

# International Employee Adjustment: How to Efficiently Facilitate Peak Performance of new International Hires

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An Exploratory Case Study of Norwegian Academic Institutions

Master Thesis in International Business

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This thesis was written as a part of the Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration at NHH. Please note that neither the institution nor the examiners are responsible – through the approval of this thesis – for the theories and methods used, or results and conclusions drawn in this work.

## **Abstract**

**Purpose** - The purpose of this master thesis, is to condense established insight into the aspects which hampers the performance of International Hires in academic institutions, and provide managers with a guide to how to tackle the challenges in order to make the hire successful and value creating.

**Design/Methodology/Approach** - An exploratory and qualitative research approach will be used. Interviews will be conducted with both parts of the international hiring process, namely domestic managers/administrators and international hires currently working in domestic businesses, but mostly with the international hires themselves.

**Findings** - There is no doubt that any change in culture, either national, regional or corporate, will influence a person's well-being, and hence performance. In this paper, I have looked at the direct causes of performance degradation. Solutions as to how to limit the degradation, with a focus on Norwegian academic institutions, have been suggested.

**Limitations** – The interviews were performed at two Norwegian Academic Institutions at the University level. Therefore the conclusions derived from this research cannot be carelessly applied to firms in the private sector, more research is needed.

**Originality/Value** - This paper has been aimed at giving a better understanding of the problems facing companies that hire foreign employees, and how the company can deal with the performance issues related to the transition process, notably the drop in performance immediately following relocation.

**Key Words** – Adjustment theory, Cultural Shock, International Human Resources Management, Inpatriate relocation theory, Migration of Knowledge Workers.

**Paper Type** - Empirical

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Secondly, I would thank all the participants in my research, and especially for providing me with more than was asked for of their spare time to help me uncover the real truths behind the issues facing international hires when relocation to Norway.

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## Foreword

*“Everyone you will ever meet knows something you don't.”* (Nye, 2012) These wise words were spoken by William “Bill” Nye “the Science Guy” in an interactive online AMA (Ask Me Anything) in July 2012. The purpose of this finely composed sentence was to epitomize how Mr. Nye firmly believes that knowledge sharing is the key to a brighter and better future. I believe these words to hold true, especially in relation to cross-cultural diversity. This thesis will follow in his train of thought.

This master thesis is written as a part of the MSc in Economics and Business Administration, major in International Business (MIB), at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH). The research has been supervised by Associate Professor Anne Kari Bjørge at the Department of Professional and Intercultural Communication at NHH. The data used to support my arguments have been collected through thorough qualitative interviews with both sides of the inpatriation process, at two Norwegian Academic Institutions, namely UiB in Bergen, and GUC in Gjøvik. The topic of international employee adjustment was chosen after some careful consideration and discussion with my supervisor. My master specialisation has, for the past two years, been International Business. The core concept educated in this programme is that business is becoming ever more international. To survive, domestic (and international) firms must move away from their old ways of ethnocentrism, and embrace the diversity and superior competitiveness that lies in foreign inputs to production, with an emphasis on the competence embedded in international human capital.

During the course of the writing of this thesis, I had the chance to talk to a lot of people responsible for, and participating in, the relocation of knowledge workers (that is the process of taking them from one country to another), to those I am immensely grateful. They provided me with quite the insight into the process itself, and all the challenges and opportunities that stemmed from it. The results of this thesis will not be revolutionary in any way, but hopefully it will provide a starting point for any firm or individual interested in capitalizing the benefits of employing foreign human capital.

The process of writing the thesis has been beneficial for my development as a student and hopeful professional. It has been tough at times, but enduring these times has been rewarding.

Gjøvik, 19 June 2014

Thormod M. Bakke



# 1 Introduction

The reason for hiring foreign labour is twofold. Either it is an effect of limited domestic supply, where the firm must look beyond borders to find the right competence to fill the position. Or it is a result of the firm's explicit internationalization strategy.

*“I think internationalisation is a major point for Norwegian Universities... It's not just hiring people in, it is also making Norwegians fit for the international market”* UIB IH 2

*“There is one thing I would address as a problem, not a personal problem, I see this as a problem for Norwegian Universities. The incentives to show a higher degree of enthusiasm for what you are doing, are relatively few. The private life is a holy thing, so people are simply going home. This can be a disadvantage for the universities. If you have a milieu that is buzzing, there's energy, people want to do their work and they would be more inclined to engage in projects and so on, without asking about working hours”* UIB IH 2

*“I also think that things can change, discussion culture or so. Not that I want to be a teacher of my colleagues or so, no. And I would not say that I know things better, but just by being there and adding something, you change the system”* UIB IH 2

Regardless of reason for why one might hire skilled labour abroad, the firm will always want the new employee to create value for the company as soon as possible. This can only be achieved after the international employee has overcome the discomfort of moving to, and starting to work in, an environment that is different from the one of which he or she was familiar.

In this thesis I will study the factors that influence the rate or speed of adaptation for international competent knowledge workers being hired into Norwegian academic institutions for full time positions.

## 1.1 Background

The importance of foreign sourced competence is not new in any regard. In earlier times, when there was a lack of a specific competence in any field of work, the area of sourcing workers was expanded in order to find the right competence at the right time. In modern globalized times, finding the right competence for highly specialized positions domestically, seems almost impossible, and in practice, it is.

In order to succeed globally, Norwegian firms need to remain competitive in the market. In order to achieve this, they need to maintain a high level of productivity and innovation. To reach this ideal state, there has to be an abundance of the right competence within the firm. Internally in Norway, the institutions does not manage to create enough highly specialized competence to the level that firms demand. Hiring said competence from abroad seems to be the only viable solution in the short term.

The background for this thesis was the idea of the hurdles that international employees face when they relocate to Norway. I had already taken a course called Cross Cultural Management in my Masters profile, in which I had the opportunity to interview an international employee that had extended experience with the issues relating to relocation to, and acculturating in, Norway. The relocation issue was also illuminated in several of the courses I participated in, within my Masters profile International Business.

On the background of these inputs, I chose to follow this train of thought and bring it into my master thesis. In working with the thesis, I had the opportunity to talk to a wider range of international employees and learned a lot of the issues that faced them in their attempts to relocate to working and living in Norway full time. The exact way of which I conducted the study can be found in the methodology part (part 4).

## **1.2 Purpose**

In recent times, more and more Norwegian firms have started to look abroad for specialized personnel. There may be several reasons for this, but I firmly believe that without the diversity embodied in an international workforce, domestic firms cannot maintain their competitive edge in the ever more global marketplace.

The true purpose of this paper is to provide Norwegian firms and institutions with the necessary background knowledge to properly recognize the potential that lies within foreign human resources, and the know-how to take advantage of that very potential. Through conducting an exploratory study of the matter (Robson, 2002), I will provide the reader with the basic information necessary in order to start expanding the scope of their human resources sourcing strategy.

Since this field of research is fairly new, the resources available to any manager or administrator might be fragmented and hard to put to good use. Throughout this paper I will

attempt to condense the information available and supplement with my own findings wherever applicable. This process has two distinct stages. Firstly I will search through existing research and literature on the topic and extract the valuable knowledge embedded within. Secondly I will conduct several in-depth interviews with both foreign staff that has recently moved to Norway, and the business side administrators that have managed the process internally. These interviews will serve as a guide to illustrate the situations and concepts described in the literature, and will provide hands on examples of how the process should be managed.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

My research question was originally about how Norwegian firms should handle Inpatriation, but since inpatriation is only classified as such if the international transfer of the employee is within a large Multinational Corporation (and they usually have extensive HR departments dealing with this issue on a regular basis), the question lost its intrigue. Therefore I looked to domestic Norwegian enterprises which usually does not have any firmly established routines related to hiring from abroad. In this search, some types of firms stood out as more interesting than others, in terms of how likely they were to search for employees abroad, and the choice eventually fell on academic institutions due to their high percentage of foreign staff.

The topic thereby chosen in this thesis is how Norwegian Academic Institutions can successfully integrate foreign employees, be that sojourners (short term migration) only staying for a finite amount of time, or long time migrants. There are several different types of work migration, both in terms of duration and in terms of the type of skill the migrants bring along with them. In my thesis, the focus has been on knowledge workers migrating to Norway for preferably a longer period of time.

Knowledge workers differ from other type of workers in the capital or labour they provide for their employers. Rather than selling their physical labour or presence, they offer their knowledge capital. Knowledge workers are often faced with non-routine tasks that requires knowledge and creativity to effectively solve (Reinhardt, et al., 2011). Even though there are some clear traits that knowledge workers possess, no clear definition has ever been established (Pyöriä, 2005).

Based on the field of research chosen, and the inputs from conducting the interviews, the problem statement is defined as follows:

**What measures should be taken by the hiring institution to promote rapid adjustment and long term retention of value-enhancing, skilled international employees?**

#### **1.4 Relevance**

Since Norway has relatively high salaries and taxes, the cost of doing business in this country is fairly substantial. Therefore, domestic firms have to maintain a high level of productivity in order to stay competitive in the global marketplace. This is an important issue today, and it grows even more important in the future due to the fact that the general population is aging, and aging fast (Oslo Chamber of Commerce, 2013).

There has been extensive research on the closely related fields of expatriation and inpatriation. Both of these terms deals with how employees of large Multinational Corporations relocate between headquarter and subsidiary in order to facilitate knowledge transfer, among other benefits of international mobility. In this regard, the research on inpatriation is closely related to the focus of this thesis. Since my focus on relocating foreign employees to the Norwegian setting, inpatriation research focuses on the relocation of foreign (but from within the organization) personnel to the headquarter location. Therefore I argue that the methods and studies on this topic are highly relevant for helping to explain the relocation in the Norwegian setting. On this field, Sebastian Reiche is one of the dominating researchers at the moment. Using his research and the contributions of others, we can create some rough guidelines as to how the relocation process should be handled in the best manner possible.

The focus of this thesis is on academic institutions at the university level in Norway, and the findings are therefore mostly relevant to these kind of institutions. Regardless, I truly believe that the situations and issues my interviewees faced during the relocation to Norway, can be transferred to the relocation of foreign employees in both the private and public sector. Thereby the conclusions and guidelines presented in this thesis can be utilized on a broader range of firms, as long as one remembers to tread lightly.

## **1.5 Scope**

Since the possible field of study is large, I have had to narrow the scope of the research. Therefore this thesis will focus on international employees currently working in Norwegian Academic Institutions, as opposed to other private and public institutions/firms as a whole. The focus is also on employees working on long term contracts with the intent to remain in the country after the expiration, given that they are awarded new positions within the same field of research. This distinction excludes PhD-students from the scope of this thesis, even though these students are “employed” at the institution, their intent is not necessarily to remain in the country after they have finished their studies, leading to a loss of subsidized competence, and possibly adversely affecting their intent to adjust.

To keep the terminology employed in the thesis consistent, I have chosen to refer to these kind of international employees as International Hires. Unless stated otherwise, any person referred to as an International Hire is an employee of the institution of whose last employment position was outside of Norway, thereby leading to a need for adjustment. In some cases, I have also referred to the international hire as an assignee.

## **1.6 Empirics**

When one is trying to unearth the challenges that exists in the process of hiring foreign staff, qualitative research needs to be conducted. Qualitative research is concerned with using data collection techniques that generate qualitative, non-numerical, data (Saunders, et al., 2007). In contrast to quantitative data (numerical data from larger samples), qualitative data is concerned with the words, sentences and other data generated through smaller samples and interviews. (Saunders, et al., 2007) (Blumberg, et al., 2008). To gather the required qualitative data needed for my thesis, I have conducted 6 semi-structured interviews with both Norwegian and Foreign employees in two Norwegian Universities. The research strategy opted for is called an Exploratory Case Study, which is defined as “*development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single case... as a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence*” - (Robson, 2002).

The two Academic institutions that have been studied are Gjøvik University College and Bergen University:

Figure 1:GUC Logo



(HiG, 2014)

Gjøvik University College is an academic institution established in 1994 after the merger of the two colleges Gjøvik College of Engineering and Oppland College of Nursing (HiG, 2014). It offers studies in a broad range of fields including medicine, information technology, technology in general, media, and economics and business. It has around 3000 students and 330 employees, of which the employees are representing over 30 different countries (HiG, 2014).

Figure 2:UiB Logo



(UiB, 2009)

The University of Bergen is another academic institution which was founded in 1946 and is spread out over the city of Bergen. There is an approximate of 14 500 students enrolled at any given time, and the university employs around 3 200 faculty and staff (UiB, 2009). The university has six faculties and teaches in everything from humanities, social sciences to mathematics and natural sciences. The university has an international focus and deals heavily in co-operation with international partners. UiB has also been designated as an important player in several scientific fields in accordance with the EU's framework programmes for research and technological development (UiB, 2009).

## 1.7 Structure

This thesis has been structured in a logical manner. First the introduction chapter has introduced the reader to both the research question and the reason as to why firms hire international labour in the first place. In chapter 2, I will introduce the main conceptual topics of the thesis, and look at what existing literature has examined about the subject. Any concepts, theories, and findings that can help to alleviate the understanding of the problem statement are introduced here. Chapter 3 deals with briefly introducing the two colleges I have

used as a basis for my study. Chapter 4, Methodology, deals with discussing both the methodology I have chosen for my thesis, and serves to describe how the research itself has been conducted. Chapter 5 presents the findings of my quest for knowledge, whereas in chapter 6 I will discuss the findings in light of existing theory to answer the research questions. Lastly, in Chapter 7, I will present an executive summary of my findings.

## **2 Literature Review**

In the introduction, I introduced the concept of hiring internationally and the reasons for why firms often do this. Hiring anyone is a risky operation, especially when you deal with hiring people from other countries and cultures. To alleviate risk, certain best practices should be followed, but what is the reasoning behind these practices? In this chapter I introduce the underlying concepts that influence the adaptation process international hires go through when they come to Norway, or any other country for that matter, and the concepts underpinning firm's exploitation of its combined human resources. This will create a solid foundation for developing specific recommendations for firms in the final parts of the thesis.

During the writing of this thesis, I developed a structure which I found to be helpful. To any relocation there are certain steps that are taken, consciously or not. These steps forms the basic structure of my recommendations to how the process should be managed. After this brief introduction section, I will dive into the challenges related to relocating, and the possible ways literature has found ways to circumvent these problems. So this literature review chapter will start by laying the theoretical foundations to the relocation process itself, before it moves on to really examine the processes that hamper international relocation.

### **2.1 Process of International Hiring**

Let us assume that the firm has already decided that it needs to hire from abroad. Thus alleviating us of the problems regarding to how one actually reaches that decision, which can be a long and complicated process. Therefore, the next logical step will be to look at what the existing literature on the subject has proposed: The Inpatriation/Expatriation Process. This structure has been proposed by many (Bonache, et al., 2001) (Reiche, 2010) (Reiche & Harzing, 2011), some propose three steps (Reiche & Harzing, 2011), others propose more, (Reiche, 2010). Regardless of steps proposed, the main elements are the same. I opt for using Reiche's model with four steps (Reiche, 2010). I argue that this model is universal, meaning that the model can be applied to any country and situation where the relocation of an international assignee is considered. My point of view is therefore that this model can also be translated to the process of domestic firms hiring international employees, albeit without the last step of the process, reintegration of expatriate/inpatriate to his/hers home society.



