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**Decoding the intention to expatriate:  
A comparative analysis of employees from developed and  
emerging countries**

Denise Rossato Quatrin

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
Doctor of Philosophy in Management



Durham University Business School

Department of Management and Marketing

2022

## **Decoding the intention to expatriate:**

### **A comparative analysis of employees from developed and emerging countries**

A thesis by Denise Rossato Quatrin

#### **ABSTRACT**

Assigned expatriates (AEs) are strategic resources for the successful operation of multinational companies (MNCs). More recently, though, employees have been more reluctant to expatriate. In this context, it is crucial to investigate the predictors of employees' intention to expatriate to widen organisations' talent pool. Notably, while most expatriation research has focused on individuals from Western developed countries, very limited research has been conducted on those from Latin emerging countries. In this respect, this study aimed to identify the psychological process involved in forming developed and emerging employees' intention to expatriate. The first step was to develop a conceptual framework, which integrated the self-determination theory (SDT) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). It assumes that autonomous and controlled motivations from SDT affect employees' intention to expatriate through the socio-cognitive variables (attitude, subjective norms - SN, and perceived behavioural control - PBC) from TPB. In addition, the model incorporated individual-subjective and national-level moderating variables, psychic distance (PD) and cultural distance (CD). A sample of 431 AEs, of which 218 were from emerging countries (Brazil and Mexico) and 213 were from developed countries (Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States), answered an online questionnaire. Descriptive statistics showed that, although the samples of developed and emerging AEs resemble in aspects such as the proportion of male expatriates and family composition, they differ in many other aspects: emerging AEs are fluent in more foreign languages than developed AEs, and have, on average, three years less of previous international experience than developed AEs. The model was tested using multi-group structural equation modelling, and the results support a different psychological process explaining developed and emerging AEs' expatriation intention. For example, autonomous motivation and PBC are the key predictors of developed AEs' intention to expatriate; conversely, controlled motivation and attitudes are the leading antecedents of emerging AEs' intention to expatriate. These results can be primarily linked to employees' cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Moreover, the types of motivation directly affected employees' intention to expatriate, indicating that the expatriation decision is very complex and the result of a combination of influences that can be cognitive and driven by motivations. The results also support the moderating role played by the CD and PD, which alter the motivational and cognitive processes explaining employees' expatriation intention. The findings of this study shed new light on the international human resource management and expatriation literature. Foremost, this research provides a more comprehensive appreciation of the antecedents of employees' expatriation intention, adding another layer of understanding to previous studies, and emphasises the lasting impact of the country of nationality on employees' formation of their intention to expatriate.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND EMERGING GAPS .....	1
1.2	RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
1.3	RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY, DESIGN, AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH .....	6
1.4	CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY .....	7
1.5	THESIS STRUCTURE AND OUTLINE.....	9
<b>2</b>	<b>THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1	EXPATRIATES: CONTEXT, BOUNDARIES, AND DEFINITIONS .....	11
2.2	THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEES' INTENTION TO EXPATRIATE .....	16
2.3	A REVIEW OF PRIOR RESEARCH ON THE INTENTION TO EXPATRIATE.....	17
2.4	THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR .....	22
2.4.1	<i>Theory of planned behaviour: an overview.....</i>	<i>22</i>
2.4.2	<i>The theory of reasoned action: a predecessor to the TPB.....</i>	<i>24</i>
2.4.3	<i>Theory of planned behaviour variables: intention .....</i>	<i>26</i>
2.4.3.1	Distance and individuals' intention to expatriate .....	27
2.4.4	<i>Theory of planned behaviour variables: attitude towards the behaviour .....</i>	<i>28</i>
2.4.5	<i>Theory of planned behaviour variables: subjective norms.....</i>	<i>30</i>
2.4.6	<i>Theory of planned behaviour variables: perceived behavioural control .....</i>	<i>31</i>
2.5	SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY.....	35
2.5.1	<i>Self-determination theory: an overview .....</i>	<i>36</i>
2.5.2	<i>Theoretical background and principles of the SDT.....</i>	<i>41</i>
2.5.3	<i>Innate psychological needs.....</i>	<i>44</i>
2.5.4	<i>Regulatory styles.....</i>	<i>47</i>
2.5.5	<i>Relative autonomy continuum.....</i>	<i>51</i>
2.5.6	<i>Autonomous and controlled motivation.....</i>	<i>53</i>
2.5.7	<i>Individuals' reasons for expatriate.....</i>	<i>57</i>
2.5.7.1	Autonomous reasons to expatriate .....	57
2.5.7.2	Controlled reasons to expatriate .....	65
2.6	DEVELOPED AND EMERGING COUNTRIES .....	72
2.6.1	<i>Definition .....</i>	<i>72</i>
2.6.2	<i>Cultural framework.....</i>	<i>73</i>
2.6.3	<i>Socio-economic conditions.....</i>	<i>78</i>
2.6.4	<i>The intricate relationship between national context and individuals' motivations and socio-cognitions.....</i>	<i>81</i>
2.7	SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	84

<b>3</b>	<b>CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES</b> .....	<b>90</b>
3.1	THE EFFECT OF THE SOCIO-COGNITIVE VARIABLES ON EMPLOYEES’ INTENTION TO EXPATRIATE.....	93
3.2	THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF THE SOCIO-COGNITIVE VARIABLES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND INTENTION TO EXPATRIATE .....	95
3.3	CULTURAL DISTANCE AND ITS MODERATING EFFECT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUBJECTIVE NORMS AND THE EMPLOYEES’ INTENTION TO EXPATRIATE.....	97
3.4	PSYCHIC DISTANCE AND ITS MODERATING EFFECT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED BEHAVIOUR CONTROL AND THE EMPLOYEES’ INTENTION TO EXPATRIATE .....	98
3.5	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....	99
<b>4</b>	<b>RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY, METHOD, AND DESIGN</b> .....	<b>101</b>
4.1	RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND METHOD .....	101
4.2	STUDY POPULATION.....	103
4.3	QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT .....	105
4.3.1	<i>Design of the study measures</i> .....	105
4.3.1.1	The measures of the variables from the theory of planned behaviour .....	105
4.3.1.2	Motivation to expatriate.....	106
4.3.1.3	Moderator variables .....	109
4.3.1.4	Control variables.....	110
4.3.1.5	Assignment and expatriates’ characteristics.....	112
4.3.1.6	Summary of the measures used in the research.....	113
4.3.2	<i>The translation and back-translation process</i> .....	117
4.3.3	<i>Pre-test</i> .....	118
4.3.4	<i>The structure of the questionnaire</i> .....	119
4.4	DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURES.....	119
4.5	DATA ANALYSIS.....	121
4.5.1	<i>Preliminary data analysis and descriptive statistics</i> .....	121
4.5.2	<i>Exploratory factor analysis</i> .....	122
4.5.3	<i>Multi-group confirmatory factor analysis</i> .....	123
4.5.4	<i>Invariance test</i> .....	124
4.5.5	<i>Common method variance</i> .....	124
4.5.6	<i>Non-response bias</i> .....	125
4.5.7	<i>Hypothesis testing</i> .....	127
<b>5</b>	<b>ANALYSIS AND RESULTS</b> .....	<b>129</b>
5.1	PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS.....	129
5.1.1	<i>Testing the normality assumption</i> .....	131
5.2	DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS.....	133
5.2.1	<i>Profile of respondents</i> .....	133

5.2.2	<i>Descriptive statistics of the constructs' items</i> .....	140
5.3	EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS .....	143
5.4	ESTABLISHMENT OF A BASELINE MODEL .....	146
5.5	CONVERGENT AND DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY .....	147
5.5.1	<i>Convergent validity</i> .....	148
5.5.2	<i>Discriminant validity</i> .....	150
5.6	INVARIANCE TEST.....	151
5.7	TEST FOR COMMON METHOD VARIANCE.....	152
5.8	NON-RESPONSE BIAS.....	154
5.9	HYPOTHESES TESTING.....	155
5.9.1	<i>Hypothesis 1</i> .....	156
5.9.2	<i>Hypothesis 2</i> .....	158
5.9.3	<i>Hypothesis 3</i> .....	160
5.9.4	<i>Hypothesis 4</i> .....	162
5.10	A COMPARISON OF THE TPB-BASED MODEL, SDT-BASED MODEL AND THE INTEGRATED MODEL.....	165
5.11	SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	166
<b>6</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>170</b>
6.1	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON THE SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS .....	170
6.2	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF THE SOCIO-COGNITIVE VARIABLES ON EMPLOYEES' INTENTION TO EXPATRIATE 173	
6.3	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TYPES OF MOTIVATION AND EMPLOYEES' INTENTION TO EXPATRIATE.....	175
6.4	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON THE MODERATION ANALYSES .....	177
6.5	EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS .....	179
6.6	THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS.....	182
6.7	MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS.....	188
6.8	LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....	192
<b>7</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>196</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>201</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>279</b>
9.1	APPENDIX 1: THE SUMMARISED CURRICULUM OF THE CONSULTED EXPERTS .....	279
9.2	APPENDIX 2: GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM.....	280

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Schematic representation of the Theory of Reasoned Action .....	25
Figure 2: Schematic representation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour .....	35
Figure 3: Examples of self-regulation of worker completing a task.....	51
Figure 4: The types of motivation and regulation.....	52
Figure 5: Autonomous and controlled motivation .....	54
Figure 6: Hofstede's national culture dimensions .....	74
Figure 7: The proposed conceptual framework .....	100
Figure 8: The research process onion .....	102
Figure 9: Translators' profile .....	118
Figure 10: Confirmatory factor analysis path diagram for developed AEs .....	147
Figure 11: Confirmatory factor analysis path diagram for emerging AEs .....	147
Figure 12: The final model .....	169
Figure 13: Developed AEs' model of expatriation intention.....	199
Figure 14: Emerging AEs' model of expatriation intention .....	199

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: A summary of previous studies on expatriation intention .....	21
Table 2: The reasons to expatriate and their supporting literature.....	86
Table 3: Autonomous reasons to expatriate .....	107
Table 4: Controlled reasons to expatriate .....	108
Table 5: Measure of primary data variables .....	114
Table 6: Measure of secondary data variables .....	117
Table 7: Final number of questionnaires resulting from preliminary data analysis .....	131
Table 8: Normality check: skewness and kurtosis .....	131
Table 9: Respondents' nationality .....	133
Table 10: Respondents' demographic characteristics.....	135
Table 11: Respondents' professional profile and IA's characteristics.....	137
Table 12: Destination of the IAs.....	139
Table 13: Distribution of the sample regarding the direction of the transfer.....	139
Table 14: Descriptive statistics of the latent factors .....	141
Table 15: EFA results for the latent constructs.....	145
Table 16: Convergent validity analysis.....	149
Table 17: Discriminant validity analysis .....	150
Table 18: HTMT for developed and emerging AEs .....	151
Table 19: Measurement invariance testing .....	152
Table 20: Items' loadings on their respective constructs with the presence of CMV .....	153
Table 21: CMV test: results for partial correlation method.....	154
Table 22: Mann-Whitney test for non-response bias.....	155
Table 23: Results of Hypotheses testing: Hypothesis 1 .....	156
Table 24: Results of hypotheses testing: Hypothesis 2.....	158
Table 25: Results of hypotheses testing: Hypothesis 3.....	160
Table 26: Results of hypotheses testing: Hypothesis 4.....	162
Table 27: A comparison among the models explaining the intention to expatriate.....	165
Table 28: Outcome of the hypotheses.....	168
Table 29: A summary of the theoretical contributions .....	187

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
AE	Assigned expatriate
AMot	Autonomous motivation
Att	Attitude
AVE	Average variance extracted
$\beta$	Standardized estimate
CD	Cultural distance
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CMot	Controlled motivation
CMV	Common method variance
CR	Composite reliability
Developed AE	AE from developed countries
df	Degrees of freedom
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
Emerging AE	AE from emerging countries
Expat	Expatriate
FDI	Foreign direct investment
IA	International assignment
Int	Intention to expatriate
M	Mean
MG	Multi-group
MNC	Multinational company
PBC	Perceived behaviour control
PD	Psychic distance
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
SEM	Structural equation modelling
SD	Standard deviation
SDT	Self-determination theory
SE	Standardized error
SN	Subjective norms
SRMR	Standardized root mean squared residual
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
TPB	Theory of planned behaviour
W	Wald test
WEIRD	Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, Developed

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Cheers,

Denise

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the Study and Emerging Gaps

Assigned expatriates (AEs) are employees sponsored and assigned by multinational companies (MNCs) to work temporarily abroad (McNulty & Brewster, 2017a). MNCs rely on AEs for several reasons, including transfer of knowledge, control and coordination, and management development (Edström & Galbraith, 1994; Harzing, 2001). From the employees' perspective, international assignments (IAs) are the most effective opportunity for personal, professional, and career development (Bolino, 2007; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Haslberger & Brewster, 2009; Stahl et al., 2002; Suutari et al., 2018). Nevertheless, recent research has shown they are more reluctant to expatriate for reasons such as dual-career couples and disruption to children's education at the individual level, lack of formal career management practices at the organisational level, and political and economic nationalism at the national level (e.g., Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Dickmann, 2018; Farndale et al., 2020; Ghauri et al., 2021; Horak et al., 2019; Mockaitis et al., 2018). Important to say is that most successful expatriation missions only happen when employees are willing to expatriate (Tung, 1981); otherwise, IAs may result in premature returns at high costs (Joardar & Weisang, 2019). In this scenario where employees are more hesitant to expatriate, it is important to investigate the predictors of employees' intention to expatriate to widen organisations' talent pool.

Previous studies have investigated diverse antecedents of employees' intention to expatriate from different perspectives, such as the impact of personal variables, including gender, family configurations, level of education, and foreign language proficiency (e.g., Brett & Stroh, 1995; Dupuis et al., 2008; Froese et al., 2013; Ipek & Paulus, 2021; Remhof et al., 2013). Further research has focused on push (e.g., socio-economic conditions of home country) and pull (e.g., better work-life balance and standard of living) factors that drive decisions (e.g., Doherty et al., 2011; McNulty & Vance, 2017). Additional investigations have identified the importance of diverse reasons in individuals' decision to expatriate, including financial incentives, professional development, and personal challenges (e.g., Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011; Hippler, 2009). Another research cluster has focused on the psychological determinants of individuals' intention to expatriate, among which researchers have investigated aspects such as personality traits (e.g., Baluku et al.,

2018; Ipek & Paulus, 2021; Mol et al., 2009) and cultural intelligence (e.g., Camargo et al., 2020; Richter et al., 2020; Schlägel & Sarstedt, 2016).

While many antecedents are out of the companies' control, the psychological processes operating within individuals are considered the most practical level at which people can intervene in human behaviour affairs and, thus, the most needed level of analysis to understand and change behaviours (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In this sense, there is a call for more empirical studies from a cognitive perspective for the development of the field of IHRM (Budhwar, 2000). More broadly, researchers emphasise the need for more studies on the micro-foundations of HR, which allows scholars to enter into the personal and psychological aspects of expatriation and global work (e.g., Minbaeva et al., 2012; Reiche et al., 2019).

Recognising the value of psychological theories in explaining and changing human behaviours, many researchers relied on the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). Within the TPB, intentions are explained through socio-cognitive variables named attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behaviour control, which represent, respectively, individuals' evaluation of the target behaviour, individuals' belief about social pressure, and individuals' perception of control and capability over performing the target behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB has proved to explain individuals' intention to expatriate in different contexts through these socio-cognitive variables (e.g., Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Eby & Russell, 2000; Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Joardar & Weisang, 2019; Yurtkoru et al., 2017). The TPB is helpful for understanding, predicting, and changing intentional human behaviours (Ajzen, 1991), and it brings valuable insights into the formation of employees' behavioural intentions towards expatriation. Nonetheless, the TPB "cannot answer the question of why the psychological variables that are included in their models motivate behaviour" (Chatzisarantis et al., 1997, p. 358). In other words, socio-cognitive theories ignore the organism's conditions that make activities and behaviours desired (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). As such, the TPB does not provide information on the origins of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control. In fact, "most information processing [social cognitive] models are silent on matters central to self-determination theory" (Andersen et al., 2000, p. 272). This is where another branch of psychological research becomes important: the self-determination theory (SDT).

SDT is a motivational theory that underlines the qualitative aspects of motivation, emphasising that different reasons to expatriate (autonomous or controlled) lead to behaviours varying in quality and dynamics (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). In the organisational research, autonomous motivation was found to increase job satisfaction and

psychological well-being (e.g., Gagné et al., 2010; Güntert, 2015; Van den Broeck et al., 2013), job organisational and occupational commitment (e.g., Fernet, 2011; Gagné et al., 2008), and job performance (e.g., Parent-Lamarche et al., 2022). Autonomous motivations also positively predicted self-initiated expatriates' organisational and community embeddedness (Chen & Shaffer, 2017) and are negatively related to maladaptive outcomes such as turnover intentions and psychological distress (Gagné et al., 2010). In contrast, although controlled motivated people also show efficiency, they tend to show less free-choice persistence (Ryan et al., 1991), increased turnover intentions (Güntert, 2015), and burnout (e.g., Fernet et al., 2004; van Beek et al., 2012). In addition, workers with higher controlled motivation reported lower levels of well-being (job satisfaction, enthusiasm, and engagement) (Van den Broeck et al., 2013). In the expatriation realm, authors found that higher intrinsic motivation (the most autonomous form of motivation) for an IA was associated with greater willingness to accept an IA, while extrinsic motivation (the most controlled form of motivation) was not significantly associated with it (Haines et al., 2008). Further, using the lens of cultural intelligence, which has a motivational component, Richter et al. (2020) found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational cultural intelligence influenced individuals' intention to expatriate, with the importance of each varying according to their nationality. Overall, the SDT can clarify important aspects concerning the formation of individuals' intentions to expatriate. However, it also has its theoretical scope and limitations. Crucially, it does not reveal the process by which motivation leads to behavioural intentions and behaviours (Hagger et al., 2002).

There is little doubt that the TPB and the SDT can bring meaningful contributions to understanding the formation process of individuals' intentions to expatriate. However, due to their theoretical scope and limitations, the decision-making process involved in the employee's expatriation may be more complex than previously assumed by studies based on either the SDT or the TPB. Earlier, an integrated model of the TPB and the SDT was proposed to study other intentional behaviours (Hagger et al., 2002) because both theories are thought to provide complementary explanations of the mechanisms that underlie intentional behaviours and actions (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009; Lee et al., 2020): the decision-making constructs from the TPB indicate the formation of plans to engage in specific behaviours, and the motives from the SDT serve to indicate the source of information that influences the decision-making process (Hagger, 2012). Within this perspective, the integrated model was further tested in diverse contexts, especially in medical research (e.g.,

Chan et al., 2015; Hagger et al., 2012), proving to increase the explanation of the intention compared to studies using either the TPB or the SDT (e.g., Williams et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, no study was found using the integrated model among the ones aiming to explain employees' intention to expatriate. So, the question remains whether the integration of TPB and SDT will improve the predictive power, as found in other research areas.

Besides this gap, there are important considerations concerning the boundary conditions that can provide a better understanding of individuals' intentions to expatriate. In this regard, many individual-subjective and national-level variables were found to moderate the relationship between the socio-cognitive variables (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control) and the behavioural intention in a range of subjects (e.g., Chen & Tung, 2010; Hassan et al., 2016; Hooft & Jong, 2009; Leonidou et al., 2022; Shukri et al., 2016). In the expatriation field, individuals should be more familiar with practices in psychologically close countries, where they are also more likely to possess the appropriate knowledge and skills needed to understand and adapt to the host country. Therefore, the perceived differences between home and host countries should attenuate the relationship between individuals' perceived capability (PBC) and their intention to expatriate due to the expectations of difficulties abroad (Burleigh & Schoenherr, 2015). Further, previous studies on the intention to expatriate have called for the investigation of the possible boundary conditions by incorporating country-level variables into the models (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Richter et al., 2020). Cultural distance, for example, has long been found to negatively relate to individuals' intention to expatriate (Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995), and social support should not be equally available to individuals given the cultural novelty of the prospective host country. In such a way, the cultural distance should attenuate the relationship between SN and the intention to expatriate. Surprisingly, despite this theoretical and empirical background, no research has yet considered the moderation role of cultural distance and psychological distance in the context of expatriation behaviour.

The national background is of relevance here as it constrains individuals' motivations, cognitions, and behaviours. It is acknowledged that most behaviour studies have relied on samples from 'WEIRD' (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) nations (Henrich et al., 2010). In particular, the majority of research on expatriates have focused on individuals of Western origin (Farndale et al., 2017; McNulty & Brewster, 2019), who have frequently been surveyed together due to their similarities led by national-level characteristics (e.g., Doherty et al., 2011; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2014; Shah et al., 2021). However, there is

an increasing tendency of expatriates to move from developing and emerging countries, leading to calls for studies on expatriation from their perspectives (Clarke et al., 2017; López-Duarte et al., 2020; Tung, 2017; Zhu et al., 2018). Remarkably, emerging markets in East Asia, Latin America, South Asia, and Eastern Europe presented a considerable rise from the early 1980s, and today their economies make up around 42 per cent of the world's GDP (Cavusgil et al., 2021). Amidst the diverse emerging countries, the Latin American context is appreciated not only because it is an under-researched region in expatriation terms but also due to its increasing importance in the world economy and homogeneous characteristics across countries and their people (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2016). Especially when addressing individuals' psychological factors, their contextual background is of importance since aspects such as culture (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989) and socio-economic conditions (Manstead, 2018; Welzel & Inglehart, 2005) have a lasting impact on their motivations, cognitions, and behaviours. Notably, developed and emerging countries present substantial differences in such aspects, leading to differences in people's psychological processing. Despite this understanding, few studies have explored the intention formation for expatriates from emerging countries (e.g., Li et al., 2020; Weerasinghe & Kumar, 2014; Yurtkoru et al., 2017), and no study was found investigating Latin Americans.

This research aimed to address these three mentioned gaps: a) the non-existence of studies applying the integrated model to explain employees' intention to expatriate, b) the lack of knowledge of the moderation role played by individual-subjective and national-level variables to explain employees' intention to expatriate and c) the dearth of studies on expatriates from emerging countries, particularly Latin Americans. These research gaps lead to this study's question and objectives, which are addressed in the next section.

## **1.2 Research Question and Objectives**

To address the aforementioned gaps, this study proposed a conceptual framework integrating the SDT and the TPB to explain employees' intention to expatriate and examines it with samples of expatriates from Western developed countries and Latin emerging countries. Specifically, this research asked the following questions:

What are the processes involved in forming developed and emerging employees' intention to expatriate?

Do the employees' nationality countries influence the formation of their intention to expatriate?

To answer this research question, this dissertation had the following objectives:

Research objective 1: To identify the impact of the socio-cognitive variables on the intention to expatriate for developed and emerging AEs.

Research objective 2: To empirically analyse how the types of motivation impact the intention to expatriate for developed and emerging AEs.

Research objective 3: To empirically test the moderation effect of cultural distance on the relationship between the socio-cognitive variables and the intention to expatriate for developed and emerging AEs.

Research objective 4: To investigate the moderation effect of psychic distance on the relationship between the socio-cognitive variables and the intention to expatriate for developed and emerging AEs.

A specific methodological design was employed to achieve these objectives and answer the research question, summarised in the next section.

### **1.3 Research Philosophy, Design, and Methodological Approach**

This research was developed under the positivist paradigm, which is in accordance with the availability of previous literature on the topic, and it makes use of quantitative methods with cross-sectional data.

The research question informed the hypotheses propositions, which were tested and compared for samples of developed and emerging AEs. This study focused specifically on emerging AEs from Brazil and Mexico, and developed AEs from Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. These countries were selected based on their FDI outflow and number of MNCs (criteria addressed in section 4.2) to have more homogeneous sub-samples of respondents.

A survey using questionnaires was conducted to collect the data. The processes involved in the construction of the questionnaire were a preliminary design of measures, translation and back-translation to the languages of interest, and pre-test. Then, data were collected between the 21<sup>st</sup> of April and the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 with a total of 431 valid responses, 213 from AEs from developed countries (45 American, 58 British, 33 Dutch, and 77 German) and 218 from AEs from emerging countries (153 Brazilian and 65 Mexican).

After data were acquired, a series of statistical tests were employed to assure the quality of the scales, the scales' invariance across the sub-samples, and the improbable influence of a common method and non-response bias on the results. Finally, the theoretical hypotheses were tested using multiple-group structural equation modelling.

#### **1.4 Contributions of this Study**

By closely assessing the antecedents of employees' intention to expatriate, this study aimed to provide novel insights that add to the existing body of IHRM and expatriation literature, as well as managerial practices.

The first contribution relates to the evident lack of understanding of the motivational and belief-based determinants of intention to expatriate, and the process by which those determinants relate to intention. This study fills this gap through an integrated model, which combines the SDT, TPB, and the literature on the reasons leading individuals to expatriate. Previous studies on a range of topics have integrated SDT and TPB (e.g., Chan et al., 2014, 2015; Hagger et al., 2002, 2005; Lee et al., 2020), but this is the first to incorporate the expatriation literature into the integrated model to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the formation of employees' intention to expatriate. Such integration is expected to bring new insights into the relationship among the variables and a more comprehensive understanding of the formation of employees' intention to expatriate.

Second, this study helps to develop a more holistic view of the formation of employees' intention to expatriate by incorporating variables at the individual and national levels. It does so by integrating the cultural (CD) and psychic distance (PD) variables into a psychological-based model. It is useful as it provides a richer and deeper portrait of phenomena while illuminating the context surrounding individual-level processes, clarifying when such processes are likely to occur (Klein et al., 1999). In the present research, individual and national-level moderator variables clarify under which levels of the moderating variables (CD and PD) specific relationships in the model become stronger and weaker.

The third contribution deals with calls to develop studies from the perspective of emerging countries in a range of fields related to this dissertation, from IB and IHRM, more largely (e.g., Deng et al., 2020; Geary & Aguzzoli, 2016; Li & Fleury, 2020; Luo & Tung, 2018; Thite, 2015; Thite et al., 2012), to expatriation, more specifically (e.g., Clarke et al.,

2017; López-Duarte et al., 2020; Tung, 2017; Zhu et al., 2018). This study responds and goes beyond these claims while aiming to analyse the antecedents of employees' intention to expatriate from a comparative approach of developed and emerging AEs, allowing for a broader set of voices to be heard (Parry et al., 2021). Hence, while recognising the importance of context in IB and IHRM research (Cooke et al., 2020; Harzing & Pudelko, 2016), the findings from the present study contribute to the advancement of the corpus of existing knowledge in the fields of IHRM and expatriation by providing new knowledge regarding the individuals' intention to expatriate in a comparative approach between developed and emerging countries.

Further, this study also brings managerial contributions. Especially, this study contributes to managerial issues raised in the more recent global events. McNulty and Brewster (2019) have noted that political developments involving right-wing populist movements in diverse countries were expected to reduce international business and, as a consequence for IHRM, a slower increase in the number of assigned expatriates. Moreover, the covid pandemic brought huge changes to the global economy and added to the trend evidenced by McNulty & Brewster (2019). Notably, the pandemic forced the spread of virtual expatriates; however, they are only partially suitable to assume traditional expatriates' roles (Selmer et al., 2022). Under these conditions, studies on expatriation assume greater importance and scope owing to the need to adjust more rapidly to the foreign environment and achieve greater success faster than previous generations of expatriates did (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Crucially, expatriates' success rate has been a major challenge facing MNCs over the last decades because expatriate assignments present high costs and failure rates (Nowak & Linder, 2016; Toh & Denisi, 2007; van der Laken et al., 2019). In turn, the most important factor influencing expatriates' success is their receptivity or intention to an IA (Briscoe, 2015). In this context, organisations need to increase the pool of employees who can successfully work across boundaries and are willing to take international assignments (Mol, Born, Willemsen, van der Molen and Derous 2009; Society for Human Resource Management 2010). Two main aspects related to this study design can contribute in this regard: its comparative perspective between expatriates from developed and emerging countries, and the analysis of the moderating role of national-level variables encompassing aspects of the home and host countries. The analysis of both aspects provides information for developing HR policies that better fit different profiles of expatriates regarding their nationality and the contextual differences between home and host countries. Ultimately,

developing policies that acknowledge how individuals form their intention to expatriate facilitates the recruitment of employees willing to expatriate and their resultant success during the assignment, enabling financial gains for organisations.

## **1.5 Thesis Structure and Outline**

This section outlines the structure of this thesis, providing a summary of the content of each of its seven chapters.

Chapter 1 has described the study's background and identified research gaps. It has also presented the research question and objectives and provided a brief account of the research method adopted for this study and the research contributions.

Chapter 2 addresses the theoretical background of the thesis. This chapter starts by discussing and defining the study objects, the assigned expatriates, which is followed by a review of previous studies on individuals' intention to expatriate. Then, the chapter presents the TPB and the SDT. Finally, it addresses the literature on the individuals' reasons to expatriate, which is the basis for the later definition of employees' autonomous and controlled reasons to expatriate.

Chapter 3 departs from the TPB and SDT to explore how they are integrated to explain the employees' intention to expatriate, which is the basis to deduce the logical relationships between the main variables and propose the corresponding hypotheses. Altogether, the conceptual framework is presented.

Chapter 4 discusses how contextual aspects from expatriates' home countries affect the motivation and socio-cognitive variables, with emphasis on the cultural and socio-economic aspects. The differences between developed and emerging countries in these aspects justify comparing the model of employees' intention to expatriate for both groups of expatriates.

Chapter 5 describes and justifies the dissertation's research strategy. In this regard, it presents the methodological choices adopted to answer the research question, including the criteria to select the population, the measures to develop the questionnaire, and the data collection and analysis procedures.

Chapter 6 brings the results and discussion. It starts with preliminary data analysis, to then explore the samples' characteristics. Next, exploratory factor analysis is employed to define the item pool in each scale. Later, a baseline model for developed and emerging AEs is

established. The scales are tested for convergent and discriminant validity, followed by an invariance test, and test for common method variance and non-response bias. Finally, the proposed hypotheses are tested, and the results are discussed.

Chapter 7 brings the dissertation conclusions, starting with a summary of the procedures and results. Then, it presents the empirical, theoretical, and managerial contributions, followed by its limitations, which lead to the directions for future research.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter aims to present key concepts, theories, and studies' findings that support the investigation of employees' intention to expatriate.

The first part of the chapter brings a historical contextualization and theoretical definition of the object of analysis in this study, the assigned expatriates. Then, to better elucidate the definition, they are compared to other types of the internationally mobile workforce, such as migrants and self-initiated expatriates.

Next, the chapter reviews previous studies investigating individuals' intention to expatriate, highlighting their theoretical basis and main results.

In the face of the multi-theory approach of the present study, the TPB and the SDT are then discussed, focusing on their theoretical backgrounds and main concepts. Then, the literature on the individuals' reasons for expatriating is addressed, which is the basis for the later definition of employees' autonomous and controlled reasons to expatriate. Finally, the chapter closes mentioning the main topics addressed in the chapter and how they are employed in the present research.

