skills/ talents and expectations regarding your job. If the home organisation seems less interested in your experiences, you can ask to meet your superior to discuss your current tasks/ duties as well as career progression.

103 “The release of personnel from various administrative branches for civilian crisis management posts must be encouraged, and time spent abroad in international postings should be viewed as a positive factor in terms of career development” (Mol 2008, 13).

6 Conclusion

Repatriation represents a complex, multi-factorial, phenomenon, in which a combination of variables is thought to either facilitate or hinder repatriation adjustment. What those variables are can depend on the personal characteristics and coping skills, as well as life experiences, of the expert, in addition to the influence of the outside world (work, non-work, and the surrounding network of people). The repatriation of Finnish experts, as well as the repatriation phenomenon in general, still requires further exploration in order to determine why repatriation adjustment is easier for some individuals and more difficult for others. Although it appears that the repatriation process of the Finnish experts differs in some ways with that of some other professional groups, the Finnish experts may experience less favourable work conditions, which has actually been the experience of some other professional groups as well.

Even though the repatriation process may progress relatively smoothly for most Finnish experts, returning back to the home country represents a change in the experts' life. When confronted with change, be it big or small, individuals may be more sensitive and open to personal reflection and evaluation. Repatriation, although representing only one stage in the civilian crisis management cycle of the Finnish expert, provides an excellent opportunity for self-reflection of the past (the mission that has just ended), present (confronting the return home) and future (future endeavours/ career/ personal life). As such opportunities do not always arise naturally, or are not actively sought, repatriation could be embraced positively. Therefore, even those experts who find they have nothing in particular to adjust back to could take the opportunity presented by the recent return home to pause and reflect on their life.

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