### **2.1.1 Selection**

#### **First Research, 4 factors Tung**

This is the first step of any hiring process, be it domestic or international. Some of the earliest research on this topic, in the international regard, was carried out in 1981 by Rosalie L. Tung (Tung, 1981), she identified four factors that would contribute to the degree of success in any international assignment. She unearthed four factors which she deemed to be important to the success of the international assignment. The first, “*Technical competence on the job*” related to how the international assignee lost his or hers technical security-net when moving to a new place to take on a position, this meant that the assignee needed to be technically competent to be able to perform without necessarily consulting others as to how it should be done (Reiche & Harzing, 2011) (Hays, 1971). The second factor was the “*Personal traits or relational abilities*”, relating to how successful the assignee is at social interaction, extending beyond the basic knowledge of another culture and its customs. Put in a better way; “*the crucial element is the ability to live and work with people whose value systems, beliefs, customs, manners, and ways of conducting business may greatly differ from one’s own*” (Reiche & Harzing, 2011) (Hays, 1971). The third factor she called for the “*Ability to cope with environmental variables*”, relating to how the political, legal, and socio-economic structures which constitute the macro-environment of the destination country, usually differed greatly from the system and environment in which the assignee is familiar. The ability to cope with these differences was deemed essential to successful acculturation. (Reiche & Harzing, 2011) . Lastly Tung focused on the “*Family situation*”. She noted that the assignee might in certain cases take his or hers family with them in the relocation process. The ability for the rest of the family to integrate proved to be hugely important to the ability of the assignee’s own acculturation (Reiche & Harzing, 2011). She argued that these broad factors should be included in any selection to improve the chances of success, and that especially the family situation often proved to be a huge hurdle to success. (Tung, 1981)

#### **Mendenhall and Oddou, three dimensions, extension of Tung’s work**

Another notable contribution to the selection phase was made in 1985 by Mark Mendenhall and Gary Oddou. They concluded that the field of study in expatriate acculturation was, at the time, not advanced enough to properly identify the factors that influenced the success of the expatriate’s acculturation (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). To remedy this, they performed a study and found their own set of dimensions. The first dimension, they argued, was what they called the “*Self-orientation dimension*”. This related to how the assignee had any inherent

activities or attributes that served the purpose of strengthening his or hers self-esteem, - confidence, or mental hygiene (Reiche & Harzing, 2011), which would make the assignee more psychologically rigid in dealing with the emotional rollercoaster that international relocation is. Their second dimension was the “*Other’s orientation dimension*”. This related to how the assignee had attributes or activities that would strengthen his or hers ability to interact with host nationals, in an efficient manner (Reiche & Harzing, 2011). The third dimension, they dubbed the “*Perceptual dimension*”. This one was interested in how the assignee had attributes that made him or her more prone to understanding why foreigners behaves as they do (Reiche & Harzing, 2011), when the assignee can attribute the behaviour of host nationals to their culture, and therefore not take it personally, their chances of successful integration are elevated. The last dimension of Mendenhall and Oddou’s studies was the “*Cultural toughness dimension*”. This dimension relates to how tough, or different, the host nation’s culture is to the home nation. If the culture in the nation that the expatriate goes to is strongly different from his or hers home country, the three first dimensions become increasingly more important for dictating the success of the international assignment. (Reiche & Harzing, 2011)

### **Difficult to measure, therefore practice differs from literature**

This is the foundation of most literature on the subject of expatriation or inpatriation selection. But these factors are often personality traits and can thus be hard to measure, making the selection process differ from what is considered academically as best practice. There exists several reasons for this. Firstly it is difficult to measure and identify relevant interpersonal and cross-cultural competences. Secondly, it is not always HR that does the selection, thus increasing incoherence in selection. Third, the inherent self-interest of selectors, trying to minimize possibility of failure on technical aspects. All of these aspects make selection practice differ from academic research (Reiche & Harzing, 2011) (Bonache, et al., 2001).

### **Most recent research, focusing on International Experience and Cultural Distance**

Building on the studies of earlier, Sebastian Reiche has contributed with more recent studies on the matter (Reiche, 2006) (Reiche, 2010). He found that besides the obvious technical competence, there are other factors that will influence the success of the Inpatriate. These factors were previous international experience, the skill to build social relationships, and the host language proficiency (Reiche, 2010). Though the obvious dimension that will influence the success is still technical competence. Without the skill needed to perform the task at hand,

the hire will practically never be more valuable than if one hired someone with the technical competence.

Reiche proposes that due to cultural distance's negative influence on performance, candidates should also be screened based on cultural distance between the host and home country of assignee. He acknowledges that previous international experience can greatly influence the *Perceived Cultural Distance* (Reiche, 2010). The term *Perceived Cultural Distance* has been identified as to "*account for the distress experienced by sojourners during the process of acculturation*" (Suanet & van de Vijver, 2009) (Babiker, et al., 1980). This term is not directly the same as the stereotypical cultural distance, but rather how each individual deals with the acculturation process based on the stereotypical cultural distance and the person's own personality, ability, and experience. What we can draw from this, is that individuals who are fit for an overseas assignment usually come from a country where the cultural distance is quite similar to the place of assignment, or the individual has amassed previous international and cultural experience. This reduces the *Perceived Cultural Distance*, and thus facilitates rapid acculturation of the international assignee (Reiche, 2010).

### **Cultural Intelligence**

Another recent contribution to this field of study is the notion of Cultural Intelligence, or CQ. Since culture apparently plays a dominant role in the adjustment to other environments, some measure of cultural distance should be used to determine expected adjustment, here Hofstede's work on cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1983) stands out as an obvious way to go at it. Now the downside to Geert Hofstede's famous cultural dimensions, is that they are aggregated to the national level, meaning that there is no direct way to attribute the national culture to the individual successfully. Now there has been research done that support the idea that the national culture can be attributed successfully to smaller groups like organisations and other teams of individuals, but not directly to the individuals themselves (Kirkman, et al., 2006) (Gooderham, et al., 2013)

A way to circumvent the apparent flaws of cultural research (Hofstede, 1983), Cultural Intelligence has been introduced as a way to capture the ability of any individual to adjust to different cultures and environments (Early & Ang, 2003). According to their research, Early and Ang found that their concept of CQ could be used to properly capture the variations found in the ability of international managers to adjust to culturally different settings. CQ is different from Social Intelligence by realizing the fact that one can be good at interacting with other

people in the native environment, thus scoring high on social Intelligence, but may be lacking the ability to properly interact with individuals from other cultures and environments (Gooderham, et al., 2013). CQ consists of three main components. Firstly, the *Cognitive Intelligence* refers to learning and knowledge, more specifically how well the individual can pick up cues and knowledge about the new culture through the information at hand. Secondly, the *Motivational Intelligence* refers to how motivated the individual is in acting on the knowledge obtained (Cognitive Intelligence) and keep the learning process lit during the stay in the foreign culture. Motivational Intelligence is instrumental in the adjustment process due to the assignee's inherent willingness to learn and adapt. Lastly, *Behavioural Intelligence* relates to the direct capability the assignee has to act appropriately in the new environment. This requires both a fair amount of Cognitive and Motivational Intelligence (Early & Ang, 2003).

### **Introducing Social Capital**

The concept of Social Capital has been developed in order to explain knowledge transfer on the individual level within MNCs. Early thoughts were on how knowledge transfer is effectively a result of social interaction (Argote & Ingram, 2000). Social capital is explained as the structure and contents of an individual's social network (Adler & Kwon, 2002). The most important part of this concept of Social Capital, is that it can be used as a way to examine the potential for conducting social affairs and exchanges (Coleman, 1990). Thereby developing the social capital of any employee is a way to expand the social reach within the organisation and at the same time promote knowledge sharing and synergy between units. Social Capital is seen as essential in accessing, exploiting, and leveraging individual and collective knowledge, thus creating value for the organization in question (Reiche, et al., 2009).

#### **2.1.2 Preparation**

This is the second step of the generic expatriation/inpatriation process model. What it recognises is that there is space in time between the candidate has been selected, and the actual relocation of said candidate. In this intermediate timeframe, a window of opportunity arises, namely the ability to prepare both the candidate/assignee, home country staff, and the organisation as a whole for the inevitable relocation. There has been a lot of research related to the preparation during expatriation and inpatriation assignments (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) (Black & Mendenhall, 1990) (Harris, et al., 2003), not all the aspects of current

literature are directly applicable to the situation that is studied in this thesis. Nonetheless, a lot of this research is still highly relevant.

As stated, most of the research on the subject has been on Multinational Corporations which have ample opportunities and the necessary HR capital to initiate large and comprehensive training regimes. These possibilities are usually not present in the context of the academic institutions, and in many cases it is hard to coerce the new international hire to undergo any formal training, at least in the regiment of the institution. As for the optimal way to aid the adjustment of the international hire, therefore I will include some of the literature on the subject here.

### **Goals of Pre-departure Training**

Recent research on the matter of inpatriation training, established a set of goals for any training, be it pre-departure or post-relocation (that is relocating back to the home country of the inpatriate). The goals identified were: Firstly, balance the types of training between cognitive, affective, and behavioural. Secondly, increase awareness of differences between home and host country, in order to understand how differences may affect business practices. Thirdly, provide training in the host culture's business language. Fourth, increase awareness of cultural/social issues in the host country. Fifth, provide multidimensional skill training (as indicated previously). Sixth, identify possible career paths, and their impact on the long-term success of the firm. Seventh, provide an assessment of assignee's strengths and weaknesses pre and post assignment. And lastly, eighth, improve cultural empathy and highlight the understanding of differences (Harvey, 1997). Many of these goals can be directly related to the purpose of this thesis, therefore some of them will be further elaborated.

As understood from the literature review on factors that should be considered during selection, the preparation phase is simply an opportunity to develop those skills. Since residing and working in a foreign environment requires certain skills of the individual in order to be done efficiently. The skills required to properly interact with a culturally diverse group of people, are different from those one might need to interact with people from one's own country and culture (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) (Adler, 1986). These studies did also show that besides from needing other sets of skills, the proficiency in these skills greatly influenced the success of the acculturation and interaction with host nationals, leading to more successful assignments (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). The skills required to better the chances of success can be divided into three distinct categories: Skills related to maintenance of oneself

(mental health, stress reduction etc.), skills related to creating lasting relationships with other nationals in assignment country, and skills needed in order to promote the correct perception of the environment and institutional systems (Black & Mendenhall, 1990) (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). Any training of the assignee pre-departure should therefore be focussed on improving these sets of skills.

As noted previously, lot of effort has been dedicated to studying how pre-departure training of the assignee is beneficial for the international assignment (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) (Tung, 1981). A comprehensive review of empirical studies on the matter was completed by Black and Mendenhall in 1990, which drew the conclusion that cross-cultural training had a strong impact on the assignee's self-confidence, ability to establish interpersonal relationships with host nationals, perceptions of host culture, and the degree of the assignee's acculturation and adjustment (Harris, et al., 2003) (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). Thus pre-departure training must evidently be beneficial for the success of the international assignment.

### **Host Country Staff**

What is lacking for a more balanced view on the matter, is how the local staff of assignment destination is prepared to better take advantage of the situation (Reiche, 2010). Reiche argues that host organisation *ethnocentrism* is a major hindrance to the success of the international assignment. As he puts it: "*Only if locals understand the value that inpatriates can contribute to the organisation, will inpatriates be able to receive the necessary credit to build social capital*" (Reiche, 2010). In this context, the term *Ethnocentrism* is used to describe the local organisation's apparent reluctance to properly put confidence the skills and knowledge of the international assignee, thus limiting the degree and speed of integration and adjustment (Reiche, 2006). Ethnocentrism is existing to a certain extent in any national organisation and has proven to be influential in the adjustment process of the assignee (Florkowski & Fogel, 1999). Therefore measures should be taken to educate the organisation on the benefits of international diversity in order to improve the degree of success (Florkowski, 1996).

### **Mentoring**

Another factor that is mentioned to influence the acculturation process of the assignee during the actual relocation, is the concept of mentoring. Reiche identifies the need for finding a suitable host organisation mentor during the preparation phase, the idea is that the mentor can provide a single point of access to the internal workings of the organisation, and thus make the process of integration easier for the assignee (Reiche, 2010). Studies on inpatriation and

expatriation show that mentors can provide the same benefits as close interpersonal relationships in most cases (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). What firms cannot guarantee is that the international assignee will develop these strong personal friendships with other employees in the organisation, at least not immediately. Therefore the provision of adequate mentoring should be investigated. A suitable mentor will be able to guide the assignee in the navigation of the new organisational environment. This will allow the international assignee to avoid socially awkward situations and enable the correct behaviour in the new environment (Brein & David, 1971) (Brein & David, 1973). What might even be more important when it comes to the positive effects of mentoring, is the ability of the mentor to provide the international assignee with a reference point in relation to the expectations and attitudes in the new organisational, and national, culture. The same study on this matter also identified that the mentor could support the international assignee in adjusting to the culture outside of work (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) (Hammer, et al., 1978).

### **2.1.3 Relocation**

In this part of the literature review, there will be a presentation of the relevant literature and research on the subject of expatriate and inpatriate relocation to a foreign national environment. Moving to another country that differs from one's own in regards to institutions and culture, involves a great amount of stress until one is truly settled in. The research presented here is concerned with how this can be handled in the best manner possible, both in order to lower the amount of stress one experiences, and also how integration should be facilitated as efficiently as possible.

#### **Organisational Handling of the Relocation Process, and Assignee Socialization**

Any international assignee in the process of relocation will suffer from the liability of foreignness, although to a varying degree based on the openness of the culture in the host organisation (Reiche, 2006). In this regard the concept of "liability of foreignness" is defined as how an individual faces certain challenges and discrimination based on his or hers non-native status in the environment (Zaheer, 1995), the concept is derived from how firms face challenges in foreign markets, but I argue that the concept can be transferred to this context.. For international hires this liability means that they face greater challenges in adjusting to, and getting accepted in, the new organisation, than what a domestic new hire would have faced.

When the assignee arrives in the new organisation, he or she is in most cases part of a minority of international staff. This is mostly true in the context of inpatriation, where the assignee comes from the periphery of the MNC (Reiche, 2006). In the case of international hiring, this might not always be the case. Still there is evidence to support that any personnel transferred to a new environment becomes part of a minority in that environment. In the context of the organisational environment, being part of a minority is often related to the reduction in the person's ability to exercise social influence on their peers (Gruenfeld, et al., 2000), it might also inhibit the creation of efficient social networks within the organisation (Mehra, et al., 1998). A consequence of this stigmatisation, is that knowledge sharing between the organisation at large and the new, and possibly very knowledgeable, international hire will be suboptimal. Therefore, integration mechanisms must be devised on account of the domestic organisation and the organisational culture must be positive with regards to staffing diversity (Reiche, 2006).

To counter this liability that the international hire faces in the organisation, the organisation should create opportunities for the new international employee to interact with, and get to know a wide variety of people within the organisation, not just within the small unit where the employee is to work (Reiche, 2010). This will promote the development of the inpatriate's social capital (Reiche, et al., 2009). This interaction will promote the acceptance of the new international hire and reduce his or hers minority perception (Gruenfeld, et al., 2000). Another reason as to why interaction and participation in social event and activities is that this helps the inpatriate partake in the common organisation culture and become even further acculturated to the organisational setting. This is due to the fact that organisational socialization takes place during these types of activities. In this regard, organisational socialization refers to how an individual learns what behaviour and mind-set is both customary and desirable within the organisation, and even more importantly, which ones are not (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

A model on organizational socialization exists, the most common is the three stage model as devised by Fisher in 1986. This model has three stages of which the assignee adjusts or gets accustomed to the new organization. The first stage is called Anticipatory socialization. Here the assignee anticipates how the new organisation works through devising a set of expectations. The more accurate these expectations are, the swifter the socialization process is later on (Fisher, 1986). The second stage is called the encounter stage. This is where the assignee is actually exposed to the new organization. Here one works with the tasks appointed



and starts to create relationships with other employees. In this stage, the expectations developed in the first stage are put to the test, if these appear to be mostly correct, the position offers a low amount of role ambiguity and there appears to be little role conflict in the new organization, adjustment to the new culture is rapid (Fisher, 1986). In the last stage, called the Role Management stage, the assignee is becoming in control of his or her role in the new organisation, the assignee is becoming an accepted member in the workplace, and adjustments to become fully acculturated are minimal. The assignee is now socialized (Feldman, 1976).