### 2.1 Expatriates: Context, Boundaries, and Definitions

The term expatriation has a Latin etymological root, *ex-Patria*, which means out of the country. In light of a historical perspective, expatriation "... has existed from the time that there were countries for people to expatriate from" (McNulty & Brewster, 2017b, p. 29). More precisely, their existence dates back to when the Romans sent their employees to 'manage' the empire's provinces (Ando, 2007). Further, almost two millennia ago, the silk road enabled the existence of expatriates while connecting the East to the West (Boulnois, 2005).

For a long time, the number of expatriates worldwide has kept growing. The percentage of expatriates worldwide increased from around 0.75% in 2013 to 0.90% in 2017; it was estimated to rise to 1.13% by 2021 (Finaccord, 2018). Notably, the Covid-19 pandemic brought uncertainty and change to expatriation worldwide. In this context, some predicted that it would cause a reduction in international business and the number of expatriates sent abroad by MNCs (Caligiuri et al., 2020; McNulty & Brewster, 2019). However, although the pandemic forced the spread of virtual expatriates, they were found to be only partially

suitable to assume traditional expatriates' roles (Selmer et al., 2022) because traditional expats play core roles within MNCs (Harzing, 2001).

Throughout the evolution of mobility all over the world, researchers began to draw their attention to the topic. Accordingly, research on expatriates is much more recent than the existence of expatriates. Formal studies on expatriation began in the 1950s (McNulty & Selmer, 2017) with considerable development from the 1980s, when the annual average number of articles in the field was 7.2, reaching 91 in the first half of the 2010s (Selmer, 2017). With a primary focus on policies to manage expatriates, some studies began to focus on the expats themselves in the 1970s. For instance, Mincer (1978) investigated the role of family ties in the decision to undertake international assignments. During the 1980s and 1990s, the studies on expatriation consolidated a dual trend interest, part focusing on the policies to manage expatriates and part focusing on the expatriates themselves (McNulty & Brewster, 2017b).

Importantly, new and diversified types of internationally mobile workers emerged during the evolution of mobility over the centuries. However, the remarkable increase in publications in the field of international mobility does not correspond to an advancement in the conceptual definitions in the research area. "Few studies even attempt to identify the exact meaning of the term "expatriate"" (Fan et al., 2021, p. 7). Consequently, there is still confusion regarding the criteria for the demarcation of different mobile workers, such as assigned and self-initiated expatriation and migrants (Andresen et al., 2014). It is much related to the fact that researchers failed to define their study objects in previous studies on business expatriates. Instead, most studies were conducted through MNCs and adopted the definitions used by each organisation (McNulty & Brewster, 2017a).

Some problems arise from the conceptual confusion of terms, such as the fact that sometimes the use of 'expatriate' does not adequately describe the concept it claims to investigate (McNulty & Brewster, 2017a) and the fact that it leads to a lack of comparability of research finds (Andresen et al., 2014). In the face of the importance of a well-demarcation of terms for the IHRM to evolve, some authors have put efforts into defining the different categories of internationally mobile workers (e.g., Andresen et al., 2014; Andresen & Biemann, 2013; Baruch et al., 2013; McNulty & Brewster, 2017a, 2017b, 2019). These authors use different criteria to specify the different kinds of international workers, including their nationality, home and host countries, time of exposure, and the purpose of the assignment.

Different types of relocatees are described to distinguish the research objects, the organisational-assigned expatriates (AEs), from other types. The topics are addressed in three stages. First, migrants are compared to expatriates. Then, self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) are compared to AEs. Finally, aspects of AEs and their assignments are addressed to explore the variations within the category.

The first important distinction is between expatriates and migrants. The most remarkable difference between them is the intended length of time abroad: while migrants are people moving from their home countries intending to remain abroad, expatriates move abroad temporarily (McNulty & Brewster, 2017b). By “temporarily” the authors mean any length of time, whether short, medium, or long, provided that the relocatee intends to return to their home country. Further, by establishing the criterion of “intended” length of time abroad, the authors emphasise the expected length of time established before moving, independent of the time spent abroad. Thus, expatriates can decide to remain in the host country (Cao et al., 2014; Despotovic et al., 2022), provided they intend to stay abroad temporarily before moving.

Besides the temporary intended length of stay abroad, expatriates must (1) be organisationally employed, (2) not be a citizen of the host country, and (3) present regulatory cross-border (legal) compliance (McNulty & Brewster, 2017b).

Two broad categories of expatriates exist within the business expatriates, which are compared: self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and organisational-assigned expatriates (AEs). Self-initiated expatriates are individuals undertaking an international career experience on their own initiative (Harrison et al., 2004; Shaffer et al., 2012), while organisational-assigned expatriates are controlled and directed by an organisation (Harrison et al., 2004). In this regard, McNulty and Vance (2017) propose an AEs-SIE career continuum, where AEs are placed at one end and are characterised by complete control by MNEs, while SIEs are placed at the other end featuring complete control by employees. The differences between SIEs and AEs go much further than is supposed by the conceptual definition. While AEs are largely confined in their ‘expatriates bubbles’, SIEs were found to better adjust to general aspects of their host country and better interact with host-country nationals than AEs (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009), despite facing even more challenges in building local social ties than assigned expatriates (Kubovcikova & Van Bakel, 2021). Moreover, SIEs and AEs were found to present different motives for expatriating (Doherty et al., 2011). Another important differentiating aspect regards the hierarchical level of their position abroad. It is said that

most AEs are high-status expatriates, and another smaller part is mid-status, whereas mostly low-status expatriates are self-initiated expatriates, which is explained by the fact that the expatriation itself is expensive to the firm, thus being incoherent send an expatriate for a low-status position (Haak-Saheem & Brewster, 2017; McNulty & Brewster, 2019; Salt, 1992). The differences remain in the long term, while AEs were found to have gained more knowing how, knowing whom, and knowing why capital than SIEs (Dickmann et al., 2018). From the organisational perspective, SIEs are important resources especially because they are accessible from the host country and relatively inexpensive, not requiring an expatriate compensation package, for example (McKenna & Richardson, 2007). Compared to AEs, SIEs are less qualified for some types of jobs because of their company experience, thus organisations could not substitute all AEs with SIEs (Lauring & Selmer, 2018). The consistent differences between SIEs and AEs led to the development of two strands of literature. The strand of interest for this study is the one related to the AEs.

Among AEs, parent country nationals (PCNs) are the most traditional and referenced type of expatriate in the literature. A PCN is generally defined as an employee who is a citizen of the corporate HQ country and is sent from the HQ to a foreign subsidiary (McNulty & Brewster, 2017a). An example of a PCN is a Brazilian manager working for a Brazilian company and sent to an IA in a subsidiary abroad. Due to their considerable amount of capital derived from their affiliation with both the HQ and the home country, PCNs have access to the corporate culture knowledge and important connection, occupying higher positions during their IAs (Levy et al., 2015). For this reason, their main purposes during the assignment regard control and coordination over the subsidiaries and sharing the organisational culture (McNulty & Brewster, 2017a; Reiche & Harzing, 2011; Waxin, 2007). They are critical at the beginning of a firm's internationalisation process, ensuring stability and early momentum of operations (Briscoe et al., 2009). Representing the HQ in a subsidiary, PCNs are conferred with higher status compared to other kinds of AEs (Levy et al., 2015). Comparatively, they are said to be approached with more respect and credibility and have a higher level of influence in the subsidiary (Levy et al., 2015; Reiche, 2006). Exploring the literature so far, these kinds of expatriates have received different nomenclatures, such as 'corporate expatriate' (Bonache et al., 2016; Shaffer et al., 2012; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004), 'traditional expatriates' (Doherty et al., 2011; Suutari & Brewster, 2009) and 'business expatriates' (Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Selmer, 2006).

Compared to PCNs, inpatriates go the other way around: they are employees sent from a subsidiary to the corporate HQ (Harvey et al., 2000). An example of an inpatriate is a British employee moving from the British subsidiary office of a Brazilian company to the HQ in Brazil. They are especially important for knowledge transfer and boundary-spanning (Reiche, 2006, 2011). Inpatriates are expected to learn the organisational culture or specific competencies in the HQ to take back to their subsidiary (McNulty & Brewster, 2017a; Reiche et al., 2011), which supports subsidiaries' growth and performance (Kim et al., 2022). Opposite to PCNs, inpatriates are mostly used when the MNCs are at a more mature globalisation level to build and maintain inter-unit relationships (Moeller & Reiche, 2017).

Considering the diversity of IAs, it is important to note that AEs can engage in different formats of assignments. For instance, IAs may vary on the extent of time abroad. Generally, AEs' time abroad ranges from 1 to 5 years. However, companies also make use of short-term assignments, when IAs last for the intended length of time of up to one year (McNulty & Brewster, 2017b; Shaffer et al., 2012). Short-term assignments are among the most common assignments organisations have recently relied on to support their goals (KPMG, 2019). Its popularity is based on the fact that, compared to long-term assignments, short-term ones have some advantages from organisational and individual perspectives. From the organisational perspective, they are lower-cost alternatives; from the individual perspective, short-term assignments present a lower risk for both the individuals' personal life because they prevent relationships disruptions and individuals' careers because they avoid individuals being 'out of sight, out of mind' for longer (Konopaske et al., 2009). However, the short time abroad is a hinder to develop social capital with local colleagues (Dowling et al., 2015).

Moreover, it is important to note that the employees' movements within the companies can assume diverse patterns. In contrast to the earlier patterns of international assignments, when most expatriates were PCNs moving from the HQ to subsidiaries, today's picture is one of diversity. For instance, the 2016's Brookfield mobility trends found that more and more talents are coming from non-headquarters locations. In this regard, if relocations from subsidiaries to HQs (inpatriation) and between subsidiaries (lateral mobility) were considered rare decades ago (Edström & Galbraith, 1994), they are becoming more common. Lateral mobility, also called geographical boundary-crossing (Valk et al., 2015), is the relocation between subsidiaries, which enables talent management and retention within the company (Mercer, 2017, 2021). In this regard, lateral mobility is especially useful for

MNCs to retain talented employees experiencing the ‘holding pattern’, when there is no specific role for them upon repatriation (Collings et al., 2011).

From the presented aspects, it is simple to conclude that international mobile workers are diverse. Therefore, following other empirical studies on expatriates (e.g., Andresen et al., 2015; Shortland, 2016; Shortland & Perkins, 2019; Suutari et al., 2018), this research investigates the formation of AEs’ intention to expatriate.

With the object of analysis specified, the next section addresses the importance of the expatriation intention construct while focusing on its outcomes.

## **2.2 The importance of employees’ intention to expatriate**

Employees’ intention to expatriate is considered critical for MNCs as it is an essential predictor of employees’ actual expatriation and their attitudes abroad. More specifically, two main aspects evidence the importance of investigating employees’ intention to expatriate.

The first aspect is that intention is a powerful predictor of actual behaviour, as it represents self-instructions to perform particular actions. Remarkably, intentions have been found to provide superior prediction of behaviours compared to other cognitions, including attitudes, norms, and self-efficacy (e.g., McEachan et al., 2011) and personality factors (e.g., Chiaburu et al., 2011). In this regard, several social psychological models converge on the assumption that intentions are the most immediate and important predictors of specific behaviours. Some examples of these theoretical models include the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997, 1998), the theory of interpersonal behaviour (Triandis, 1977), the theory of trying (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990), the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein, 1967; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). Furthermore, in several research topics (e.g., sustainable buying behaviour, exercising, collaborative consumption, and condom use,), a strong relationship has been empirically found between behavioural intention and behaviour (e.g., Albarracín et al., 2001; Frommeyer et al., 2022; Roos & Hahn, 2019), which was confirmed in numerous meta-analyses (Cooke & Sheeran, 2004; Morren & Grinstein, 2016). However, many constraints attached to longitudinal studies, such as information access, time, and financial resources, hinder further empirical studies on the intention-behaviour relationship. Thus, the investigation of this relationship is uncommon in many research areas, such as food consumption (e.g., Sherwani et al., 2018), and sustainable behaviours (e.g., Delistavrou & Tilikidou, 2022; Ponnappureddy

et al., 2020). Moreover, faced with such constraints, several researchers (e.g., Froese et al., 2013; Joardar & Weisang, 2019) focused on individuals' intention to expatriate based on the established potential relationship between expatriates' intentions towards IAs and actual acceptance of assignments (i.e., behaviour). Shortly, employee's intention to expatriate has been applied as a proxy for expatriation behaviour.

The second aspect evidencing the importance of investigating employees' intention to expatriate is that it is an important predictor of employees' behaviours and attitudes during the IA. For instance, it has long been said that the success of IAs is dependent on employees' willingness to expatriate (Tung, 1981). In turn, the success may be measured in terms of task completion, expatriates' adjustment, and completion of the assignment or withdrawal cognition (Harrison & Shaffer, 2005). Accordingly, unwillingness to engage in IAs can easily result in premature return of an expatriate (Joardar & Weisang, 2019) at high costs for both employees (e.g., lack of self-confidence) and organisations (e.g., financial cost).

Related to these aspects, it is worth mentioning the associated difficulties that MNCs encounter when there are high refusal rates to IAs. On the one hand, high refusal rates make it difficult for companies to identify and motivate other employees to take on an IA (Harvey et al., 2011). On the other hand, expatriate's career success positively influences the willingness of other employees to accept IAs (Bolino, 2007). Accordingly, successful previous assignments among peers can increase the social acceptance of IAs and cause such assignments to be viewed as favourable by other employees. Thus, understanding how employees form their intention to expatriate may lead to practices that yield lower refusal rates, higher expatriation success and more employees willing to expatriate, configuring a virtuous circle.

Having highlighted the importance of employees' intention to expatriate, next section reviews prior studies that investigated individuals' intention to expatriate, emphasizing the difference theoretical perspectives.

### **2.3 A review of prior research on the intention to expatriate**

Researchers for more than two decades have examined the determinants of expatriation intention (e.g., Brett & Stroh, 1995; Camargo et al., 2020; Ipek & Paulus, 2021; Suutari et al., 2012; Tharenou, 2008; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995), which evidences the importance of the topic. The intention to expatriate is also referred to as expatriation

willingness (e.g., Eby & Russell, 2000; Froese et al., 2013; Kim & Froese, 2012; Li et al., 2020; Mol et al., 2009). However, the terms have different meanings and are better suited to predict different behaviours (Pomery et al., 2009). For example, willingness involves little pre-contemplation of the behaviour or its consequences and the construct can capture nonintentional, irrational influences on behaviours, so it better suits the prediction of reactive behaviours (Gibbons et al., 1998). On the other hand, intention refers to how much effort an individual plans to exert to perform a specific behaviour, especially relatively novel and important behaviours (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, intentions are better suited to predict rational and premeditated behaviours (Gibbons et al., 1998). As such, this study focuses on employees' intention to expatriate because the decision is based on at least some previous rational consideration (Clarke et al., 2017). However, because previous studies have used these terms interchangeably, this review encompasses studies on intention and willingness to expatriate.

Moreover, based on the blurred definition of the types of internationally mobile workers in previous studies (addressed in 2.1), this review encompasses results from diverse types of mobile workers. Further, studies have focused on different theoretical perspectives and have investigated a broad range of antecedents of employees' intention to expatriate. Therefore, this section does not attempt to cover all the previous studies on the topic but covers the most influential and common perspectives.

First, there are many references to the impact of personal variables (explicitly or by the inclusion as control variables), such as gender, family configuration, level of education, foreign language proficiency, and international experience, on individuals' intention to expatriate. In general, results show that men, single, and childless individuals have a higher intention to expatriate (e.g., Brett & Stroh, 1995; Dupuis et al., 2008; Engle et al., 2015; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013; Haines et al., 2008; Ipek & Paulus, 2021; Konopaske et al., 2005; Remhof et al., 2013; Tharenou, 2008; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995). Further, previous studies have evidence that the level of education, foreign language proficiency, and previous international experience positively influence the intention to expatriate (e.g., Brett & Stroh, 1995; Engle et al., 2015; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013; Haines et al., 2008; Li et al., 2020).

Another set of investigations has identified push and pull factors for a global career (e.g., Doherty et al., 2011; Latukha et al., 2021; McNulty & Vance, 2017; Suutari et al., 2012). Push factors are related to a home country's negative characteristics (e.g., socio-economic conditions of the home country), while pull factors reflect the relative attractiveness of the host country (e.g., the standard of living). For instance, Latukha et al.,

(2021) identified that men and women have the same industry (an overall representation of the conditions relevant for a particular industry) and individual (represents the individual perception of the social environment in the country) push factors influencing the migration intention.

Further studies explored the importance of diverse reasons for individuals' intention or decision to expatriate, which has some overlap compared to push and pull factors. For instance, Doherty et al. (2011) compared the motives (related to location, career, foreign experience, host country, family benefits, host-home relations, personal relationships, and push factors) for SIEs and AEs. They found that while location and host reputation were more critical for SIEs, career motives were more important for AEs. Moreover, Hippler (2009) surveyed German employees and identified a range of motives for relocation (rooted in the person, the country, and the new and previous task or position) and found that the most mentioned motives were personal and professional development and career motives. Further, Dickmann et al. (2008) have investigated individuals' motives to expatriate and compared them to the organisational perspective. The motives were allocated into 4 categories: a) job, development, and career opportunities; b) personal and domestic issues; c) host location factors; and d) assignment offer. They found that, among other aspects, financial incentives were overestimated by managers while the importance of career, work-life balance, and development were underestimated.

Other studies have investigated psychological variables predicting individuals' intention to expatriate. Among these, researchers have examined the influence of personality traits. They reflect basic dimensions on which people differ, carrying the implicit assumption that people tend to behave consistently in different settings (Matthews et al., 2009). In this realm, Mol et al. (2009) identified that openness to experience and extraversion are positively related to expatriation intention. When considering the host country's security, Ipek and Paulus (2021) found that emotionality and conscientiousness predicted expatriation willingness to dangerous environments, whereas openness to experience predicted expatriation willingness to safe environments.

Further studies examined the influence of more narrow personality constructs, such as personal initiative and flexibility (Baluku et al., 2018), and the results show that both are positively related to expatriation intention. Further, several studies explored the relationship between cultural intelligence (CQ) and expatriation intention (e.g., Camargo et al., 2020; Richter et al., 2020; Schlägel & Sarstedt, 2016). CQ is generally referred to as an individual's

capability to adapt to and operate effectively in new cultural contexts (Earley & Ang, 2003). Schlaegel et al. (2021) meta-analysed studies on CQ and found strong support for a positive association of different types of CQ with expatriation intention.

While many antecedents are out of the companies' control, the psychological processes operating within individuals are the most needed analysis to understand and change behaviours, as they are considered the most practical level at which people can intervene in human behaviour affairs (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Acknowledging the value of psychological theories to explain, predict, and change behaviours, several studies have also relied on them. The theory of planned behaviour (explained in detail in section 2.4) is among the most common theories used to explain individuals' intentions to expatriate. It considers three antecedents of behavioural intentions: attitudes (individuals' evaluation of the target behaviour), subjective norms (individuals' beliefs about social pressure), and perceived behaviour control (individuals' perception of control and capability over performing the target behaviour) (Ajzen, 1991). However, despite the common and successful application of the TPB, results from previous studies have provided mixed results. For instance, Weerasinghe and Kumar (2015) found that only attitudes and self-efficacy fully contributed to predicting behavioural intention towards an overseas career. Moreover, Yurtkoru et al. (2017) applied the TPB, augmenting with CQ, and found that subjective norms and perceived behavioural control but not attitudes predicted the intention to work abroad. Further, Engle et al. (2015) combined personality traits with the TPB and found that the cognitive constructs from the TPB (attitude, SN, PBC) fully mediate the relationships between the personality traits of openness to experience and extraversion and the intention to work abroad.

Another psychological theory that has proved useful in explaining, predicting, and changing human behaviours in several domains is the self-determination theory (SDT) (explained in detail in section 2.5). However, it has been rarely applied to investigate individuals' intention to expatriate. Adopting the SDT, authors found that higher intrinsic motivation (the most autonomous form of motivation) for an IA was associated with greater willingness to accept an IA, while extrinsic motivation (the most controlled form of motivation) was not significantly associated with it (Haines et al., 2008). Further, using the lens of cultural intelligence, which has a motivational component, (Richter et al., 2020) found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational CQ influenced individuals' intention to expatriate, with different types of CQ explaining the intention to expatriate according to the nationality.

Table 1 summarises the main theories and frameworks used in previous research, emphasising the main results.

**Table 1:** A summary of previous studies on expatriation intention

<b>Theory or framework</b>	<b>Main results</b>	<b>Supporting references</b>
Background characteristics (e.g., gender, family configuration, level of education, foreign language proficiency, international experience).	Men, single, and childless individuals present higher intention to expatriate.  The intention to expatriate increases with the level of education, the proficiency in foreign languages, and previous IAs.	(Brett & Stroh, 1995; Dupuis et al., 2008; Engle et al., 2015; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013; Haines et al., 2008; Ipek & Paulus, 2021; Konopaske et al., 2005; J. Li et al., 2020; Remhof et al., 2013; Tharenou, 2008; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995)
Push and pull factors	Home and host countries' socioeconomic conditions and standard of living	(Doherty et al., 2011; Latukha et al., 2021; McNulty & Vance, 2017; Suutari et al., 2012)
Descriptive account of individuals' reasons to expatriate	Career motives, personal and professional development are the most common motives.  Although important, financial reasons seems overestimated by companies, while career, work-life balance and development seems underestimated.	(B. Bader, 2017; Dickmann et al., 2008; Dickmann, 2012; Doherty et al., 2011; Hippler, 2009a; Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004)
Personality traits and constructs	Openness to experience and extraversion are consistently related to the intention to expatriate.  Personal initiative and flexibility are positively related to expatriation intention. Cultural intelligence is also positively associated with expatriation intention.	(Baluku et al., 2018; Camargo et al., 2020; Ipek & Paulus, 2021; Mol et al., 2009; Richter et al., 2020; Schlägel & Sarstedt, 2016)
Theory of planned behaviour	Mixed results: studies found that all the three psychological variables predict expatriation intention; others found that only attitude and PBC predict expatriation intention; a third group found only SN and PBC predicting intention; still a fourth group found that SN and attitude predict expatriation intention.	(Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Engle et al., 2015; Remhof et al., 2014; Weerasinghe & Kumar, 2015; Yurtkoru et al., 2017)
Self-determination theory	Intrinsic motivation, but not extrinsic motivation predicts individuals' intention to expatriate	(Haines et al., 2008)

This review provides information on the range of approaches researchers have used to investigate individuals' intention to expatriate. Given the expected superior explanation of the phenomenon through psychological theories, this study integrates the TPB and the SDT, which are now taken into detail.

## 2.4 Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was developed by Ajzen (1985), and it is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). They originated in the field of Social Psychology and are applied to understand, predict, and change intentional human behaviours (Ajzen, 1991). The focus on intentional behaviours means that it relies on the premise that people “are usually quite rational and make systematic use of the information available to them” (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 5). Thus, the TPB describes how people process information before engaging in deliberative behaviour. Notably, the TPB posits that behavioural intention is determined by attitude towards the behaviour (individuals’ evaluation of the behaviour), subjective norm (individuals’ belief about social pressure), and perceived behavioural control (individuals’ perception of control and capability over engaging the behaviour) (Ajzen, 1991).

The TPB has been used to explain employees’ expatriation because this is typical deliberative decision-making (Clarke et al., 2017). Employees’ relocation is attached to diverse implications for individuals and their families, which justifies that they are not likely to relocate without at least some preliminary consideration. Accordingly, the TPB can bring valuable insights into the formation of employees’ intention to expatriate. Following the TPB tenets, it is possible to identify the proximal socio-cognitive determinants of employees’ intention to expatriate, meaning how people process information to form their intention to expatriate.

The following sections are structured to evidence the ways the TPB contributes to this research. An understanding of its contributions requires knowledge of some concepts and theoretical background. In this regard, the following section brings an overview of the TPB. Next, the section addresses the theoretical aspects of the theory of reasoned action (TRA), from which the TPB originated. The following sections address the intention’s construct and its base components: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control.

### 2.4.1 *Theory of planned behaviour: an overview*

The core objective of the TPB is to explain human behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), and it is based on the premise that individuals make logical, reasoned decisions to engage in specific behaviours by evaluating the information available to them.

The TPB posits that human behaviour is guided by behavioural intentions and perceived behaviour control over the target behaviour, while behavioural intention is jointly determined by attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Intentions represent the person's conscious plan to exert effort to engage in the behaviour. Behavioural intention, in its turn, is predicted by three variables: a) attitude towards the behaviour, which reflects how a person thinks and feels about the behaviour, and the individual's expectations and evaluations of the behaviour); b) subjective norm regarding the behaviour, referring to the perceived pressure to engage in the behaviour, and; c) perceived behavioural control regarding the behaviour, which is the extent to which a person feels in control and capable of doing the behaviour (each of the intention's predictors is addressed separately in sections 2.4.4, 2.4.5, and 2.4.6).

The TPB ascertains that attitudes, perceived norms, and perceived control should permit to account for all or most of the meaningful variance in behavioural intentions, what the authors name the sufficiency assumption (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Nevertheless, the predictive utility of the three intention predictors is expected to vary across behaviours and situations (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, for a certain behaviour, individuals' evaluation that it can bring good benefits (attitude) may have a large impact on their intention to perform the behaviour, while for another behaviour, individuals' feeling in control over it (PBC) may better explain their intention to perform the behaviour.

Since the formulation of the TRA and the TPB, they have received broad empirical support to explain a range of human behaviours in various disciplines. Some examples include research on political science to study vote behaviour (e.g., Hansen & Jensen, 2007; Singh et al., 1995), on education to study engagement and persistence towards educational goals (e.g., Cheon et al., 2012; de Leeuw et al., 2015; Dunn et al., 2018), and on healthcare (e.g., Kakoko et al., 2006; Song et al., 2018). Moreover, the recognition of the value of the TPB in understanding and predicting behaviour is also acknowledged in the management literature to study aspects such as employees' engagement in development activities, organisational change, knowledge sharing, and innovation adoption (e.g., Hurtz & Williams, 2009; Jimmieson et al., 2008; McCarthy & Garavan, 2006; Shirahada & Zhang, 2022; Vargas et al., 2018; Wu & Yu, 2022). Especially, many researchers relied on the TPB to investigate individuals' willingness to expatriate (e.g., Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Remhof et al., 2014). The results from these studies are evidenced in the sections addressing the predictors of individuals' intentions (sections 2.4.4, 2.4.5, and 2.4.6).

As evidenced in this overview, the TPB has much to do with the TRA. To better understand the basis of the TPB, the next section brings the details about the TRA.

#### 2.4.2 *The theory of reasoned action: a predecessor to the TPB*

The TRA is not the theory chosen to clarify the formation of employees' intention to expatriate, but it provides valuable information about the TPB's evolution into a leading social scientific theory used to study behavioural intent. The TRA was introduced by Martin Fishbein in 1967 (Fishbein, 1967). A core idea within the TRA regards asserting that people do not accidentally behave; instead, they consider the consequences and implications of behaviours before acting. This aspect supports the name of the theory: The theory of reasoned action.

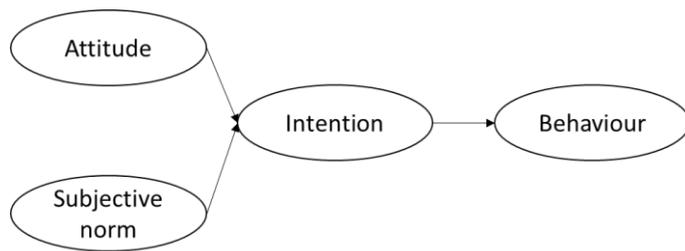
TRA was born out of frustration with traditional attitude-behaviour research (Hale et al., 2002). Such an approach, albeit conceptually sound, was found to have weak correlations when testing the relationship between attitude and volitional behaviours. Then, Ajzen and Fishbein realised that something must mediate the relationship between attitudes and behaviours. They found out that intention is the mediator variable.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) assume that a person's intention to perform a behaviour is the core predictor of whether they actually perform that behaviour, thus reflecting situational-level plans to engage in it. Basically, stronger intentions lead to increased effort to perform the behaviour, which also increases the likelihood for the behaviour to be performed.

Moreover, the TRA states that the two major determinants of intention are individuals' attitudes towards the behaviour and perceived pressures from important others (subjective norms). Together, these forces determine intent. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) contend that, generally, individuals will intend to perform a behaviour when they evaluate it positively (attitude) and when they believe important others want them to perform the behaviour (subjective norm).

The TRA is schematically represented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Schematic representation of the Theory of Reasoned Action



Source: Ajzen and Fishbein (1980)

These assumptions from the TRA have been empirically tested. A high correlation between attitudes and subjective norms to behavioural intention, and subsequently to behaviour, has been confirmed in many empirical studies and, further, in meta-analytic studies (e.g., Sheeran & Taylor, 1999; Sheppard et al., 1988). For instance, Sheppard et al. (1988) reviewed 87 studies involving 174 behaviours, ranging from going to church to purchasing shampoo to resigning from a job. The authors estimated high correlations between individuals' socio-cognitive variables (attitudes and subjective norms) and their intentions and between individuals' intentions and behaviours.

However, the predictability of the TRA is a matter of the measures applied. For example, the prediction of specific behaviours is more precise than the prediction of general behaviours. In turn, the level of specificity varies according to the extent to which the behavioural definition includes four aspects: action (e.g., to expatriate), target at which action is directed (e.g., a relocation sponsored by the company), time at which the behaviour is performed (e.g., next month), and the context in which the action is performed (e.g., in London, UK) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). It has been shown that measurement following this compatibility principle strengthens relations among reasoned action variables (Cooke & Sheeran, 2004).

Within the TRA, intentions only predict behaviours that are under the individuals' complete volitional control (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), which is to say that a person can decide at will to perform or not perform the behaviour. This condition limits the scope of the theory's applicability, once not all behaviours are under complete volitional control. Behaviours may depend on the availability of requisite opportunities and resources, such as money, skills, time, and the cooperation of others (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). For instance, although an employee has a positive attitude and a perception of general social pressure towards expatriating, the employee is not likely to relocate if they consider it too difficult to adapt to the foreign culture or if the company does not offer enough financial support to

afford the cost of living at the host location. Clearly, such behaviours are also determined by non-volitional factors, which lay outside the TRA's scope.

As a response to this limitation, Ajzen (1985) extended the theory of reasoned action to cover non-volitional behaviours. In this regard, he added a new construct, called perceived behavioural control. The expanded model including this variable is known as the theory of planned behaviour. The variables explaining behaviour within the TPB are explored in the following sections.

### *2.4.3 Theory of planned behaviour variables: intention*

The intention is crucial in understanding, predicting, and changing behaviours. It is a cognitive representation of the degree of planning and effort people are willing to invest in performing any planned action or behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Thus, the TPB holds that stronger intentions lead to increased effort to perform the behaviour, which also increases the likelihood for the behaviour to be performed.