### **Culture Shock and Adjustment**

Any international assignee's exposure to the host nation's culture will always entail personal stress and uncertainty, although to a varying degree. This concept is commonly referred to as Culture Shock (Oberg, 1960). Culture Shock is the all so familiar personal disorientation one experiences when being exposed to the culture or environment of a different place or country. In the culture shock literature, four distinct phases of culture shock can be identified. These stages relate to the emotional well-being of the assignee and the time since relocation. In the first Honeymoon Phase, the differences experienced between the old and familiar, and the new and exciting culture are romanticised. When this stage ends, the Negotiation phase begins. In this phase the differences which were previously seen as exciting, are now creating anxiety and stress for the individual. Frustration and anger are the feelings that take over for the excitement once experienced (Oberg, 1960). After an extended period of time (around 6-12 months), the Adjustment Phase begins. Here the individual starts to adjust. The person now knows what to expect of the foreign culture, and develops ways to manage, thus adjusting. Lastly the person becomes a master of the new culture. This does not necessarily mean that the person has converted completely, but rather than her or she is in control of his or her cultural environment (Oberg, 1960).

A common way to conceptualize adjustment in relation to the concept of culture shock, is that adjustment is seen as "*the normal process of adaptation to cultural stress involving such symptoms as anxiety, helplessness, irritability, and longing for more predictable and gratifying environment*" (Church, 1982). This view on adjustment was taken one step further by Black & Gregersen in 1991, where they defined it as the "*degree of a person's psychological comfort with various aspects of the new setting*" (Black & Gregersen, 1991). This definition is quite broad, but it clearly states that psychological comfort is the essence of adjustment, which is understandable. Another definition of adjustment that fits along these

lines is one constructed by Hippler. He defined adjustment as the general satisfaction with one's own life in the new environment (Hippler, 2000). Again, the concept of well-being and satisfaction seems to be the essence of adjustment during international assignments.

### **A Comprehensive Model of Adjustment**

When it comes to the relocation phase of the international hiring process, there is really just one simple goal of the process: to make the employee adjust to the new situation in order to promote effectiveness. As seen previously, adjustment has a lot to do with personal wellbeing, now we will divert our gaze to a comprehensive model of expatriate adjustment, which I argue, can be used to illuminate the adjustment process for any international hire. In their research, Black, Mendenhall and Oddou, found that adjustment was really two sided. There was the anticipatory adjustment that would take place before the relocation, and the in-country adjustment that followed the actual relocation (Black, et al., 1991). They found that the Anticipatory adjustment would usually have a positive impact on the in-country adjustment that occurred later. This realization was not in any way revolutionary, it simply amplified the importance of preparation and selection criterion to success (Black, et al., 1991). Anticipatory adjustment was found to be influenced by cross-cultural training, previous international experience, and personality traits that had to be used as selection criterion in the beginning of the selection process (Black, 1988). Previous cross-cultural training and international experience assists the assignee in building up realistic expectations, the more accurate expectations, the less stress/uncertainty they will experience during relocation. This results in fewer surprises, which directly influences the perceived amount of culture shock, and thus in-country adjustment.

The term in-country adjustment was used to identify the factors that influenced the adjustment process during and after the initial relocation. Black and colleagues (Black, et al., 1991) found that there were a total of five broad categories of factors that influenced the adjustment process. The first category was the individual factors. Secondly came Job Factors, especially those related to the clarity of the role description (Black, 1988). The third group was called Organizational Culture factors, in which they found the social support from other organizational members to be highly influential in determining adjustment (Pinder & Schroeder, 1987). Coming as the fourth group was the Organisational Socialisation factors, this group was concerned with how the socialisation tactics of the organisation was related to the level of innovation, especially role innovation, within the firm (Black, et al., 1991). Lastly came the group of Non-work factors on adjustment. The major results from this group was

that culture novelty (the degree of difference) between home and host country was greatly influential on adjustment (Church, 1982), and so was family adjustment in the cases where the international assignee moved with his or hers family (Tung, 1981). Black and Colleagues' proposed model on adjustment was very influential on the direction of research in the field. The model was further extended after studies conducted by Shaffer, Harrison and Gilley in 1999. They extended the model with two additional moderation variables, previous assignments and language fluency (Shaffer, et al., 1999). The work of these groups of researchers provided the field of study with a quite extensive model of adjustment, which was later fine-tuned by Reiche and Harzing, in this model they included a visual representation of the influence each factor had on different forms of in-country adjustment (Reiche & Harzing, 2011).

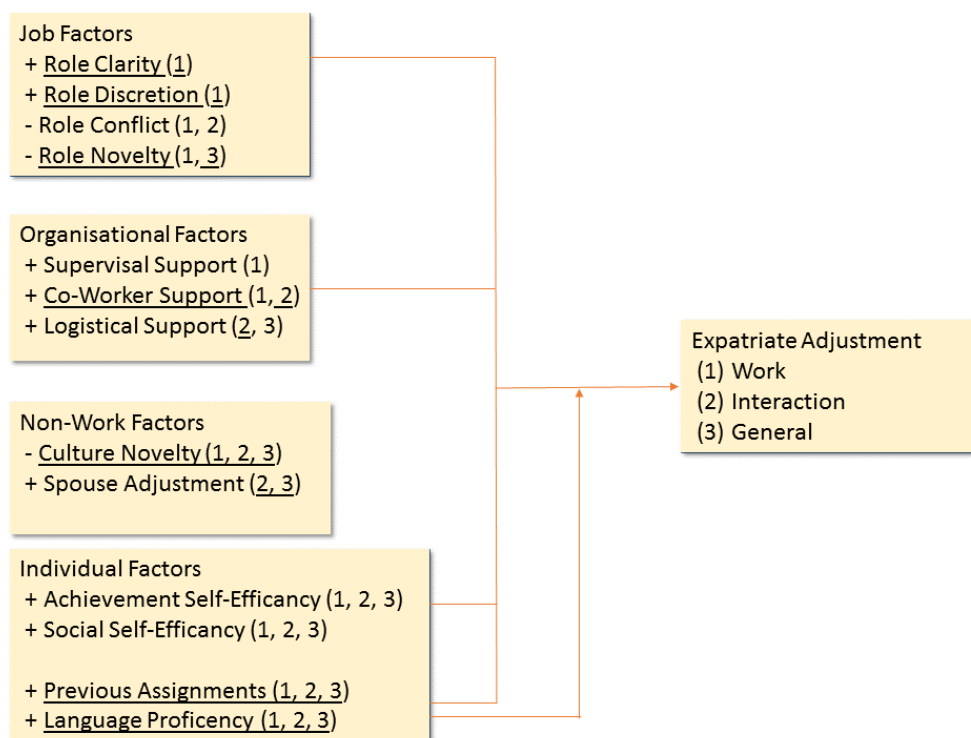


Figure 3 (Reiche & Harzing, 2011) Underlined means greater effect.

This model serves as a good visual illustration of the different factors that influence the in-country adjustment process, with regards to work, interactional, and general adjustment. This model is rather self-explanatory, the factors that greatly influence adjustment are highlighted in the model. Shaffer's results supported those of Black and Colleagues. The model clearly identifies the importance of job design, organisational support systems, and the inclusion of spouse in any training and support programmes. And the importance of language fluency in

selection. (Shaffer, et al., 1999) (Reiche & Harzing, 2011). More recent studies included the concept of *perceived* support. It has been found that the overall level of support is not the most important factor in this regard, but rather support on those dimensions the assignee truly require. This directed support from both home country units, and host organisation has proven to be positively influencing the other dimensions of in-country adjustment (Kraimer, et al., 2001). Another notable finding during the in-country adjustment studies of Shaffer and colleagues was that inpatriates in the study, was found to generally have a harder time in adjusting to the host organisation, something that was easier for the expatriates. Therefore they concluded that it was generally harder to adjust to the HQ organisational culture, than to the culture in subsidiaries (Shaffer, et al., 1999).

### **3 Case Presentation**

This chapter is concerned with briefly presenting the Universities, and the research groups in which I picked the candidates for the study.

#### **Gjøvik University College**

The first institution of which I interviewed some international employees was Gjøvik University College. This institution is a strong player in both the domestic and international Information Security scene. Gjøvik University College is an academic institution established in 1994 after the merger of the two colleges Gjøvik College of Engineering and Oppland College of Nursing (HiG, 2014). It offers studies in a broad range of fields including medicine, information technology, technology in general, media, and economics and business. It has around 3000 students and 330 employees, of which the employees are representing over 30 different countries (HiG, 2014).

GUC has its own research group specializing in Information security with bachelor, master and PhD studies available. The Norwegian Information Security Laboratory, or NISlab as the group is known, was established in 2001 by request from Telenor, a large Norwegian telecommunications company, which saw the need for Norwegian experts with a background in Information Security (Høyskolen i Gjøvik, 2012). NISlab employs over 50 people in administrative, professoriates, postdoc, and PhD positions. Of these employees, over 50% are international hires (NISlab, 2014), thus creating an international working environment within the research group.

At GUC, and from within the NISlab research group, I interviewed one of the administrators who was responsible for the initial development of the NISlab research arm of the institution. He had been responsible for staffing the new group and in that process he had to look abroad for qualified employees since the domestic supply was very limited. Two other interviewees were selected at GUC, both of them were German, one working in a post doctorate position and the other working as a professor.

#### **University of Bergen**

The University of Bergen is the other academic institution of which I selected candidates for interviews. The institution was founded in 1946 and is spread out over the city of Bergen. There is an approximate of 14 500 students enrolled at any given time, and the university

employs around 3 200 faculty and staff (UiB, 2009). The university has six faculties and teaches in everything from humanities, social sciences to mathematics and natural sciences. The university has an international focus and deals heavily in co-operation with international partners. UiB has also been designated as an important player in several scientific fields in accordance with the EU's framework programmes for research and technological development (UiB, 2009).

The University of Bergen has a high degree of international employees, especially in its PhD positions. This is a trend that has been growing for the last couple of years, due to the University's explicit focus on attracting the best candidates for the positions, regardless of ethnicity or home country influences. Since research is growing ever more international, the University's view on the matter is that international mobility should be encouraged (Johannessen, 2014).

It has been found that a lot of the PhD students return to their home country after finishing their studies. This is seen as mostly unfortunate for the Norwegian firms which could have utilized this competence to strengthen their position in the global marketplace. Now the University thinks this is a bad thing too, but they are also vocal about how the doctorates who return to their home country helps in building the University's global reach, and should therefore not be seen as an existential crisis (Johannessen, 2014)

The part of the university of which I studied was the Faculty of Humanities. This faculty offers a wide range of studies and is currently teaching more than 3700 students. The faculty offers a multitude of different programmes that lead to an equal amount of qualifications in humanities studies (UiB, 2014). It is within this faculty that I found the candidates for my interviews, which lead me to find a trove of useful information in regards to my research question.

The University of Bergen's Centre for medieval studies is a research group that was awarded as a European Centre of Excellence from 2003 to 2013. After this period the research group has shifted its focus slightly, but is still mainly concerned with studying the Middle Ages in Scandinavia (CMS, 2013). Due to its specific focus, this research group is staffed mostly of northern European employees.

At the Faculty for Humanities, I interviewed one German professor which was also somewhat involved with the administration of the faculty. And two post doctorates from Germany and England.

## 4 Methodology

This chapter has the primary responsibility to introduce the research design and methodology applied in this master thesis. It will also try to convince the reader as to why the chosen methodology is superior to the competition, with a special focus on reliability, validity and generalizability. In addition to the general discussion on the chosen methodology, I will give a good overview of how the research has been conducted, and at the end of the chapter the limitations to this methodology will be dealt with.

Methodology is basically a tool to describe reality (Johanneseen, et al., 2005) it gives researchers advice on how data can be collected, processed and analysed (Hellevik, 2009). The choice of method will inevitably influence the way in which the research is conducted and the following interpretation of said research (Johanneseen, et al., 2005). Sanders and colleagues simply define research as "*something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge*" (Saunders, et al., 2007) The main reason behind the necessity of this chapter is firstly to support my own research process, but it also serves as a foundation for the reader of this paper to individually evaluate the results and research methods chosen.

### 4.1 Research Questions

To properly design the research in question, one must always keep the problem statement of the research in mind. It is the problem statement that essentially determines everything from choice of theory to research design, not the other way around (Johanneseen, et al., 2005). Also worth noting, is that in a qualitative study like this, the research questions may evolve, change or be refined during the study (Dörnyei, 2007). This is something that became hugely apparent in the process, where both my general understanding of the topic, and the research focus itself, was modified to a great degree during the writing of this thesis. The resulting research question has been defined as:

**1) How Norwegian Academic Institutions should act in order to properly manage the complete hiring process of international expertise, with the end result being rapid adaptation and subsequent value creation.**



To create a proper research paper based on this research question, I had to decide on whether it would be useful to do a quantitative or qualitative study. To best understand the research questions from the participants' perspective, the qualitative research approach is most suitable (Ticehurst & Veal, 2000).

In the theoretical part of the paper (part2), a theoretical framework of the inpatriation/expatriation process was introduced, this part is ripe with suggestions and clues as to how the process should be handled in the best manner possible. This theoretical foundation is necessary in order to underline the importance of my findings and discussion, and thus compliments the research process.

## **4.2 Research Design**

Research design is, in its most basic state, the way of which the researcher will conduct the study at hand. Told in a better way; research design is a detailed description of the structured process of the complete research methodology (Johanneseen, et al., 2005). In this study, I wanted to explore the underlying components of what influences the adjustment of international hires in academic institutions. Based on this idea, it was vital to choose a research design that would give me the results that I was looking for. Inadvertently, this way of thinking lies within the lines of the “pragmatic” research methodology. In the pragmatic approach, the research is designed in such a way that it is most efficient in providing answers to the research questions and objectives. (Saunders, et al., 2007)

After this approach had been chosen, I had to look at the possible ways of designing the research in question. According to Saunders and colleagues, there are several sub-categories of research design. The most common are exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory design (Saunders, et al., 2007). Exploratory design is, as the name suggest, a form of research design used to explore the underlying factors influencing a given topic. The exploratory design is mostly used when the researcher is facing a complex problems, where the exploratory nature of attack will hopefully augment the understanding of the problem.

The descriptive design is chosen when the researcher wants to give a detailed description of a certain phenomenon. Lastly the Explanatory design is used to explain a vague relationship between several variables. As the name suggests, researchers will use the explanatory design

when they are trying to illustrate the relationship between different factors, or variables, within the study. (Saunders, et al., 2007)

Of these possible designs, the Exploratory Research Design seemed to be best at finding the underlying causes to the adjustment of international hires. This was due to the fact that I was trying to uncover the “secrets” of successful adjustment into Norwegian institutional setting. The Exploratory design allowed me to uncover the underlying factors that truly influenced the true success of adjustment in my study.

What remains to be explained regarding the research design, is the decision on the extent of the study. In this respect, both the “Depth” and the “Breadth” of the study to be undertaken appears as important dimensions (Hellevik, 2002). The first dimension focuses on what kind of phenomenon you are studying, and to what depth you will dive into the material. Simply put, the researcher will have to decide to what degree he or she will go into detail of the many underlying variables of the study. The second dimension transfers to how many different occasions this phenomenon will be studied. Basically this makes the researcher think about how many different views or angles he or she wants, or have time to conduct, on the phenomenon in question. Relating this to my study, I have been given limited time and resources, and thus, I had to curb my exploration of the phenomenon on both dimensions.

There is one prevalent Research Design that has all the correct parameters we have previously been discussing. The Case Study approach is, in its core, a research design aimed at giving the researcher, and his or hers audience, a solid understanding of a particular phenomenon in a restricted set of real cases. (Johanneseen, et al., 2005) (Saunders, et al., 2007)

#### **4.2.2 Approach and Method**

The approach taken to answer the research question was one of the interpretivist kind, interviews are typically used in this kind of research (Robson, 2002). With this approach to data collection, qualitative studies, with an inductive research approach are generally preferred in order to uncover the different meanings on the subject (Saunders, et al., 2007).