Many studies have shown that behavioural intentions account for a considerable proportion of variance in behaviour in diverse behavioural domains (Albarracín et al., 2001; Sheeran, 2002; Sheppard et al., 1988). In the context of international relocation, no study was found investigating the relationship between the intention to relocate and the decision to relocate. However, in a correlated issue, Brett and Reilly (1988) investigated relocation in general in a longitudinal study and found a significant correlation between the willingness to relocate and the acceptance of relocation for a job offer. Based on the theoretical background of the TPB and empirical findings from other research areas, there is a general trend in the expatriate literature of using expatriation intention as an indicator of assignment acceptance (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004).

The intention is a function of a set of personal, normative, and control-related belief-based socio-cognitive constructs regarding the performance of the behaviour. In this sense, the TPB considers three conceptually independent determinants of intention: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behaviour control (Ajzen, 1991). "As a general rule, the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm concerning a behaviour, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be an individual's intention to perform the behaviour under consideration." (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). However, there are many parameters that interfere in the formation of expatriation intention and behaviour, among which national

and subjective-level distance have been suggested to be quite crucial. The relationship between these parameters and individuals' intention to expatriate is now addressed.

#### ***2.4.3.1 Distance and individuals' intention to expatriate***

Distance is associated with ambiguity, obstacles, and unpredictability (Xu & Shenkar, 2002), and different concepts associated with distance have been frequently used to explain individuals' intention to expatriate. Particular attention has been given to national-level and individual-subjective differences (De Eccher & Duarte, 2018; Dupuis et al., 2008).

At the national level, culture is associated with many social aspects, such as family, workplace, state, and ideas (Hofstede, 1991). It represents the socially shared collective programming of the mind, enabling the distinction of members of different groups (Hofstede, 2001). In studying expatriates' intention to expatriate, both the home and host countries' national culture matter. The home country's culture is a crucial factor leading to how individuals define themselves; it determines how individuals behave, perceive, value, and interpret (Hofstede, 1983; Schwartz et al., 2006; Torbiorn, 1982). Host country culture impacts expatriates' daily lives in several ways as it reflects in the organisational culture, how people deal with work and non-work activities, and even the available leisure activities. Thus, according to the novelty of different cultural aspects, the assignment may pose larger or smaller difficulties and uncertainties to the expatriates' adaptation as its culture differs more or less, respectively, from the home country (Black et al., 1991; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Bozionelos, 2009). The cultural difference between home and host countries is captured through the concept of cultural distance (CD), which is the degree to which cultural norms in one country differ from those in another (Hennart & Larimo, 1998; D. W. White et al., 2011).

In turn, the CD has long been found to influence individuals' intention to expatriate. Essentially, low-high cultural distance assignments involve different considerations (Dupuis et al., 2008) as a matter of the available knowledge about the new environment. Usually, relocation proposals to dissimilar host countries are associated with a lower intention to accept the assignments (Noe & Barber, 1993). Moreover, the CD also interacts with other background variables. For instance, the presence of children leads to an even lower willingness to accept an international assignment to high-cultural-distance country destinations (Dupuis et al., 2008).

While CD is measured at national levels of aggregation, such aggregated measures of distance are stimuli to individual distance perceptions (Sousa & Bradley, 2006). The individuals' perception about the differences between home and host countries is investigated through the concept of psychic distance. This concept was introduced in the literature in the works by Beckerman (1956) and Linnemann (1966). Beckerman (1956) used the term in the context of trade between countries, suggesting that it is affected not only by the geographic distance and transportation costs but also by importers' perceptions of the "psychic" distances to potential suppliers. Then the term appeared and became widely used in the IB literature due to the contributions of the Uppsala school in explaining the choice of export markets and firm internationalization patterns (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 1990). PD has an inherent cognitive nature in a way that the notion of perception is crucial to understanding the concept of psychic distance (Sousa et al., 2014). Essentially, "it is the mind's processing that forms the basis of psychic distance" (Evans & Mavondo, 2002, p. 516). In the context of expatriation, PD regards the degree to which employees perceive the host country as different from or similar to their country of nationality in several aspects, such as language and culture. Such perceived differences constrain the flow and interpretation of information, imposing barriers to learning and understanding (Evans & Mavondo, 2002). Thus, the higher the PD, the higher the expected constraints in the host country.

PD is closely related to individuals' backgrounds. For instance, an employee with previous experience in a target market that is culturally distant from their home country would have a much smaller psychic distance from that market than measurements of CD would indicate (O'Grady & Lane, 1996). In fact, previous research suggests that management experience has an influence on psychic distance in a way that the higher the experience, the lower the perceived differences (Evans & Mavondo, 2002; Sousa & Bradley, 2006). In what concerns expatriation, previous international experience is associated with lower PD towards any host country and lower PD is associated with higher receptivity to IAs (Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995).

#### *2.4.4 Theory of planned behaviour variables: attitude towards the behaviour*

Attitude towards the behaviour refers to how a person thinks and feels about the behaviour and its potential outcomes. It denotes "the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188).

Thus, individuals tend to possess a favourable attitude when the behaviours are linked to desirable consequences (e.g., enjoyable, beneficial); conversely, they tend to form unfavourable attitudes towards behaviours linked to undesirable consequences (e.g., unenjoyable, harmful) (Ajzen, 1991). For example, in the present research, employees may think that expatriating is good or bad for them and their careers, forming favourable or unfavourable attitudes towards expatriating.

Important, some researchers (e.g., Courneya et al., 1999; R. Lowe et al., 2002) have claimed that there are two types of attitude, which form a bi-dimensional view of evaluation: one cognitive and the other affective in nature (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). For example, Lowe et al. (2002, p. 1242) proposed that instrumental evaluations relate to the “benefits and costs associated with the behaviour”, such as healthy or unhealthy and foolish or wise, while “affective evaluations are emotion-laden judgments about the consequences of the behavior”, such as pleasant or unpleasant and enjoyable or unenjoyable.

Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) have analysed the bi-dimensional view of attitude and concluded that such a proposal is misleading. They recognise that previous factor analytic studies have found a two-factor solution, each factor with high correlation, distinguishing the interrelated aspects of attitude. However, they argue that a single factor could emerge if the items with high loading on the two factors were included among a set of more heterogeneous adjective scales. They conclude that both the cognitive and the affective scales are evaluative in nature and tend to form a single internally consistent scale, supporting a unidimensional view of attitude. Indeed, in some examples of studies using the unidimensional view of attitude (e.g., Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010; Ponnappureddy et al., 2020), that is, including both types of evaluations, the authors have found adequate internal consistency. In a practical comparison between a unidimensional and a bi-dimensional view of attitude, Ajzen (1991) concluded that two separate measures of attitude did not significantly improve the prediction of intentions, and the multiple correlations were virtually unchanged. Lastly, instead of calling it affective, the authors argue that the more general term “experiential” fits better with the meaning conveyed by the adjectives used to assess this kind of evaluation (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Several studies have demonstrated that individuals’ intention to perform a behaviour is positively influenced by their attitude towards it. Taking studies addressing a wide range of behaviours, across different meta-analyses, the mean correlations between attitudes and intentions range from 0.45 to 0.60 (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). More specifically, some studies

have found that individuals' attitudes influence their intention to relocate. For example, Brett and Reilly (1988) surveyed mobile workers from US corporations and found that a positive attitude towards moving raised their willingness to move. Another example regards the study by Andresen and Margenfeld (2015), who investigated the antecedents of attitude, SN, and PBC and their impact on international relocation mobility readiness in a sample of German employees. The authors identified that a boundaryless mindset (attitude) significantly influences international relocation mobility readiness. Moreover, Froese et al. (2013) investigated the antecedents of cosmopolitanism (attitude) and expatriation willingness as an outcome among German and Korean Business students, and the results evidence that cosmopolitanism is a strong predictor of students' expatriation willingness in both samples.

Individuals' attitudes towards the behaviour affect their intention to engage in the behaviour, as well as the social pressures and perceived behaviour control. In this regard, the next section brings the details referring to the second base component, the individual's subjective norms.

#### 2.4.5 *Theory of planned behaviour variables: subjective norms*

Subjective norm was first conceptualized as the individual's belief that important others prescribe, desire, or expect them to perform (or not) the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this realm, the use of the term "subjective" in this construct is explained by the fact that it reflects the individual perception of important others' opinions, which may or may not reflect what significant others in fact think about them performing the behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Later, this first conceptual definition was revisited and expanded to include the normative prescription from the perception that others are or are not performing the referred behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

The first cited social pressure is termed *injunctive*, while the second is termed *descriptive*, named by Cialdini et al. (1990, 1991). Injunctive social norms relate to the person's perception of what most people approve or disapprove of; it is the perception of what constitutes morally approved and disapproved conduct. Instead, descriptive social norms describe what is typical or normal, referring to individuals' perceptions of what most people do in the domain. It motivates people's behaviour by providing evidence as to which actions are likely to be effective and adaptive, following the reasoning: "If everyone is doing

it, it must be a sensible thing to do” (Cialdini et al., 1990, p. 1015). In this realm, descriptive norms are the norms of “is” while injunctive norms are the norms of “ought” (Cialdini et al., 1990, 1991).

Subjective norm, thus, incorporates the total social pressure experienced concerning a given behaviour. Translating these concepts to current research, SN regards the employees’ belief that important others, such as family and friends, would approve and encourage them to expatriate (injunctive social norm) as well as the perception that referent individuals and groups, such as peers and managers, are engaging themselves in expatriations (descriptive social norm).

Several studies have demonstrated that individuals’ intention is positively influenced by their subjective norms towards the behaviour. Taking studies addressing a wide range of behaviours, across different meta-analyses, the mean correlations between SN and intentions range from 0.32 to 0.42 (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). More specifically, some studies have found that SN influences individuals’ intention to relocate. For example, Andresen and Margenfeld (2015) have found that the perceived attitude of the social network towards the person’s international relocation mobility plays a key role in determining employees’ international relocation mobility readiness. Moreover, Remhof et al. (2014) used the TPB to investigate individuals’ intention to work abroad in a sample of undergraduate business students at two public universities in Germany and found that SN has a positive and significant effect on the intention to expatriate.

To understand how the TPB bases the intention prediction, it is essential to understand a third and last base component of the TPB: perceived behavioural control., which is addressed in the following section.

#### *2.4.6 Theory of planned behaviour variables: perceived behavioural control*

The PBC was added to the previously formulated TRA to deal with situations where people may lack complete volitional control over the target behaviour. Its importance in predicting behaviour is stressed when comparing the predictivity of the TRA and the TPB. In this regard, including the perceived behavioural control variable in the model enhances the prediction of behavioural intention and behaviour (e.g., Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Madden et al., 1992).

Before addressing the role of PBC in explaining intention and behaviour, it is essential to bring some theoretical considerations about the PBC variable to understand how it differentiates from other concepts and why it constitutes a unique construct.

It is crucial to notice that PBC differs from the concept of perceived locus of control, coined by Rotter (1966). PBC refers to the individual's perception of the target, specific behaviour. In opposition, the perceived locus of control is a personality variable connected to a generalised expectancy about the future: internals are likely to attribute outcomes of events to their own control, and externals are more likely to attribute outcomes of events to external conditions (Rotter, 1975). From this definition, whereas PBC can, and usually does, varies across situations and forms of action, the locus of control remains stable across a broad range of situations (Ajzen, 1991).

There is a discussion around the PBC variable in the sense that many authors have conceptualised and tried to prove the existence of two PBC components, perceived self-efficacy and perceived control (e.g., Armitage & Conner, 1999; Terry & O'Leary, 1995). Empirically, they found two factors. However, Ajzen (2002) investigated these results, supporting that there is no theoretical basis for calling one of the factors self-efficacy and the other factor control once both are considered virtually identical: both refer to a person's perceived ability to perform a target behaviour or to attain a particular goal. Further, studies that measured the PBC assessing both aspects found high internal consistency (e.g., Conner et al., 2000, 2017; Han, 2015). Thus, items that have to do with control and ability are simply different ways of assessing the same theoretical aspect, and both should be considered when assessing PBC (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Taking both aspects, PBC regards "people's perceptions of the degree to which they are capable of, or have control over performing a given behaviour" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 64). Perceived capability is compatible with Bandura's (1997) concept of perceived self-efficacy. He states, "perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). In this regard, perceived capacity captures the confidence individuals have about their ability to perform a behaviour and the personal assessment of how easy or difficult it is to perform it (Ajzen, 1991). For a long time, PBC and self-efficacy were considered synonymous because there was no clarity in this area (e.g., Sheeran & Taylor, 1999). In fact, researchers applying the TPB commonly assess the PBC through items measuring only self-efficacy (e.g., Joardar & Weisang, 2019; Moriano et al., 2012). However, the concept of PBC

also considers perceived control, which comprehends the degree of perceived control over performing the behaviour and the judgments that engaging the behaviour is up to the person (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Thus, it involves the assessment of resources, barriers, and opportunities to engage the behaviour (Ajzen, 2002).

Evidence of the importance of this construct can be ascertained from the observation that even simple activities may not be under complete volitional control. For example, such a simple behaviour as preparing coffee may be thwarted by problems with the coffee machine. Indeed, “every intended behaviour is a goal whose attainment is subject to some degree of uncertainty” (Ajzen, 1985, p. 24). From the behaviours that encounter few or any problems of control to the behaviours over which individuals have relatively little control, behavioural control can best be viewed as a continuum (Ajzen & Madden, 1986).

The TPB postulates that PBC can have a direct effect on behaviour and can also influence behaviour indirectly by its effect on intentions. Ajzen (1991) has proposed two reasons to support PBC’s direct effect on behaviour. Firstly, holding intention constant, the effort expended to successfully conclude a task is likely to increase with perceived behavioural control. According to this reasoning, if two individuals have equally strong intentions towards a target behaviour, and both try to perform the behaviour, the person who is confident about mastering the activity is more likely to persevere than the person who doubts their ability. Secondly, PBC can often be used as a substitute for a measure of actual control. In situations where a person has no experience with the behaviour to make a reasonably accurate estimation of control over behaviour, the PBC may be unrealistic. However, to the extent that perceived control is realistic, it can be used to predict the probability of a successful behavioural attempt and can therefore be used as an additional direct predictor of behaviour (Ajzen, 1985, 2002). In this regard, past experience with the behaviour and second-hand information about the behaviour from others’ experiences (e.g., peers, family, acquaintances) are crucial to the predictive power of PBC: when individuals have previous experience with the behaviour or more information about it, PBC should be more predictive of the behaviour because the individuals can make a reasonably accurate estimate of the control and ability over the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Fazio, 1990; Manstead, 2001).

Further, the indirect effect of PBC on behaviours is conceptualised to be mediated by intentions. In this regard, the PBC has a direct link with intention, which impacts behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). Therefore, the greater the PBC, the stronger should be the intention to perform

the target behaviour and subsequent the behaviour's performance. For example, in the expatriation realm, higher PBC corresponds to employees' confidence in their abilities to expatriate and their perception of control over relocating, which is theoretically expected to increase their intention to expatriate.

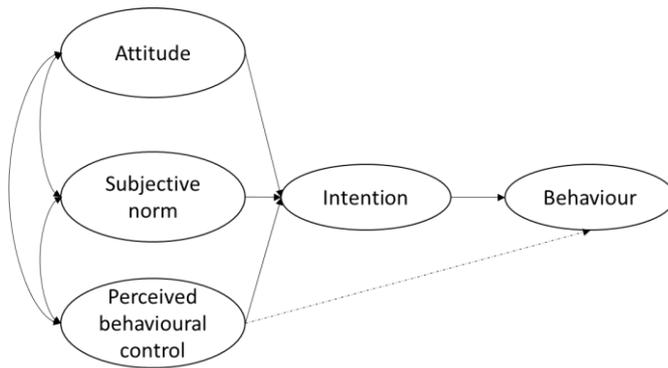
Many studies have demonstrated that individuals' intentions and behaviour are positively influenced by their self-confidence in their ability to perform the behaviour and their perceived control over it. Taking studies addressing a wide range of behaviours, across different meta-analyses, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) have identified that the mean correlation between PBC and intentions ranges from 0.35 to 0.46. In the realm of relocation, Engle et al. (2015) collected data from Business students in Croatia, Germany, Russia, Turkey, and the US and found that PBC explained from 0.01 (Russia) to 0.18 (USA) of the intention to become an expatriate.

Further, an interaction between PBC and the other base components is expected to form a strong behavioural intention. Besides believing that one could perform the behaviour (high PBC), one must be inclined to do it for other reasons as well (e.g., positive attitude: one expects good outcomes) (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). On the other hand, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) argue that if a person believes that they do not have control over performing a behaviour (low PBC), they may not form strong behavioural intentions to perform it even if they perceive the behaviour to be good and perceive strong social pressure to perform the behaviour. When this idea is applied to the topic of the present study, it would be expected that when an employee holds little control over relocating to expatriate because there is a lack of required resources (e.g., language skills, financial support), their behavioural intention will be lower despite a positive attitude and high subjective norm concerning the relocation.

In this regard, PBC is a necessary but insufficient condition for forming an intention to perform a behaviour, which implies that PBC affects intention only in conjunction with attitude and SN (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). Thus, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control are conceptually independent predictors of intentions, but they are free to correlate with each other (Ajzen, 2020).

Altogether, based on the theoretical foundations, a schematic representation of the TPB is presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2:** Schematic representation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour



Source: Ajzen (1991, p. 182); Ajzen and Madden (1985, p. 458).

Overall, the TPB postulates that intentions predict behaviours. Further, behavioural intentions are jointly predicted by individuals' evaluation of the behaviour and its consequences, the perceived social pressure to engage in the behaviour, and the perceived control over the behaviour. In turn, the three intentions' antecedents can correlate with each other. Crucially, the importance of each socio-cognitive variable varies according to the behaviour: some behavioural intentions are better explained by the PBC, while attitudes or social norms better explain others.

Beyond the TPB's contributions to understanding the employees' intention to expatriate, this research also counts on the SDT. Therefore, the next sections bring the SDT's theoretical foundations and relevant aspects to this study.

## 2.5 Self-determination Theory

SDT is one of the diverse theories that explain human motivation. Indeed, motivation research is diverse and complex, and there is no universal theory to explain motivated behaviour (Locke & Latham, 2004). Most motivational theories, such as goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) and expectancy-value theory (Vroom, 1964), favour a quantitative approach, focusing on the amount of motivation. Within this approach, all types of motivation are added because such a theoretical approach considers that they are all equivalent in value or importance (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Further, within the field of work motivation, Porter and Lawler (1968) proposed an expectancy theory that

distinguishes intrinsic and extrinsic motivations; however, just like the other mentioned theories, the authors consider them to be additive.

In this regard, from the range of motivational theories, the particular value of SDT for organisational research is that it offers a differentiated model of motivation, which proposes that there are different types of motivation. SDT underlines the qualitative aspects of motivation, emphasising that different types and sources of motivation lead to behaviours varying in quality and dynamics (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). It focuses on the “relative strength of autonomous versus controlled motivation, rather than on the total amount of motivation” (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 340). In this regard, when the quality of motivational orientations is at stake, the reasons for individuals to engage specific behaviours may be differentiated according to the degree to which they are experienced as being autonomous or controlled, respectively high- and low-quality types of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Based on this background, this study relies on the SDT because it enables the prediction of human motivation outcomes by examining how individuals experience their reasons to expatriate, whether autonomously or controlled. In this sense, through the lenses of the SDT, it is possible to identify the motivational conditions within the individual and the social-environmental factors associated with people’s intention to expatriate.

The following sections are structured to evidence how SDT contributes to this research. Understanding its contributions requires the knowledge of some concepts and theoretical background. Thus, the following section brings an overview of the SDT, highlighting the main theoretical background and definitions. Then, the next section explores the theoretical background and philosophical principles of SDT. Later, the chapter explores essential concepts of the SDT: innate psychological needs and regulatory styles. The regulatory styles are further taken to elucidate how they are placed in the relative autonomy continuum. Lastly, autonomous and controlled motivation are explained and compared.

### *2.5.1 Self-determination theory: an overview*

SDT has been described as a macro-theory of human motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Motivation means to be moved to act; thus, it concerns energy, direction, persistence, and equifinality (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In this regard, SDT focuses on the reasons or motives for human behaviour and development (Deci

& Ryan, 2008a; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2006). The theory departed from experimental studies and field observations to understand what humans need from psychological and social environments to fully function and thrive (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

The SDT is referred to in more than 9,700 articles on Scopus<sup>1</sup> and has been widely adopted to investigate how and why a particular behaviour occurs (Deci et al., 1999) in a range of domains, such as education (e.g., Levesque-Bristol et al., 2020; Vallerand et al., 1992), sports (e.g., Chan et al., 2015; Christiana et al., 2014), and parenting (e.g., Bernier et al., 2010). In the work domains, the SDT has been used to investigate issues such as employees' performance (e.g., Parent-Lamarche et al., 2022; Vecchi et al., 2022), satisfaction, turnover intention, and organisational citizenship behaviour (e.g., Akosile & Ekemen, 2022; Güntert, 2015; Halvari & Olafsen, 2022), corporate volunteering intention (e.g., Hamilton Skurak et al., 2019), and commitment (e.g., Becker et al., 2018; Gagné et al., 2008; Houle et al., 2022).

Research on SDT has been developed over the last fifty years. The first texts on SDT date back to the 70s with the discovery of the “undermining effect” (Deci, 1971, 1972). These studies found that the introduction of external rewards turns the behaviour dependent upon the reward and reduces people's desire to keep performing a formerly enjoyable behaviour. In this regard, these studies focused on intrinsic motivation and the social-contextual factors that enhance or diminish it.

With further developments, in 1985, Edward Deci and Richard Ryan wrote their seminal work (Deci & Ryan, 1985a) with the fundamental tenets of the SDT. SDT incorporated previous theoretical definitions from the 70s but is much broader in scope (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Since the publication of the seminal work, many studies have adopted the SDT, leading to progressively revision and extension of the theory. This non-stopping development of the theory is pretty clear from the authors' preface in a more recent compendium book (Ryan & Deci, 2017), where they state that “We have been writing and revising each year, synthesising the experimental and field research, the intervention results, and new theoretical extensions emerging around the globe. (...) Finally, we simply had to surrender to the idea that this book must be published, however incomplete” (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. vii). Although SDT has grown and expanded, the basic tenets of the theory come from Deci and Ryan's seminal 1985 book.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the title, abstract, and keyword search of “self-determination theory” on Scopus on 15 August, 2021 (www.scopus.com)

SDT embraces fundamental tenets. At the core of it is the organismic dialectical approach to human behaviour. While having an organismic approach, SDT posits that human beings are active, growth-oriented organisms, predisposed to engage in interesting and enjoyable activities, use their abilities fully, search for connectedness with others, and to integrate their experiences intrapersonal and interpersonally in a relative unity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). However, social environments can either support or thwart peoples' growth-oriented tendencies. For this reason, the dialectic between the active organism and the social context is the basis for SDT's predictions about human behaviour, motivation, and psychological growth (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Overall, individuals tend to pursue goals, domains, and relationships to satisfy their psychological needs, which allow them to achieve effectiveness, connectedness, and coherence (Deci & Ryan, 1985a, 2000). Human beings, in this regard, present an inherent propensity to explore, manipulate and understand, what is associated with intrinsic motivation, besides the tendency to assimilate social norms through internalisation and integration (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

From the dialectical between the active organism and the social contexts, individuals' behaviours may be more or less self-determined. Self-determination refers to the quality of human functioning that involves the experience of choice (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). The term is used within SDT as a synonym for autonomy and internal perceived locus of causality, which entails that the regulation of activity is either intrinsic or well-integrated, and thus the activity is performed freely or volitionally (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In turn, self-determination plays an important role in psychological health, well-being, and motivation quality.

Remarkably, SDT has a content-based approach, which regards theories specifying "psychological traits, motives, tendencies and orientations that instigate motivational and volitional processes" (Kanfer et al., 2017, p. 340). A critical aspect of the SDT regards its focus on the psychological level, the reason why it is considered a psychological theory (Ryan & Deci, 2004). Ryan and Deci (2017) emphasise that psychological theories have a higher utility when addressing human behaviour. They argue that the forces that move people, such as perceived satisfaction, rewards, and values, supply the most relevant predictive models regarding intentional (rather than reflexive) behaviours. Adopting this perspective, SDT is concerned with human behaviours as a function of conscious or nonconscious reasons or motives as the causes of intentional behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2006). This perspective affirms the importance of psychological variables in determining behaviour given that, besides being often the proximal causes of behaviours, psychological events are

also the most practical level at which people can intervene in human behaviour affairs. For instance, behaviour outcomes are most easily changed by appealing to the person's motives, goals, and expectations or by changing features of the social environment that give rise to them (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Further, among the content-oriented theories, SDT has been categorised as a normative needs theory (Kanfer et al., 2017), referring to its tenet that the same basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) exist for all individuals (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). The psychological needs are addressed in section 2.5.3.

SDT is a macro theory embracing six micro theories, which evidence its scope and coverage: cognitive evaluation theory (CET), organismic integration theory (OIT), causality orientations theory (COT), basic psychological needs theory (BPNT), goal contents theory (GCT), and relationships motivation theory (RMT). Each of them addresses different issues of motivation theory and is briefly described now.

Cognitive evaluation theory (CET), the first of SDT's mini theories, focuses exclusively on intrinsic motivation. It was formulated to describe the effects of social contexts on individuals' intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1980) and supported by an experiment in which students were asked to solve puzzles in a lab (Deci, 1971). CET is particularly concerned about how external events (e.g., rewards and feedback) facilitate, maintain, and enhance intrinsic motivation or alternatively, diminish and undermine it. For instance, external events that conduce towards the feeling of competence, such as optimal challenges and positive feedback, facilitate intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975). Accordingly, a core idea within the CET is that making extrinsic incentives directly salient 'crowd out' interest in otherwise intrinsically enjoyable tasks (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020).

The second SDT's mini theory regards the organismic integration theory (OIT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Ryan & Connell, 1989), which is concerned with the various forms of extrinsic motivation and their causes and consequences. The main concepts involved in explaining OIT are internalisation and integration, resulting in four types of motivational regulation (external, introjected, identified, and integrated), which vary in their degree of autonomy (these types of regulation are addressed in detail in section 2.5.4). Overall, it explains the development and dynamics of extrinsic motivation, the degree to which individuals experience autonomy while engaging in extrinsically motivated behaviour, and the processes through which people adopt the values of their groups and cultures (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Notably, differing from previous authors (e.g., De Charms, 1968), who

characterised extrinsic motivation as nonautonomous, SDT assumes that individuals may be autonomously extrinsically motivated, which is further investigated within OIT.

While CET focuses on socio-contextual influences on intrinsic motivation and OIT focuses on the internalisation of extrinsic motivation, causality orientations theory (COT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985b) is concerned about the individual differences in motivation styles or their tendencies to orient towards the social environment. The individual differences concern people's autonomous, controlled, and impersonal causality orientations. Because causality orientations are relatively enduring aspects that characterise the source of initiation and regulation of the behaviour, it allows the prediction of experience and behaviour. The most positive outcomes are related to autonomy orientation, less positive outcomes are related to control orientation, and the most negative outcomes are associated with impersonal orientation (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Basic psychological needs theory (BPNT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000a) was formulated to explain the relationship between the three basic needs' satisfaction and frustration and well-being and ill-being. Whereas the satisfaction of the psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) leads to optimal development, integrity, and well-being, failure to satisfy any of the needs will be manifested in diminished growth, integrity, and wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The psychological needs are addressed in section 2.5.3.

While much of the work on SDT concerns the reasons why people engage in behaviours or pursue certain goals, goal contents theory (GCT) focuses on the what of people's behaviours, the content of life goals they are pursuing (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Overall, it posits that a focus on extrinsic aspirations is related to lower well-being while prioritising intrinsic aspirations leads to higher well-being (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). The underlying idea explaining this issue is the fact that extrinsic goals tend to be controlled rather than autonomous and are less satisfying of the three psychological needs.

The sixth mini-theory, relationships motivation theory (RMT), concerns close relationships' qualities and consequences. It departs from the analysis that the satisfaction of the need for relatedness is essential to wellness (Reis et al., 2000) and underpins intrinsic motivation to engage with others. Moreover, it posits that the satisfaction of all the three psychological needs within relationships promotes personal well-being (e.g., self-esteem, vitality) and relationship well-being (e.g., commitment to the relationship) (Patrick et al., 2007).

Explicitly, each mini theory addresses different aspects and is used for different studies' purposes. In this regard, themes from different mini theories are addressed only where relevant to the understanding of the current research, with a particular focus on CET, OIT, and BPNT.

### *2.5.2 Theoretical background and principles of the SDT*

SDT draws on a number of concepts and principles from psychology and other scientific disciplines. This section aims to trace SDT's theoretical background and philosophical principles.

Ryan et al., (2019) have outlined the development of motivation theories. The authors ascertain that they date back to Post-Darwinian theories, when theories stressed instinct and drives as motivators of action (e.g., McDougall, 1923; Woodworth, 1918, 1958). Then, theorists have proposed behaviourist theories, which underline external reinforcements (e.g., Hull, 1943; Skinner, 1953). Behaviourist theories, in turn, have received three reactions: a) theories focusing on the cognitive mechanisms, which underscore the role of expectancies and efficacy (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Rotter, 1954); b) theories focusing on inner sources of regulation and psychological needs (e.g., De Charms, 1968; R. W. White, 1959) and; c) theories emphasising evolutionary and biological psychology (e.g., Ekman, 1972; Izard, 1977) again. From these three reactions, the attention lies on the theories focusing on inner sources of regulation and psychological needs, which provide some of the SDT's theoretical foundations.

Research on the inherent sources of regulation and psychological needs was directly opposed to the behaviourist focus on external reinforcements. In this regard, behaviourists did not provide a compelling account to explain behaviours that persist without reinforcement, such as exploratory and curiosity behaviours (Ryan et al., 2019).

Robert White's contribution to this discussion concerns his assertion that behaviours can be derived from innate psychological tendencies. In White's (1959a) seminal work, he introduced the concept of 'effectance motivation'. Effectance, in his work, was defined as the individual's tendency to explore and influence the environment. In successful interaction with the environment, the individual receives intrinsic rewards such as feelings of efficacy and pleasure, which motivates them to continue effectance efforts. In this context, White used the term "competence" to denote people's capacity to interact effectively with the environment,

which involves understanding both the effects they can have on the environment and the effects the environment has on them. He asserts that competence-promoting behaviour “satisfies an intrinsic need to deal with the environment” (White, 1959, p. 318). White’s construct of effectance motivation represents the theoretical basis of organismic approaches to intrinsic motivation and psychological needs formulation, from which the concept of competence is derived (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Richard de Charms (1968) extended White’s theorising on intrinsic motivation and introduced the concepts of internal and external perceived locus of causality (PLOC), which gave rise to the concept of the need for autonomy. De Charms (1968) affirms that intrinsically motivated individuals have an internal perceived locus of causality (I-PLOC), which means that they see themselves as self-regulating, as the causes of their own actions. On the other hand, despite individuals’ primary propensity to be the origins of their actions, they may present an external perceived locus of causality (E-PLOC). Generally speaking, having E-PLOC concerns any situation when individuals do not perceive themselves as being the origin of their actions.

Within SDT, the definition of the needs for competence and autonomy are partly derived from the works of White (1959) and de Charms (1968), respectively, which account for the necessary conditions for supporting intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Further, the need for autonomy is essential to distinguish between extrinsic and intrinsic forms of motivation in SDT. In this regard, SDT draws on the “Theory Y” proposed by the organisational psychologist McGregor (1960). Influenced by Maslow (1943, 1954), Theory Y applies a hierarchical structure of needs, including the lower-order needs (e.g., sustenance, safety, and security) and the higher-order needs (e.g., esteem, self-actualization) to the work settings. McGregor argues that when workers have lower-order needs relatively satisfied, the higher-order needs become more salient. Moreover, the accomplishment and achievement of the needs for esteem and self-actualisation will be inherently satisfying for workers. In this regard, the higher order needs correspond to autonomous motivation and each level of the hierarchy, from the need for sustenance, presents increasing autonomy.

SDT also assumes that individuals have an inherent developmental process called organismic integration, consistent with theories in Psychology, Biology, and Philosophy. This concept holds that human beings are not passive recipients of external influences, but have an “inherent tendency towards integrating experiences into a unified regulatory process” (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 433). This is to say that humans within the SDT are active, growth-

oriented organisms with evolved tendencies towards growing, mastering ambient challenges, and integrating new experiences into a coherent sense of self.

The organismic approach is rooted in humanistic psychology, a psychological movement that emphasises people's inherent tendency towards self-actualization through the unique human capacity for self-awareness, which allows behavioural regulation (Koole et al., 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Moreover, the organismic perspective also reflects the school of scientific thought called vitalism (e.g., Bergson, 1911; Driesch, 1908). Vitalists oppose reductionist perspectives. Reductionists argue that living entities can be fully understood from the same analysis principle of non-living entities by evaluating the basic psychochemical processes and their causes. On the other hand, vitalists propose that living entities cannot be fully understood from their physical entities since they possess some non-physical elements. Bergson (1911) refers to these elements as *élan vital*, related to an energetic force, a vital impetus, which explains evolution and development in a lively way (as opposed to a mechanical one) and accounts for the creative impulse of humankind.

Finally, the philosophy behind SDT stems from the Greek philosopher Aristotle, specifically the concept of eudaimonia. Aristotle proposes that the final goal of all people's thoughts and behaviours is the experience of happiness (Ryan & Deci, 2001). According to Aristotle, people can experience happiness in two ways, eudaimonic and hedonic. The first way entails pursuing good character, while the second entails the pursuit of pleasure and comfort. He ascertains that hedonic interests, such as power and wealth, are generally associated with temporary feelings and fail to provide lasting happiness (Huta & Ryan, 2010). On the other hand, engaging in persistent, virtuous behaviours lead to the development of good character and genuine, lasting happiness (Huta & Ryan, 2010). In this regard, SDT is mainly concerned with eudaimonic happiness, and eudaimonia or self-realisation is taken as a central aspect of defining well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

This section brought the theoretical background supporting the SDT. The next sections go deep into analysing the core concepts necessary to understand the SDT and its contributions to the thesis, starting from innate psychological needs.

### 2.5.3 *Innate psychological needs*

One of the mini theories within the SDT macro-theory concerns the basic psychological needs theory (BPNT). In general, needs theories differ in their perspective on the target of needs and their definition (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Patrick et al., 2007). In this regard, some theories focus on physiological and others on psychological needs. Likewise, some theories define needs as necessary nutriment for growth while others focus on any motivating force. For instance, the drive theory proposed by Hull (1943) is a physiological need theory that considers people as having innate physiological needs, which are necessary nutriment for optimal physiological growth and development. On the other hand, Murray's (1938) personality theory is a psychological need theory that considers people having acquired or learned needs, which are considered to be any motivating force.

Amid these different perspectives on need theories, SDT falls between Hull and Murrays' theories. SDT asserts that understanding human motivation requires the consideration of innate (as in Hull's theory) psychological needs (as in Murray's theory) (Deci & Ryan, 1985a, 2000). Within the SDT, "needs specify innate psychological nutriment that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229). Any need must meet two criteria:

- (1) that the deprivation of certain resources or nutrients results in degraded forms of growth and impaired integrity, that is, it leads to serious harms; and (2) that providing certain resources or nutrients reliably facilitates thriving and the fuller expression of the organism's nature and potential. (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 81)

In so being, needs differ from both desires and motives or reasons. The difference between needs and desires gets clear when analysing that, even when people are efficacious at satisfying desires, it may not lead to well-being or may also be detrimental to well-being. Exemplifying, someone might want to eat more chocolate after finishing a box. In reality, satisfying this desire might not enhance health and wellness; instead, it might have negative consequences (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Likewise, a motive is a reason (implicitly or explicitly) for behaving, and it may underpin attempts at value attainment, which are culturally or individually preferred outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In this regard, someone's motives (autonomous or controlled) may not be directed at need satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2002, 2017). Exemplifying, someone might engage in a behaviour because their family values it. In

this regard, the motive for engaging in the behaviour, instead of increasing wellness, might diminish it through autonomy deprivation. Thus, within the SDT, only the valued outcomes that are consistent with the satisfaction of basic psychological needs can yield outcomes of vitality and wellness.

SDT posits three basic psychological needs: competence, relatedness, and autonomy, which are the ingredients for autonomous motivation. While fulfilling the needs leads individuals to thrive, the frustration of the basic needs leads to negative outcomes, such as work-related stress, emotional exhaustion, turnover intention, and absenteeism (Olafsen et al., 2017). The three basic psychological needs are now addressed one by one.

As mentioned before, SDT's definition of the basic need for competence can be traced back to White's (1959) seminal work. Consistent with White's definition, SDT considers competence a felt sense of confidence and effectance. It thus refers to the perceived self-belief in one's ability to perform well in an activity and the experiencing opportunities to express one's capacities (Deci, 1975). Ryan and Deci (2017) evidence the recognition of the need for competence by emphasising that motivation and wellness theory would consider it a core motivation condition. The need for competence leads people to seek optimal challenges (according to their capacities) and to attempt to maintain and enhance skills, abilities, and capacities (Ryan & Deci, 2002). In considering these aspects concerning the need for competence, Deci and Ryan (2000) have identified that it is associated with adaptive advantages since "interested, open, learning organisms can better adapt to new challenges in changing contexts" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 252). At last, it is important to distinguish the concept of competence need satisfaction from the concept of self-efficacy, which is a core concept for the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997) and part of the TPB. While competence satisfaction concerns the intrinsic satisfaction that individuals feel when they are effective at meeting a challenge, self-efficacy is cognition that concerns the degree to which individuals believe they have the power to be effective in the future. Consequently, individuals are likely to report high self-efficacy in the face of easy tasks; however, it is most probable that individuals experience low satisfaction with the need for competence in the same circumstance. In the workplace, Forner et al. (2020) investigated how leaders are using the tenets of SDT to support employees' competence and, among other aspects, the main applications are to let team members learn at their own individual pace, provide development/learning opportunities, and support and help build self-esteem and confidence.

Relatedness, the need to feel belongingness and connectedness with others, is defined by a sense of shared experience and meaningful relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). It carries a sense of giving and taking within social groups since it regards both love and care, and to be loved and cared for (Bowlby, 1979; Ryan, 1995). The need for relatedness is not concerned with the attainment of a certain outcome or status. Instead, it “concerns the psychological sense of being with others in secure communion or unity” (Ryan & Deci, 2002, p. 7). The investigation that set the stage to the concept of relatedness within SDT dates back to the 50s, when Harlow (1958) carried out multiple experiments with primates and identified that they need relatedness beyond basic physiological requirements to flourish. The importance of the need for relatedness is evidenced by its use in other motivation and well-being theories, which assume a human’s desire or tendency for relatedness, even if the authors do not identify it as a need (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Among the theories that explicitly address the need for relatedness, an example refers to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). Long before the SDT was proposed, Abraham Maslow proposed a pyramid of needs in which social belonging occupies a place within the high-order types of needs. According to Maslow, it refers to the human need to love and be loved, which involves feelings of belongingness to social groups. Relatedness is associated with adaptive consequences once it affords resource sharing and mutual protection (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The need to relate or belong provides the motivational basis for people’s internalisation of values and behaviours from their cultures, as adopting the social group behaviours ensure them acceptance and involvement (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Interestingly, the need for relatedness can sometimes compete or conflict with the need for autonomy, once the first reflects the tendency towards the integration of the individual into a social group and the second reflects the tendency towards individual integration (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In practical terms, leaders can support employees’ relatedness need through applications such as implementing team bonding activities, knowing their team members’ names, interests, and skills, and respecting others’ backgrounds and experiences (Forner et al., 2020).

Autonomy is a core concept within SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2006), and it refers to be the perceived origin of one’s own behaviour (De Charms, 1968; Deci & Ryan, 1985a). Within SDT, autonomy retains its primary etymological meaning of self-governance or rule by the self. Thus, autonomy entails acting with a sense of volition and having the experience of choice (Gagné & Deci, 2005). When autonomous, individuals experience their behaviour as an expression of their selves. In the workplace, autonomy refers to workers’ need to

experience choice in their role, have the freedom to make decisions, express their thoughts, and take part in deciding how their tasks are performed. In this regard, leaders can support employees' autonomy needs by being less prescriptive in assigning tasks, consulting with those who are affected by their decisions, and providing a rationale for decisions where possible (Forner et al., 2020).

Interestingly, some studies have argued about the importance of expanding the number of basic psychological needs. For example, Andersen et al. (2000) point out the existence of the need for meaning and security. Although Deci and Ryan do not object to the expansion of the list of needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000c), they highlight that less strict criteria to include other needs could make the list too long, causing the needs to lose their explanatory power (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In this regard, while keeping a stringent meaning of need, none of the candidates for needs met the requirements (Ryan & Deci, 2000c, 2017).

As evidenced earlier, within SDT, basic needs are taken as universal and represent innate requirements. The theory asserts that the satisfaction of the three basic needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy is essential for healthy development and well-being regardless of individual differences in need strength and culture (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In other words, everyone needs to fulfil the basic psychological needs to thrive, irrespective of the contextual background or the individual's preferences. In affirming so, the theorists do not deny individual differences in the strength of basic needs but argue that it is not the most fruitful aspect to focus on (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Instead of focusing on individual differences in need strength, SDT theorists focus on regulatory styles, which regard the way people orient towards the environment as a result of the fulfilment or frustration of the needs.

Regulatory styles are addressed in the following section, where they are taken into perspective from their relative autonomy.

#### *2.5.4 Regulatory styles*

When people are feeling secure and connected to others (relatedness), effective in what they are doing and competent in what they are up to (competence), and they are doing something willingly or volitionally (autonomy), they feel intrinsically motivated.

Crucially, the three psychological needs play different roles in intrinsic motivation. The need for autonomy is the core need for intrinsic motivation, and the need for competence is also associated with greater intrinsic motivation. Noteworthy, the need for competence

alone is not a sufficient condition for intrinsic motivation since there are many activities individuals have the competence to do but have no interest in doing (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Relatedness also plays a role in the maintenance of intrinsic motivation. However, it is said to have a more distal role in maintaining intrinsic motivation: depending on the situation, relatedness is less central to intrinsic motivation than autonomy and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In this regard, intrinsically motivated behaviours are precisely those “freely engaged out of interest without the necessity of separable consequences, and, to be maintained, they require satisfaction of the needs for autonomy and competence” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 233). Individuals will be intrinsically motivated only for activities they find inherent interest, activities that appeal to novelty, challenge, or aesthetic value. (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b). SDT research has shown that what makes intrinsically motivated activities enjoyable is precisely the satisfaction of the needs for competence and autonomy (Ryan & Moller, 2017).

Nevertheless, people also engage in activities that are not intrinsically motivated: the motivation involved is extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation regards doing something because there are separable consequences the individual would like to accomplish (Ryan & Deci, 2000b), such as receiving a paycheck or avoiding punishment. Thus, extrinsic motivation refers to the behaviours individuals engage in not for their own sake but as a means to an end (Deci, 1975). In such cases, the theorists further evaluate whether people can become autonomous for extrinsically motivated behaviours. This clarifies the different kinds of extrinsic motivation, which are explained through the concept of internalisation.

Internalisation is the active and natural process by which individuals attempt to transform an extrinsic motive into personally endorsed values and self-regulations (Grolnick et al., 1997; Ryan et al., 1985). The more internalised a value or regulation is, the more it is experienced as autonomous or as subjectively located closer to the self (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, individuals internalise external regulations when encouraged through an autonomy-supportive social context (Gagné & Deci, 2005). For instance, acknowledging others’ perspectives, providing meaningful rationales for tasks, and minimizing controls influence internalising the value of a boring task (Deci et al., 1994).

While intrinsic motivation is innate and, as such, does not result from internalisation (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the distinction among the types of extrinsic motivation is based on four regulatory styles; each of them represents how regulations and values can be internalised in different ways (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). In this regard, extrinsic motivation may be more or less

internalised to one's self and it reflects the degree to which the behavioural regulation is relatively autonomous versus controlled (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

The first type of extrinsic motivation is external regulation, which occurs when behaviours are controlled by external incentives such as praise, rewards, and punishment avoidance. When individuals experience their behaviour as totally external to themselves, they are performed to satisfy an external demand or reward contingency (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). It is the type of motivation searched by operant theorists (e.g., Skinner, 1953), according to which individuals make an association between a particular behaviour and a consequence, either rewards or punishments. This kind of motivation can be powerful and efficient. However, it carries the issue of maintenance and transfer, which means that the motivation does not last unless the reward or punishment lasts as well (Deci & Ryan, 1985b). Moreover, it leads people to perform the behaviours in the least effortful way, with less attention to quality (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

External regulation can be internalised through the process of introjection (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Introjected regulation occurs when the external contingencies have been internalised and the individual acts to facilitate self-esteem (e.g., exhibit ability) and their consequences (e.g., pride vs guilt). Thus, introjection is a form of control that individuals enact on themselves, stressing internal judgements and evaluations that are the basis of the individuals' self-definition of worth (Ryan & Deci, 2017). While driven by feelings of worth and esteem, introjected regulated behaviours are motivated by individuals' desire to appear worthy to themselves and others (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). Interestingly, others may or may not be judging an individual, but when externally regulated, the individual may perceive that they are – thus, fear of shame and concerns with approval are salient (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The projection of individuals' self-approval or disapproval onto others through the desire to appear worthy implicates a conflict between the need for autonomy (individuals' primary propensity to be the origins of their actions) and the need for relatedness (Koestner & Losier, 2002). As such, although introjection can promote high involvement and task engagement (Koestner & Losier, 2002), it is related to negative emotions, such as ego-involvement, pride, guilt, shame, and anxiety (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989).

External regulation can also be internalised through the process of identification (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Identified regulation occurs when individuals explicitly recognise the underlying value of a behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000), so they "accept the responsibility for regulating the behaviour" (Deci & Ryan, 2008b, p. 16). It may entail engaging in behaviours

because the outcomes of it are personally significant, reflecting consideration of long-term outcomes that the individual hopes to achieve in the domain (Koestner & Losier, 2002). When individuals identify with the value of an activity or behaviour, they engage in the behaviour with a greater sense of autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2008b) and present a high involvement level (Koestner & Losier, 2002). Among the styles of extrinsic motivation, identification is one of the types entailing volitional behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2008b), which leads to positive emotional experiences, such as enjoyment (Ryan & Connell, 1989). The covid pandemic is a valid scenario for understanding the internalisation process through identification. In the beginning, governments adopted new procedures and rules to restrain or prohibit people from different households from interacting, configuring an external form of regulation. For instance, in the UK, failure to comply with self-isolation could result in a fine (UK Cabinet Office, 2021). However, when people understood the importance of isolating to reduce the risk to themselves, their family, friends, and the community (Wright et al., 2022), they also had internal reasons to comply, independent of external pressures. In so doing, individuals explicitly recognised the underlying value of isolating and internalise the external regulation through the process of identification.

Finally, external regulation can be internalised through the process of integration (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It is the most autonomous kind of extrinsic motivation, as integration has the most complete form of internalisation among the extrinsic types of motivation. It involves not only identification with the importance of behaviours but also integrating those identifications with other aspects of the self (e.g., psychological needs and identifications) (Deci & Ryan, 2008b). When integrated, external regulation becomes fully transformed into self-regulation, resulting in self-determined extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which is experienced as fully authentic (Ryan & Deci, 2006), involving feelings of psychological freedom and volition. Because integration entails bringing a value into congruence with other aspects of the one's self, there is a remarkable absence of conflicts with other abiding values, attitudes, and identifications. Thus, the result of integration is a highly stable form of regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Importantly, intrinsic motivation and all forms of extrinsic motivation stand in contrast to amotivation regarding behavioural intentionality. While motivated behaviours are intentional, when individuals are amotivated, behaviours are executed for reasons unknown or not executed at all (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). Most empirical cognitive theories of motivation go as far as differentiating between amotivation and motivation (e.g., Bandura, 1997;

Vroom, 1964), and do not make the SDT's proposed distinction between the types of extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Overall, amotivation encompasses the state of non-intentionality represented in two core cases: perceived inability to attain an outcome (related to competence) and absence of interest or utility (related to autonomy). More specifically, the lack of perceived competence results from individuals believing that acting will not yield a valued outcome, or that one cannot perform adequately when behaviours are linked to a valued outcome (Deci & Ryan, 2008b). Another source of amotivation involves people perceiving a lack of value or interest in a behaviour or outcome (Deci & Ryan, 2008b).

Figure 3 presents examples to illustrate the regulative styles and the non-regulation (amotivation) considering the hypothetical situation of a worker completing a specific task.

**Figure 3:** Examples of self-regulation of worker completing a task

<b>Types of regulation</b>	<b>The reasons why workers put effort into completing a task.</b>
Amotivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The worker does not complete the task.</li> <li>• The worker does not know why they are completing the task.</li> </ul>
External Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers pay extra for the worker to complete the task.</li> <li>• The worker wishes to avoid loss of privileges for not completing the task.</li> </ul>
Introjected Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The worker would be ashamed of themselves if they did not complete the task.</li> <li>• The worker likes to show off skills to feel good about the self.</li> </ul>
Identified Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The worker values developing the skills related to the task so they can advance in their career.</li> </ul>
Integrated Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The worker values developing the skills related to the task so they can advance in their career: this career aspiration fits with their wider interest in promoting gender equality.</li> </ul>
Intrinsic Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task is optimally challenging and novel, so the worker finds it interesting and enjoyable to complete.</li> </ul>

Source: Developed by the author

The regulative styles are put side by side in what is called the continuum of relative autonomy (Ryan & Connell, 1989), which is discussed in the following section.

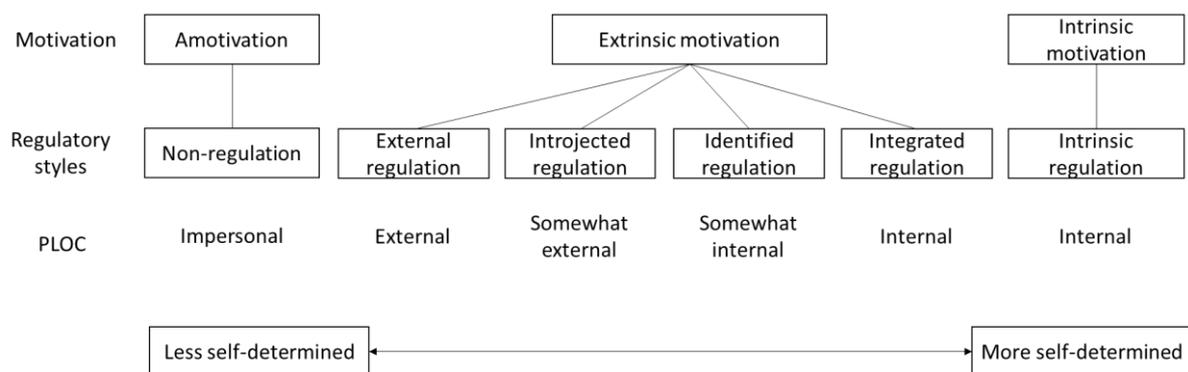
### 2.5.5 *Relative autonomy continuum*

SDT posits that all motivated behaviours are accompanied by a sense of why one is performing the behaviour, in a way that people can report their reasons if they are asked (Sheldon et al., 2017). The different reasons or goals that give rise to action are the basis to distinguish the types of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). In this regard, Ryan and Connell (1989) highlighted that a central concern refers to the perceived locus of causality (PLOC) for

one's actions. SDT adopts the PLOC concept from De Charms (1968): the degree to which people perceive their behaviours as caused by internal or external reasons. A PLOC assessment tells whether or not individuals see themselves as the source of initiation and regulation of behaviour and feel a sense of volition (choosing to vs having to do something) (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Ryan and Connell (1989) proposed that the appropriate model for describing PLOC for one's actions fits a simplex-like or ordered correlation structure, which demonstrates ordered relations between correlated variables that differ in kind and degree. That was when the authors introduced the autonomy continuum idea into SDT. According to them, the reasons for acting fall into a continuum of autonomy or self-determination. Later, Ryan and Deci (2000a) depicted the continuum of autonomy schematically (Figure 4).

**Figure 4:** The types of motivation and regulation



Source: adapted from Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 72).

The upper part of Figure 4 differentiates the kinds of motivation. As previously discussed, the core demarcation between amotivation and motivation concerns the issue of intention. Amotivation refers to the state in which individuals struggle to have any of their needs met, they are not motivated to behave, or the behaviour is not mediated by intentionality (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Motivation, instead, involves conscious or nonconscious intention to behave, and it can be intrinsic or extrinsic.

In describing the continuum, amotivation is placed on the far left, which regards the non-regulation and an impersonal locus of causality. Then, the continuum presents all the types of extrinsic motivation, from the least autonomous to the most autonomous: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation, with external, somewhat external, somewhat internal, and internal PLOC, respectively. On the far

right, intrinsic motivation is placed, corresponding to an intrinsic regulation, with internal PLOC and the most autonomous or self-determined form of motivation.

The continuum depicts the idea that autonomy for any given action is a matter of degree within SDT. In this sense, conceptual similar regulatory styles are close and correlate more highly than those farther apart (Ryan & Connell, 1989). For instance, integrated regulation carries similarities with intrinsic motivation since both are accompanied by a sense of volition and choice (Deci & Ryan, 2008b; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). In this regard, an activity resulting from external demand or pressure may be self-determined the same way as the intrinsic regulated, as long as individuals fully endorse the activity (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Precisely, the difference between integrated regulation and intrinsic motivation is that whereas in the first, an activity/behaviour is done for its instrumental value regarding a separate outcome, in the second, the activity/behaviour is considered enjoyable and interesting (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

For this reason, when the quality of motivational orientations is at stake, the distinction between autonomous and controlled is more fruitful than between intrinsic and extrinsic. In this regard, “the conception of internalisation and types of regulation have shifted the primary differentiation within SDT from a focus on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation to a focus on autonomous versus controlled motivation” (Deci & Ryan, 2008b, p. 16). Complementary, autonomous and controlled motivation relates to De Charms’ (1968) definition of internal (I-PLOC) and external perceived locus of causality (E-PLOC).

Autonomous and controlled motivations are the concepts used in the study to address individuals’ motivation to expatriate. The following section brings further aspects related to controlled and autonomous motivation.

#### *2.5.6 Autonomous and controlled motivation*

When addressing autonomous and controlled motivation, the regulatory styles that fall along the right side of the continuum (Figure 4) are considered more autonomous (identified, integrated, and intrinsic regulations). In contrast, the regulatory styles on the left side are the controlled ones (external and introjected regulations) (Deci & Ryan, 2008b). The analysis of intrinsic, integrated, and identified motivation as a unique construct concerning autonomous motivation and the analysis of introjected and external motivation as a unique construct regarding controlled motivation are sustained by studies that found a high correlation within

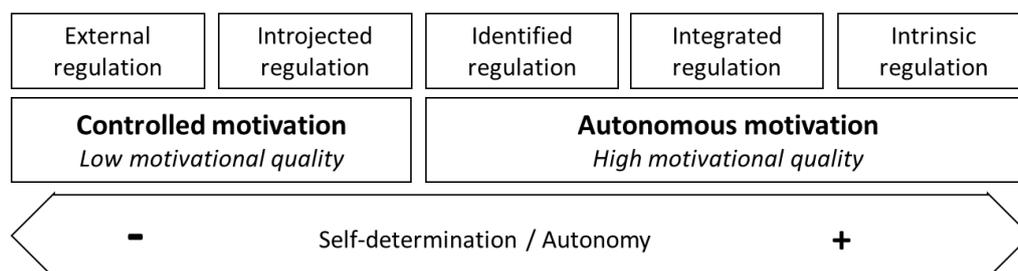
the subscales (e.g., Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017; Pelletier et al., 2001; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004).

In this regard, individuals are self-determined or autonomous-motivated when they do something because they are interested (intrinsic motivation), because the thing is part of who they are (integrated motivation), or because they value the behaviour and believe that it is important (identified motivation). On the other hand, individuals present controlled motivation when they perform something because they feel guilt, shame, or any internal pressure (introjected motivation) or because of external rewards, evaluations, and punishments (external motivation).

Crucially, autonomous and controlled motivation differ in their PLOC. Autonomous motivation has an internal PLOC (I-PLOC) and is associated with high motivational quality, whereas controlled motivation has an external PLOC (E-PLOC) and is associated with low motivational quality (Deci & Ryan, 2000). More specifically, autonomous motivation involves the experience of volition, psychological freedom, and reflective self-endorsement; in contrast, controlled motivation entails the regulation of behaviour with the experiences of pressure, control, or coercion to think, feel, or behave in specific ways, which interpersonal or intrapsychic forces may initiate (Deci, 2004; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Vansteenkiste et al., 2010).

Figure 5 shows the types of regulation within autonomous and controlled motivation and their main characteristics.

**Figure 5:** Autonomous and controlled motivation



Source: Developed by the author based on Ryan and Deci (2000) and Deci and Ryan (2008).

Human beings may have diverse reasons for engaging in a specific behaviour, which fall along the autonomy continuum (Ryan & Connell, 1989), and might have internal or external PLOC. For instance, relocating to work temporarily abroad may be driven by a passionate intrinsic interest, such as the personal challenge (autonomous motivation) or

extrinsic pressures, such as financial incentives (controlled motivation), or both. Notably, the more autonomous forms of motivation are associated with the fulfilment of individuals' basic psychological needs, especially autonomy and competence. Thus, individuals' experiences of their reasons as controlled or autonomous are associated with the frustration or fulfilment of psychological needs, respectively, and lead to qualitatively different outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In this regard, it is important to address and distinguish autonomous and controlled motivation.

Autonomous motivation contributes to individuals' thriving as it allows the satisfaction of basic human psychological needs, while controlled motivation does not contribute to or even undermine the needs' satisfaction. In this regard, autonomous and controlled motivations are the adaptive and non-adaptive or maladaptive forms of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which are being proven in various domains. For example, autonomous motivation was found to increase aspects such as job satisfaction (Gagné et al., 2010; Güntert, 2015; Van den Broeck et al., 2013), psychological well-being (Gagné et al., 2010), organisational and occupational commitment (Fernet, 2011; Gagné et al., 2008), work engagement and work enthusiasm (van Beek et al., 2012), and performance (e.g., Parent-Lamarche et al., 2022). Moreover, autonomous motivation is negatively related to maladaptive outcomes, such as turnover intentions and psychological distress (Gagné et al., 2010). Furthermore, autonomous functioning allows for openness to ongoing experience or a willingness to experience what is occurring in the current moment without distorting or defending against it (Hodgins & Knee, 2002). Notably, the harder the task, the more important the quality of motivation (Green-Demers et al., 1997), which is why autonomous motivation appears to be critical when greater effort or persistence is required to perform a behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In contrast to autonomous motivation, controlled motivated people tend to show less free-choice persistence (Ryan et al., 1991), unlikelihood to sustain the behaviour in the long term (Ryan & Deci, 2019), increased turnover intentions (e.g., Güntert, 2015) and burnout (e.g., Fernet et al., 2004; van Beek et al., 2012). Moreover, it showed to be negatively related to work satisfaction and occupational commitment (Fernet, 2011), and workers with higher controlled motivation were found to report lower levels of well-being (job satisfaction, enthusiasm, engagement) (Van den Broeck et al., 2013).

As summarized by Gagné and Deci (2005), empirical evidence suggests that while autonomous motivation enhances effective performance and well-being, controlled

motivation decreases these outcomes “particularly if the task requires creativity, cognitive flexibility, or deep processing of information” (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 341). In fact, in a model of creativity and innovation in organisations, Amabile and Pratt (2016, p. 175) ascertain that “people are most creative when they are motivated primarily by the interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself, and not by extrinsic pressures or motivators in the social environment”. Regarding individuals’ performance, satisfying the need for competence increases one’s autonomous motivation, which leads to optimal performance (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Attached to it, a meta-analysis found that intrinsic motivation (autonomous) predicted more unique variance in the quality of performance, while incentives were a better predictor of the quantity of performance (Cerasoli et al., 2014). As an overall consequence, more autonomous forms of regulation are experienced by individuals with more volition and higher quality of persistence and performance compared to controlled regulation (Deci, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

In this regard, if two professionals are engaging in an IA, one because they enjoy the job and the other because they want to impress the boss, both might be highly motivated, but the first is more likely to thrive in the IA. The key difference is that the motivations derived from a sense of truly valuing or enjoying one’s activities (“wanting to do it”), as opposed to motivation born of interpersonal or intrapsychic forces (“having to do it”), are associated with increased progress, persistence, success, and well-being. In the expatriation research, some of these aspects became evident in a study on the formation of an individual’s willingness to expatriate: intrinsically motivated individuals presented a higher willingness to communicate in a foreign language, while extrinsically motivated individuals perceived more difficulties during the IA (Haines et al., 2008). Further, when there is external pressure to accept the IA, the lack of free choice in deciding results in poor person-job fit, lower levels of satisfaction and commitment, and lower levels of adjustment and performance (e.g., Bolino et al., 2017; Feldman & Thomas, 1992; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004).

Considering the importance of identifying the regulatory styles, Ryan and Connell (1989) noticed the paucity of empirical methods to examine the degree of internalisation and the relative autonomy regarding a set of values or behavioural regulations. They proposed that the constructs addressed in internalisation theories can be related to several reasons for acting. Reasons “represent the primary basis by which people typically account for their own actions” (Ryan & Connell, 1989, p. 750). Overall, self-perception of the reasons that explain

the engagement and persistence in a given activity can be placed along the continuum of autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989).

In the context of expatriation, the same logic applies since employees have their own reasons to expatriate. The self-perception of such reasons is evident in a quote from an assigned expatriate in Peru, who highlights that “I think we usually move to another country because of some motivating factor, whether it’s material or career advancement, there is always a motivating factor behind our decisions” (Canhilal et al., 2015, p. 387). The motivation factors the interviewee evidenced are, in fact, the reasons for acting. The literature has uncovered several reasons for expatriating, which are addressed in the following section.