Therefore the research strategy chosen is one of the qualitative kind. In this kind of approach to the research, interviews is the main tool of the researcher, be that qualitative interviews performed in a semi- or unstructured way (Robson, 2002) (Saunders, et al., 2007). This is what I chose, with regards to the approach taken, as the way to perform my study.

The method chosen as the data gathering tool, was the interview. Using semi-structured interviews I was able to go off script and look for deeper meaning to the answers I got, this fits well with theory on this kind of studies (Saunders, et al., 2007). In these kind of studies, one is able to go beyond the basic list of questions to be asked, and look for new insights to the topics covered (Saunders, et al., 2007).

### **4.3 Information Gathering**

When using a qualitative research approach, it was important that I managed to find a handful of reliable interview objects for my thesis. Since the nature of the study is potentially vast, I had to focus my efforts on a niche in the Norwegian business arena. The choice fell on the educational sector in Norway. This is mostly due to the fact that it is a highly academic field, requiring the potential employees to have rather high academic qualifications, and does therefore usually contain a high percentage of foreign employees (due to limited supply of highly specialized academic employees in Norway).

#### **4.3.1 Sampling Strategy**

Having chosen to follow in the footsteps of the interpretive paradigm, it is possible to generalize the findings based on a simple case, or in my case, two entities. Even though generalization is possible, it is not really the sought after outcome of such a study (Blumberg, et al., 2008), this allows me to conduct a thorough study within a niche of the Norwegian institutional setting and draw conclusions based on this limited set. There is also another reason as to why these qualitative studies usually have a relatively small sample size, that being the amount of work required to conduct the in-depth interview, it is strongly labour intensive (Dörnyei, 2007).

#### **Choice of Research Objects**

The institutions, or cases, selected in this study were two Academic Institutions on the university level. The two institutions have been introduced in the case presentation (part 3) and the reason for these two institutions being chosen were the relational reach I had within them, in accordance with theory on Social Capital. The first institution, Gjøvik University College, I got in touch with since I had been working there previously, and in that employment period gotten in contact with several international employees of which I had learnt that moving to Norway was not always as easy as one might think. The second

institution I contacted was the University of Bergen, my advisor had extended contacts in this institution, making it an easy target for finding possible interviewees.

In this thesis, interviews were selected as the only source of data collection. This decision was made based on the time and resources that was made available to me. Ideally, several types of data collection techniques should have been used (Robson, 2002), but again due to constraints only one technique was truly used, namely the semi-structured interviews. Some secondary data was collected, that being some superficial information on the institutions themselves, their stated international focus and the research group within. This data was collected from the institutions' own web pages.

### **Selection of Interview Objects**

The main goal of finding suitable interview objects within the qualitative approach, is not necessarily to find a representative sample, but rather on finding interview objects that can provide the research with deep and varied insights into the subject in question, in order to learn as much as possible on the matter (Dörnyei, 2007). Now it is important to be aware of how this is the ideal situation of which interview objects should be chosen, but this requires knowledge about each and every possible employee within the institution. Therefore this was not followed up in practice. I knew of some interesting cases within GUC where I had worked, and my thesis supervisor had contacts at UIB. Therefore the subjects selected were partially chosen based on their interesting case history, and partially chosen at random from the possible international hires employed at these institutions. With this approach I had partial success in finding interesting cases.

For the data gathering to be appropriate, I had to select cases that were comparable in order to see how the process of adjustment had been. Initially I thought it to be a good approach to interview both the administrative side of the academic institution and the international hires that had been affected by said administration. After the first round of interviews with employees at Gjøvik University College however, I found the data collected from the administrative side to yield comparably less information on the subject than those with international employees. Therefore I opted for interviewing only international employees at the University of Bergen. In order for the interviews to be at least partially comparable, I chose to interview only international employees in positions higher than PhD level. This allowed me to find a group of candidates that were comparable between the institutions and

could thus provide me with a good insight into the similar process of adjustment that they had faced.

#### **4.3.2 The Interview Guide**

The interview guide was created based on current literature on the topic of Inpatriation and Expatriation. The interview guide was semi-structured, meaning that there was no fixed structure on which questions were asked at any time (Saunders, et al., 2007). This allowed me as an interviewer to follow the interviewee on his or hers digressions without any difficulties. The nature of the questions that were asked, allowed the interviewees to elaborate and digress, often providing valuable insight which might otherwise have been missed.

The interview guide had the goal of uncovering any troubles or difficulties the international employees had faced during their relocation process. As with the literature review, the interview questions were structured in three broad categories selection, preparation, and relocation. Each of these categories aimed at uncovering how the process had been handled in each individual case, what kind of issues there might have been, and how the international employee believed the process could have been handled better or steps they believed would have contributed to a better experience.

Every interview started with some personal questions about the interviewee's background in an attempt to get him or her to open up and feel more comfortable in the interview situation. During the entirety of the interview, I encouraged openness and elaboration, often asking follow-up questions that were not originally part of my interview guide. These un-scripted questions served the purpose of uncovering the underlying truths about challenges the interviewees faced.

Another point of the interview guide which is interesting, is that it has been adaptive during the course of my study. From the first interview to the last, contents of the interview guide has been modified to better reflect the real issues experienced. This had to be done after I found that some aspects of the literature were not as important as I anticipated (in this specific setting), and there were also issues that appeared which my literature search had not unveiled, at least not to the full extent.

### **4.3.3 The Interviews**

According to all the previous elaboration on the research method employed, I ended up with interviewing six employees of two academic institutions at the university level, one administrator at GUC and five comparable international employees from both GUC and UIB.

During my correspondence with the interviewees before their actual interview, I introduced them briefly to the research I was conducting. At the beginning of each interview I elaborated on the introduction I had given them in the previous emails to establish a common ground of what I was researching, this was done both in accordance with their interest and to prepare them for what I was interested in learning about.

In most cases the interviews were done face to face via the IT-service Skype. True face to face meetings would have been preferred, but due to myself being away from Norway on an exchange semester during the interviews, other means of communication had to be utilized. This method of conducting the interviews was used in five out of the six interviews, and it provided me with a lot of information. In most of the cases, the interviewees had a lot of time on their hands, thus allowing the interviews to extend beyond the 45 minutes that we had agreed to in the previous email correspondence. In the sixth case, the person I had wanted to interview was so pressed on time that he wanted me to send him my research questions as a questionnaire for him to passively answer in his spare time. This interview did not yield the same amount of information that the other face-to-face interactive interviews did. Consent forms were issued electronically, read and signed. Additionally, the interviews were voice recorded after being given consent from the interviewees, allowing me to produce reliable data after the interview had taken place.

### **4.4 Analysis and Presentation of Results**

After all the interviews had been conducted, I had managed to collect an approximate of five and a half hour of voice data, which was transcribed after each session. Since the interview with the Norwegian administrator at GUC was conducted in Norwegian, this interview was translated by myself in order to utilize the data in the thesis. During the translation I managed to maintain the meaning and views of the interviewee thanks to the voice recordings. With the transcribed data, I sorted it into the three main phases of the adjustment model presented in the literature review, the selection phase, preparation phase, and relocation phase. The data collected was further divided into subcategories within each phase and used as a starting point

for the discussion in the following chapter. During this part of the study, it became apparent that some concepts that were highlighted as important in the literature on the subject, did not matter as much in my real case, leading to interesting findings.

## **4.5 Evaluation of Results and Methodology**

The inherent strength of the qualitative research approach lies within its ability to maintain a holistic view of the situation, thus providing the researcher with a better understanding of the underlying processes. The flaws of the approach lies in its narrow range of samples collected, and also the selection of the interview candidates. It is impossible to know beforehand if the candidate selected will yield more appropriate and insightful information than those candidates that were not selected, which became highly apparent in the case of the odd interview I conducted as a questionnaire (which provided vastly less quality information than the face to face interviews). To test the strength of the study, the criteria of reliability, validity and generalizability. Now we have already excluded the idea of generalizability on behalf of our interpretive design (Blumberg, et al., 2008), which leaves reliability and validity as the measures of which this research should be evaluated on.

### **4.5.1 Reliability**

This concept relates to how consistent the findings are based on the choice of collection techniques (Saunders, et al., 2007). The idea is that there should be enough transparency so that the research can be replicated and arrive at the same conclusions that I did. The transparency of this research lies in the clear documentation of the research steps, found in this chapter mostly, and in the appendix. According to theory, there are several dangers to a study's reliability, those are participant error, participation bias, observer error, and observer bias (Saunders, et al., 2007).

Participant error is concerned with how the setting in which the interview takes place may influence the results (Saunders, et al., 2007). I did my best to alleviate this issue by only selecting candidates which responded positively to my inquiries, so that they were initially interested in participating. I also opted for performing the interviews face-to-face in all the cases I could (five out of six), hopefully making the interview more comfortable for the interviewees, and promoting the creating of a trusting relationship between interviewer and interviewee. A possible source of error was in the language in which the interviews were conducted. I had only one native English speaker in my selection of candidates and since the

interviews were conducted in English (except the interview with the Norwegian administrator), chances are that the interviewees might have expressed themselves clearer if they had been allowed to use their native language.

Participation bias relates to how interviewees might be biased in their response, only providing me with parts of the whole truth. This is often related to how the candidates fear repercussions from superiors (Saunders, et al., 2007). To overcome this issue, I guaranteed the interviewees a fair amount of anonymity. Every quote presented in this paper is written exactly as the interviewee said it (except for the translated interview with the Norwegian administrator), and to keep the anonymity intact, I have kept out any information that can reveal the interviewee's real identity. Due to the guarantee of anonymity and the fact that the interviews were voluntarily, I believe that there is not any possibility of grave participation bias in the data that I have collected.

Observer error relates to how I as an interviewer might have failed to understand the true meaning behind what the interviewees expressed (Saunders, et al., 2007). Due to following my interview guide I believe that I had the ability to understand the meaning behind the interviewees comments, and in the cases where I was uncertain, I asked follow-up questions to clarify. Note that there is a possibility that the follow-up questions were asked too soon, and that the interviewee intended to elaborate further before I interrupted. This can be a source of error.

Observer bias is the inherent flaw of having a single interviewer, since I am responsible for conducting this study, I may interpret the answers of the interviewees in a way that fits with my own train of thought, causing a biased data sample. On the other hand, conducting the interviews without having any idea of what I was doing or what answers would be beneficial for my study, would have been rather difficult. Therefore some observer bias is probably hard to avoid in this type of study.

#### **4.5.2 Validity**

The concept of validity refers to how one actually measures that of which one has the intent of actually measuring. It relates to the interpretation of the data, and also how the data describes what it is supposed to explain (Johanneseen, et al., 2005). To assess validity in these kind of qualitative studies is done by thoroughly go through the interview process, data gathering, and data usage with regards to the different types of validity (Grønmo, 2007) (Gibbert, et al., 2008).



The first validity measure is the study's Internal Validity. This relates to the causal relationship between the results gathered and the variables used (Gibbert, et al., 2008). The aim is to make sure that the data gathered can be applied to the institution at large. This can be questioned due to the low amount of interviews conducted for each institution, but the goal of the study was always to find the deeper truths about the adjustment process at Norwegian institutions in general, not necessarily to focus solely on the two institutions of which the candidates were selected. Again, the sample is small, so the findings are probably only parts of the whole truth, but I believe that the study covered most of the issues facing institutions hiring internationally.

The second measure is called construct validity. This is concerned with how I actually studied what I thought that I was studying, and whether this created an accurate picture of reality. Subjective judgement can come in the way of validity (Gibbert, et al., 2008). Through the methodology chapter I have tried to give an accurate representation of the steps I have taken to go from research focus to conclusions. If the concept of construct validity does not hold, the reason for this should be found in this methodology chapter, but I believe that I have been able to keep my objectivity throughout the study.

Lastly, external validity refers to how the phenomena in question is generalizable to other situations. A qualitative, focused, case-study research is not sufficient enough to generalize the findings in any way, but it is an adequate approach in order to find future research possibilities (Gibbert, et al., 2008). Again, the interpretive approach selected in this study does not focus too heavily on the findings' ability to be generalizable (Saunders, et al., 2007), but rather on why this occurs within the studied setting.

## **5 Findings & Discussion**

In this chapter I will present the findings from my interviews and contribute with a discussion on the main topics. The inputs to this part of the paper are the interviews I have conducted, the literature on the subject, and my own personal knowledge and experience. It is important to clarify that the statements presented here are subjective and made by people with varied backgrounds and experience, therefore some of the statements might be a bit contradictory, but this is perfectly normal and a good way to start a discussion.

This section of the paper will be structured in the same manner as the literature review. I will go through the major phases of the relocation process and highlight any findings that have been collected. A minor discussion will follow each element of my findings. In the discussion there will be a comparison between my findings and literature, this will assist in building some consensus on what should be best practice in Norwegian institutions.

### **5.1 Selection**

A lot of research has been conducted on which factors or personal attributes that have a great influence on the adjustment process, and should therefore be examined in the selection phase (Tung, 1981) (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) (Reiche, 2010). This research has not translated so very well to the institutions in my studies, this is quite possibly due to the inherent differences of the situations. In expatriation/inpatriation research there is usually one large Multinational Corporation that has a pool of candidates to choose from. In academia, the pool of possible candidates is in most cases much smaller, and it is therefore the case that much more weight is put on the technical competence of the candidate, rather than the relational competence (since technical competence is scarce). In addition to this, academic institutions simply do not have the capabilities to properly assess all and every one of the possible candidates to the same extent as the HR department of a MNC. Following in this chapter are the elements of the selection phase that stands out from the rest, either according to the data gathered or previous research.

### **5.1.1 Reasons for hiring internationally, and the importance of Candidate's Academic Background**

One of the most fundamental topics in this thesis is why firms actually have to, or should, look abroad to find the right hires. There has been many opinions on this subject, but for the most part the reason for why the institutions in this study have looked abroad has been to fill positions with competence that either does not exist in Norway, or when that competence is too immobile to be relocated within. Most of the international hires' experience has been that they have been hired to fill a specific position that the institution has deemed to be worth filling. Now this does not leave out the possibility that the ulterior motive of the institution has been to advance its competitive position in the academic environment, but it has been perceived as a move to simply fill a position. This is the view of one of the international staff at GUC as to why he was hired in the first place:

*"I had already acquired an intensive research track-record before I applied. I had international experience with all the international projects that I had conducted... You can see that a number of international projects have been launched since I joined Gjøvik, and I think, if I am not mistaken, GUC is through the international projects that I am running, one of the most research active academic institutions in the European Research programme."* GUC IH 1

Another reason for hiring foreign expertise was highlighted by one of the professors at UiB. He stated that one of the most important parts of finding international employees was for the development of both the University's interior competence, with an emphasis on what he called the "Innovative Milieu", and the development of the University's outbound reach both in terms of finding the best qualified hires and attracting a larger group of students. This interviewee had a lot of thoughts about this topic.

*"I am convinced of that it is important to have a milieu, so that it is not like everyone sits in his room, doors are shut, and everyone does some fantastic work, which is wonderful for the books. But I think this is only one part of the business. I think the more important part today, is to engage in a milieu, to be visible, to having a general interest in teaching students... also to have a surplus, that you are willing to do more than what is requested of you"* UIB IH 2

Having a milieu or environment for collaboration is very beneficial, especially in situations where knowledge is the main input for the firm's product. This benefit comes from the idea of Synergy, where one plus one equals three. When people collaborate they share knowledge and

tap into the competence of the others. This allows one to access both knowledge and ideas that one might have been oblivious to in the past, thereby promoting knowledge production.