### *2.5.7 Individuals’ reasons for expatriate*

Individuals may have various reasons to engage in a behaviour. In the context of international assignments, there is a rich literature on the reasons leading individuals to expatriate (e.g., Bader, 2017; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Hippler, 2009; Shortland, 2016; Stahl et al., 2002). Although most of these previous studies have not explicitly addressed autonomous and controlled motivations, a number of identified reasons fall within these categories. Accordingly, Shaffer et al. (2012) acknowledged that both extrinsic (e.g., financial rewards, compensation packages, and fringe benefits) and intrinsic (e.g., personal challenges and development, and enjoyment) motivations are important factors that motivate individuals to engage in IAs. In this regard, the following sections address the extant literature on the reasons to expatriate in accordance with the tenets of the SDT in that they can be categorised according to the types of motivation. Thus, the reasons identified in the literature are the basis for measuring employees’ autonomous and controlled motivations to expatriate.

#### *2.5.7.1 Autonomous reasons to expatriate*

Autonomous reasons to expatriate are those that enable the fulfilment of the needs for autonomy and competence, primarily, and relatedness, in lesser importance. As such the autonomous reasons to expatriate are associated with employees’ recognition that the IA (or its outcomes) has personal importance, relevance, or value; interest, enjoyment, and inherent satisfaction associated with the IA. They are addressed in the following sections.

### 2.5.7.1.1 *Professional development*

Professional development refers to the “acquisition of or improvement on knowledge, skills, abilities, and insights (i.e., social and technical competence)” (Hippler, 2009, p. 1394).

Professional development appears as an important reason leading individuals to expatriate. For example, it was considered one of the most important reasons for the international transfer of Portuguese expats (Pinto et al., 2012). Further, professional development was considered in the decision of 78% of German expats and 85% of French expats (Stahl & Cerdin, 2004). For expats from German companies, professional development was considered the second most important reason, increasing its importance from 2002 (Stahl et al., 2002) to 2015 (Bader, 2017).

Addressing specific aspects of professional development, the potential for skills development was the second most important factor in the decision to expatriate for those in London (Dickmann, 2012). Other aspects attached to professional development also play an important role in individuals’ decisions to expatriate. For example, Finish managers highly evaluate the importance of learning new tasks during the IA (Suutari, 2003; Suutari et al., 2012). Learning new occupational skills was a reason considered among American (Miller & Cheng, 1978) and Australian expats (Suutari & Brewster, 2000), and was the second most important reason to relocate for expats predominantly from Western origin to the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Spain (Doherty et al., 2011).

Overall, from diverse samples of internationally mobile workers and over decades of research, there is a widespread agreement that individuals view their international assignment as an opportunity for professional development (e.g., Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Haslberger & Brewster, 2009; Latukha et al., 2021; Stahl et al., 2002; Tung, 1998). This is in accordance with SDT in that being motivated by the professional development the IAs enables is closely related to the universally required need for competence. The need for competence, in turn, leads people to attempt to maintain and enhance skills, abilities, and capacities (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

There are aspects of the IA that foster development, as it is evident that “merely breathing the air of another country does not foster development” (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016, p. 135). Particularly, cultural novelty and challenging contexts make international work experiences truly developmental (e.g., Chattopadhyay & Choudhury, 2017; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). For instance, a sample of Anglo leaders provides evidence that the

relationship between global work experiences and competency in strategic thinking is strengthened when home and host countries differ more in cultural aspects (Dragoni et al., 2014). In addition, leadership, resilience, and self-awareness were some development issues that led expatriates from an international development organisation in the UK to work in hostile environments (Dickmann & Watson, 2017).

#### *2.5.7.1.2 Job features*

Job features refer to personal enjoyment regarding the job offer concerning its related tasks, area of responsibility or expertise, the challenge of the role, and autonomy (Dickmann et al., 2008; Hippler, 2009).

Aspects of the job offer such as autonomy, responsibility, and diversity of tasks were important variables leading Germans to accept IAs (Hippler, 2009), and it was a highly ranked motivation for expatriates in London (Dickmann, 2012). Remarkably, the ‘importance of the job itself’ was one of the most important reasons for Germans and French expats (Stahl & Cerdin, 2004, p. 893), and challenges, level of autonomy, and meaningfulness of the work were important motivations for Finnish expats (Suutari et al., 2012).

Earlier, American managers with previous IA highly estimated the greater responsibility related to the job offer in their relocation decisions (Miller & Cheng, 1978). Moreover, job characteristics, especially higher responsibilities, number of subordinates, and job tasks, were found to increase individuals’ willingness to accept IAs in emerging economies (De Eccher & Duarte, 2018). Furthermore, Spanish expatriates, mostly on assignments in Latin America, were found to give high value to jobs with task variety and autonomy, and jobs that enable them to apply their knowledge, and give them enough responsibility (Bonache, 2005). The variety and excitement of the tasks were also very relevant motives for Austrian expatriates across Europe (Demel & Mayrhofer, 2010).

Specifically referring to the professional challenge related to the job offer, it was among the most important variables influencing the decision to take an assignment for British and Asian expats (Dickmann et al., 2008), for Portuguese expats (Pinto et al., 2012), and expats from Europe, USA, Canada, China, India, Australia, and New Zealand living in London (Dickmann, 2012). Further, interesting jobs with challenging assignments were particularly relevant in changing Russian talents’ migration intentions (Latukha et al., 2021).

From the diversity of these samples, the job features appear to be universally valuable. This is in accordance with SDT in that the job features are closely related to the universally required needs for autonomy and competence.

#### *2.5.7.1.3 Personal development*

Personal development regards the personal importance given “to broaden one’s horizon through new experiences (...) and to develop and extend one’s knowledge, skills and insights” (Hippler, 2009, p. 1393). Expatriating because of the expected personal development that may be reached with the experience entails recognising that it has personal importance and a conscious endorsement of its value (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). More specifically, it reflects the need for competence, which leads people to attempt to maintain and enhance skills, abilities, and capacities.

IAs are important sources supporting personal development. When taking IAs, employees experience unusual situations actively, from daily routines, such as using another currency in the supermarket, to dealing with more complex cultural differences affecting ways of interacting at work. Actively experiencing events or situations that are unusual can disrupt normality, violate cognitive schemas, and promote a thinking style characterised by cognitive flexibility, responsible for creativity (Leung et al., 2008; Ritter et al., 2012).

Noteworthy, personal development was of high importance in the decision of English and Asian expatriates to accept an IA (Hippler, 2009). Personal development can also account for ‘learning or improving the host country’s language’ (e.g., Dickmann, 2012; Hippler, 2009). Expatriates in London have given moderate importance to learning the host language (Dickmann, 2012), and it was slightly more important for expatriates mainly from Western origin to the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Spain (Doherty et al., 2011). Moreover, Finish expatriates highly considered the IA as an opportunity to learn foreign cultures and languages (Suutari, 2003).

Some aspects of the host country may facilitate personal development, motivating individuals that aim to develop and extend their knowledge, skills, and insights. Remarkably, multi-year assignments in culturally distant countries are considered the most intensive mechanism through which employees can learn about another culture and market, enabling the development of a global mindset, which is defined as “openness to and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesize across this

diversity” (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002, p. 117). Thus, although cultural distant countries are generally associated with employees’ refusal of such assignments, and extra barriers to adaptation and expatriation success (Dupuis et al., 2008; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2011), they are also among the most valuable experiences for personal development.

#### *2.5.7.1.4 Work-life balance*

Work-life balance refers to the individual’s perception of the host country that work and nonwork activities are compatible and promote growth according to their current life priorities (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). To seek work-life balance during the IA is linked to the individual’s tendency to seek experiences that enable them to fulfil the need for relatedness: those valuing the work-life balance do not want their work position to be at the cost of their relationships (Deci & Ryan, 1985a).

There is still little focus on this aspect in the literature on the reasons leading individuals to expatriate. Among the studies investigating it, work-life balance received moderate importance from British and Asian expatriates (Dickmann et al., 2008) and expatriates in London (Dickmann, 2012). Compared to these studies, the balance between work and social life in the host location received slightly greater importance from expatriates primarily of Western origin to the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Spain (Doherty et al., 2011).

Managing work-life balance abroad is considered one of the critical challenges associated with expatriation (Shaffer et al., 2001; Shortland & Cummins, 2007), mainly when home and host countries differ substantially in their preferred work-life boundaries (Bader, Froese, & Kraeh, 2018). This aspect is evidenced in a quotation from an American woman expatriated in France: “on vacation... you’d still be expected to carry your mobile and take your [laptop], you know - ‘you’re not checking your e-mails everyday?’ - kind of thing. And here [France], I mean you’re on vacation you know. And that’s a big difference” (Crowley-Henry, 2007, p. 54). Another piece of evidence comes from a Chinese expatriate in London, who highly value work-life balance, and compared the way of dealing with it in China and London by addressing employees’ after-work appointments. The expatriate stresses that, while employees spend their after-work with customers in China or neighbouring countries, in London, this time is intended to be spent with family (Dickmann & Mills, 2009).

Some personal aspects may also play a role in the importance of work-life balance, especially being working parents. This reasoning comes from the analysis that, although the reconciliation between work and private life is relevant to all employees, it is not as crucial for solo-living workers without children as it is for working parents (Wilkinson et al., 2018).

#### *2.5.7.1.5 Personal challenges*

Personal challenges relate to seeking a non-professional challenge, a desire to explore ‘the new’, ‘the unknown’, which requires effort and determination (Hippler, 2009; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004). The decision to expatriate based on the personal challenge of the IA is a typical example of behaviour motivated by an “inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn” (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 70), which is linked to the need for competence.

IAs are undoubtedly opportunities for those looking for personal challenges, as moving to a new country constantly puts people in uncommon situations. In previous studies on expatriates, the personal challenge was one of the reasons that 83% of German and 65% of French expatriates presented to accept an IA (Stahl & Cerdin, 2004). Moreover, 85.8% of a German sample of expatriates put it among the five most important factors in their decision (Bader, 2017). Finnish managers also highly evaluated the importance of the new challenges involved in IAs in their decisions to expatriate (Suutari, 2003). In a study with Portuguese expatriates, personal challenges were highly evaluated, evidenced by a quotation expressing the importance of “discovering what you are personally capable of doing” (Pinto et al., 2012, p. 2300) as a reason to engage in IAs.

This reason also seems related to individuals’ demographics. For instance, Bader (2017) found that the importance of personal challenge decreases with the increase in age: 62.1% of people with less than 30 years consider personal challenge in the first position, and just 43.6% of expatriates with more than 40 years set it in the first position.

Further, the importance of personal challenges can also be linked to the employees’ cultural backgrounds. For instance, people from high uncertainty-avoidance countries tend to learn to avoid the unknown, while people from low-uncertainty-avoidance countries tend to be open to the unfamiliar and curious about the different (Hofstede et al., 1991). In this regard, it is reasonable to expect that people from low-uncertainty-avoidance countries will have a higher desire to explore ‘the new’, and ‘the unknown’.

#### 2.5.7.1.6 *Opportunity to live abroad*

This variable regards the opportunity to live in another country, region, or city in particular (Dickmann et al., 2008). This reason explains individuals' expatriation in the face of the possibility the assignment brings of reaching the personally valuable goal of living abroad, thus configuring an autonomous reason to expatriate (Deci & Ryan, 2008b; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Thus, it enables employees to fulfil the need for autonomy in the sense that the reason reflects their own interests (Deci & Ryan, 1985a).

The desire to live abroad leads many expatriates to accept IAs. For instance, Portuguese expatriated to diverse countries were driven to accept an IA because they wanted an assignment abroad (Pinto et al., 2012). Earlier, the opportunity to live and work abroad was of high interest to Australian expatriates in East Asia (Fish, 1996). Further, two samples of Finnish expatriates considered their interest in living abroad as motivating to take IAs (Suutari, 2003; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). Moreover, expatriates primarily of Western origin to the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Spain consider the variable 'to see the world' as the fourth most important reason to expatriate (Doherty et al., 2011). Likewise, one of the major motives of Austrian expatriates across Europe is internationality and international mobility (Demel & Mayrhofer, 2010).

The importance attributed to the opportunity to live abroad may be linked to individuals' national cultural backgrounds. For instance, low-power-distance cultures encourage independent exploration more than high-power-distance cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010). Then, it is plausible to expect employees from low-power-distance countries to be more inclined to look forward to the opportunity to live abroad.

#### 2.5.7.1.7 *Discover another culture*

This motive entails accepting an IA to get to know and experience other cultures (Haines et al., 2008). It is attached to the individuals' interest and curiosity towards the host location culture (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). As such, it enables the fulfilment of the need for autonomy, which is founded on a nondefensive open consideration of possibilities; a willingness to experience the assignment abroad fully (Ryan & Deci, 2006).

Not many studies investigated the importance of this variable for the individuals' decision to expatriate, but there are some interesting findings. For example, discovering

another culture was the most influential reason explaining the willingness to accept an IA in a sample of employed business school alumni of a Canadian MBA (Haines et al., 2008). In an earlier study, the cross-cultural experience was one of the leading reasons American MBAs accepted IAs (Adler, 1986).

Dickmann (2012) investigated the motivations of expatriates from forty-five countries to take an assignment in London. London's reputation as a multicultural city was the tenth most important reason for their decisions. Valuing the multicultural aspect of the host location seems to be related to the wish to discover other cultures, as these cities enable expatriates to emerge in a diversity of cultures.

The importance of getting to know and experience other cultures seems to be related to individuals' cultural backgrounds. For instance, people from high-uncertainty-avoidance countries tend to learn to avoid the unknown and develop xenophobia against other people; on the other hand, people from low-uncertainty avoidance countries tend to be open to the unfamiliar and curious about the different (Hofstede et al., 1991). In this regard, people from weak-uncertainty-avoidance countries will give more importance to experiencing other cultures.

#### *2.5.7.1.8 Location attractiveness*

This variable refers to the attractiveness of the host country or location regarding the proximity to the sea, the local scenery or other features of interest, or even the travel opportunities it offers (Hippler, 2009). It concerns a decision to expatriate driven by the employees' interests and values, enabling them to fulfil the need for autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985a).

There are intriguing findings regarding the importance given to location attractiveness in individuals' decision to expatriate. This variable was of low importance in the decision of German expatriates to accept an IA (Hippler, 2009), and it appeared to be essential for a few Finnish managers (Suutari, 2003). On the other hand, many studies found that it is of substantial importance to a diverse sample of expatriates. For example, for those expatriates in London, the interest in the specific location was of high importance for their decision to engage in the IA, which is closely related to the fact that it is a global centre for business (Dickmann, 2012). Further, in a sample of German and French expatriates, 54% consider the geographic location of the assignment among the five most important reasons for accepting

an IA (Stahl & Cerdin, 2004). The host location was the third most important aspect when German expatriates accepted IAs (Bader, 2017). The geographic location of the job was also crucial for the decision of American managers (Miller & Cheng, 1978), and cultural attractions in the host location contributed to European's decision to work in London (Dickmann & Mills, 2009).

Interestingly, a publication on the satisfaction of migrants in various countries (InterNations, 2018) found that migrants in Spain and Switzerland highly value the opportunities to travel in the host countries. Moreover, an individual living in New Zealand evidenced the concern about location attractiveness when evaluating their expatriation: "I struggle a bit with a feeling of isolation. Travel to other countries, including my home country where my family lives, is quite expensive and would take a lot of time" (InterNations, 2018, p. 128).

Further, the importance of geographical location appears to be closely related to the age cohort: the importance rises with age increase (Bader, 2017). The same pattern was found for a sample of French, Portuguese, and Spanish in hypothetical scenarios in host developing countries: older individuals show more sensitivity to certain host countries' characteristics to which younger individuals are almost indifferent (Duarte et al., 2021).

### ***2.5.7.2 Controlled reasons to expatriate***

Controlled reasons to expatriate are those that thwart the fulfilment of the needs for autonomy and competence, primarily, and relatedness, in lesser importance. As such, the controlled reasons to expatriate are associated with external incentives or punishments, with the attainment of ego enhancements and the desire to appear worthy to self, and with a sense of pressure. They are addressed in the following sections.

#### ***2.5.7.2.1 Financial incentives***

Financial incentives include base salary, foreign inducement, and hardship premium, allowances, such as cost-of-living, housing, education, relocation, and spouse assistance, and benefits, such as health care, pension plan/social security, life insurance, child allowance, and profit sharing/stock options plans (Dowling et al., 2015). When individuals accept IA for the financial incentives, they engage in expatriation because of external incentives, thus

characterising a controlled reason (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008b). External rewards may be seen as “carrots” that companies use to induce behaviours (Amabile & Pratt, 2016), leading employees to feel controlled in the face of a thwart to their need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

The IHRM literature broadly considers that monetary incentives influence employees’ intentions and the decision to expatriate (Bonache, 2006; Dowling et al., 2013). Indeed, American expats with no previous IA and Australian expats highly estimate increased pay in their decision to accept an overseas position (Miller & Cheng, 1978; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). However, Stahl, Miller and Tung (2002) argue that financial packages have been overestimated and criticised that the findings are mainly based on American expatriates. The authors found that only 50% of a sample of expatriates from German companies consider monetary incentives among the five most important reasons. A study replication showed that thirteen years later, just 32% of the sample found monetary considerations among the five most important reasons to accept an IA (Bader, 2017). Dickmann et al. (2008) also found support for the lesser importance of financial incentives for expats compared to the organisational belief: while expatriates rated the personal financial impact as the eighth most important factor, corporate representatives rated it the fifth most important variable. Financial incentives were also of moderate importance for expatriates in London and Portuguese expatriates (Dickmann, 2012; Pinto et al., 2012). Brookfield (2016) mobility trends also indicated that only 15% of the refusals of IAs were related to perceived insufficient compensation.

By addressing the decreasing importance of monetary considerations, Bader (2017) considers that generous packages are normally given to expatriates, so they do not have to worry about it, influencing how much they value financial incentives in their decisions to expatriate. However, the importance attributed to this motive seems to be attached to diverse background characteristics, including age, seniority, previous international experience, satisfaction with the current situation, and host country evaluation (Duarte et al., 2021). Complementary, certain markets are less attractive as expatriate destinations (e.g., underdeveloped infrastructure and unsafety), and a more lucrative incentive package is generally offered to attract assignees to these locations (Briscoe, 2015; Martocchio, 2015). This sounds compelling from the perspective of the conservation of resource theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989), and indicates that employees use financial requests to balance the difficulties they forecast in these less attractive destinations.

#### 2.5.7.2.2 *Career opportunities*

It refers to the IA's expected influence on the employees' career opportunities within and outside the company (Hippler, 2009; Shortland, 2016). It regards a controlled reason that may lead employees to thwart the satisfaction of the need for autonomy since the temporary relocation is performed to satisfy an external demand or reward contingency (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

Stahl et al. (2002) point out that opportunities that might arise from an IA strongly influence employees' decision to accept the post. There is bulky evidence of its importance related to expatriates from and to diverse places. The impact on subsequent career advancement, either in the current organisation or elsewhere, was highly valued by American managers (Tung, 1998). Career motivation was considered the second most important reason for the transfer of German expatriates (Hippler, 2009). Women expatriates from diverse nationalities have considered career opportunities as the main reason to accept IAs in diverse world regions (Shortland, 2016). Further, the impact on career and the potential role(s) available after work were higher ranked by expatriates in London (Dickmann, 2012).

Moreover, 61% of German expatriates and 42% of French expatriates consider "future opportunities for advancement" as an important reason for accepting an IA (Stahl & Cerdin, 2004). This seems to have at least some resonance in the repatriation as was found that 50% of a Finnish sample of AEs were promoted once or twice up to 8 years after the assignment (Suutari et al., 2018). Interestingly, the expectation of promotion upon return was an outstanding reason for expatriates to accept assignments in hostile environments (Dickmann & Watson, 2017). Complementary, the uncertainty that the career gain is worth the life disruption was considered an important reason for assignment refusal (Brookfield, 2016).

While reinforcing career mobility as a motivator for undertaking IAs, Clarke et al. (2017) express that it remains unclear whether this is equally true when movements are between developed and developing countries. Kim and Froese (2012) suggest that career opportunities in the company during and after assignment may increase employees' willingness to expatriate from developed to developing countries. From the perspective of the conservation of resource theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989), this suggestion is plausible and denotes that employees use career opportunity requirements to balance the difficulties they forecast in less developed countries.

#### 2.5.7.2.3 *Standard of living*

The standard of living is the quality and quantity of goods and services available for consumption to a certain socio-economic class in a given location (Williams & Zimmerman, 1935). Expatriating because it affords a certain standard of living refers to a controlled reason since employees are temporarily relocating to satisfy an external demand or reward contingency, which may thwart their need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

A few studies have investigated how much expatriates value the host countries' standard of living when deciding to expatriate. It received moderate importance for expatriates predominantly from Western origin to the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, and Spain (Doherty et al., 2011), and it was among the least important reasons for expatriates in London (Dickmann, 2012).

Noteworthy, the standard of living is closely related to the locations' level of development in a way that developed countries present a higher index than emerging countries (Harvey et al., 2000; Kim & Froese, 2012; Lowe et al., 1999; United Nations, 2020a). Related to this, there is an increasing flow of expatriates from emerging and developing countries to richer countries (López-Duarte et al., 2020), and the level of economic development plays a role for talent migrants (Latukha et al., 2021), expatriates (Carr et al., 2005), and intellectual immigrants (Oliinyk et al., 2022). Thus, it is plausible to expect that employees' decisions to accept IAs in more developed countries will also be motivated by the fact that these destinations allow them a higher standard of living.

#### 2.5.7.2.4 *The prestige of working in the host location or subsidiary*

This reason regards the respect and admiration given to an expatriate due to the host location or the subsidiary where the assignment takes place (Doherty et al., 2011; Shortland, 2016). This reason is clearly aligned with the need for relatedness in the sense that people may seek to maintain relatedness through approval from others. However, it may thwart the need for autonomy: to maintain relatedness through approval from others, individuals may accept the IA irrespective of their own interests and values.

In terms of the studies focused on the reasons influencing individuals to engage in IAs, a specific study found that the status of the host country is an essential factor for both SIEs and AEs, but it was significantly more influential for SIEs (Doherty et al., 2011).

Further, the prestige of working in London was of moderate importance for expatriates' decision to work in the city (Dickmann, 2012).

This reason is well investigated in a study exploring why women undertake IAs (Shortland, 2016). Remarkably, the interviews support that asset profile and size are closely related to career enhancement. However, family configuration plays a vital role in the importance of this reason, and mothers appear to be more willing to abdicate the prestige that core assets afford them if it means relocating to remote or insecure locations (Shortland, 2016).

#### 2.5.7.2.5 *Self-affirmation*

Self-affirmation regards doing something which allows one to affirm oneself or prove something to oneself (Hippler, 2009). Individuals expatriating for self-affirmation reasons present a controlled motivation once the temporary relocation is performed to attain ego enhancements (Ryan & Deci, 2000a) and the desire to appear worthy to self (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). As such, it is aligned with the need for relatedness while it may thwart the need for autonomy.

Remarkably, the studies investigating the reasons leading individuals to relocate did not fully address self-affirmation motivation. Hippler (2009) addressed the reason for "seeking a private challenge or self-affirmation", which puts together aspects of both autonomous (seeking a private challenge) and controlled motivation (self-affirmation). This aspect was of moderate importance for the sample of German expatriates.

A nation-level aspect may influence the importance given to self-affirmation when deciding upon an international assignment, which is the national inferiority complex. It is a common aspect of ex-colonised nations (Lemos & Dantas, 2010), which potentially derives from the discourse that construed ex-colonies as inferiors (Prasad, 2003). It denotes a basic feeling of inadequacy and insecurity, a strong sense of being less than others. In this regard, employees from colonised countries may have a stronger self-affirmation motivation to expatriate compared to employees from ex-colonial powers.

#### 2.5.7.2.6 *Stimuli from family*

It denotes family stimuli to take the assignment (Hippler, 2009; Valk et al., 2014) from spouses, parents, grandparents, and extended family. This reason regards the experience or perception that one is doing the behaviour because of an external contingency, which entails that the behaviour is controlled (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Ultimately, if there is no stimulus from family, the employee has no longer a reason to expatriate. In turn, this reason is aligned with the need for relatedness, and it may thwart the need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2017): to maintain relatedness through a high concern for others' interests, individuals may accept the IA irrespective of their own interests and values.

Stimuli from family are an important reason for individuals' decision to expatriate. Prior, American expatriates gave high importance to the encouragement from wives and family to accept an IA (Miller & Cheng, 1978), and the family or partner played an essential role in motivating French managers to accept IAs (Stahl & Cerdin, 2004).

It is worth highlighting that the importance of this reason seems to be highly attached to the national culture (Kim & Froese, 2012). For example, in collectivist cultures (detailed in section 2.6.2), family and extended family have a central role in individuals' life, a trait that differs in individualist cultures (Hofstede et al., 1991). Thus, the importance of the stimuli from family may vary among employees from collectivist and individualist cultures.

#### 2.5.7.2.7 *Stimuli from colleagues and superiors*

It denotes stimuli from people professionally related to the employee, such as colleagues and superiors (Miller & Cheng, 1978; Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004). This reason regards the experience or perception that one is doing the behaviour because of an external contingency, which entails that the behaviour is controlled (Ryan & Deci, 2017). As it happens in controlled motivated behaviours, if there is no stimulus from colleagues or superiors, the employee has no reason to expatriate. In turn, this reason is aligned with the need for relatedness, and it may thwart the need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2017): to maintain relatedness through a high concern for others' interests, employees may accept the IA irrespective of their own interests and values.

This reason was not addressed in various studies on expatriation. However, research that has searched its importance for individuals' decision to expatriate has found that it is of

minor importance for German expatriates (Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004) and French expatriates (Stahl & Cerdin, 2004). Earlier, stimuli from colleagues and superiors accounted for only 9% of the explained variance in the acceptance of IA for American managers who were on their first IA (Miller & Cheng, 1978).

Resembling the association between stimuli from family and collectivist vs individualist societies, stimuli from colleagues and superiors also seems to be attached to the same cultural trait. In collectivist societies, employees are members of in-groups who will pursue the group's interests, while there is also a moral relationship between employer-employee (Hofstede et al., 1991). These aspects can potentially make the stimuli from colleagues and superiors more relevant for employees from collectivist countries than individualist ones.

#### 2.5.7.2.8 *Compelled to accept*

Dealing with organisational expatriates, Pinto et al. (2012) claimed that the pressure to accept an assignment might be more important than it seemed in previous studies.

In the context of expatriation, although Shaffer et al. (2012) expressed that organisations hesitate to force candidates to accept IAs, this reason explicitly appears in the expatriates acknowledge that “they could not say no” because of losing career prospects, either within the HQ or for future IAs (Pinto et al., 2012, p. 2301). A further example is in the quotation: “... They wanted me to go to Angola. And at that moment it was clear to me that either I accepted it and solved that problem, or I turned it down and then became part of the problem myself” (Pinto et al., 2012, p. 2301). Similarly, earlier, German expatriates also expressed that they were aware of negative consequences regarding their career opportunities if they refused the assignment (Stahl et al., 2002).

A crucial aspect regarding this reason to expatriate concerns the fact that, although the rates of IAs' refusal should be lower when employees feel coerced, the lack of free choice may result in poor person-job fit, lower levels of satisfaction and commitment, and lower levels of adjustment and performance (e.g., Bolino et al., 2017; Feldman & Thomas, 1992; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). These results are per the SDT: the lack of free choice prevents the satisfaction of the need for autonomy, turning the behaviour controlled by external pressure, which leads to maladaptive outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

After addressing the theories used to explain individuals' intention to expatriate, next section provides information on the attributes associated with developed and emerging markets companies and their people.

## **2.6 Developed and emerging countries**

This investigation aims to identify how employees from Western developed countries and Latin emerging countries form their intention to expatriate. Thus, this section addresses the characteristics of developed and emerging countries, with particular attention to how these attributes affect their people.

### *2.6.1 Definition*

It is crucial to highlight that the terms 'emerging' and 'developed' countries do not have a commonly accepted definition. Many organisations classify them and use different nomenclatures and criteria (e.g., CIA, 2018; IMF, 2016; United Nations, 2018; World Bank, 2022b), which reflects in the literature. For instance, several studies in the fields of Economics, International Business, and IHRM use 'developing countries' for dealing with both developing and emerging countries or consider both terms interchangeably (e.g., Briscoe, 2014; Cuervo-Cazurra & Genc, 2011; Khanna & Palepu, 1997; La Porta & Shleifer, 2014; Punnett, 2018).

Amidst these nomenclatures, it is essential to define developed and emerging countries to clarify the profile of the countries in this research. Thus, for this study, developed countries refer to those with high income, high human development index, and high industrialisation. Emerging countries, instead, are "low-income, rapid-growth countries using economic liberalization as their primary engine of growth" (Hoskinsson et al., 2000, p. 249), the ones that "opened their doors to the foreign investors" (Budhwar & Debrah, 2001, p. 3). Although the term emerging markets was originally coined in 1981 by Antoine van Agtmael, an economist working at the World Bank (The Economist, 2017), it was only in the 2000s that papers referring to 'emerging market', 'emerging economies', and 'transition economies' began to appear regularly in academic journals (Cavusgil, 2021).

Beyond the different definitions, emerging countries from Latin America and Western developed countries differ in a range of aspects. Notably, developed and emerging countries

differ significantly regarding cultural and socio-economic conditions, which seems to play a core role to explain individuals' intention to expatriate. Thus, the following sections address developed and emerging countries' cultural and socio-economic characteristics, emphasising their impact on their people and companies.

### 2.6.2 *Cultural framework*

Culture is a collective phenomenon that is durable and relatively stable, with incremental changes occurring slowly (McGrath et al., 1992). Culture manifests itself in the patterns of feeling, thinking, and acting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols within social environments (Hofstede, 1991, 2001). Thus, people sharing the same cultural background, also tend to present similar patterns of feeling, thinking, and acting.

There are different criteria to understand and classify a national culture, such as those provided by Shalom Schwartz (Schwartz, 1992, 1994; Schwartz et al., 2006) and the project GLOBE (House et al., 2004). This thesis relies on the dimensions proposed by Hofstede (1980/2001) to define national cultures. The recognition of Hofstede's framework is evidenced by the fact that Hofstede (1980/2001) seminal contribution is among the 25 most cited books in social sciences (Green, 2016). Moreover, there is broad evidence of the validity and reliability of the country scores proposed by Hofstede (1980) (e.g., Morosini et al., 1998; Shane, 1992). Furthermore, in addressing critiques that Hofstede's work received, Drogendijk and Slangen (2006, p. 362) have compared Schwartz and Hofstede's proposals and concluded that "it may be premature to dismiss Hofstede's (1980) work as outdated or as inaccurately reflecting national cultures, and to consider Schwartz (1994, 1999) more recent framework to be superior".

Hofstede was inspired by the findings of Kluckhohn (1951), who noted that cultures shape and influence individuals and provide distinct answers to the same questions. Firstly, Hofstede collected responses from more than 116,000 IBM employees in 40 nations, which gave rise to four cultural dimensions: power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. Later on, in the 1980s, Hofstede, in partnership with Bond, administered research to a Chinese sample and added a fifth dimension to Hofstede's framework: long-term orientation (Hofstede, 2001). Finally, as a result of research conducted by Michael Minkov, a sixth dimension was added to the cultural categories in 2010:

indulgence vs restraint (Hofstede et al., 2010). Figure 6 addresses the definitions of each of the six dimensions.

Figure 6: Hofstede’s national culture dimensions

<b>Dimensions of national culture</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Power distance	The extent to which inequality is expected and accepted, including the relationship with authority.
Individualism vs collectivism	The degree to which individuals are integrated into groups.
Masculinity vs femininity	Achievement-oriented vs care-oriented societies.
Uncertainty avoidance	The degree of comfort with ambiguous and unpredictable situations and the extent to which efforts are made to avoid or minimise these situations.
Long-term orientation	Attitudes towards time and traditions.
Indulgence vs restraint	The extent to which individuals try to control their desires and impulses.

Source: Adapted from Hofstede et al. (2010)

From the six dimensions proposed by Hofstede, the literature emphasises power distance and individualism as especially important to address cultural differences between developed and emerging countries: emerging countries present larger power distances than developed countries and are more collectivists. These aspects are now taken into detail.

Power distance portrays how a society handles inequalities among people as it regards the extent to which less-power members within a country accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1991, 2001). Societies with large power distance legitimise inequalities among people, and unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources. In contrast, in societies characterised by small power distance, people seek to equalise the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power. Remarkably, countries with large power distance represent mostly poorer countries with a small middle class, while countries with small power distance are mostly wealthier countries with large middle classes, in which people share the reasoning that all should have equal rights (Hofstede, 1991).

The link between high pay dispersion and the cultural acceptance of hierarchical authority patterns was confirmed in an investigation of CEOs and workers’ compensation across nations (Greckhamer, 2016). Although there is a growth in income differential worldwide, there remain remarkable differences between emerging and developed countries: advanced economies present smaller income inequality than emerging and developing countries (Derviş & Qureshi, 2016). In fact, although many emerging markets recently succeeded in enlarging the medium class, which is the case of Brazil and many South

American countries, there remains a high level of inequality (OECD, 2015). The Covid pandemic led to job losses and substantial increases in poverty and inequality and emerging countries, including Brazil and Mexico, are already among the countries with the highest levels of income inequality in the world (United Nations, 2020b). In turn, the high inequality of income distribution in Latin America translates into a large mass of customers at the bottom of the pyramid (Vassolo et al., 2011). Power distance reveals, for example, through the gap in salaries: while a manager in Brazil gains on average 75 times more than an employee and can reach more than 100 times (Alvarenga, 2020), in Germany, the figure is only on average, four times more (calculated from Gehalt, 2020). Pay disparity is also evident from the international mobility perspective, with expatriates in Latin America generally paid between two and five times more than their local colleagues (Bonache, 2006).

Additionally, power distance influences the centralisation of power. Societies with small power distances tend to have decentralisation of power within firms, while centralisation is prevalent in societies with large power distances (Hofstede et al., 1991, 1991). This characteristic is supported by a study with 6,400 subordinates from 10 countries, including the US and European countries, Brazil, and Asian countries (Adsit et al., 1997). The authors found that in small power distance cultures, where there is limited dependence of subordinates on their supervisors, there was a preference for participative behaviour, whereas, in large power distance cultures, where subordinates are generally dependent on their supervisors, autocratic behaviours were more prevalent. Other studies corroborate this finding. Typically, Latin American firms tend to have centralised decision-making and relatively inflexible structures (Nicholls-Nixon et al., 2011). In Brazilian firms, for instance, power concentration is a key aspect of the management system (Elvira & Davila, 2005), whereas sometimes masqueraded in more inclusive behaviours (Tanure, 2005).

Power distance also impacts subordinate-superior relationship: it tends to be pragmatic in small power distance cultures, while in large power distance societies, they tend to be emotional (Hofstede, 1991). An emotional relationship between subordinate and superior is an outstanding trait in Latin America, where superiors and subordinates usually develop strong ties as they share the value of power distance, which is based on solidarity and reciprocity (Davila & Elvira, 2015). The establishment of a close relationship between subordinates and superiors is based on frequent contact, listening, empathy, and comprehension of family and personal matters (Martínez, 2005). Tanure (2005) points out that bonds among people are strong, shaping the structure of relations in different social

groups in Brazil. Indeed, foreigners were found to acknowledge Brazil for the friendliness of relations, hospitality, and the inclusion of personal and emotional dimensions in professional relations (Tanure, 2005; von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014). Remarkably, the emotional relationship between subordinates and superiors prevents subordinates from confronting their superiors regarding their ideas or actions (Lindsley, 1999).

Another aspect of the relationship between subordinates and superiors that characterise the power distance in Latin American firms is paternalism, which entails a beneficent or protective intent and the infringement on the personal freedom and autonomy of a person or group of persons (Thompson, 2007). The existent paternalism in Latin America (Azevedo et al., 2016; Martínez, 2005), thus, is well-aligned with the cultural trait of power distance, where the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat (Hofstede et al., 1991). Unlike MNCs with developed HRM, where salary and job stability are mostly related to performance, paternalism in Latin America reflects on personal relationships, hiring, compensation, promotion and recognition (Greer & Stephens, 1996; Martínez, 2005).

The way people acknowledge remuneration and benefits is also found to be associated with societies' power distance. Large-power-distance societies conceive that powerful people should have privileges and that privileges and status symbols are normal and popular (Hofstede, 1991). These aspects are in line with findings from Latin American organisations. For instance, hierarchical structures are mechanisms of social differentiation in Mexico, where executives value fringe benefits over salaries because they symbolise social status (Flynn, 1994). Thus, the use of status symbols as management rewards, such as expensive cars or large offices, is consistent with Latin America's large power distance culture (Bonache et al., 2012; Flynn, 1994; Gomez-Mejia et al., 1995). However, the use of status symbols is frowned upon in small-power-distant societies (Hofstede et al., 1991), where most developed countries employ high-performance human resources systems (Davila & Elvira, 2005).

The second cultural aspect significantly differing across developed and emerging countries is the degree of individualism. This cultural dimension represents the "desirable strength of the relationship of an adult person with the group(s) with which he or she identifies" (Hofstede et al., 1991, p. 102). The importance of the strength of the relationships within a society is such that Greenfield (2000) sees individualism-collectivism as the 'deep structure' of cultural differences, from which all other differences evolved. An individualist society prefers a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals take care of themselves

and their immediate families. In contrast, a collectivist society shows a preference for a “tightly knotted social framework” in which individuals expect their in-group people to look after them in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede, 1983, p. 296). Crucially, Latin Americans tend to be more collectivist compared to people from developed countries (Punnett, 2012). The importance of relationships is such in emerging markets that the ability to build and maintain productive relationships is considered essential for success (Corner et al., 2021).

Another aspect that enables the comparison of individualist and collectivist societies is the treatment of in-group and out-group people: while individualist societies apply universalism, collectivist societies are exclusionists, which means to have different value standards for in-groups and out-groups (Hofstede et al., 1991). From this perspective, people in market economies generally do not cultivate close and distant personal relationships, which differs them from the kinship society (mutual obligation) in Latin America (Davila & Elvira, 2015). The difference entails that in Latin America, relationships are primarily driven by the principle of kinship as opposed to market principles in developed countries (Jones, 2005). This aspect was observed by an SIE in Brazil, to whom it took a while to notice the importance of personal networks to have things done in a context where different rules apply to different people (von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014).

It is worth mentioning that there is an intricate relationship between the cultural dimensions. For instance, the individualist dimension is closely related to the degree of power distance, and large power distance societies are likely to be more collectivist, while small power distance societies are more likely to be individualists. Thus, cultures in which people are dependent on in-group are usually also dependent on power figures (Hofstede et al., 1991). It reflects on hiring, rewarding, and promoting: while collectivists and large power-distance societies take in-groups into account, individualists and small power-distance societies base it on skills and rules (Hofstede et al., 1991). These aspects become evident while analysing that knowing other employees is the most common way of getting hired in Latin American firms (Flynn, 1994). Further, seniority-based promotions and rewards are recognised as being well adapted to collectivist and uncertainty avoidance national cultures (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2020), while performance-based rewards and career policies characterise high-performance work systems (Brewster, 2007).

Taking the cultural dimensions of power distance and individualism into account, this section addressed how cultural background enacts individuals’ attitudes and behaviours, and

how it reflects on organisations. Next, developed and emerging countries are put side by side concerning socio-economic conditions.

### 2.6.3 *Socio-economic conditions*

Another essential aspect that differs between developed and emerging countries relates to their economic and social development. While emerging countries usually have limited infrastructure and social services, education, health, and other services are non-existent in some locations and adequate in the better-off locations (La Porta & Shleifer, 2008; Punnett, 2012), the richness of developed countries supports that they invest more in education, health care, and other factors that increase people's quality of life (Briscoe, 2014; Clarke et al., 2017; Punnett, 2012, 2018).

These countries' socio-economic aspects are properly integrated by the Human Development Index (HDI), the best-known measurement of development, developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP defines human development as a process of enlarging peoples' choices in terms of individuals' capabilities to a) lead a long and healthy life, b) be knowledgeable, and c) enjoy a decent standard of living (UNDP, 1990). There is one indicator for each dimension: the population's life expectancy, the population's educational level, and gross national income (GNI) per capita (United Nations, 2020a). The HDI reflects the development of human potential within countries, meaning the resources a given society provides that allow citizens to grow, develop, and make achievements. In this regard, human development has two sides: a) the formation of human capabilities such as improved health, knowledge, and skills, and b) the use people make of their acquired capabilities for work, leisure, or political and cultural activities (UNDP, 1990). Next, the differences between developed and emerging countries are underlined from the analysis of these aspects.

The long and healthy life dimension is assessed by life expectancy at birth (United Nations, 2020a). It is defined as how long, on average, a newborn can expect to live. The life expectancy at birth is an important aspect of the country's level of development, especially because it is related to several contextual features: gains in life expectancy at birth can be attributed to the rise in living standards, the improvement of lifestyle and quality of education, and the greater access to quality health services (OECD, 2018). Not surprisingly, developed countries present higher indexes referring to the health dimension than emerging

countries from Latin America. For instance, while Germany and the Netherlands present indexes of 0.944 and 0.958, respectively, Brazil and Mexico present indexes of 0.860 and 0,847, respectively (United Nations, 2020a).

The second dimension, knowledge, is measured by the mean years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and more and expected years of schooling for children of school-entering age (United Nations, 2020a). There is a close relationship between education and economic development: providing every child with education and the skills needed to participate fully in society can boost gross domestic product (GDP) by an average of 28% per year in lower-income countries and 16% per year in high-income countries for the next 80 years (OECD, 2015a). In general, more education leads to improved economic performance and quality of life.

Moreover, the countries' social development is closely related to the quality of human capital, whereas developed countries present a higher level than emerging ones (Cuervo-Cazurra & Genc, 2011). It influences the overall labour market situation. For example, a recent report identified that an average Brazilian born in 2019 would achieve only sixty per cent of their potential human capital by age 18, meaning that forty per cent of all talent in Brazil is undeveloped (World Bank, 2022a). This aspect can be noticed from the point of view of MNCs and organisations in emerging markets that generally face extra challenges in recruiting managers and other skilled workers because the quality of talent is hard to ascertain (Khanna et al., 2005; La Porta & Shleifer, 2014) given the lack of managerial competence and professional expertise (Luo & Tung, 2018). Concomitantly, in a market with low demand for skilled labour, companies established in Latin America (mostly family-owned business groups and foreign multinationals from developed countries) do not invest much in education and training (Schneider, 2013). On the other hand, developed countries base their economic success on knowledge and innovation, which requires highly qualified employees. Thus, market-based in-house training (typical in the USA) and training offered by associations and trade unions (typical in Germany) are common practices in developed countries (Hall & Soskice, 2001). The presence of foreign MNCs in emerging markets (Schneider, 2013) also reflects another difference between developed and emerging countries' economic scenarios: developed countries' MNCs were already in advanced stages of internationalisation when emerging AEs started their internationalisation efforts (Cuervo-Cazurra & Genc, 2008; Gammeltoft et al., 2010; Luo & Tung, 2018). Concomitantly, internationalisation is a matter of learning (Selmer et al., 2002) and Western managers are important sources for emerging

MNCs to acquire knowledge and capabilities needed to enhance their global competitiveness (Thite et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2014).

The third socio-economic dimension, the standard of living, is a measure of the material aspects of an economy. It is assessed through gross national income (GNI) per capita (United Nations, 2020a), meaning residents' purchasing power of income. A higher GNI per capita, in its turn, reflects in a better mobilisation to generate necessary stocks of human and physical capital for healthcare infrastructure (Farlow, 2016). GNI per capita also has proved to be closely correlated with other nonmonetary measures of quality of life, such as life expectancy at birth, mortality rates of children, and enrolment rates in school (The World Bank, 2019). Since the standard of living refers to people's purchase power, it is easy to intuit that an economic crisis or lack of work opportunities will lower the level of economic prosperity in a country. Thus, it is worth noticing the diverse impact of the Covid pandemic on the employment levels across countries with diverse levels of development. The Covid pandemic heavily hit the labour market in Latin America: unemployment rates are skyrocketing while underemployment and informality also rise sharply, leading to further polarization of skills and income (United Nations, 2020b). On the other hand, countries with higher HDI are farther along in their transition to market economies and can offer more in terms of careers and opportunities for further economic growth (Andresen et al., 2020). The career opportunities and unemployment levels complement the GNI data and give information to understand the use people make of their acquired capabilities (for work) (UNDP, 1990). Overall, there is a cascade effect between the formation and the use of human capabilities: besides the low potential human capital, 35.6 per cent of Brazil's talent is lost due to underutilization in the labour market, and low employment rates leave a deep mark (World Bank, 2022a).

Appreciating the intersection between the socio-economic dimensions, the countries' educational level was also shown to reduce income inequality (Gregorio & Lee, 2002). In turn, inequality also reduces incentives for companies to invest in education and training because the gap between employees' actual and desired skills is so great (Schneider, 2009). In fact, the apparently different phenomena of health, education, and income are systematically linked through their common focus on broadening human choice. In other words, the higher the opportunities for people to develop and use their potential, the higher their capability to choose the lives they want (UNDP, 1990). Having it in mind, in evaluating the HDI, the superiority of developed countries in terms of individuals' choices is evident as

they present a higher HDI index compared to emerging countries. As a means of contrast, in 2018, Germany and the Netherlands presented overall HDI indexes of 0.947 and 0.944, while Mexico and Brazil presented indexes of 0.765 and 0.779 (United Nations, 2020a).

#### *2.6.4 The intricate relationship between national context and individuals' motivations and socio-cognitions*

Individuals' motivations and socio-cognitions are in many ways constrained by contextual characteristics. For instance, the countries' cultural and socio-economic conditions described before can impact what motivates individuals and the extent that they tend to follow social norms. These intricate relationships are now discussed.

It has long been recognised that culture influences people's decision-making processes (Hofstede, 1980). Importantly, social context, including cultural values, affects people's needs satisfaction and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2012). For example, collectivism implies that individuals' fulfilment comes from carrying out externally defined obligations (Welzel & Inglehart, 2005), emphasising conformity, obedience, and reliability (Hofstede, 1983). In this regard, people from collectivist societies focus on meeting others' expectations (Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), stressing controlled reasons for acting. In contrast, in individualistic cultures, people are more likely to refer to themselves as independent, self-contained, and more differentiated from others (Hofstede, 1983), so their internal wishes and personal attributes tend to be more pronounced to regulate their behaviours (Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), accentuating the autonomous reasons for acting. In the realm of expatriation, there is sparse evidence that individuals from developed countries are driven to IAs by more intrinsic motivation (Fish, 1996; Hippler, 2009).

Moreover, "individual cognitions do not develop in a vacuum, but arise as a result of experiences throughout life in various settings and through interaction with other people" (Budhwar, 2000, p. 730). An important background in developing people's cognitions refers to culture. Culture shapes humans' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the self and the social environment, besides determining acceptable or attractive behaviours (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Schwartz et al., 2006). Further, Triandis (1989) evidences that culture influences people's attitudes, norms, beliefs, and intentions. Interestingly, Henrich et al. (2010) coined the term 'WEIRD' after recognising that individuals from such cultures are

likely to present a specific combination of psychological characteristics in a way that they present particular ways of thinking that are more individualistic, analytic, and impersonal. Studies support the way culture influences people's cognition: people from collectivistic cultures are more attentive to social norms (i.e., subjective norms), while people from individualistic cultures put more emphasis on personal evaluations (i.e., attitudes and PBC) (Shukri et al., 2016). This pattern was found in the case of entrepreneurship intention, demonstrating that in collectivistic cultures, the consideration of the expectation of important others (the subjective norm) had a stronger influence on intention formation than in individualistic cultures (Begley & Tan, 2001). This intricate relationship between culture and peoples' thoughts and behaviours is inherent and, sometimes, imperceptible. Shortly, "(w)hen a person is socialized in a given culture, the person can use custom as a substitute for thought, and save time" (Triandis, 1989, p. 512). In the context of expatriation, cultural norms appear to affect how international experiences are valued (attitude) in different countries (Mello et al., 2022), and the culture of origin is said to influence a person's international mobility readiness (Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015). In this regard, cultural values may influence whether an individual is willing to leave parents, family, and friends behind to accept an IA (Richter et al., 2020). These aspects led previous researchers to compare or call for research into the formation of individuals' intention to expatriate for individuals from different cultural clusters (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2019; Richter et al., 2020).

Recently, in a closely related subject, Reiche et al. (2019) stressed the importance of addressing broader factors to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of global work, such as the actors' socio-economic background.

Remarkably, socio-economic background influences individuals' motivations. It is understood that diminishing material, cognitive (low levels of education and information), and social (absence of welfare state) constraints on human choice are conducive to a shift from survival to self-expression, with extrinsic motivations giving way to intrinsic motivations (Welzel & Inglehart, 2005). Thus, higher levels of national socio-economic development are prone to lead individuals to be more autonomously motivated compared to countries with lower levels of development. However, there is little knowledge in the organisational expatriation literature about how socio-economic conditions influence employees' motivations. In a different setting, Oberholster et al. (2013) found that religious and humanitarian workers from developed and emerging countries present different motivations for expatriating, pointing to the influence of expatriates' countries of nationality.

Further, socio-economic background impacts employees' socio-cognitions. Recent research has argued that the material, informational, and social conditions in which people grow up and live have a lasting impact on how they think, feel, and behave (Manstead, 2018). The recent literature on the psychology of social class brings valuable contributions to understanding the way socio-economic background affects individuals' psychological variables, especially individuals' socio-cognitive variables. The core link between the two topics concerns the fact that material resources are key to defining social classes (Kraus et al., 2009) and a country's development level (United Nations, 2020a). People growing up in environments with more material, informational, and psychological resources available to them have stronger beliefs about the extent to which they can shape their own social outcome; on the other hand, those growing up in environments in which they have fewer resources available have weaker beliefs about their ability to control their outcomes (Kraus et al., 2012). This pattern was found in a study on vocational aspirations (Ali et al., 2005): individuals with a background of lower socio-economic conditions had less career-related self-efficacy regarding vocational aspirations. Further, the sense of safety and stability at the societal level (more characteristic of more developed countries) reduces one's need to depend on a group and induces the ability to be less concerned about pleasing others (Taras et al., 2016), so impacting an individual's subjective norms. These cases demonstrate the socio-economic influence on socio-cognitive variables, precisely on the perceived behaviour control and the subjective norms.

Interestingly, a country's cultural and socio-economic aspects are intertwined in many ways, revealing that societal context variables influencing employees' intention to expatriate do not act independently. For instance, national socio-economic conditions correlate with the cultural dimensions, and there is a negative correlation between education level (socio-economic aspect) and power distance as well as uncertainty avoidance: more education leads to lower power distance and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001). Further, power distance and individualism (cultural dimensions) were found to be interrelated and both associated with socio-economic development: the level of individualism is negatively associated with the level of power distance, whereas high individualist and low power distance societies present higher socio-economic development levels (Basabe et al., 2002). The reasoning explaining the relationship between socio-economic conditions and power distance is as follows: economic development initially leads to increased inequality due to urbanisation and increased savings among the upper class; over time, government policy, entrepreneurial

activities, and technological change drive economic development and a decline in power distance (Tang & Koveos, 2008). In turn, the idea explaining the relationship between individualism and socio-economic conditions is that when a country's wealth increases (socio-economic aspect), people have access to resources that allow them to have more privacy and individual choices, reinforcing individualism (cultural aspects) (Basabe et al., 2002; Steel & Taras, 2010). In other words, as external constraints (material, education, and information) on human choice diminish (with the increase in socio-economic development), people put more emphasis on self-expression interests or individualism (Welzel & Inglehart, 2005). In this regard, Hofstede et al. (2010) go as far as to posit that national wealth causes individualism.

## **2.7 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter first addressed the different types of international mobile workers. Among them, assigned expatriates (AEs) are the ones of interest in this study, defined as individuals undertaking an international career experience controlled and directed by an organisation (Harrison et al., 2004). Next, the outcomes of employees' intention to expatriate and previous studies on the intention to expatriate were addressed, evidencing the topics' importance and substantiating this study on the same topic.

Two theories are adopted to investigate AEs' intention to expatriate, which were discussed next. The sections addressing the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) evidenced the theoretical aspects of the theory, the theory components, as well as empirical studies that help to understand how different may be the way the variables are related to each other, given distinct fields of research and study contexts. Although this content is necessary to understand the rationality of the theory and its applicability, this dissertation focuses on specific variables from the TPB to understand and predict individuals' intention to expatriate. Specifically, following the tenets of the theory, this study explores the intention (intention to expatriate) and its three socio-cognitive antecedents: attitude (attitude towards expatriating), subjective norm (subjective norm towards expatriating), and perceived behaviour control (perceived behaviour control towards expatriating).

When the TPB is translated into the current research on expatriation intention, it posits that employees' behaviour (i.e., employees' acceptance of IAs) can be predicted by expatriation intention. In turn, expatriation intention is expected to be a function of attitude

(i.e., employees' favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the IA and its consequences), subjective norms (i.e., employees' belief that important others expect them to expatriate (or not) and that peers are also engaging IAs), and PBC (i.e., employees' perception that they are capable of expatriating and that they have control over expatriating).

Then, the sections addressing the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985a) brought the theoretical aspects of the theory, the theory components, and empirical studies that evidence its applicability in different research fields. In this investigation, SDT is applied to investigate "why" employees engage IAs, for which the concepts of autonomous and controlled motivations are helpful and, in turn, combine several notions of the theory. First, the more self-determined the regulation is (more autonomous), the more the psychological needs are fulfilled (basic psychological needs theory - BPNT). Further, autonomous motivation has an internal perceived locus of causality (I-PLOC) and is associated with high motivational quality, whereas controlled motivation has an external perceived locus of causality (E-PLOC) and is associated with low motivational quality (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Remarkably, motivations were previously divided into intrinsic (cognitive evaluation theory - CET) and extrinsic (organismic integration theory – OIT) orientations. However, the quality of certain types of extrinsic motivation (e.g., integrated regulation) is as high as that of intrinsic motivation. Thus, as the quality of motivation is of importance in predicting behavioural intentions, the distinction between autonomous and controlled motivation is a more fruitful way for investigating the reasons ("why") explaining employees' expatriation behaviour.

SDT explains that an individual presents diverse reasons to engage in behaviours. In the expatriation literature, a range of reasons is identified to influence individuals' intention to expatriate. These reasons are the basis for assessing employees' autonomous and controlled reasons for expatriating, which is summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2:** The reasons to expatriate and their supporting literature

Autonomous reasons				
N.	Topic	Definition	Involved basic psychological needs	Supporting literature
1	Professional development	“Acquisition of or improvement on knowledge, skills, abilities and insights (i.e., social and technical competence)” (Hippler, 2009, p. 1394).	It reflects the need for competence, which leads people to attempt to maintain and enhance skills, abilities, and capacities (Ryan & Deci, 2002).	(Bader, 2017; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Dickmann & Watson, 2017; Doherty et al., 2011; Hippler, 2009; Latukha et al., 2021; Miller & Cheng, 1978; Pinto et al., 2012; Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004; Suutari, 2003; Suutari & Brewster, 2000)
2	Job features	It refers to features of the job offer, such as the related task, area of responsibility or expertise, challenge of the role, and autonomy (Dickmann et al., 2008; Hippler, 2009).	It reflects the need for competence, which leads people to seek optimal challenges (Ryan & Deci, 2002), and the need for autonomy, which leads people to seek freedom to make decisions in the workplace (Forner et al., 2020).	(Adler, 1986; Bader, 2017; Bonache, 2005; De Eccher & Duarte, 2018; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Dickmann & Watson, 2017; Haines et al., 2008; Hippler, 2009; Latukha et al., 2021; Miller & Cheng, 1978; Pinto et al., 2012; Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004)
3	Personal development	“To broaden one’s horizon through new experiences (...) and to develop and extend one’s knowledge, skills and insights” (Hippler, 2009, p. 1393).	It reflects the need for competence, which leads people to attempt to maintain and enhance skills, abilities, and capacities (Ryan & Deci, 2002).	(Adler, 1986; Dickmann, 2012; Hippler, 2009; Suutari, 2003)
4	Work-life balance	It refers to the individual’s perception of the host country that work and nonwork activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s given life priorities (Kalliath & Brough, 2008).	It is linked to the need for relatedness in the sense that those valuing the host country’s work-life balance do not want their work position to be at the cost of their relationships (Deci & Ryan, 1985a).	(Bader et al., 2018; Crowley-Henry, 2007; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Dickmann & Mills, 2009; Doherty et al., 2011; Hippler, 2009; Shaffer et al., 2001; Shortland & Cummins, 2007)
5	Personal challenge	Seeking a non-professional challenge, a desire to explore ‘the new’, ‘the unknown’, which requires effort and determination (Hippler, 2009; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004).	It is linked to the need for competence, which leads people to seek optimal challenges (Ryan & Deci, 2002).	(Bader, 2017; Hippler, 2009; Pinto et al., 2012; Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004; Suutari, 2003)
6	Opportunity to live abroad	The opportunity to live in another country, region or city in particular (Dickmann et al., 2008).	It is linked to the need for autonomy as employees are willingly endorsing their expatriation; the reason reflects their own interests (Deci & Ryan, 1985a).	(Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011; Fish, 1996; Miller & Cheng, 1978; Pinto et al., 2012; Suutari, 2003; Suutari & Brewster, 2000)

7	Discover another culture	Getting to know and experience other cultures (Haines et al., 2008).	It is linked to the need for autonomy, which is founded on a nondefensive open consideration of possibilities; a willingness to experience the assignment abroad fully (Ryan & Deci, 2006).	(Adler, 1986; Dickmann, 2012; Haines et al., 2008)
8	Location attractiveness	The attractiveness of the host country or location regarding the proximity to the sea, the local scenery or other features of interest, or even the travel opportunities it offers (Hippler, 2009).	It is linked to the need for autonomy as employees are willingly endorsing their own behaviours; the reason reflects their own interests and values (Deci & Ryan, 1985a).	(Bader, 2017; Demel & Mayrhofer, 2010; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann & Mills, 2009; Dickmann & Watson, 2017; Doherty et al., 2011; Duarte et al., 2021; Hippler, 2009; Miller & Cheng, 1978; Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004; Suutari, 2003)
<b>Controlled reasons</b>				
<b>N.</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Involved basic psychological needs</b>	<b>Supporting literature</b>
1	Financial incentives	It includes base salary, foreign inducement and hardship premium, allowances (cost-of-living, housing, education, relocation, spouse assistance), benefits (health care, pension plan/social security, life insurance, child allowance and profit sharing/stock options plans) (Dowling et al., 2015).	This reason refers to external rewards. They may be seen as “carrots” that companies use to induce behaviours (Amabile & Pratt, 2016), which leads employees to feel controlled, thwarting their need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, they might still manage to satisfy their need for relatedness by receiving social support from others (Broeck et al., 2010).	(Adler, 1986; Bader, 2017; Bonache & Paz-Aparicio, 2015; Briscoe, 2015; Dickmann et al., 2008; Dickmann, 2012; Doherty et al., 2011; Duarte et al., 2021; Haines et al., 2008; Kim & Tung, 2013; Kim & Froese, 2012; Martocchio, 2015; Miller & Cheng, 1978; Pinto et al., 2012; Shortland, 2016; Stahl et al., 2002; Suutari & Brewster, 2000)
2	Career opportunities	Expected influence of the IA on the employees’ career opportunities within and outside the company (Hippler, 2009; Shortland, 2016).	This reason refers to external rewards, which lead employees to feel controlled, thwarting their need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000).	(Adler, 1986; Bader, 2017; Clarke et al., 2017; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Dickmann & Watson, 2017; Doherty et al., 2011; Hippler, 2009; Kim & Froese, 2012; Konopaske et al., 2009; Miller & Cheng, 1978; Pinto et al., 2012; Shortland, 2016, 2016; Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004; Suutari, 2003; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995)
3	Standard of living	Quality and quantity of goods and services available for consumption to a certain socio-economic class in a given location (Williams & Zimmerman, 1935).	This reason refers to external rewards, which lead employees to feel controlled, thwarting their need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000).	(Carr et al., 2005; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011; Latukha et al., 2021; Oliinyk et al., 2022)
4	The prestige of working in the	The respect and admiration given to an expatriate due to the host location or the subsidiary where the	This reason is aligned with the need for relatedness, and it may thwart the need for	(Dickmann, 2012; Doherty et al., 2011; Shortland, 2016)

	host location or subsidiary	assignment takes place (Doherty et al., 2011; Shortland, 2016).	autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2017): to maintain relatedness through approval from others, individuals may accept the IA irrespective of their own interests and values.	
5	Self-affirmation	Doing something which allows one to affirm oneself or prove something to oneself (Hippler, 2009).	Self-affirmation is aligned with the need for relatedness, and it may thwart the need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2017): to maintain relatedness through approval from others, individuals may accept the IA irrespective of their own interests and values.	(Hippler, 2009)
6	Stimuli from family	It denotes family stimuli to take the assignment (Hippler, 2009; Valk et al., 2014).	This reason is aligned with the need for relatedness, and it may thwart the need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2017): to maintain relatedness through a high concern for others' interests, individuals may accept the IA irrespective of their own interests and values.	(Carr et al., 2005; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Kim & Froese, 2012; Miller & Cheng, 1978; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004)
7	Stimuli from colleagues and superiors	It denotes stimuli from colleagues, superiors, and friends (Miller & Cheng, 1978; Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004).	This reason is aligned with the need for relatedness, and it may thwart the need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2017): while seeking to feel supported by others, employees may accept the IA irrespective of their own interests and values.	(Miller & Cheng, 1978; Stahl et al., 2002; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004)
8	Compelled to accept	Pressure from the organisation to relocate (Pinto et al., 2012).	The lack of free choice prevents the satisfaction of the need for autonomy, turning the behaviour controlled by external pressure (Deci & Ryan, 2000).	(Pinto et al., 2012; Shaffer et al., 2012; Stahl et al., 2002; Torbiorn, 1982)

Lastly, the chapter addressed the differences across developed and emerging countries, evidencing the intricate relationship between national context (culture and socio-economic conditions) and individuals' socio-cognitions and motivations.