*“Norwegian universities is on the periphery, not necessarily in the work, but you have to make yourself visible in the international context. So I think it is preferable that people have international contacts beforehand ...If you have these connections, then people will be more eager to apply. Through the connections of the international employees, the university gets a more global reach in both getting good candidates in PhD positions and making your research more visible”* UIB IH 2

The main concept he forwarded was that firms do not hire foreign staff purely out of necessity, but the internationalization also acts as a way to enhance the Institution’s global reach, or competitiveness on the global arena. His idea of the “milieu” was also quite interesting. He had found that in specifically smaller subjects like his own, there had to be a lot of collaboration within the department. Without an atmosphere for collaboration, the creation of a successful milieu would be impossible, and thus knowledge production would drop.

From the business perspective, the idea of position filling is strong in academia. Due to restrictive funding, the institutions must meet certain criteria laid out by funding institutions like the EU or other international or domestic funding agencies. These criteria are often very specific, requiring the academic institutions to maintain a certain level of competence or produce a specific amount of research to receive grants etc. The search for this specific competence usually leads administration to look beyond the borders of Norway where the chances of finding the correct competence can be miniscule. This the one administrator had to say on the issue of developing the international research group NISLAB, at GUC:

*“It was as simple as when I had called all the five possible Norwegian candidates, and neither of them wanted to move, then the only natural solution was to announce the position abroad and look for decent hires outside of Norway ...Finding the right competence is practically impossible within the confines of this country”* GUC ADM 1

To facilitate the position filling that seems to be so important in the institutional setting, having the right academic background is immensely important when it comes to staffing your research group. This is partly due to how the funding works, but it is also vital to the actual research output that your organisation produces. This concept fits very well with previous

research on the topic where it was called technical competence (Tung, 1981) (Reiche, 2010). Without having employees with very specific academic backgrounds, producing high quality research is practically impossible, one needs to really dive deep and narrow ones scope if one wants to produce high quality research in one's field. The implications of this is that one needs to look for very specific qualifications when staffing a research arm of an institution. This is one of the reasons as to why educational and research institutions on this level usually have a higher percentage of international employees than other lines of work, mostly due to the inherent modest supply of competent candidates within Norway!

Now saying that the quest for the right competence is the only reason why firms look abroad is simply wrong. There are an abundance of reasons as to why firms look abroad when hiring, position-filling is one of those, but so is also the search for competitive advantage. This was perfectly illustrated by the professor at UiB, where he had already spent considerable time pondering how to increase his centre's global reach, both in terms of staffing, and also recruiting students (as mentioned earlier in this subchapter).

### **5.1.2 Cultural Distance & Background**

The candidate's cultural background has proven to be an immensely important factor in the adjustment process. Therefore it is vital to be aware of the issues related to cultural distance, in this regard, Hofstede's dimensions (Hofstede, 1983) might be a good tool in the selection between otherwise similar candidates. For most of my foreign interviewees, cultural distance was an issue to some degree, but not the most important one when it came to the adjustment. Then again all of the international employees I interviewed came from within the European Union, meaning that the cultural distance has not been so great for any of my interviewees. As one of my interviewees put it:

*"I don't see any fundamental differences between Norway and Germany. It's one European Culture. It's a significant European container that these two countries are a part of, and this is something completely different from moving to China or India, and frankly I wouldn't do this."* GUC IH 1

Now it is important to be aware of the dataset used in this thesis, where all of the interviewees came from within the European Union. This does not allow us to draw any definitive conclusions saying that culture is not an issue, because it still is. The Norwegian administrator I interviewed, had some experience with interacting and hiring potent candidates from culturally distant locations. In his experience, culture did play an important role in the

adjustment of the international hire, this is what he experienced in working with someone that was both culturally and religiously distant from the Norwegian setting:

*“We had a professor from Singapore. He came and worked here for three years before he packed up his things and went back to his home country. We never managed to get on the same page when it came to work attitude, since he came from a country where you either worked below a boss, or you had other people below yourself. Getting him to adapt to the Norwegian, more flat model of business was practically impossible... Now it should be mentioned that he was also a bit extremist in his religion, and that might have had something to do with his reluctance to adapt. But anyways, it is important to check for common ground when you are hiring abroad, since this helps speed up the adjustment process”* GUC ADM 1

Now again, I stress the matter that the dataset is limited in scope, but due to my findings and the current literature on the matter, I would argue that cultural distance matters. Reiche found in his studies that the greater the cultural distance, the harder it was for the Inpatriate to adjust to the new setting. This is partly due to norms and values being different, but also the way in which communication takes place in the two very different settings. Due to the cultural communication filter (a concept within cultural research that states that between sender and receiver of any communication, the cultural background of the receiver creates a filter that might disrupt the true intentions and meaning of the sender’s message), cultural distance hinders effective knowledge transfer (Reiche, 2010). When the knowledge transfer is hampered, adjustment to the new situation, or rather the extraction of value from the international hire is limited.

*“I would say that because the culture of Norway and Germany is so similar, the minor gap between the two cultures has not been a problem for communication”* GUC IH 1

*“Actually, I’m from Northern Germany and the way of communicating is quite similar to the Scandinavian way, involving irony and so on. So there has not really been any problem.”* UIB IH 2

Now that the cultural distance hinders knowledge transfer has been thoroughly researched, but in my Interviews I did not find this to be an issue, then again my dataset was limited. Even though my study indicated that cultural distance had not been an issue for either acculturation or communication, it does not mean that it is not an issue in other cases, therefore I have

decided to include some more discussion on the topic based on previous research rather than my own findings.

In the same study, Reiche found that the cultural distance, which he had found to impede knowledge transfer, also prevented the creation of trusting relationships with host country colleagues (Reiche, 2010). Combining this with the notion of Social Capital (Reiche, et al., 2009), it illustrates the difficulties that emerges from hiring candidates from culturally distant locations. Now this does not in any way say that one should not hire from distant locations, only that if the cultural distance is great, the other factors that are important in the selection process (academic qualification, interpersonal skills, international experience, etc.) should be relatively better than the competition, for the candidate to be considered as having a greater value potential.

### **5.1.3 International Experience and Cultural Intelligence**

Another trait research on the subject of Inpatriation and Expatriation has deemed as important in the selection phase, is previous international experience. Previous experience in residing in a culture and environment different from one's own has proved to be deterministic in later international assignments (Reiche, 2010) (Gooderham, et al., 2013). This might be due to the fact that any experience in working and residing in another culture is beneficial in developing the assignees cultural intelligence, which is such a sought after quality that to an extent determines the degree of cultural maturity of the candidate.

I found that most of the international employees that I interviewed had some type of previous experience in living and/or working in foreign countries. If this was a coincidence or not can be speculated on, but the general feeling of the people I interviewed was that they felt that their international experience had both been important in why they had been selected in the first place and also, more importantly, had been very beneficial for their own adjustment process.

*"I had international experience with all the international projects that I had conducted"* GUC  
IH 1

*"I think the fact that I had travelled before was helpful, I had experience of living abroad"*  
UIB IH 1

Now the train of thought that previous international experience can be helpful in future adjustment is not new. Actually, it is believed that any experience in any situation will make

future encounters with that very situation more manageable. In this thesis, this all relates to the cultural intelligence (CQ) and –maturity of the assignee. Since cultural intelligence is a concept that is used to measure the degree of adjustability of the candidate to a culturally different environment, this concept can be looked into when assessing candidates for selection. Now again, it is important to clarify the difference between Inpatriation and Expatriation research and my thesis. For when you in these studies have a large organization with a large pool of candidates, and a HR department and systems that can help you assess the candidate's Cultural Intelligence. This is usually not the case in academic institutions.

Since distributing and monitoring tests of cultural intelligence is usually out of the scope and possibilities of the institution, some traits have to act as a proxy for the CQ. In most cases, previous international experience and good letters of reference are such proxies. The previous international experience usually promotes the development of the candidate's Cultural intelligence. Good letter of recommendation are usually also helpful in assessing the candidate's interpersonal skills as proposed as important by several studies (Tung, 1981) (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985), and also the academic qualifications and production potential.

*“I think the letters of recommendation that I got were quite strong”* UIB IH 3

Another related topic to previous international experience was that of the candidate's cognitive maturity. According to one of my interviewees, the psychological maturity of the person is very important in the ability to cope and adjust to new environments. According to him, his experiences have accumulated over the years, and this has made it easier for him to adjust to the new location:

*“Yes, I mean this is also a question of “where are you in the progress of your academic life, or your business life“. I started working after my graduation in 1992, and if you after 22 years do not know how to adjust, then something is wrong. So for me, this was obviously less of a challenge than for PhD students that have just graduated”* GUC IH 1

What he says about accumulating experience relates very well to the idea of cultural intelligence and the training of this ability. Previous exposure helps the development process of practically any skill imaginable, where cultural intelligence should be no different. Now maturity is a dilemma, whereas on one hand it is helpful due to the candidate's accumulated life experiences, which acts as a fairly good proxy for cultural intelligence and good interpersonal skills, it usually bears a correlation to having a family. I will divulge into the



family situation of the candidate later in this chapter, but as for now, selecting a candidate with an established family can be either good or bad for the adjustment and later value creation of the hire.

#### **5.1.4 Personality Traits**

As suggested in practically all research on this topic, there are personal traits or qualities that will positively, or negatively if lacking, influence the adjustment process of the international hire. In the previous sections I have mentioned a few traits relating to the Cultural Intelligence, or CQ, but there are several other attributes that can be identified. One of them is an umbrella attribute that is usually referred to as Interpersonal Skills (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) (Reiche, 2010). Within this umbrella attribute, are several minor personality traits that combined create the foundation for the candidate's ability to interact efficiently with others domestic and foreign nationals.

As stated previously, developing a Milieu is quite good for the value creation of the research arm or group. Now creating a milieu is not simple, it requires skilled individuals within the same field of research, and also a culture or environment for collaboration and sharing. To facilitate this further, some personality traits contribute more than others. To use these personality traits as proxies for future creation of the milieu could be effective. The main idea of the milieu is that of collaboration, therefore having the capacity and interpersonal skills necessary to engage in fruitful collaboration is usually vital. How one measures this skill during the selection phase is more difficult without elaborate testing and observation. On the other hand, a skilled administrator can possibly rank the candidates after their collaborative skills after talking to them during interviews.

Another personal trait that encourages the creation of the productive milieu, is the ability to have excess energy and use it on something the candidate is interested in. Ideally this energy should be used to motivate and encourage others within the research group to participate in, and thereby further develop, the innovative milieu. As one of my interviewees puts it:

*"...also to have a surplus, that you are willing to do more than what is requested of you"* UIB  
IH 2

According to him, it is vital to have excess energy and being motivated about what you do in order to foster an energetic and buzzing environment that promotes innovation in terms of academic research and production.

Another trait that was found to be helpful for the success of the relocation phase, was the assignee's degree of open-mindedness and cultural curiosity:

*“Being open-minded, and being curious of what life is like in other countries is very helpful as well”* UIB IH 1

With regards to cultural shock, and how to cope, this is what the same interviewee said on the matter:

*“I think everybody to some degree is like this, people expect it to be exactly like it is at home and they want it to be like that, but of course they have to accept the fact that some things in society will be different, and you can make of that what you will, either you accept that, or you complain about it all the time”* UIB IH 1

Now the idea of being open minded and curious is not new. According to Early and Ang, these attributes are a part of their concept of Cultural Intelligence (Early & Ang, 2003). The curiosity that was mentioned aligns well with the concepts of Cognitive and Motivational Intelligence, as proposed again by the same authors. Being curious does not necessarily entail that the person actually has enough capacity to truly learn, but it is important for the development of accurate expectations and behaviour in the new environment. Without the curiosity or “motivation”, it will be very hard for the assignee to get enough opportunities to learn from the new environment, and will therefore be influential in developing acceptable behaviour. Also having an open mind and thus being able to attribute differences to culture or similar, rather than personally, is very close to what they call Behavioural Intelligence. This means that for the assignee to properly interact with, and learn from, the new environment they must be able to do exactly this, having an open mind and attributing differences correctly. All these aspects that Early and Ang found to be important, are therefore important in my experience. Thus attempts should be made to discover or uncover the Cultural Intelligence of candidates in the selection process.

Other beneficial traits for the actual adjustment and success of employment were found. One of the more important aspects was academic flexibility. Now there were two trains of thought on this subject. One of my interviewees had experienced that academic flexibility should not be taken for granted, and this I agree with. But on the other hand, having the ability to be academically flexible is hugely beneficial for the success of the institution, or research

centre/arm, especially in relatively narrow field of research. As one of the professors at a relatively small research group at UiB told me:

*“For smaller subjects specifically, I think it is important that the person has a wider horizon when it comes to what he has been doing research in. When comes to engaging in the milieu, it is quite clear to see that if you have dealt with different subjects, then it would be easier for you to engage in cooperative work where everybody has to move a bit to form a common field of research”* UIB IH 2

Although academic flexibility could be beneficial for the productivity of the research group as a whole, it should never be taken for granted, as illustrated by the GUC Administrator, but if the candidate shows signs of possessing the ability to remain academically flexible after relocation, this should be weighted positively in the selection of candidates.

*“For our part, it has been immensely important that the international hires have the right academic background. I have made the mistake of thinking that people will be flexible in relation to academic specialization and that they would learn new things, so I have been thinking that as long as I hire someone with the approximately correct academic background, I could have them teach in topics that are related, but not necessarily in his or hers specific academic field. But this is not the case.”* GUC ADM 1

### **5.1.5 Family Situation**

Selecting a candidate with or without an accompanying family can be influential. My Interviewees have had mixed feelings about this aspect. Although research on the subject has indicated that having to worry about how your family is being able to adapt and live in the new country entails a huge amount of stress, there might also be positive sides to having a family moving with the candidate. According to one of my interviewees on how it was to adapt to the social outside-of-work life, he argued that since it was not very easy to quickly develop a large social network, having moved with your family (if the assignee had one) could be beneficial to well-being, if not necessarily to the degree of adaption to the Norwegian social life.

*“So if you move to Norway as a single, I think that is worse, because it’s harder to find other people”* GUC IH 1

*“My partner has come here too, she applied for a position and got it. This is at least our home for the next years to come, perhaps permanent.”* UIB IH 2

This makes sense, that as long as the relocation of the family is not too complicated (which results in stress and reduced capability to focus on work-related tasks), it can provide the international hire with a social safety net and therefore provide the employee with an increased amount of social well-being. This recharges the international hire's emotional and social batteries and allows him or her to have excess energy and motivation to work well in the institution and also promote collaboration and the illusive milieu.

Another thought is that if the international hire moves without his or hers family, then some of the time in Norway will be spent on socializing with them instead of using that time to integrate into the society and developing their own social networks in Norway.

*“My children are in Germany, so I have to find time to visit them. A great deal of my spare time therefore goes to that”* UIB IH 2

Even though one of my interviewees believed that moving with your family could be a good thing, the other interviewees were more on to the more original, well researched, train of thought, namely that moving with a family makes adaptation and acculturation harder:

*“I think also being single helps, because you do not have to organise family move”* UIB IH 1

My impression on the subject is in accordance with the majority of the research in this field. Having to worry about more than yourself during the actual relocation creates unnecessary amounts of stress that will keep the assignee away from focusing fully on his or hers work after relocation. Of course it is good to have a social safety-net, which is something the family represents, but my argument is that if the institution does enough to help the assignee develop a good social network in the beginning, and during the stay, the issue of not having moved with your family will not be such an important issue for the international hire's well-being. Therefore selecting candidates without an established family will be beneficial for social and cultural adaptation, and possibly productivity of the employee and the research group.

### **5.1.6 Host Language Proficiency**

The last element that was uncovered to be useful to consider during the selection phase, was the degree of Scandinavian language proficiency of the candidate. This aspect has been thoroughly studied in previous research on Inpatriation and Expatriation, since host country language proficiency is a gateway to social and work adjustment and well-being. Now since the Norwegian language is not widely spoken, finding international candidates who already

are proficient in the language seems like a long shot, but I argue that having this skill may alleviate problems arising later in the relocation phase.