Having addressed the SDT and the TPB, it is clear that each of them has its theoretical boundaries. Therefore, the investigation of the employees' intention to expatriate is proposed not through the lenses of TPB or SDT, but through the integration of both. Thus, the following chapter presents the theoretical rationale for the proposal of the integrated model, the conceptual framework, and the hypotheses development.

### 3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

This section proposes a conceptual framework to predict employees' intention to expatriate. A conceptual framework is a structure of combined concepts and/or theories that serve as a map for the study, providing clarity, focus, and simplicity to the research task (Punch, 2014).

The proposition of the conceptual framework departs from this study's questions and aims to combine theories and constructs to provide a comprehensive understanding of the formation of employees' intention to expatriate. Two main theories and several of their constructs are pulled together to explain the formation of employees' intention to expatriate: the theory of planned behaviour (constructs: attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, and intention) and the self-determination theory (constructs: autonomous and controlled motivation). The core ideas are now articulated and then each expected relationship between and among variables is addressed in the hypothesis's development.

Notably, the relocation to work abroad is an intentional behaviour (Clarke et al., 2017), meaning it is a reasoned and deliberative process. Indeed, when deciding whether to expatriate, employees account for their expectations concerning the prospect of future earnings in terms of knowledge, social capital, possibilities for future promotions, or financial gains (Freitas, 2001). The fact that expatriation is an intentional behaviour has driven many researchers to study it with the TPB lens. Over time, researchers have found that individuals' belief-based variables are effective predictors of the intention to expatriate (e.g., Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Eby & Russell, 2000; Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Joardar & Weisang, 2019; Yurtkoru et al., 2017).

SDT has also been employed to investigate individuals' willingness to expatriate and Haines et al. (2008) found that higher intrinsic motivation for an IA was associated with greater willingness to accept an IA, while extrinsic motivation was not significantly associated with it (Haines et al., 2008).

Despite the promising results of these works, there are notable boundaries. Remarkably, "most information processing [social cognitive] models are silent on matters central to self-determination theory" (Andersen et al., 2000, p. 272). Precisely, the TPB does not provide information on the origins of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control. In this regard, Deci and Ryan (1985a) pointed out that social cognitive theories ignore the organism's conditions that make activities and behaviours desired. Thus, they state

that socio-cognitive theories can be integrated with constructs from SDT to form a “more complete motivational theory” (p. 229). Additionally, Ajzen has noted that the TPB is open to including additional predictors if they are found to capture a significant variance in intention or behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, 1998).

In essence, the SDT and the TPB provide complementary explanations of the mechanisms that underlie intentional behaviours and actions (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009; Lee et al., 2020). The reasoning for integrating these theories is that decision-making constructs from the TPB indicate the formation of plans to engage in specific behaviours, and the motives from the SDT serve to indicate the source of information that influences the decision-making process (Hagger, 2012). Thus, SDT clarifies the origins of the TPB’s constructs (Andersen et al., 2000) because it explains whether the beliefs about the behaviour are interpreted as self-determined or controlling (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009). In other words, the motivational variables from SDT are considered distal factors that exert effects on the proximal socio-cognitive variables from the TPB (Chatzisarantis et al., 1997; Hagger et al., 2002, 2006; Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009).

Based on this background, the proposed framework integrates the TPB and the SDT to explain employees’ intention to expatriate, whereas autonomous and controlled reasons to expatriate impact the socio-cognitive variables from the TPB (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control), which affect employees’ intention to expatriate. Evidence supporting the integrated model comes from a range of behaviours, especially in studies on health-related contexts. It was first tested in the context of physical activities (Hagger et al., 2002, 2005), and then has proliferated to areas such as dieting (Jacobs et al., 2011), disease prevention (Chan et al., 2014, 2015), rehabilitation (Chan & Hagger, 2012b; Lee et al., 2020), sports injury prevention (Chan & Hagger, 2012a), reduction in binge drinking (Hagger et al., 2012), maintenance of healthy eating (Hagger et al., 2002a; Hagger et al., 2006), and sleep hygiene (Kor & Mullan, 2011).

Further, a few studies in the field of Business and Management have applied variations of the integrated model to explain individuals’ intentions and behaviours. Some examples include the investigation of entrepreneurial intention (Al-Jubari, 2019; Al-Jubari et al., 2019) and volunteering intentions (Grano et al., 2008; Li & Wu, 2019).

In practice, these studies have shown that the integrated model increases the explanation of the intention compared to studies using either the TPB or the SDT. For example, in a study on blood donation, the integrated model explained an additional 14% of

the variance in blood donation intention compared to a TPB-only model (Williams et al., 2019). Thus, the integrated model has proved to increase the utility of the models in predicting behavioural intentions and behaviours.

Besides integrating these theories, the conceptual framework incorporates moderating variables. Such propositions are per findings that many individual-subjective and national-level variables were found to moderate the relationship between the socio-cognitive variables and the intention in a range of behaviours other than expatriation (e.g., Dinev et al., 2009; Hassan et al., 2016; Hooft & Jong, 2009; Meng et al., 2020; Petrovskaya & Haleem, 2021; Shukri et al., 2016; Van Hooft & Jong, 2009). Based on the insights from these previous studies and the expatriation context, the conceptual framework also incorporates boundary conditions expected to render the link between the socio-cognitive variables and intention to expatriate stronger or weaker: cultural distance (CD) and psychic distance (PD).

Previous studies on the intention to expatriate have found differences among respondents from different countries and called for the investigation of the possible boundary conditions by incorporating country-level variables into the models (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Richter et al., 2020). Thus, at the country level, the conceptual framework incorporates cultural distance.

Following Shenkar's (2001, 2012) advice, the cognitive psychic distance (PD) measure is used to supplement and enlarge the approach of the variables that embrace the national level. A perceived PD reflects individual-level biases and thus brings important and extra explanations compared to country-level operationalisations based on secondary sources (Nebus & Chai, 2014). Jointly considering individual and country-level measures is expected to bring positive implications for explaining IB phenomena such as global talent management (Cerar et al., 2021).

Previous studies on a range of phenomena other than expatriation have found different individual-subjective variables to exert a moderating effect on the relationship between the base variables of TPB and the individuals' intention (e.g., Chen & Tung, 2010; Hooft & Jong, 2009; Line & Hanks, 2016; Meng et al., 2020; Petrovskaya & Haleem, 2021). At the individual-subjective level, PD is considered a moderator variable. In this study, PD regards the degree to which employees perceive their host country as different from or similar to their country of nationality in several aspects, such as language and culture.

Given these specifications, the integration of the SDT and TPB, and the inclusion of boundary conditions, the employment of the conceptual framework is expected to provide a

more comprehensive understanding of the employees' intention to expatriate compared to previous models.

The hypotheses' development specifies the relationships between and among the variables. Firstly, it is hypothesised how the socio-cognitive variables impact the employees' intention to expatriate. Next, the argumentation bases the proposition of the mediating effect of the socio-cognitive variables on the relationship between motivation and intention to expatriate. After that, the moderating hypothesis with the national-level variable is discussed, namely the cultural distance. Then, the moderating hypothesis referring to the individual-subjective variable is developed, namely the individuals' psychic distance. Finally, the chapter brings the proposed conceptual framework (Figure 7).

### **3.1 The Effect of the Socio-cognitive Variables on Employees' Intention to Expatriate**

The hypotheses about the impact of attitude, SN, and PBC on employees' intention to expatriate are in accordance with the TPB (Ajzen, 1991). Overall, the TPB posits that the more positive the evaluation of the behaviour (attitude), the higher the perceived social pressure to perform the behaviour (SN), and the higher the perceived control and capability of doing the behaviour (PBC), the higher will be the intention to engage in the behaviour.

There are plenty of empirical studies supporting the impact of attitude, SN, and PBC on intention across disciplines (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). However, the studies addressing such relationships in the context of employees' expatriation present clear flaws and limitations, which claim for further studies. The most important flaws and limitations are related to the studies' samples and the operationalization of the variables. For example, Froese et al. (2013) found that cosmopolitanism (attitude) is a strong predictor of students' expatriation willingness, Engle et al. (2015) identified that the three socio-cognitive variables explained the intention to become an expatriate, and Remhof et al. (2014) found that sensation seeking (part of the attitude's construct), SN (parents, friends, and mentors), and motivational cultural intelligence (part of the PBC's construct) have a positive effect on individuals' intention to work abroad. However, in all these studies, the samples are composed of business students, which are considered inappropriate samples, especially due to their lack of real-life managerial experience and variation in terms of education, age, and experience (Bello et al., 2009). Further, Joardar and Weisang (2019) found that satisfaction with the host country (attitude) and self-efficacy influence future expatriate career intentions,

and Andresen and Margenfeld (2015) found that boundaryless mindset (attitude) and perceived attitude of the social network (SN) significantly influence the international relocation mobility readiness, whereas PBC had no effect on international relocation mobility readiness. In these studies, the operationalization of the variables does not strictly follow the guidance from the TPB: (a) self-efficacy captures only part of the PBC's concept (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010), and; (b) the measures are based on the individual's general measures, what goes contrary to the TPB orientation of using domain-specific measures because decision-makers demonstrate different information processing in different decision domains (e.g., a proposal to expatriate to England may generate different attitudes (more or less favourable) than a proposal to expatriate to Brazil) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977).

These previous studies bring clues to the relationship between the socio-cognitive variables and the employees' intention to expatriate. However, the pointed flaws and limitations evidence the need for further studies that can overcome the cited weaknesses and test the same relationships and establish the relationship between these variables with appropriate sample and construct measures. The reasoning supporting each of the expected relationships is now discussed.

First, if individuals evaluate a certain behaviour as positive, this results in a higher intention, and vice versa (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). For example, an employee who believes that an IA could bring valued personal and career outcomes would be more likely to expatriate. Conversely, the expectation of dissatisfaction results in a belief that the individual is unable to function in a foreign environment, thereby developing a negative attitude towards international assignments (Joardar & Weisang, 2019).

Second, individuals' perception of what most people do in the domain influences their intention to pursue a behaviour in that domain (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). When specific types of job mobility become more popular, people become more comfortable pursuing opportunities of which they might have been unsure previously (Ng et al., 2007), which is expected considering the increasing number of expatriates over time. In this regard, during the process of deciding upon accepting an IA, SN is expected to play an important role in explaining employees' intention to expatriate, especially because expatriate experience tends to positively influence the willingness of other employees to accept IAs (Bolino, 2007).

Third, individuals are more likely to perform a given behaviour if they present the subjective ability to perform it, which depends on available resources and opportunities (Ajzen, 1991). On this matter, PBC is expected to influence individuals' intention to

expatriate, especially because employees to whom companies offer international work opportunities are expected to present high cognitive certainty because they believe that they have been chosen for the positions abroad because of their previous success (Haslberger et al., 2013).

Based on the above argument, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*Hypothesis 1a:* The more favourable the employees' attitude towards the expatriation, the stronger their intention to expatriate.

*Hypothesis 1b:* The stronger an employee's SN regarding expatriating, the stronger their intention to expatriate.

*Hypothesis 1c:* The higher the employees' PBC regarding expatriating, the stronger their intention to expatriate.

### **3.2 The Mediating Effect of the Socio-cognitive Variables on the Relationship Between Motivation and Intention to Expatriate**

Motivation is an important behavioural antecedent (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). In turn, the SDT identifies different types of motivation, controlled and autonomous, differing in quality. In the context of expatriation, previous studies found a direct effect of the types of motivation on the intention to expatriate (e.g., Haines et al., 2008). The authors discovered that different reasons for expatriation affect the expatriation intention in different strengths, evidencing that the individuals' reasons to expatriate are relevant variables to explain individuals' intention to expatriate. However, there is evidence that this relationship is not direct, and that it can be better understood from a chain of relationships to which the TPB can contribute. For example, previous studies found a direct effect of the socio-cognitive variables from the TPB on the intention to expatriate (e.g., Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Eby & Russell, 2000; Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Joardar & Weisang, 2019) and the types of motivation clarify the origins of the TPB's constructs (Andersen et al., 2000). These aspects suggest that the cognitive processing of the available information may play an important role in explaining how individuals' motivations influence their intention to expatriate. Complementary, according to the TPB's sufficiency assumption, the effect of any outside-model variable on intentions (i.e., motivations) should be mediated by the theory's three major predictors (i.e. attitude, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

The mediation through the socio-cognitive variables is considered to indicate that the process by which motivation influences intention formation is reflective (or deliberative) rather than impulsive (or automatic) (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009). Deliberative processing is characterised by considerable cognitive work and effort, and it involves scrutiny of available information and analysis of features of behaviour (e.g., costs and benefits); on the other hand, automatic processing involves using simple rules that individuals developed through past experiences and observations (Fazio, 1990). Automatic processing allows people to make fast decisions without much deliberation and effort (Chatzisarantis et al., 2002). Complementary, reflective and impulsive styles are associated with habitualness, which refers to frequently performed acts that become automatic responses to particular situations (Deci & Ryan, 1980). While habitual behaviours are carried out with minimum awareness, non-habitual behaviours imply cognitive processing (Bentler & Speckart, 1979; Hofmann et al., 2008). An employee's expatriation is not considered a habitual behaviour. Instead, the decision to expatriate is said to be a disruptive choice, even when employees have previous experiences abroad (Tharenou, 2008), given the range of changes it may incur for the employees and their families (Shah et al., 2021).

The mediation proposition was supported in studies in other research fields applying the integrated model. For example, Al-Jubari et al. (2019) found that the socio-cognitive variables (attitude, SN, and PBC) fully mediated the relationship between need satisfaction and frustration, and entrepreneurial intention. Luqman et al. (2018) also revealed that attitude, SN, and PBC fully mediated the relationships between motivation (autonomous and controlled) and discontinuance intention of social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and WeChat).

Based on this reasoning, the formation process of employees' intention to expatriate is expected to be explained through an influence chain, beginning with autonomous and controlled motives to engage in the expatriation, which are filtered by the individual's socio-cognitive variables, resulting in employees' behavioural intentions to expatriate. Thus, the following hypotheses establish the expected role of the socio-cognitive variables on the relationship between motivation and intention to expatriate.

*Hypothesis 2a:* Attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control mediate the stimulus of autonomous motivation on intention to expatriate.

*Hypothesis 2b:* Attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control mediate the stimulus of controlled motivation on intention to expatriate.

This study also considers the moderating role of national-level and individual-subjective variables in the relationship between the socio-cognitive variables and employees' intention to expatriate. The next section refers to the moderating impact of the national-level variable, the cultural distance.

### **3.3 Cultural Distance and its Moderating Effect on the Relationship Between the Subjective Norms and the Employees' Intention to Expatriate**

CD is an important variable in the IHRM literature, and it has been incorporated into research on different topics linked to expatriation, including expatriates' staffing (e.g., Colakoglu & Caligiuri, 2008), effectiveness (e.g., Chen et al., 2010), coping strategies (e.g., Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005), adjustment (e.g., Silbiger et al., 2021; Song et al., 2021; Zhang, 2013) and employees' intention to expatriate (e.g., Joardar & Weisang, 2019).

On the one hand, commonalities in values and norms (denoting small CDs) facilitate human interaction and communication between foreigners and locals by providing a common understanding of context and expectations of behaviour (Håkanson & Ambos, 2010). On the other hand, expatriate research consistently supports that IAs can be very challenging when considering host countries culturally distinct from the expatriates' home country (Black et al., 1991; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Bozionelos, 2009) due to the great uncertainty involved (Dupuis et al., 2008). Considering home and host countries with large CDs, there tends to be less available knowledge to people, which makes the host country difficult to understand (Sousa & Bradley, 2008). It thus leads companies to have varied expatriate practices depending on the cultural differences between the home and host countries (Cheng & Lin, 2009), and it also seems to play an important role in understanding the impact of the social norms on the employees' intention to expatriate.

Cross-cultural theorists assert that entrance into unfamiliar cultures produces a loss in an individual's well-being (Byrnes, 1966; Oberg, 1960) and the ambiguity of an unfamiliar host country is often associated with stress (Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005). Thus, in practice, a larger CD is attached to a larger disruption and uncertainty. For example, power distance is a cultural characteristic that has widespread consequences in daily lives, recognised from the accepted inequality, especially regarding wealth, class, and age. The societies' characteristics reflecting power distance are easily captured even through mainstream media and can be shocking and confusing for those from countries on opposite sides of the power distance

scale. Thus, in possession of shocking or confusing information (that is culturally grounded, even though people are not cognisant of this) from the prospective host country, important others are more likely to oppose the relocation. Consequently, the positive relationship between SN and intention to expatriate should be attenuated as CD increases because employees are less likely to perceive social support when deciding whether to accept an expatriation proposal to culturally distant countries.

In this regard, whereas empirical studies (e.g., Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Engle et al., 2015; Remhof et al., 2014) based on the TPB have found that SN is positively related to the intention to expatriate, this impact is likely to vary across the levels of CD. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 3:* The relationship between SN and intention to expatriate is weaker (stronger) when CD is high (low).

### **3.4 Psychic Distance and its Moderating Effect on the Relationship Between Perceived Behaviour Control and the Employees' Intention to Expatriate**

Distance is associated with ambiguity, obstacles, and unpredictability (Xu & Shenkar, 2002), which applies to the concept of PD. Expatriating to psychic distant countries means working and living in a novel environment inherently difficult for expatriates to comprehend and adapt to. The idea that PD moderates the relationship between PBC and the individuals' intention to expatriate seems plausible.

Although AEs may present high cognitive certainty because they believe that they have been chosen for the positions abroad because of their previous success (Haslberger et al., 2013), it may not hold all the time. For instance, the similarity-based accounts suggest that the unfamiliarity linked to high-psychic-distant countries is associated with higher cognitive uncertainty (Burleigh & Schoenherr, 2015; Cheetham et al., 2011). Further, the offer of an assignment in countries towards which employees feel psychologically distant entails they are less likely to possess the appropriate knowledge and skills needed to understand and adapt to the host country. Anticipating disruption and uncertainty makes employees feel that they have little control (Tharenou, 2008). That is what happens when the employee perceives that home and host countries differ in aspects such as cultural values and traditions, in a way that there is a lack of the appropriate knowledge to understand and adapt to the host country. Thus, the positive relationship between PBC and intention to expatriate

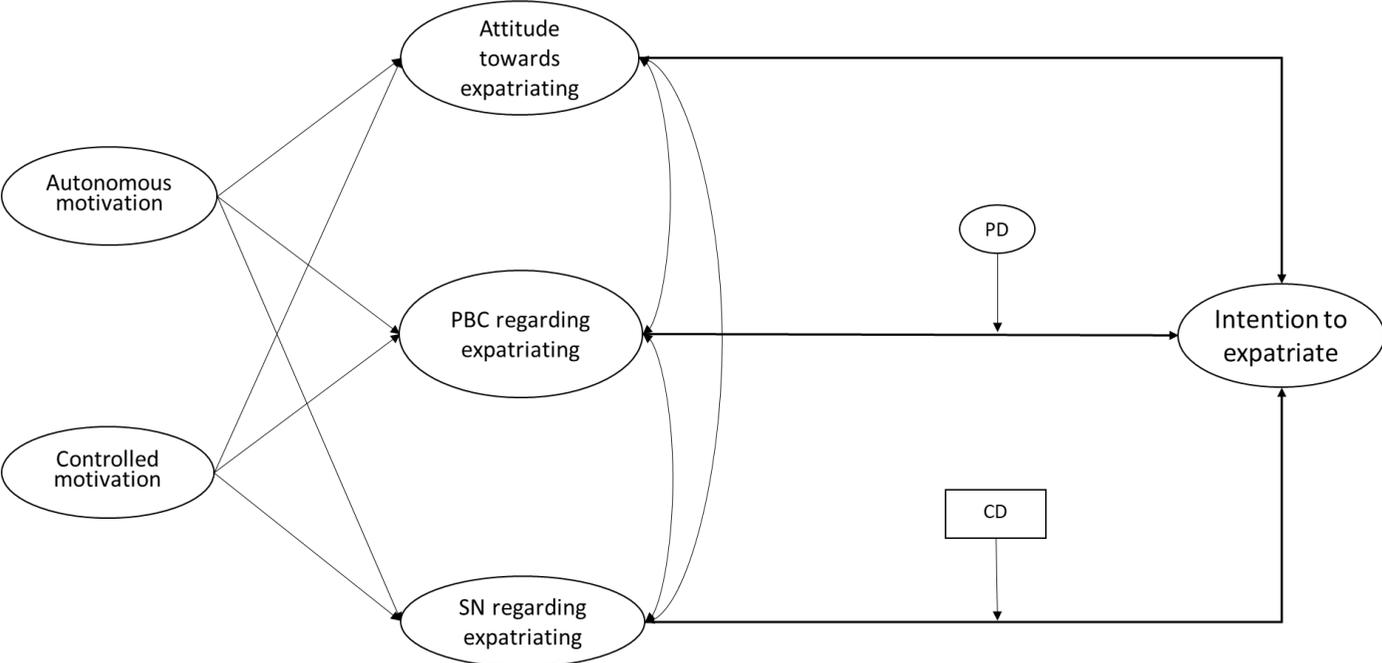
should be weakened as PD increases because the perceived differences between home and host countries leave employees with lower perceived capability and confidence towards expatriating.

In this regard, whereas empirical studies (Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Engle et al., 2015; Remhof et al., 2014) based on the TPB have found that PBC is positively related to individuals' intention to expatriate, this impact is likely to vary according to the level of PD. *Hypothesis 4:* The relationship between PBC and intention to expatriate is stronger (weaker) when PD is low (high).

### **3.5 Conceptual Framework**

Based on the proposed hypotheses, the conceptual framework is presented in Figure 7.

**Figure 7:** The proposed conceptual framework



## 4 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY, METHOD, AND DESIGN

This chapter describes the methodological choices designed to answer the research question: What are the processes involved in forming developed and emerging employees' intention to expatriate?

It opens with an overview of the philosophical approach and the research method adopted within the current research, followed by the aspects related to the research population. The third part presents the questionnaire development, specifying the variables' measures, the procedures regarding translation and back-translation, and the pre-test. The following section addresses procedures for data collection. Lastly, the chapter details data analyses, from preliminary data analyses to hypotheses testing.

### 4.1 Research Philosophy and Method

When characterising the research philosophy supporting an investigation, it is essential to first define under which paradigm it is drawn. A paradigm concerns the way researchers answer questions related to ontological, epistemological, and methodological matters (Bryman, 2016; Guba, 1990). Thus, paradigms are contrasted based on (a) their ontological base, related to the nature of existence and reality; (b) their epistemological base, related to the relationship between the researcher and the knowledge; (c) their methodological base, referring to the strategy to find out knowledge (Guba, 1990).

This study was based on the positivist paradigm, which originates from the writings of Auguste Comte and emphasises the importance of scientific knowledge gathering through rigorous scientific methods (Benton & Craib, 2011). In this regard, this study departed from the understanding that there is a single external reality, which is objective and tangible (realist ontology). Further, it acknowledges that knowledge exists independent of the observer (objectivist epistemology). Finally, it recognises that knowledge is found by empirically testing pre-defined hypotheses (experimental-manipulative methodology).

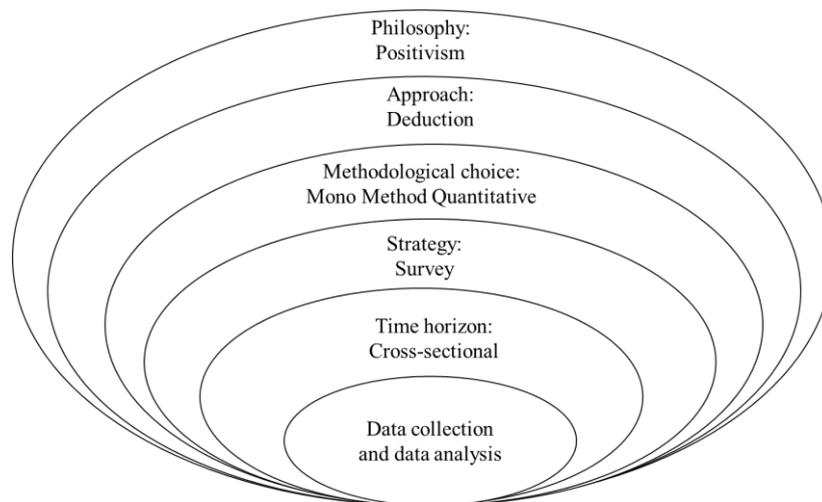
Referring to the methodology, thus, this study adopted a deductive approach to explaining causal relationships between variables and concepts. It involves the proposition of theoretically based hypotheses, which, using data collection, are subjected to rigorous testing to evaluate if they are false or corroborated (Bryman, 2016). For the present research, the

deductive approach was essential for testing the relationship between the model variables according to the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3.

The paradigm adopted in a study, especially the methodological base, is interconnected with and influences the method. The method refers to the techniques to gather and analyse data (Crotty, 1998). In this regard, quantitative methods were employed, which focus on collecting numerical data and generalising them across groups of people or explaining a particular phenomenon (Babbie, 2013). In this study, quantitative methods aimed to explain the formation of developed and emerging AEs' intention to expatriate. In this sense, data collection is done at a set time, configuring a cross-sectional study (Bryman, 2016). For data collection, a self-report survey strategy using questionnaires was applied because it allows the collection of standardised data from numerous respondents (Saunders et al., 2019). These choices are in accordance with previous studies measuring the constructs of the self-determination theory and the theory of planned behaviour (e.g., Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Qin & Hsu, 2022; Roussillon Soyer et al., 2022; Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Although the researcher recognises the difficulties in primary data collection, which led to the small percentage of IB studies using it (Nielsen et al., 2020), undoubtedly, self-reported data are the best way to quantify attitudes and motivations that underly behaviours (Bearden et al., 2011).

The research philosophy and method choices are well-connected in the research process onion (Saunders et al., 2019), presented in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: The research process onion**



Source: Proposed by the author based on Saunders et al. (2019)

The innermost part of the onion regards data collection and data analysis, which are detailed in sections 4.4 and 4.5.

## **4.2 Study Population**

This study's population regarded AEs assigned to work abroad at the time of data collection, either from developed or emerging countries. The choice of inquiring AEs assigned to work abroad at the time of inquiry was based on a theoretical reason, and opposes to the common practice of sampling non-expat people to measure their intention to expatriate (e.g., Froese et al., 2013; Mol et al., 2009; Remhof et al., 2014). Basically, "on a questionnaire, people may express an intention to engage in a given behaviour, but when they enter the real situation, their perceptions may change, producing a different intention" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 63). In this regard, only when a real and specific IA offer is made, will (and can) individuals investigate the potential location more thoroughly (Velde et al., 2017). Particularly, salient features of a behavioural situation often activate beliefs towards the behaviour that are different from the beliefs that are activated in hypothetical situations (Ajzen et al., 2004). Thus, sampling employees that faced real decision-making to expatriate seemed the most suitable strategy and it also safeguarded the sample relevance as they are the most relevant respondents to the research question (Parry et al., 2021).

Further, the denomination of developed and emerging countries comprises many countries and, especially, a vast diversity within them. For this reason, some criteria were specified to delimit the expatriates' nationalities and thus have more homogeneous groups in the sub-samples. The delimitation was based on two combined criteria: the countries' institutional framework and the role MNCs play in the countries' economies, which are now taken in detail.

The first criterion refers to the countries' institutional framework and is based on the literature on the varieties of capitalism. Countries within the same type of capitalism share important institutional aspects, which bring similarities to their people once institutions guide and sustain the individuals' identity by establishing possible and impossible ways of behaving and relating to others (Bellah et al., 1991). The resulting shared characteristics among people coming from countries with the same type of capitalism is the reason to rely on this criterion to delimit the sample of expatriates' home countries. Hall and Soskice (2001) provide a framework for understanding the institutional similarities and differences between

the developed economies, emphasising the role of institutions in national political economies. They proposed two categories to differentiate the varieties of capitalism in countries with a higher level of development: liberal market economies (LME), in which coordination is through the market, and coordinated market economies (CMEs), in which coordination is through formal or informal networks. Expanding on these categories, (Schneider, 2009) proposed a third type, called hierarchical market economy (HME), which comprises Latin American countries. Unlike those identified in developed and other developing regions, this type of capitalism is characterised by the concentration of most production and credit in foreign multinationals and family-owned business groups, large informal labour markets, and a shortage of investment in education and training. These categories proposed by Hall and Soskice (2001) and (Schneider, 2009) were the basis for the first criterion to delimit the population of expatriates' home countries.

The second criterion concerned the role played by MNCs in the countries' economies. This study focused on the expatriates coming from the leading economies within LME and CME (developed) and HME (emerging), which is analysed through the joint assessment of the number of MNCs in the country and the country's foreign direct investment (FDI) outflow. The importance of addressing these aspects refers to their close relationship with the existence and number of expatriates from the respective countries. Outward FDI is an investment to expand a firm outside of its home country, which may result in the establishment of foreign subsidiaries (Caves, 2007). Therefore, in countries with higher outward FDI, people tend to have more mobility options, also leading to a higher number of expatriates. Data on the countries' FDI outflow is obtained from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2020). Further, as AEs exist within MNCs, the number of MNCs is also of interest. Data on the number of MNCs in each country is obtained from the Orbis database developed by Bureau van Dijk (2017). Following the criterion used by Chacar et al., (2010), MNCs were identified as companies with one or more subsidiaries in other countries with a minimum 50.01% ownership stake.

Finally, the expatriates' home countries considered in this study are the ones that stand among the countries with the highest FDI outflow and the largest number of MNCs in each type of capitalism. Assigned expatriates from Brazil and Mexico compose the population from emerging countries and assigned expatriates from The United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands compose the population from developed countries.

### **4.3 Questionnaire Development**

The development of the questionnaire for data collection involved several procedures. Firstly, depending on the scale, preliminary measures were developed by the researcher or adapted from other existing validated scales. After designing the preliminary measures, two important procedures were adopted to ensure the quality of the questionnaire before data collection: translation and back-translation and pre-test, which is per the call for translation in cross-language research in IB (Chidlow et al., 2014). Each of these procedures is described in the following sections.

#### *4.3.1 Design of the study measures*

This section specifies the measures of each variable and scale used in this study. Accordingly, the first part presents the variables concerning the TPB, followed by the motivation to expatriate based on the SDT. The subsequent section specifies the measures of moderator variables, followed by the control variables. Then, the measures of variables addressing the assignment and expatriates' characteristics are explained. The last section brings tables to summarise the measures.

##### *4.3.1.1 The measures of the variables from the theory of planned behaviour*

The TPB's measurement instruments were adapted and modified from existing validated questions described in the literature for studies in other contexts (e.g., Conner et al., 2017; Han, 2015; Lee & Back, 2008; Roos & Hahn, 2019; Shneor & Munim, 2019; Turel, 2016). In addition, the items' wording was adapted to the context of expatriation and the items' verb tense was altered: once the present study aimed to investigate employees who were already abroad, instead of using the present, the items were stated in the past tense.