*“I think it made a difference that I spoke Norwegian to begin with, I think that made it easier to integrate me”* UIB IH 3

This is what one of my interviewees said about knowing the Norwegian language. She had also previously been working as a foreigner in Denmark, in which the knowledge of the Norwegian language did not offer as much assistance. This is what she said about knowing the language when moving to Norway, versus moving to Denmark.

*“I knew the language, and it makes such a difference”* UIB IH 3

Having proficiency in the Norwegian language pre-departure really alleviates several issues related to training and adjusting to the language in the candidate’s new living situation in later stages of the relocation process. Now it is important to remember that language is trainable, just like the other interpersonal skills later in the relocation process. Therefore it does not outweigh the need for academic qualifications or interpersonal skills, but should rather be treated as an equal attribute to other interpersonal skills, which again should be weighed less than the pure academic qualification. Lastly it is also worth noting that finding international candidates with proficiency in the Norwegian language is the exception rather than the norm. Thus the focus during selection and ranking of candidates should in most cases be concentrated on academic qualifications, cultural distance, interpersonal skills and personality traits, and lastly the family situation.

## **5.2 Preparation**

The preparation of assignees for international missions have also been extensively researched in the past. But for the same reasons as in the selection phase, not all of this research can be directly applied to our situation. In more cases than not, the academic institution does not have the appropriate resources to conduct any pre-departure training for the assignee. This does not mean that this training is not beneficial for the assignee, but rather that the institution does not have the right capabilities to initiate the training before the arrival of the international hire.

Most research has anyway been concerned with how the pre-departure training is simply just an opportunity to further develop those characteristics and personal traits that are helpful to facilitate a rapid adaptation in the new environment. To get around this problem of lacking capabilities to perform this kind of training, the Academic Institutions must either be more thorough during the selection process, or more realistically, the training must be performed after arrival.

Besides from the training of the assignee, there are other parts of the literature that can be beneficial to look into. This includes the training of home country staff and the selection of a suitable mentor. This has also to some extent been supported by my findings.

### **5.2.1 Preparing the International Hire for Relocation**

Even though the academic institutions have limited capabilities to do any rigorous pre-departure training, there are things that can be initiated both by the institution itself and the assignee. It is good to know that there exists several low intensity/costly measures that can be initiated during the preparation phase. What is most important to realise is that there are several ways in which the assignee can prepare him or herself for the relocation. In many of my interviews I found that the assignee had taken initiative to do many kinds of preparations on their own. What I would like to propose is that this should not really be necessary, the institution should be more proactive rather than reactive and make sure that the assignee is indulged in all the issues he or she might be interested in learning about before the actual relocation.

#### **Cultural and Lingual Training/information**

Firstly, let's look at different kinds of training that will benefit the assignee's cultural and lingual skills. As noted earlier, host language proficiency is an important tool to open up the gates to social well-being in another country. Language courses should be offered during the actual relocation, but it may also be initiated sooner. Here is what two of my subjects had to say on the matter:

*“One thing I did do was to apply for the summer school at the University of Oslo, an international summer school ...went to school six weeks before I started working in Bergen ...I took a crash course in the Norwegian language, and Norwegian history”* UIB IH 1

This is what one of my interviewees did on her own accord. She signed up for summer school in Oslo in order to learn more about both the history of the country in the hope that it could

identify some of the reasons for why the Norwegian culture is the way it is. And she also took some language courses, what was difficult for her was that the language courses were in “bokmål” (the Danish-influenced branch of the Norwegian language) and when she arrived in Bergen, most of the written Norwegian she met was in “nynorsk” (the more native branch of the Norwegian language). This created some confusion.

*“I made myself acquainted with what was going on in Bergen, and specifically what was happening in the centre of medieval studies”* UIB IH 2

Both of these two assignees took the initiative themselves in relation to preparing themselves for the inevitable relocation. The first assignee described how she took the initiative to start language and historical training before starting in the position. This is obviously helpful for later adjustment. The second assignee talks about how he initiated a search to learn more about the employer he was going to work for, and more specifically what the state of research was in the group in which he was to be employed. Now both these two show some extraordinary initiative which is very good for adjustment, but my opinion is that they should already have gotten this information from the institution of which they were going to work before they felt the need for that kind of information or training.

The first case is the most interesting, where the assignee herself signs up for summer school at another academic institution in order to be better at dealing with the adjustment when she moves to Bergen. The more optimal way for the institution to handle this situation would have been if they had informed the assignee about the possibilities to do language and cultural courses before starting in the position. If the academic institution does not offer this kind of training off-season (Summer school is a good example) then they should make the effort to initiate some kinds of agreements with those institutions who do, University of Oslo’s summer school is one such example. If the institution had this kind of agreement, it would have been easy to relay this information to the international hire so that they had an idea of how they could prepare in terms of lingual and cultural training.

Relating to the other case, information on what is going on in the department where the assignee is to work, should really be available before the relocation. The assignee would have found this kind of information to be very beneficial, and if he could access this information easily, that is without having to thoroughly search for this information himself, the part of the preparation phase where one makes oneself acquainted with the employer and future employment situation would have been smoother.

### **Proactiveness by the Institution**

Now on to a more general statement that the institution should be more proactive. In one case the assignee got all the help he would ever need, but this was not necessarily thanks to the institution, but rather an enthusiastic colleague:

*“Things were quite easy for me, because of a colleague who is very energetic and obsessed with details, I mean this positively in this context. As soon as he knew that I was coming, he wrote me long emails with all kinds of information I could use, also the institute sent me a lot of practical information. This was very good and it came without me requesting it”* UIB IH 2

For another one of my interviewees, she got a lot of information from her superior during the preparation of the relocation:

*“My boss was providing me with loads of information, what I was supposed to do, how and where I was to turn up on my first day, and in case anything went wrong I could call her ...The best thing she did was when she asked me which model of laptop I wanted, and then she asked me what kind of keyboard layout I wanted, an international one, a German one or a Norwegian layout, and this I felt was really considerate and it made a difference”* UIB IH 3

Again, I understood what she said as it was her superior that on her own accord composed or acquired the necessary information and sent it to her. This is what the same employee had to say about the institution's attempts to send her this kind of information:

*“The university was supposed to send me some information sheets, and they never arrived. They said that it was enclosed, but it was in fact not there”* UIB IH 3

Now that the information was not attached where it should have been is a simple mistake, but to compose this information would probably not be very hard for the institution which usually has at least some experience with hiring from abroad. The institution could perhaps condense all the information that any international hire might ever want into a single document that could be handed out to any new international hire. Even though the information is so simple to compose, the information can prove to be an invaluable asset to the newly hired international employee who does not necessarily know what to expect, or how to deal with the relocation. Therefore having all the necessary information already available in the preparation phase would take away much of the stress the assignee has before moving, thereby making the entire process more comfortable and inevitably, successful.



## **Expectations**

Another issue that I discussed with my interviewees was the extent of how expectations can be both good and bad during the actual relocation, and in the context of preparation, what one should do with expectations at this stage.

*“I think that it is kind of healthy not to develop expectations in too much detail, if you have very detailed expectations, the risk of being disappointed is high. I would say that my stomach feeling was that there was a nice culture and climate between the colleagues” GUC IH 1*

Now having accurate expectations about the new culture is one way to prevent the culture shock as proposed by earlier research on the subject (Oberg, 1960). Also on the flipside, having the wrong expectations worsens the feeling of discomfort during the relocation. Therefore it is important to manage the development of expectations during the preparation phase.

*“Part of the interview was having a talk about my expectations and their expectations. But I had some ideas about what they expected. What was also important was that I did not try to hide any of my expectations, I said why I wanted to work there, what I could contribute with, and how I wanted to proceed. This was helpful for me, playing with open cards” UIB IH 2*

This interviewee told me how he had experienced the institution to be transparent in the expectations they had of him as a future employee, and also worth noting was that he was open with the institution about what he expected in return. This can be related to the idea of discomfort from having wrong expectations as proposed in relation to culture shock. I argue that this can be taken one step further and also be applied to expectations in general. Therefore being open about what one expects of the institution, and for the institution to be open about what it expects of the international hire, prevents future discomfort. As is the main theme of this thesis, discomfort results in stress, and stress results in reduced capacity to produce work for the institution.

The international hire who told me that he felt that it was smart not to develop expectations in too much detail, had also experienced that the institution had been fairly transparent about what it expected of him as a future employee.

*“It was a clear strategy in the previous, and current, management an expectation to initiate third party funded research projects, why? Because Gjøvik was establishing the PhD programme which took place in 2010, or 11. You don't get a PhD-programme credited unless*

*you have a reasonable amount of research projects, so I was from the very beginning investing a lot of my time in getting those research projects ...It was expected of me to have a large address book, which is in fact the case, I have a pretty extended network which I used to collect project partners to these research projects” GUC IH 1*

This is also in line with what I argue is the best way to deal with expectations relating to working conditions. When the academic institution is transparent in relation to expectations of the international hire, or any new hire in particular, there will be less confusion about the responsibilities and expectations during the actual relocation and start of the working period. As said, this reduces the personal discomfort and promotes the speed of adjustment.

Now none of my interviewees had that many thoughts on cultural expectations, and since none of them had any grave issues with adjusting to the Norwegian culture, this might not have been the most difficult part of the relocation. Regardless, in accordance with theory on cultural shock, it has been proved that cultural relocation creates discomfort. Even though the international hires in my sample did not face a great discomfort in this regard, that does not mean that institutions should be oblivious to this issue. Therefore I propose that some information on cultural expectations should be made available for the new international hires during the preparation phase. This might be done as simple as providing the new hire with information about the culture and typical Norwegian things and ways to behave, so that the inbound employee can at least create or modify his or hers expectations to be a bit more aligned with reality. If the institution has the capacity to make some cultural courses available before or after the relocation, this would also aid the international hire in quickly bouncing back from a possible culture shock when moving to Norway.

### **Mindset**

Another topic that was pointed out during one of my interviews was how the mind-set of the international hire would influence the adjustment process. In this regard, mind-set relates to how the international hire thinks about his or hers future of living and working in Norway. The international hire might have a short term focus, thinking that this is only for a limited amount of time before they move on to another country and/or position. Or they may have a long term focus, feeling like they want to remain in Norway even after the duration of their contract.

*“I have one good advice, no matter whether you are staying short term or not, you should always try to develop an attitude that if this was for the rest of your life. Only then will you make the effort to get to know people, to make friends and so on”* UIB IH 2

What is important in this phase with relation to the mind-set of the international hire, is that no matter how long the contract’s duration or the possibilities of other positions within the institution after contract expiration, the long term focus mind-set should be greatly encouraged. As illustrated by the quote from one of my interviews, without the attitude for wanting to remain living and working in the country, sufficient effort to integrate will never be initiated. This will inevitably influence the rate of adjustment and the possible value of the acquisition or hire.

This mind-set should be encouraged already in the preparation phase. Some of the people I interviewed expressed stronger feelings towards wanting to live in Norway long-term, while some felt that they would move back to their home country after contract expiration. Most of the reasons for why any of the international hires I interviewed did not picture themselves in Norway for the long term, was due to uncertainties relating to future possibilities of work.

*“If they feel like they have no reason to stay beyond the job, then they are not going to stay here”* UIB IH 1

So some of my interviewees felt like there was really no reason to stay beyond the job. Now it should be mentioned that his international hire had experienced some problems in developing a social network in Norway, thereby further reducing the reasons for why one should stay here if there was no position to be had. Others had another view on the matter:

*“I like the country, having the possibility to work in an international working environment at NISlab, and also the promise of higher wages, good job security and daycare made it even more desirable”* GUC IH2

As stated, some are more vocal about their desire to live in Norway due to the safe work environment and social security. This can be picked up already in the selection phase and might be good to look into, but I believe that the stated desire to remain living in Norway during rounds of initial interviews with possible hires can be deceiving. Therefore I firmly believe that the long-term attitude should be encouraged both during preparation and continuously during the actual relocation and stay in Norway.

The major influence on the attitude to stay long term in Norway is the future possibilities of employment. Most of my interviewees were on limited contracts which would expire within a few years when their research was completed. This obviously influences the international hire's perceived possibilities of living long term in this country, especially for the international employees in the more fringe fields of medieval studies which is strongly focused on Old Norse, which is mostly studied in only a handful of Scandinavian universities. Therefore the future career opportunities needs to be clearly communicated with the international hire, I propose, already during the preparation phase. The more information the international hire has on the future work possibilities he or she may have, the better a decision the international hire will make on living arrangements and eventually strongly influence their effort to adjust and adapt during the actual relocation.

### **Housing**

Another issue that can be looked into before the actual relocation, is the housing or accommodation situation the assignee will end up in after relocating. In most of the cases I looked at, the international hire had in one way or another been guaranteed a place to live for the initial relocation. This proved to be greatly beneficial since it meant that the assignee could invest his or hers energy elsewhere, rather than worrying about the living situation for the initial period of living abroad.

*“The university had organised some place for me to stay the first three months, and I knew that before I went”* UIB IH 1

*“The major effort was finding a place to live in Norway, which was to my pleasure well supported by the academic institution, at the time we were smaller, so there was a colleague that was extremely helpful in getting one started in the foreign environment”* GUC IH 1

*“The other thing that was very good, was that someone who had worked here at the institute, offered me a place to stay when I arrived and that I could do my own search for apartments from there. This helped a lot, I also found the university quite helpful. I think this was one of the easiest starts I had ever had in any country”* UIB IH 2

One of the important findings here is not necessarily that having the “safety” of having housing available directly on arrival is a good support for the assignee, but rather that in more cases than not, it was not necessarily the institution which offered this supportive measure,

but rather colleagues who were aware of the situation. Now I will not speculate whether it was the colleagues themselves who came with the idea of offering some type of accommodation to the assignee, or if it was the institution pulling strings. Regardless, this is one of the areas during the preparation phase where the institutions could have been more visible.

The simplest way for the institution to accommodate the need for housing is through both acting as a searching agent, continuously scouring the rental market to find available housing, and acting as an insurer, providing the international hire with good references in order to alleviate some of the liability of foreignness in the rental market. In this case, the liability of foreignness relates to how Norwegian landlords fear the unknown, and people from abroad is seen as riskier in terms of creating positive rental experiences.

Now it is important to mention that not all of the international employees that I interviewed had any real issues in regards to finding a place to live pre departure:

*“I tried to find a flat online, and that worked out for me. It was someone desperate to rent out, so that went fine”* UIB IH 3

Even though this employee at the University of Bergen experienced that it was easy to enter the Norwegian rental market, she was rather the exception than the rule. This was the only case where any of my interviewees managed to find an apartment on his or hers own before actually moving to Norway, all of the others got assistance by either the academic institution or some friendly colleagues.

### **5.2.2 Training of Local Staff – International Scope**

This part of the preparation phase is a little more demanding than the low-cost measures described earlier. Now due to the way I chose my interview subjects, I did never get any clear answers to how this had been, or could have been done. The only hints I got at this was related to how sometimes the local staff was not as easy to work with as they could have been. This was partly due to hints of ethnocentrism found in local staff, or simply due to the lack of international scope in the planning and controlling the department.

Now it should also be mentioned that especially the first research group I interviewed at GUC, NISLAB, had a very broad international scope, with an abundance of international employees. This negates the need for local staff training since the concept of training the local

staff assumes that the local staff is close to purely consisting of domestic employees, and therefore lacks the international scope and other dangers described in the section on ethnocentrism. The discussion on this subject must therefore be done without too much of my own evidence, but rather focussing on other research on the topic.

To properly integrate the international hire, the working environment have to be friendly and open. This allows the international hire to rapidly develop their own social capital in the new working environment, thus greatly enhancing the knowledge transfer and combined production increase due to synergies. Now ethnocentrism is seen as a real danger to the openness and inclusiveness one needs to properly integrate the foreign staff. As mentioned earlier, ethnocentrism is the inherent human trait that perceives those who are similar to one's self as being more trustworthy and knowledgeable than those who are unfamiliar in both cultural and relational regard. To combat ethnocentrism, the institution needs to educate its own staff about the benefits of having an international working environment, where it is important to identify the benefits for the employees themselves in terms of further developing their social capital and potential relational reach. Also it is important to illustrate the need for internationalization of staff, especially how the international hire helps the institution in marking its position in the global research environment, and thus keeping the institution afloat in an ever more competitive research environment. Without understanding that there is in fact a need for a more international approach to research and teaching, domestic employees may never truly understand why these international employees are hired in the first place, making the integration of the international hires to the social and working environment within the institution so much harder.

### **5.2.3 Mentoring**

Finding a suitable mentor is another low-cost idea that has been thoroughly discussed in previous literature and research. The main academic view on mentoring is that it is a low-cost high-yield measure that can easily be implemented. Since all of my interviewees have faced challenges when moving to Norway, to varying extents. Having someone who they knew were explicitly there to help or guide them through the relocation phase has been seen as a smart thing to do:

*“I have found very many supportive and friendly people, both among the administrative colleagues and the researchers ... What could have been done, was that one person could have been pointed out as a go-to-guy, if you had a problem than you knew who could help you with*

*that ...More recently, I have been giving new international employees that information”* UIB  
IH 2

Here one of my interviewees explain how he feel the relocation phase could have been improved. Now we can go into more detail on the effects of mentoring during relocation in the relocation part of this chapter. What is important to find here, is that if the institution is proactive enough to appoint a mentor for the inbound assignee, then that selection should be done after some careful consideration, and more importantly, before the assignee ever feel the need for a go-to-guy in the first place.

Now the main thing an internal mentor needs to possess, is an emphatic personality. Empathy is unfortunately not enough on its own, the mentor also needs to be able to put his or herself into the shoes of the international hire so that he or she can understand what the person is going through. Now most of the issues any international hire will face can be thought of without actually having been in the same situation before, as perfectly illustrated by the helpful boss of one international hire at UIB.

*“My boss was providing me with loads of information, what I was supposed to do, how and where I was to turn up on my first day, and in case anything went wrong I could call her”*  
UIB IH 3

In this case, I uncovered that her boss had not been on any international assignment before, and she had neither been responsible for hiring foreign employees previously. Even without this background she was able to provide the international hire with all the information she needed. So in this specific case, the boss acted as a mentor and did so in an extraordinary way based on her empathic and thorough personality.

Now this case might be an exception, in order to have more consistent results, it is important that the mentor that is selected has some previous experience in what the international hire will face when relocating to another country. Previous international assignments or experience should therefore be looked into when selecting an internal mentor for the international hire. This experience will make it easier for the mentor to know what the new hire is going through, and thereby be able to offer more thoughtful help and assistance.

Since this discussion is still in the preparation phase, it is important that after a single mentor or mentors are selected, it is important to initiate open communication and transparency between the international hire and the internal mentor as soon as possible. In addition to the

information pamphlet or document that I have argued should be sent to any new international hires immediately after the person has been selected for the position, information regarding their personal mentor should be sent as well. Knowing that one has a mentor is supportive for the international hire during the preparation phase, and this pre-departure contact may help creating a better and more trusting relationship between mentor and assignee during the actual relocation.

### **5.3 Relocation**

Now on to the actual relocation of the international hire to his or hers new living situation in Norway. In my research, the actual relocation process was rather smooth for all of the international hires that I interviewed. This does not mean that this part of the process is easy in any way, but due to certain characteristics of my research sample, ref cultural distance, the relocation phase did not prove to be immensely difficult in any way. That being said, the actual relocation of an international hire should be managed well for the adjustment process to be swift and efficient. The institution must invest time and effort in order to make the relocation as streamlined as possible in order to quickly get the most out of their new acquisitions.

#### **5.3.1 Social Networks**

Social Capital is regarded as hugely influential in determining the productivity of knowledge workers (Reiche, et al., 2009). Academic Institutions are, simply put, knowledge producing facilities, relying heavily on competent knowledge workers. In order to optimize the production output, social capital must be developed in an efficient manner. Since social capital is defined in this context as the structure and content of a person's social network, expanding this network is of utmost priority for academic institutions.

It can be argued that it is the international hire's responsibility in the end, to develop his or hers own social networks after relocating to another country. To some extent, this is true, it is indeed the assignee's own well-being that is in jeopardy if social networks are not established, thus motivating the assignee to develop these networks after relocating. The problem with this is the closed nature of the Norwegian culture. Since Norway is such a cold and dark place, the culture is built up around the family and staying indoors. This is a contrast to the more outgoing and open cultures found in other places like Europe and the Americas. This national



culture is one of the reasons as to why institutions need to be active in helping develop the international hire's social networks, as explained by one of my interviewees:

*“What is unusual is that, I mean if you work hard you want to relax after work. The typical German he works intensively, and then at some point in time he stops, be it 7 or 8 or 9 in the evening, then he wants to relax, so he does sports, or he goes to a bar, there are numerous bars around where you can find people and relax. In Norway I think it's different, I mean there are some sports activities, there's snow so we can go skiing to relax, but for instance other than sports activities, there's extremely sparse network of bars or restaurants, so I think Norwegians celebrate their free time in the family. So if you move to Norway as a single, I think that is worse, because it's harder to find other people”* GUC IH 1

According to this international hire, the general social environment in Norway is somewhat harder to access than that of his home country. And since the environment is not working in the international hire's favour when it comes to developing social networks, something have to be done in order to aid the assignee.

*“What you can draw from this is that you have to establish your own network, and your own social environment. I do have this with my landlord and his friends, but if I didn't have that, I would imagine evenings are quite boring“* GUC IH 1

To remedy this situation it is important that the institution steps in as a facilitator in order to aid the development of the social capital of the new international hires. This is a role that is important that someone plays, and since the institution has vested interests in seeing the newly hired employee creating value as soon as possible, it is natural that the institution should take the responsibility in order to ensure that this development actually occurs.

Even though it makes sense that the institution should take responsibility in this regard, that does not necessarily mean that this is what I found the institutions to be doing during my research. In one instance, one of my interviewees went a full three years before she really uncovered that there were a lot of international employees in the same position as herself (with regards to having a small social network), there had been sort of a silo mentality where most of the socialisation had been within the small research group instead of the faculty, or university as a whole.

*“I think more social events at work would have been good ...And also, in the center that I worked in, I had really few opportunities to make contact with other people outside the center*

*itself. So making contact with people on the same level as you in the university would have been a really good idea” “I never met the other PhD students until I had been there for like three years, and then I realized that there were a lot of people that I just never got the opportunity to meet ...I would have really liked to know more international PhD students, so social events by the university or something like that, where people in the same position could have met each other. That would have been really helpful”* UIB IH 1

In the case of this international employee, the institution took on a passive role in relation to helping her in developing intra-institutional social relationships. She reckoned that if the institution had taken a more active role sooner, her social relationships and thus social capital would have developed much more rapidly, benefiting both her own well-being and possibly the combined value creation for the institution.

This train of thought fits well with current literature on the topic. Reiche argues that in order to efficiently integrate the new international employee into the organisation and society as a whole, ongoing social development and activities should be performed on a regular basis (Reiche, 2010). On the background of this data, I propose that therefore cross-departmental social events should be encouraged on a regular basis within the institution, thus allowing international hires to socialize with both Norwegian staff, and other international employees that are possibly facing the same problems or challenges that the International Hire is facing.

### **5.3.2 Housing**

The housing issue has been introduced in the discussion on the preparation phase, but it is indeed also an issue during the initial relocation. In many cases in my study, the international hire had been given a temporary location in which to reside. During this time the assignee had to find a more permanent solution, often without substantial assistance from the institution. This proved to be problematic for many of my interviewees:

*“I think finding accommodation was the major hurdle in settling in”* UIB IH 1

In relation to how searching for an apartment is hard on finn.no and the apparent solution is rather to create an ad where one describes one’s self and waits for landlords to contact them.

*“If someone had mentioned that, that would have been really helpful and would have cut down on a lot of stress ...It’s stressful and it takes time away from your job as well, if you have to organize everything yourself, it takes a lot of time”* UIB IH 1

The same interviewee also mentioned that she felt like the institution could have been more helpful in both having feelers in the market so that they could be aware of possible rental locales, and also that they could provide a good reference to make landlords feel more at ease renting out to a foreigner:

*“I’m sure the institution has contacts somewhere”* UIB IH 1

*“They let me put down the head of administration as a reference in order to see how I was like and if I had money”* UIB IH 1

The point of this discussion is that the academic institution should try to do more in relation to assisting the international hire in finding a place to live long term. As illustrated by the quote in the beginning of this subchapter, the International Hire feels like actually finding a place to live long term in Norway was the most stressful part of her relocation. I have argued that stress and worries of the international hire is bad for the institution since this takes away mental capacity from performing value-enhancing, work-related tasks. Therefore the institutions should make quite the effort to ensure that the housing situation is resolved swiftly and comfortably.

### **5.3.3 Managing Expectations/Worries**

This chapter is concerned with how there are certain aspects of the relocation process, beyond those which have their own subchapters, that are stressful for the international hire. The stress comes from either wrong expectations on the relocation or from other worries the international hire might face or experience during the relocation. As I have stated before, stress siphons the mental capacity and capability of the assignee, thereby lowering the potential value output of the employee. This is obviously something the institution should try to minimize the extent of, therefore I will look into some issues that can be efficiently handled by the institution, thereby limiting the stress levels of the international hire.

### **Mentoring**

The concept of mentoring has been introduced previously in the literature review (Reiche, 2010) (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985) and in the discussion on the preparation phase. Regardless, it is in the actual relocation and continued working environment that the mentor plays its most important role, actually being there for the international hire.

“Having somebody who might help you, and possibly having international experience so they know what you are going through” “You do it or leave it, it’s not obligatory, but without this offer, how do you start?” UIB IH 3

This is what one of my interviewees said in relation to mentoring. According to her, having someone she could rely on, and ask questions, was truly helpful in taking away some of the discomfort of moving to Bergen. In her case, it was her boss that had taken on the informal role as a mentor without being explicitly told to do so, but rather out of her own will. This is a point where the institution could have been more proactive and already appointed a skilled mentor for the international hire in the preparation phase.

In my study, I this interviewee was the only one who felt like she had a true mentor available during the relocation phase. The other interviewees had support and assistance from colleagues and the administration to a sufficient level, but neither of them had a dedicated go-to-guy or girl. This is one measure I would like to point out as important for the reduction of the discomfort the international hire experiences in the relocation phase. The idea of mentoring is not costly, nor hard to implement by the institutions, therefore finding that this has not been too widespread in the academic institutions of my research, was shocking.

As stated in the preparation phase, mentoring is a low-cost, high yield measure that should be implemented by the institution early. I stand by this argument and believes that it holds true all the way through the initial adjustment period of the international hire. How long this adjustment period is, is very individual, but my argument remains that having a mentor can be positive even after the international hire has settled down in his or hers new environment. Mentoring should be implemented at all academic institutions that deal with the hiring of foreign personnel.

### **Language Policy**

Another topic of expectations the international hire might have, is the institution’s language policy. This is strongly influential in determining the international hire’s degree of stress and worries related to learning Norwegian. As stress and worries takes away the international hire’s focus from completing work related tasks, limiting the degree of worries is often a good idea in order to ensure optimal performance of any hire.

In this context, the language policy of the institution makes it explicitly clear to the international hire what is expected of him or her in relation to what language should be

encouraged, and in what situations deviations are allowed. Especially in the case of the University of Bergen, the apparent lack of a clear language policy created a lot of stress for some of the international hires that interviewed.

*“It seems like the language you speak influences the way in which your work is assessed ...It is the concern for the language that creates this problem, being forced to use Norwegian in an international research setting seems like a power struggle”* UIB IH 3

*“For example if you have a discussion after a presentation in English, you feel uncertain whether you should ask follow up questions in Norwegian or English” “this situation where you actually have to think twice, instead of just asking what you have in mind, and this is what research is all about, asking your questions. So sometimes it would be better to just ask questions in English, but somehow I feel like we should all be asking in Norwegian, maybe?”*  
UIB IH 3

*“It is the Norwegian language in the research group that is an endangered species and therefore there is a desire for people to speak Norwegian.”* UIB IH 2

These experiences are good at illustrating the struggle that some of the international hires have faced at the University of Bergen in relation to there being no clear language policy, although some players are very vocal about using Norwegian as the main language. A clear official policy on what was expected of the international hire language-wise would have been a great help for these employees, in that it would have removed the uncertainty about how the language should be handled.

*“... what is hard is that somehow there is the expectation to be fluent in Norwegian after some time, which is not the case in my situation. I mean, I passed the Norskprøven, I attended language courses, I could talk to my landlord in Norwegian, but then all of business is in English. We talk in English, we write papers in English.”* GUC IH 1

This illustrates the language struggle at the first academic institution. Now the institution has some guidelines which have been made clear to all new international employees, that is that they are expected to learn Norwegian to a certain extent in order to make it more easy for them to follow the parts of daily life in and out of work, that might not always be translated to English for their convenience. But in this research arm of the institution, NISlab, there was no official statement as to what language should be used in communication, which apparently

have worked out without too much hassle. Now if the institution expects international hires to use Norwegian full time in their work, some official language policies should be encouraged:

*“A recommendation would be nice, especially a recommendation for research environments with a high percentage of foreigners... It would also be good if those people arriving here would know whether these language classes account to their work time, or free time. It’s strange that you don’t know ...For example, they could just say that they expect fluency in Norwegian as a part of your work qualifications, and then of course that would be something you would do in your work time. Or if they don’t expect it, then of course you would do it in your free time”* UIB IH 3

In this last example, having a clear language policy would also have made it clearer how the international hire should approach language training. Since learning a new language entails quite the degree of effort, this effort has to be extracted from the employee’s free time or work time. Since there is a strong culture for being thorough when it comes to writing down how much the individual works in Norway, this became an issue to some of my interviewees. Again, having a clear official language policy would alleviate some of the discomfort experienced at the University, and it would also have made it clearer how and when the language training should be initiated.

### **Future possibilities and possible legal issues**

As introduced in the preparation discussion, a long term attitude in relation to living and working in Norway is preferable. I said that this should be efficiently communicated during the preparation phase if possible. It is important not to forget that this is still an issue after the international hire has relocated to Norway. As one of my interviewees put it:

*“What is missing for me, is information about what happens at the end of my contract. Because this is something that I’m worrying about now”* UIB IH 3

Not having a safe future is worrying to most people, and especially so for international hires who are in fact immigrants without the same safety-net that Norwegians have. Now the remedy for this situation is quite basic, having continuous communication channels open between the administration which sits on this kind of information, and the international hires who are in need of this information seems like the obvious answer. Now there are complications to this simple solution. Firstly, there might simply not be any position available for the international hire at the end of their contract. This is not impossible to imagine and is a

real case in many situations. Secondly, the institution might not have a clear understanding of the possible positions the international hire can fill at other related institutions.

To tackle the first obstacle, namely the possibility that there is indeed not any position available for the international hire at the end of the contract, the only solution is to be open about this and communicate the facts promptly. Any person would rather know that there is indeed no position available at the end of their contract, rather than having to constantly wonder and worry about the possibilities. Having clear lines of communication between administration and employees also opens up the possibility of notifying the international hire of any possible openings and possible employment prospects that might not necessarily be completely certain at any given moment in time. Thus alleviating some of the worries the international hire has, letting them spend their time working rather than worrying.

When the institution knows that the international hire has no future at the institution after the expiration of their contract, be that due to the research group completing their funded research or for other reasons, the institution should try to do some reconnaissance to look for other possible positions the international hire can apply for at other partner institutions. Since the institution has a better reach internationally and domestically, the effort of the institution will yield better results than that of the international hire. If the institution would do this for the international hire, it is certain that the employee would feel like the institution really cared for his or hers well-being, resulting in a more satisfied employee that manages to focus even more of his or hers energy into creating value for the institution.

Now another issue that most Norwegians are oblivious to, is the issue of what actually happens to an immigrant if their employment contract expires and they do not have another contract lined up. This was illustrated by one of my interviewees:

*“That’s something I have no idea about, so I have to ask other people, and the Norwegians do not know because they do not fear having to be thrown out of the country.”* UIB IH 3

*“You employer is interested in having a smooth integration into your position. I think the farewell procedure does not exist. This would, for me, make things more comfortable. I am wandering, what happens legally. I could possibly find this information myself, but why not provide this information to international employees”* UIB IH 3

*“This is important for how you plan the rest of your life, what kind of rental contract you have and so on ... And I don't think this would take too much effort from the university's side”* UIB  
IH 3

This illustrates another side of international hires' worries. Actually thinking about what happens to the employees after the expiration of their contract, legally, is not something most Norwegians think about at a regular basis. This does not mean that it is not an issue, on the contrary, this is a major issue for any international hire who has the intent of staying in Norway long term (and these are the kind of international employees an intuition should aim at keeping on their payroll). As my interviewee states, it is possible to find this information on your own, but she mentions that this is the kind of information the institution could have gathered on its own and offered to any international hire as a part of a welcoming information package. Since this is something that the international hire worries about, providing them with all the information they would ever need on the topic, as early as possible, would free up the employees mental power to focus on work related tasks instead.

### **Administrative Issues**

When one moves to another country, there is usually a lot of formalities that needs to be arranged before the immigrant can be formally allowed to live and work in the country. In my research I found that there are some formalities that can be an issue to new international hires, this was mostly related to getting set up with a Norwegian bank account and with the Norwegian Immigration Authority. This was a greater issue for the younger international hires I interviewed, but was an issue regardless. In this regard, getting some kind of help or assistance from the institution, was often seen as a way to make the relocation a lot easier for the international hire. Smoothing things over with banks to make it easier for new hires to set up a bank account would probably not be too difficult to do, but would mean the world to the new international hires who need this to function properly. Therefore this is a simple measure the institution can initiate in order to make the adjustment process of the international hire easier, this more profitable for the institution.



## **6 Conclusion**

In this chapter I will go through the main findings of my research, and make notes on the implications and limitations of the study, and come with possible ideas to ways in which the research can be further expanded on.

I must stress that the bulk of information on the key findings is still in the findings and discussion chapter (chapter 5), therefore I must encourage the reading of that chapter.

### **6.1 Key Findings**

#### **Selection**

Although there is a lot of existing research on expatriation and inpatriation, the shortfall of these studies in our application, is that these firms have vast pools of candidates, and can therefore be more selective when it comes to screening of candidates. In these situations, the measurable abilities and previous experience of the candidate are major factors that can assist the assignment in being successful. In smaller domestic institutions, this is a luxury, not easily found.

The main finding of this thesis in relation to the selection phase, is that academic qualification is still of utmost importance when it comes to determining the success of the candidate in creating value for the academic institution. Since specialization is so important in academia, having the right qualifications is deterministic in predicting the research outcome of the new hire.

The second most important factor to look at during the selection phase, was the candidate's previous international experience. In the literature review I argued that international experience could be considered a proxy for the candidate's Cultural Intelligence. Cultural intelligence is seen as an important factor in determining the capabilities the candidate has to efficiently integrate into a new and culturally different environment. As said, looking at previous international experience as a proxy for the degree of the candidate's cultural intelligence, have proved to be true, at least in my sample. Therefore this is one quality that should be examined during the selection phase.

Note that cultural distance has been found to be hugely important for the adjustment of the international hire in other studies on inpatriation and expatriation. In my sample I did not find

this to be a great issue at all, but I am totally aware that my sample was biased in this regard. Further research on the subject with a wider sample base would prove beneficial in finding the true importance of cultural distance in the selection phase.

Smaller firms and intuitions must rather rely on the expertise of the candidate, and try to further develop the personal characteristics found to be beneficial for adjustment and knowledge sharing as time progresses, that is, after relocation.

Now it is important to remember that there is an abundance of potential international candidates who may possess all of the skills required to efficiently adjust to the new living situation in Norway, but we must not forget that:

*“The professional qualification should be optimal, and not the other way around.”* GUC IH 1

Academic qualifications should be the first selection criterion in hiring. Interpersonal skills can be fostered by training after relocation in most cases, but the academic background takes years of schooling and research to develop. Therefore Academic Background is still key.

### **Preparation**

During the preparation phase, the most important role of the institution is that of acting as an information facilitator. The institution should do everything in its power to make sure that the following relocation goes smoothly. To do this, one needs to properly educate the incoming international hire on aspects that may prove to be important. Effort needs also be invested in creating a friendly and welcoming environment in the local institution for the arrival of the hire, through both educating the domestic staff of the inherent value of international competence, and also through selecting a suitable mentor for the assignee.

As was found during the interviews, for the institution to initiate any thorough training programmes for the international hire before they have arrived in Norway, is practically impossible. Though providing the assignee with all the information he or she might need in order to properly prepare for the relocation is well within the range of possible low-cost measures the institution can initiate. The provision of information, and information regarding to possible training after relocation was seen as an important factor in both establishing correct expectations to the relocation, which influences the degree of discomfort experienced after relocating, and letting the international hire prepare for the administrative issues that could be handled already before moving.

Secondly, it was found that the education of domestic employees could be instrumental in promoting the rapid adjustment of the new international hire, and also the institution's ability to capture the value of the new acquisition efficiently through knowledge sharing and synergies. It is important to notice that this idea was mostly founded in current research on the subject of inpatriation, since none of my interviewees could shed much light on this issue. Regardless, I believe it to be an important measure to be undertaken in order to maximise the chances of having a smooth adjustment process of the international hire.

The last important finding in the preparation phase, was that a suitable mentor in the host organisation should be identified during this phase, and contact between mentor and assignee should be initiated to initiate the creation of a trusting relationship between the two. Since having a mentor proved to be so valuable to the international hire during the relocation phase, finding a good mentor is of the essence.

### **Relocation**

The major idea during the actual relocation of the international hire is always to make sure that the transition to the new environment is smooth, that is without major troubles, and to make sure that the social capital of the new international knowledge worker can continue to develop within the new institution, providing a boost to the combined value output of the institution as a whole.

Now the most important finding of my research was how important the creation of social capital in the new situation is instrumental for the success of the international hire as a tool to improve the institution's competitiveness. Since social capital is defined in this context as the structure and content of a person's social network, expanding this network is of utmost priority for academic institutions. The findings illustrated the need for social events hosted by the institution as a way to quickly build the international hire's social network, as a way to escape the silo mentality that was apparent in some cases (where the international hire only interacted with people from within the same research group). Encouraging inter-departmental interaction was also a measure of which the institution could initiate, such interaction could be effective in further developing the international hire's social network, thus expanding the combined social capital of the institution, essentially developing the combined research potential of the institution.

The international hires did all face the issue of finding a suitable place to live in Norway. Many ideas as to how this could have been done better by the institution were put forward.

The most promising ones were those solutions in which the institution would act as both an insurer, ensuring the landlord that the international employee was of good nature and had the ability to pay the rent, and that of a reconnaissance unit, periodically scouring the environment for potential rentals that would be interesting for the international employees, thus making the international hire feel cared for.

Another issue that was found, was how clear guidelines in regard to the language politics of the institution was desirable. In the cases where the institution did not have any official language politics with regards to the use of English and Norwegian, and in which settings these should be uttered, created quite the amount of stress for the international hires of that institution. As stress reduces the potential to focus on work related tasks, lowering the stress of the international hire is seen as a good way of improving the productivity of the institution. Therefore, having clear official language politics is seen as a low-cost measure that the institution can initiate, if it has not done so already.

Lastly, encouraging the creation of a collaborative and energetic milieu in the work environment has been seen as a way to further improve the productivity of the institution. Now it must be stressed that this is a more costly goal to strive for. This requires a change in the mentality and core culture of the institution, not something that is done instantly and without great effort. Regardless, if an institution manages to pull this off, it has been seen as a way to vastly enhance the production output of the unit, therefore it is seen as an ultimate goal of the relocation phase and further retention within the institution.

## **6.2 Implications and Limitations**

The general feeling I got during my interviews, was that the institutions themselves, or enthusiastic employees within, performed a lot of the measures suggested by research on similar subjects of inpatriation and expatriation. This illustrates that the institutions at least to some extent, are aware of the difficulties international hires face in the relocation to their new working situation in Norway, and makes an effort to make the adjustment process easier. This was not apparent in all situations, but it was obvious that the institutions did follow some of the known guidelines to make the adjustment process smoother.

The limitations to this thesis is that the sample of interview objects was rather minuscule, which means that I was most probably not able to include all the possible issues that might be

faced by international hires in the relocation to Norway, cultural distance is one such factor that is important in literature, but was not deemed important enough based on my sample data. This is a limitation to the usefulness of this research. Secondly, the narrow scope of the thesis meant that the findings cannot easily be transferred to other situations within the Norwegian context.

Due to these limitations, the findings are most applicable to similar situations, namely Norwegian academic institutions hiring northern European qualified candidates to fill their immediate need for said qualifications. Although one must note that there is a great possibility that the findings of this thesis can be applied to other situations, but this is not something I had the chance to verify due to my narrow scope.

### **6.3 Suggestions for Future Research**

This thesis has served as an introduction to the aspects which influence the adjustment process of international hires in academic institutions. Due to the limited scope of the thesis and the small sample of data, this research can easily be extended to accommodate both these dimensions.

One of the ways to extend the study is to interview more international hires within Norwegian academic institutions, especially focusing on having a broader range of ethnicities or nationalities involved in the research. As my thesis only had a sample consisting of northern European international employees, cultural distance and culture shock was never any real perceived issue. It can be assumed that this would have turned out differently if I had interviewed people from culturally and institutionally more distant locations. Therefore one simple way to extend on this research is through having a greater and more varied sample of interview objects within the institutions.

Another way to extend the research, is through widening the scope of the research. As mentioned, my thesis had to narrow the scope to academic institutions due to time and resource limitations. It would be interesting to see if international hires faced other issues or obstacles to the adjustment process in other types of enterprises, especially in private firms where competence is usually well managed.

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# Appendix

## A1 Interview Guide for International Hires

### PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Where are you from?

When did you go to Norway?

What are you currently doing at UiB/HiG?

Tell me more about your studies?

### SELECTION PHASE

How were you selected, did you apply for the position PhD/Prof?

Why did you go? Natural career path? Or other motives?

What do you think are qualities that are important for adapting to another environment?

Open Mind and curiosity, what do you think about these traits, are they beneficial in any way?

Do you think that cultural distance can influence the adjustment process? So that it should be considered in the selection phase?

What do you think about knowing Norwegian before moving?

### PREPARATION PHASE (Before actually moving, what kind of preparations did you do)

How did you prepare for the relocation?

Were you given any type of support from UiB/HiG before moving? Mentor, contact person etc?

Did you develop any expectations to how it would be to work in Norway? (or stydy/phd)(expectations to how HiG would assist you, how it would be to interact with the natives, etc.)

Did the expectations reveal themselves to be true when you arrived and started working? (was there any discrepancies between expectations and reality). How did that make you feel?

Did UiB/HiG make their expectations of you known? (as an employee/phd student)(in case they didn't, was it hard to adjust to sudden expectations you were not aware of when coming there?)

Do you have any thoughts about how this part of the process could have been done better?  
More information and help from UiB etc.?

### **RELOCATION PHASE**

How was **your experience** of moving to Norway? (Initially coming here, finding a place to live, starting to work etc.)

What were the major challenges of relocating? Housing, stuff to do during immigration, socializing, etc.

Did UiB/HiG offer any support initially, like housing, mentoring etc?

And what kind of Problems did you encounter **when you began working** at HiG?

**Culture Shock.** Did you feel any shocks when confronted with the Norwegian culture, both in and outside of work? (Culture shock is basically the distress one feels when you come to a place where a lot of the things you were familiar with is not existing, or different. It's a natural state that some people get affected by more than others)

Was it hard to adjust to the Norwegian working/**organisational culture**?

Did you have any support among your peers, like other international hires that were, or had been, in the same situation as yourself?

Did you know how your **performance** was being measured? Was this different than what you were used to in Germany? (**Performance Measurement**) (since having a clear understanding of what you are/might be measured on creates a more stable (and thus less stressful) work environment)

Can you speak Norwegian? Do you think this has been beneficial, in what way?

How was Adjusting to living in Norway, outside of work?

Did UiB offer any opportunities for socializing?

Did you at one point feel like you had adapted, like this was another home town for you?

## **WORKING SITUATION**

Worries influence your capacity to work. What were the most challenging in this respect?

Within the working environment, but also the relocation at large?

Cross Cultural Communication. Have you ever experienced that your intended message did not translate so well with your fellow employees?

When did you feel like you and your ideas/suggestions were taken seriously/being treated as equal?

Do you have any experiences of problems in this regard? Knowledge Transfer, Ethnocentrism? (this relates to how the organisation you were hired in has a culture for being open to other suggestions and thoughts. Sometimes the existing Norwegian employees might be thinking that people from other cultures are somehow less knowledgeable, and thus they will not be able to learn as much as they could from international knowledge)

Shadow Structures due to language?

Do you feel that the international atmosphere at UiB/HiG is beneficial? In what way? (German business culture etc.)(Have they brought any value (of course they have) do you have any examples))

RETENTION. How did you feel like you could continue to work at UiB/HiG, or were you there simply to do a PhD and then move on?

Were there aspects of your relocation and adjusting where you felt HiG could have done better? What did they do well?

In hindsight, could you have done anything differently for the entire process to be more successful? In the preparation and/or relocation Phases?

## **A2 Consent Form**

Now it must be noted that the consent form asked the interviewee to participate in a research project on Inpatriation. I made the utmost effort to clarify the mistake during the interview by presenting my thesis in a better light than was possible in the short space of the consent form. In none of the interviews did this turn out to be any issue with the participants.

### **SAMPLE CONSENT FORM – INTERVIEW WITH AUDIOTAPING**

Consent to Participate in Research

Title of Study: Keys to Successful Inpatriation

Introduction and Purpose

My name is Thormod M. Bakke. I am a graduate student at NHH, Bergen. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study, which concerns Inpatriation

Procedures

If you agree to participate in my research, I will conduct an interview with you at a time and location of your choice. The interview will involve questions about Inpatriation at your business. It should last about 45 minutes. With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes only! If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you don't wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time.

I expect to conduct only one interview; however, follow-ups may be needed for added clarification. If so, I will contact you by mail/phone to request this. If this is necessary, I will send you a request at a later stage.

### Benefits

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study, other than helping a student. It is hoped that the research will shed light on the subject of inpatriation and hopefully prove to be valuable to other inpatriates, and, or businesses in the same situation.

### Risks/Discomforts

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, we are taking precautions to minimize this risk.

### Confidentiality

Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used, unless you give me the permission to do so.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, we will keep the data on a secure hard drive, and erase the data using a British HMG IS5 erasure procedure. I will retain these records for up to 6 months after the study is over.

### Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

### Rights



Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate in the research and whether or not you choose to answer a question or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

### Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 0047 41 22 98 86 or [Thormod.m.bakke@gmail.com](mailto:Thormod.m.bakke@gmail.com)

### CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below.

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Participant's Name (please print)

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Participant's Signature

Date

If you agree to allow your name or other identifying information to be included in all final reports, publications, and/or presentations resulting from this research, please sign and date below.

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Participant's Signature

Date