PBC, SN, and intention were measured through a Likert scale, whereas attitude was assessed via evaluative semantic differential scales. Such scale types are the most common ones used to measure the TPB's constructs (e.g., Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010; Luqman et al., 2018; Morris & Venkatesh, 2000; Turel, 2016). The Likert scale ranged from "extremely disagree" (1) to "extremely agree" (7), and the semantic differential scale ranged from 1 to 7, following prior studies (e.g., Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010).

All the constructs were assessed with more than three items to ensure greater reliability (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Four items expressing the readiness to engage in the IA were established to measure employees' intention to expatriate. The scale to measure SN consisted of five questions and PBC was measured with six items related to individuals' perceived capacity for expatriating and their autonomy for doing so.

Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) express that any standard attitude scaling procedure can be used, such as Likert scaling or Thurstone scaling, but the semantic differential is the most employed to obtain respondents' evaluation of behaviours. Following the authors' recommendations, attitude towards expatriating was rated on a series of six 7-point evaluative semantic differential scales (Osgood et al., 1957), including "good - bad" scale, which Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) advocate capturing overall evaluation very well. Differential scales measure attitudes in response to a common stem: "For me to relocate to work temporarily abroad was..."

Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) consider the importance of including both instrumental and experiential (or affective) adjective pairs in formative research, even if there is no assurance that both types of items will meet the criterion for inclusion on the final scale. In this regard, the scale has three instrumental adjectives (bad - good; beneficial - harmful; worthless - valuable) and three experiential adjectives (enjoyable - unenjoyable; pleasant - unpleasant; dull - exciting). Following their instructions, the endpoints were counterbalanced positive and negative to counteract possible response sets. High scores are assigned to the positive end of each item.

#### ***4.3.1.2 Motivation to expatriate***

The scales to assess autonomous and controlled motivation were developed by the author. Based on the idea that motivation is a reflection of reasons for behaving (Gagné et al., 2010; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2000a), the researcher explored the rich literature on the reasons why individuals expatriate (Section 2.5.7; e.g., Bader, 2017; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Dickmann & Watson, 2017; Doherty et al., 2011; Hippler, 2009; Miller & Cheng, 1978; Pinto et al., 2012; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995). Accordingly, 8 items to measure autonomous motivation (Table 3) and 8 items to measure controlled motivation (Table 4) were developed.

**Table 3:** Autonomous reasons to expatriate

<b>Autonomous reasons:</b>		
Reasons associated with employees' recognition that the IA (or its outcomes) has personal importance, relevance, or value; interest, enjoyment, and inherent satisfaction associated with the IA.		
N.	Topic	Items to assess the reasons to expatriate
1	Professional development	Because I wanted to acquire or improve professional knowledge, skills, abilities, and insights.
2	Job features	Because I enjoyed the job (related tasks, area of responsibility or expertise, the challenge of the role, and autonomy).
3	Personal development	Because I thought it was important to broaden my horizons through new experiences and developing and extending my knowledge, skills, and insights.
4	Work-life balance	Because I personally considered important the balance between work and nonwork activities I could experience in the host location.
5	Personal challenge	To meet non-professional challenges, explore "the new", "the unknown".
6	Opportunity to live abroad	Because it was a way to reach my personal goal of living abroad.
7	Discover another culture	To discover another culture.
8	Location attractiveness	Because the host location has characteristics that were personally important (location, scenery, and other features of interest, such as travel opportunities).

**Table 4:** Controlled reasons to expatriate

<b>Controlled reasons</b>		
Reasons associated with external incentives or punishments; attainment of ego enhancements and the desire to appear worthy to self; a sense of pressure.		
<b>N.</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Items to assess the reasons to expatriate</b>
1	Financial incentives	To be rewarded financially by my company (salary, foreign inducement, hardship premium, allowances, and benefits).
2	Career opportunities	Because I expected it to influence my career opportunities within or outside the company. *
3	Standard of living	Because it would allow me a certain standard of living.
4	The prestige of working in the host location or subsidiary	For the prestige of working in the host location or subsidiary.
5	Self-affirmation	Because I had to prove to myself that I could. *
6	Stimuli from family	Because my family/spouse said I should.
7	Stimuli from colleagues and superiors	Because my colleagues/superiors said I should.
8	Compelled to accept	Because I felt pressured by the organisation.

Note: \* Items removed after content analysis

The 16 items presented were submitted to six experts on SDT (summarised curriculum in Appendix 1), who evaluated if the items were measuring the appropriate theoretical constructs, proving the content validity (Hair Jr. et al., 2006). They were asked to determine “(1) whether each item (reason) taps into autonomous or controlled motivation, and (2) how well each item (reason) reflects the underlying construct you have selected on a 5-point Likert scale.” The researcher only kept the items for which all the experts agreed on the categorisation into autonomous or controlled reasons.

The final pool consisted of eight items measuring autonomous motivation and six items measuring controlled motivation (presented in section 4.3.1.6). Each item is a response to the stem: “Please indicate to what degree the following statements correspond to one of the reasons for which you have relocated to work temporarily abroad.” The items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, whereas 1 corresponds to the anchor *not at all* and 7 corresponds to *completely*. These anchors follow the one used by Gagné et al. (2015) in their scale to measure work motivation. Many other studies assessing motivation using SDT also have used 7-point Likert scales, such as an investigation of gaming motivation (Mills & Allen, 2020) and motivation to choose a college major (Yu et al., 2018).

#### **4.3.1.3 Moderator variables**

This study considered two moderator variables affecting the relationship between the intentions’ antecedent variables and the intention to expatriate. One was measured through primary data (psychic distance), and another was measured through secondary data (cultural distance).

In this study, the CD was measured through Kogut and Singh’ (1988) index based on Hofstede’ (1980) national culture scores on the dimensions of power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. Since its introduction, Kogut and Singh’ (1988) index has received critiques, especially concerning problems in conceptualisation and measurement (Harzing & Pudelko, 2016; Shenkar, 2001). However, it also gained wide acceptance in the international management literature (Cuypers et al., 2018) and has been applied to a large number of cross-country studies in international business and management (e.g., Colakoglu & Caligiuri, 2008; Tihanyi et al., 2005; Weber et al., 2020). The Kogut and Singh distance index can be calculated for any multidimensional construct (Beugelsdijk et al., 2018), and using a composite cultural distance index is an appropriate widespread method to

measure distance (Cuypers et al., 2018). Its application in this study provided an absolute value of the score difference between the culture of the employees' country of nationality and the host country. Low scores represent cultural proximity, and high scores indicate that countries of nationality and host countries are more culturally distant.

PD was measured via primary data and is assessed using the validated scale provided by Sousa and Bradley (2006). Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they perceived their country of nationality as different from or similar to the host country on a five-point scale, ranging from "very similar" (1) to "very different" (5). The items regard seven aspects: (1) climatic conditions; (2) purchasing power of customers; (3) lifestyles; (4) consumer preferences; (5) cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions; (6) language; (7) level of literacy and education.

#### **4.3.1.4 Control variables**

The endogenous variables (attitude, SN, PBC, and intention to expatriate) were likely to be influenced by other variables that needed to be controlled to avoid spurious relationships. The inclusion of control variables aimed at ensuring that any relationships found between the variables were not confounded by differences in individual characteristics and testing the incremental predictive validity of the motivation and socio-cognitive variables over and above more established predictors of intention to expatriate. Therefore, the theoretically relevant control variables for the model were chosen, following the recommendations of Becker (2005). The control variables found to possibly influence the endogenous variables are the employee's gender and education, presence of a spouse, presence of children, number of languages, foreign country living experience, the extent of time abroad, and satisfaction with the international assignment. Each of these variables is now described.

Employees' gender (Gender) was likely to influence the endogenous variables. For example, males were more receptive to IA than females (Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995) and men showed stronger intentions to expatriate than women (Engle et al., 2015; Haines et al., 2008). Many studies have included sex as a control variable while investigating individuals' intention to expatriate (e.g., Froese et al., 2013; Haines et al., 2008; Kim & Froese, 2012; Konopaske et al., 2009; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995). Gender was coded as 1 for males and 0 for females.

Education level (Education) is another human capital variable likely to influence the individuals' intention to expatriate. In the migration literature, educational level was found to correlate positively with migration intention, especially because it enables increased access to information (Sapeha, 2017). Other studies on expatriation intention also controlled for the education level (e.g., Joardar & Weisang, 2019; Kim & Froese, 2012). Education was assessed by the number of years of formal education (including primary school), following (Håkanson & Ambos, 2010).

The presence of a spouse (Spouse) is another variable that can influence the endogenous variables. Marital status or the presence of a spouse was previously used in studies identifying expatriation willingness (Haines et al., 2008; Kim & Froese, 2012; Konopaske et al., 2009). Spouse was coded according to Haines et al. (2008) as either the respondent did not have (0) or had a spouse (1) at the time they received the proposal to expatriate.

Studies have also shown that the presence of children (Children) may reduce the intention to expatriate or receptivity of IA (Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995). In this regard, previous studies on expatriation intention have also included the presence of children as a control variable (Haines et al., 2008; Kim & Froese, 2012). Children were measured according to Haines et al. (2008) as either the respondent does not have any (0) or has at least one child (1) at the time they received the proposal to relocate to work temporarily abroad.

Another control variable regards the number of languages spoken (Languages) by the employee, as this human capital is likely to positively affect the expatriation willingness (Froese et al., 2013). Indeed, the number of languages spoken increased the intention to take an IA (Engle et al., 2015). Languages were measured as the number of languages other than the native language spoken by the employee, the same measure used by Engle et al. (2015).

Foreign country living experience (Foreign experience) is also likely to influence the endogenous variables once people that lived or travelled presented higher receptivity to accept IAs or international mobility readiness (Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995). While Kim and Froese (2012) focused on the general experience of living abroad, Haines et al. (2008) and Konopaske et al. (2009) addressed the number of previous moves for career reasons. Understanding that living abroad for any reason increases the individuals' knowledge of cultural differences, foreign experience was measured in the number of years and regards previous foreign experiences for career and personal reasons.

The extent of time the AE has spent abroad (Time abroad) was also controlled for, once the longer the time abroad, the farther the time of the decision-making to expatriate. This variable allows for controlling for potential recall bias (Coughlin, 1990), which may arise from the retrospective nature of the survey. Because recall bias depends on the time lapse between the event and the data collection (Huber & Power, 1985), this variable should help alleviate this potential issue by capturing any time trend in the responses (Huber & Power, 1985). Time abroad was measured in months, following Caligiuri (2000).

Satisfaction with the international assignment (Satisfaction) is another variable expected to impact the endogenous variables. This variable aimed to control for the impact of the actual satisfaction with the IA on the retrospective measure of intention. Satisfaction was measured with adapted items developed to measure job satisfaction among expatriates, repatriates, and domestic employees (Bonache, 2005) and job satisfaction of relocated militaries (Fisher & Shaw, 1994). The scale has four items, and the anchors ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

#### ***4.3.1.5 Assignment and expatriates' characteristics***

Besides the mentioned questions, others were added to the questionnaire to understand the sample's characteristics better, to make sure the sample falls within the established criteria and to allow the computation of further variables.

Respondents' nationality was asked to make sure they were from the specified countries of interest. For those with dual nationality, the condition was determined by whether the expatriate obtained employment as a citizen or a non-citizen of the host country (McNulty & Brewster, 2017b). For this reason, individuals with dual nationality were asked to state the one they used when seconded abroad. Further, the HQ's country, the expatriates' country of origin (the country where they were living when receiving the proposal to expatriate) and destination were asked to describe the direction of the relocations within the companies.

Moreover, respondents reported if their IAs were open-ended or fixed-term. Those on fixed-term contracts also specified the intended length of stay abroad (in months), enabling the identification of the assignment, whether short, medium, or long-term. Finally, respondents were also asked about the extent of time working for the company, and the

hierarchical level of their position before and during the IA. The hierarchical levels were used to identify if the IAs corresponded to a promotion, lateral move, or demotion.

#### ***4.3.1.6 Summary of the measures used in the research***

The measures for dependent, independent, moderator, and control variables are summarised in tables: Table 5 depicts the measures related to primary data variables and Table 6 refers to the measures of the secondary data variables.

**Table 5:** Measure of primary data variables

Name of variable	Abbreviation	Type of variable	Items	Measure	Source
Intention to expatriate	Intention	Dependent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I intended to relocate to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>2. I was likely to relocate to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>3. I was willing to relocate to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>4. I would make an effort to relocate to work temporarily abroad.</li> </ol>	Likert scale: 1 = extremely disagree 7 = extremely agree	(Conner et al., 2017; Han, 2015; Lee & Back, 2008)
Subjective norm regarding expatriating	SN	Mediator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most people whose opinions I value approved of my relocation to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>2. Most people who are important to me thought I should relocate to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>3. Most people who are important to me wanted me to relocate to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>4. Many people like me were relocated to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>5. People who influence my behaviour thought I should relocate to work temporarily abroad.</li> </ol>		(Han, 2015; Lee & Back, 2008; Roos & Hahn, 2019)
Perceived behaviour control regarding expatriating	PBC	Mediator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I had the expertise needed for relocating to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>2. I had control over relocating to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>3. I was confident in my ability to relocate to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>4. I had the necessary resources to relocate to work temporarily abroad.</li> <li>5. My relocation to work temporarily abroad was within my control.</li> <li>6. Whether or not I would relocate to work temporarily abroad was completely up to me.</li> </ol>		(Han, 2015; Lee & Back, 2008; Shneor & Munim, 2019; Turel, 2016)

Attitude towards the expatriation	Attitude	Mediator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was bad /good.</li> <li>2. For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was beneficial / harmful.<sup>R</sup></li> <li>3. For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was enjoyable / unenjoyable.<sup>R</sup></li> <li>4. For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was pleasant / unpleasant.<sup>R</sup></li> <li>5. For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was worthless / valuable.</li> <li>6. For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was dull / exciting.</li> </ol>	Semantic differential scale: from 1 to 7	(Conner et al., 2017; Roos & Hahn, 2019)
Autonomous motivation to expatriate	Autonomous motivation	Independent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Because it was a way to reach my personal goal of living abroad.</li> <li>2. To discover another culture.</li> <li>3. Because I enjoyed the job (related tasks, area of responsibility or expertise, the challenge of the role, and autonomy).</li> <li>4. Because I wanted to acquire or improve professional knowledge, skills, abilities, and insights.</li> <li>5. Because the host location has characteristics that were personally important (location, scenery, and other features of interest, such as travel opportunities).</li> <li>6. To meet non-professional challenges, explore "the new", "the unknown".</li> <li>7. Because I thought it was important to broaden my horizons through new experiences and developing and extending my knowledge, skills, and insights.</li> <li>8. Because I personally considered important the balance between work and nonwork activities I could experience in the host location.</li> </ol>	Likert scale: 1 = Not at all 7 = Completely	Items generated from the literature on the reasons to expatriate (e.g., Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011; Hippler, 2009; Miller & Cheng, 1978) and submitted to content analysis (6 experts)
Controlled motivation to expatriate	Controlled motivation	Independent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To be rewarded financially by my company (salary, foreign inducement, hardship premium, allowances, and benefits).</li> <li>2. Because my family/spouse said I should.</li> <li>3. Because I felt pressured by the organisation.</li> <li>4. For the prestige of working in the host location or subsidiary.</li> <li>5. Because it would allow me a certain standard of living.</li> <li>6. Because my colleagues/superiors said I should.</li> </ol>		

Psychic distance	PD	Moderator	1. Climatic conditions 2. Purchasing power of customers 3. Lifestyles 4. Consumer preferences 5. Cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions 6. Language 7. Level of literacy and education	Likert scale: 1 = Very similar 5 = Very different	(Sousa & Bradley, 2006)
Satisfaction with the IA	Satisfaction	Control	1. I am satisfied with my assignment. 2. I would like to take the same assignment again. 3. I would recommend this assignment to a friend. 4. This assignment measures up to my expectation.	Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree 5 = Strongly agree	(Bonache, 2005; Fisher & Shaw, 1994)
Expatriates' gender	Gender	Control	Gender	Categorical nominal: 0 = female 1 = male	(Froese et al., 2013)
Education level	Education	Control	Please indicate the total number of years of formal education you received (including primary school) (in years)	Interval: Number of years	(Håkanson & Ambos, 2010)
Presence of spouse	Spouse	Control	Presence of spouse (at the time you received the proposal to relocate to work in your current assignment)	Categorical nominal: 0 = No spouse 1 = I had a spouse	(Haines et al., 2008)
Presence of children	Children	Control	Children (at the time you received the proposal to relocate to work in your current assignment)	Categorical nominal: 0 = No children 1 = At least one child	(Haines et al., 2008)
Number of languages	Languages	Control	Number of languages you could speak when received the proposal to relocate to your current assignment	Categorical ordinal: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more	(Engle et al., 2015)
The foreign country living experience	Foreign experience	Control	Extent of time living abroad in previous experiences (for career and personal reasons) (in years)	Interval: Number of years	(Kim & Froese, 2012)
The extent of time abroad	Time abroad	Control	Extent of time abroad since you moved for the current assignment (in months)	Interval: Number of months	(Caligiuri, 2000)

**Table 6:** Measure of secondary data variables

Variable	Abbreviation	Type of variable	Measure	Source
Cultural distance	CD	Moderator	$CD_j = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^4 \{(I_{ij} - I_{iu})^2 / V_i\} / 4}$ <p>where <math>I_{ij}</math> is the index for the <math>i</math>th cultural dimension and <math>j</math>th country, <math>V_i</math> is the variance of the index of the <math>i</math>th dimension, <math>u</math> indicates the home country, and <math>CD_j</math> is cultural difference between home and <math>j</math>th host country.</p>	Kogut and Singh' (1988) index based on Hofstede' (1980) national culture scores

After establishing the item pool, the questionnaire was translated into the languages of interest, and this process is described in the next section.

#### 4.3.2 The translation and back-translation process

Although MNCs are adopting a *lingua franca* to improve communication and information flows, predominantly English (Brannen et al., 2014; Harzing & Pudelko, 2013; Neeley, 2017), questionnaires in English were found to obscure national differences through a reduction of the variance of responses across countries (Harzing, 2005). Taking this into account, the questionnaire was translated into the expatriate's native language, except for the Netherlands. This exception is based on Harzing and Pudelko's (2013) finding that people in the Netherlands, and MNCs' managers especially, present an excellent level of English proficiency, so providing reliable responses in English. In this regard, the questionnaire was available in the following languages: English (UK), English (US), German, Portuguese (BR), and Spanish (Latin America).

Except for the questionnaire in American English, which was adapted from the questionnaire in British English, translation and back translation procedure was used to ensure translation equivalence to the other languages (Brislin, 1970). This procedure involves translating the questionnaire from the original (English) to the target languages (German, Portuguese, and Spanish) by bilingual individuals. Incorporating an intercultural interaction process (Chidlow et al., 2014), translators were instructed that the purpose of this procedure was to have a translation that captures the conceptual equivalent of the English version. In this regard, they were asked to think about the concept behind the terms and provide a translation using terms specific to the target language (not a word-by-word translation). The translated version was then translated back to English by other bilingual individuals. The bilingual individuals doing the back translation have no contact with the original

questionnaire. The original and double-reverse-translated English versions were then compared to further resolution of discrepancies and provision of revised versions. An example of discrepancy regards the translation of the attitude scale into Spanish: the word worthless (in opposition to valuable in the semantic differential scale) was first translated into “inutil”, which was back-translated to “useless”. The final version of the Spanish questionnaire uses the term “sin valor”. The decision was carried out through a conversation between the researcher and the translators. The translators’ profile concerning their ability to perform the translation is addressed in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Translators’ profile

<b>Process</b>	<b>Translator’s profile</b>
English (UK) -> Portuguese	Native speaker of Portuguese; English is the translator’s second language.
Portuguese -> English (UK)	Native speaker of Portuguese; English is the translator’s second language.
English (UK) -> Spanish	Native speaker of Spanish; English is the translator’s second language.
Spanish -> English (UK)	Native speaker of English (UK); Spanish is the translator’s second language.
English (UK) -> German	Native speaker of German; English is the translator’s second language.
German -> English (UK)	Native speaker of German; English is the translator’s second language.
English (UK) -> English (US)	Native speaker of English (US).

The whole process of translation and back translation lasted two months, from the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 2020 until the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, 2021. After this, the questionnaire in each language was pre-tested.

#### 4.3.3 Pre-test

Pre-testing is a way of pilot testing employed to refine a measuring instrument (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Babbie (2013) suggests giving the questionnaire to around ten people to whom the questionnaire is at least relevant. In this regard, the questionnaires were pre-tested with employees who have already taken IAs or were expatriated at the moment to verify if all the directions were clearly articulated, if questions could be misinterpreted, if question wording and language were adequate, and if there were sequence problems. The pre-test was held from the 21<sup>st</sup> of February to the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 2021.

A total of 32 individuals filled out the questionnaire; 10 answered it in English, 9 in Portuguese, 7 in German, and 6 in Spanish. Further, 3 of the respondents (a Mexican, a Brazilian, and a British) agreed to make a video call after they had completed the questionnaire. These conversations gave further evidence that respondents understood the questions and that they had the information that the questions required. The pre-test also enabled the measurement of the average time of completion, which was found to be around 15 minutes. Minor adequacies were made after pre-testing the questionnaires.

Following these procedures, the questionnaire was considered adequate for data collection, which is described in the following section.

#### *4.3.4 The structure of the questionnaire*

The questionnaire has three main parts:

1. General information and consent form (Appendix 2).
2. The questions regarding the main constructs of interest.
3. General questions about the respondent and the assignment itself (including control variables).

The respondent could only advance to answer the questionnaire after consenting to the established terms.

After having the final version of the questionnaire, data collection started, which is described in the next section.

## **4.4 Data Collection and Procedures**

Data collection was held through an online survey on Qualtrics. The choice for an online survey was because they are better suited to be sent to expatriates in various countries (Dillman, 2000), which is the case in the present research. Data collection started on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2021 and finished on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2021.

A non-probability sample, through convenience sampling and snowball, was used as in previous expatriation studies (De Eccher & Duarte, 2018; Fan et al., 2018; Marques et al., 2021). Data collection was done through many different sources, which is per the suggested procedure to increase the validity of the results (Tharenou, 2015). The strategies used are described below:

1. To contact MNCs headquartered in each of the countries of interest and ask the responsible for the HR department or global mobility sector to send an invitation with the questionnaire's URL link to their employees who are engaged in IAs. This contact was made through the company's webpage, e-mail address, or LinkedIn. From more than a hundred messages sent, most did not reply.

2. To contact chambers of industry and commerce and agencies, asking them to distribute the survey to their related organisations. A message was sent to more than 20 chambers of industry and commerce and only one agreed to distribute the survey, while most did not reply. A Brazilian agency (Agência Brasileira de Promoção de Exportações e Investimentos - Apex-Brasil), which helps hundreds of Brazilian MNCs with their export activities, also agreed to share the survey invite on their webpage and circular letter.

3. To post an invite on social media communities related to expatriates (Facebook, expat.com, InterNations, LinkedIn). A few replies were received on social media from people saying they would fill out or had already filled out the survey.

4. To look for potential respondents on the business social media LinkedIn, in which it is possible to search for specific profiles (including the organisation where people work and the profile language). Its tools to find people falling within specific profiles have been recognised, leading researchers to use it to source participants in expatriation studies increasingly (e.g., De Eccher & Duarte, 2018; Marques et al., 2021; Stoermer et al., 2021). In the current research, more than two thousand invites were sent. However, there is no guarantee that all of them were AEs as many times there is not enough information on the profiles to conclude if the employees are expatriates or not. Although most people did not reply, many replied, confirming they would answer the survey, and several of them shared the contact of expatriate colleagues or said they would share the survey with them, configuring a snowballing strategy (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

When the messages were sent to the recipients of the mentioned strategies, the research purpose and details about the respondents' profiles were evidenced. Further, on the first page of the survey, there was also a message evidencing the profile of the respondents: "You have been invited to take part in this study because you are an *expatriate assigned by an organisation to temporarily work in a subsidiary abroad*." (Highlights as used in the questionnaire).

It is worth noting that data collection was held during the Covid pandemic, which affected the data collection effort. First, the pandemic forced a reduction in IAs due to health

risks and travelling restrictions (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Thus, the overall population of expatriates during data collection was smaller than it used to be, meaning more effort to find participants. Second, the pandemic may also have reflected on the lack of support from the companies, as those in charge of IAs were dealing with unprecedented uncertainties and decisions, being overwhelmed with their workload. Third, it was a period marked by working from home, when most employees would spend most of their time working virtually, which was frequently associated with stress and anxiety (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Lazarova et al., 2023). In this regard, expatriates may have been unwilling to spend extra time online answering a questionnaire. These are some of the Covid-related aspects that may have impacted the effort needed to collect data for this investigation.

The questionnaire link was closed on the 26th of October 2021. The procedures concerning data analysis are described in the next section.

## **4.5 Data Analysis**

This section provides information on the procedures to analyse data. First, data were screened in a preliminary data analysis, also testing the normality assumption. Then, descriptive statistics were used to assess samples and variables' descriptive information. Next, exploratory factor analysis was followed by the test for common method variance and non-response bias. Later, multi-group confirmatory factor analysis was performed to establish a baseline measurement model, which was tested to ascertain invariance across groups of expatriates as well as to ascertain convergent and discriminant validity. Finally, after all these procedures, multi-group structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses.

The following sections outline the techniques attached to each of these procedures.

### *4.5.1 Preliminary data analysis and descriptive statistics*

Firstly, data were checked to identify if all respondents fit the specified profile. Then, the answers were analysed to identify missing values, outliers and extreme values, and data were also checked for normality.

An important aspect impacting multivariate analysis is the distribution of data. In this regard, data were analysed to verify if they were normally distributed, which was assessed from the values for skewness and kurtosis. Kurtosis provides information about the height of

the distribution compared to the normal distribution (Hair Jr. et al., 2006). Positive kurtosis indicates a peaked distribution, whereas a negative value indicates a flatter distribution. The skewness value indicates the balance of the distribution (Hair Jr. et al., 2006), meaning that when it is balanced, it is centred, and when it is unbalanced, it shifts to one side (right or left). According to Hair Jr. et al. (2006), the normal range for skewness-kurtosis value is  $\pm 1.96$  (0.05 error level).

After data screening for such aspects, descriptive statistics were employed to describe the surveyed population's characteristics, such as the distribution of sex and respondents' family composition. Descriptive statistics were also used to calculate the items' mean and standard deviation. At this stage, means were also compared to analyse if they differ for the samples of developed and emerging AEs. Given the non-normally distribution of data, the Mann Whitney test, which is a nonparametric test, was used to investigate if the mean for each item varied across the samples of developed and emerging AEs (Field, 2018).

For these analyses, data were investigated for the entire population as well as for the sub-populations of developed and emerging AEs. Preliminary data analysis and descriptive analysis were done on the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences – SPSS (version 28).

#### 4.5.2 *Exploratory factor analysis*

Exploratory factor analyses were performed on every latent construct to evaluate the item pool of each of them. The analyses were conducted using MPlus.

The decision about the number of factors in each construct was determined by the Classical Parallel Analysis (Horns, 1965), robust maximum likelihood estimator (MLR), and the rotation was Geomin, an oblique technique that enables the factors to correlate but does not force them.

The procedures involved removing items with correlations too high ( $>.80$ ) or too low (none or few correlations  $>0.30$ ). Then, a combination of item communalities after rotation ( $<0.50$ ), low items loadings ( $<0.32$ ), and cross-loadings on the factors ( $<0.15$  difference from an item's highest factor loading and absolute loadings higher than 0.32 on two or more factors) was used as deletion or retention criteria (Hair Jr. et al., 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006).

### 4.5.3 *Multi-group confirmatory factor analysis*

Multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MG-CFA) was used to validate the measurement model and assess the goodness of fit, composite reliability, and construct validity in the measurement model. The analyses were performed using the MPlus 8.6 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998) and were based on the robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimator, which corrects for potential biases in the standard errors induced by non-normality.

The goodness-of-fit indexes used were  $\chi^2/df$  (chi-squared / degrees of freedom), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The  $\chi^2/df$  ratio must be less than or equal to 5 or, preferably, less than or equal to 3; CFI and TLI values must be higher than 0.90 and, preferably above 0.95; SRMR values should be close or below 0.08; RMSEA values should be close or below 0.08 or, preferably less or equal to 0.06 (Brown, 2015).

Further, the scales' convergent validity and discriminant validity were assessed, and the respective procedures are specified.

Convergent validity refers to the degree to which measures that should be theoretically related are in fact related (Hair, 2010). To provide information about convergent validity, the constructs' Cronbach's Alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and items' loadings were calculated (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Standardized factor loadings should be at least 0.4 and, preferably 0.7, AVE for each construct should equal or exceed the suggested cut-off point of 0.50, and all reliability scores should exceed the threshold of 0.7, while values between 0.6 and 0.7 are acceptable (Hair Jr. et al., 2006; Hinkin, 1998).

Discriminant validity tests whether measurements that are not supposed to be related are actually unrelated (Hair, 2010). To obtain discriminant validity, all constructs must share more variance with their measures than other constructs. This can be assessed if the square root of the AVE values for each latent variable is higher than the correlations between the construct and all other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Henseler et al. (2015) have suggested that Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method is insufficiently sensitive to detect discriminant validity problems. To address this issue, constructs are also analysed based on their proposed heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). Using Henseler's HTMT online calculator, the correlations between the pairs of constructs based on item loadings

were calculated. To prove the existence of discriminant validity, the correlations should be lower than 0.85, using a conservative criterion (Kline, 2011).

#### 4.5.4 *Invariance test*

Given the comparative objective of this study, an invariance test needs to be performed to allow for the comparison of latent means across samples of AEs from developed and emerging countries. The focus is on the measurement properties of the indicators that make up the latent variables of interest. For doing so, “sets of parameters are put to the test in a logically ordered and increasingly restrictive fashion” (Byrne, 2012, p. 195).

For this study, then, a sequential testing procedure was performed to ensure multi-group invariance. The first model, called configural, refers to when factor loadings and item intercepts are freely estimated. Next, constraining the factor loadings to be equal across groups, metric invariance is tested. Lastly, another nested model with constraints on both factor loadings and item intercepts is called scalar invariance.

The model fit results of the metric are compared with those of the configural and the fit results of the scalar are compared to those of the metric to test the existence of multi-group invariance. Because  $\chi^2$  (difference) tests “are sensitive to sample size and to violation of the normality assumption” (Chen, 2007, p. 465), the extent of measurement invariance was based on the commonly used model fit index: Changes in CFI of less than or equal to 0.01 is an indication of measurement invariance (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

#### 4.5.5 *Common method variance*

Common method variance (CMV) is the “variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent” (Podsakoff et al., 2003, p. 879) and it threatens the validity of the results about the relationships between variables.

In this regard, several procedural remedies were adopted to account for common method variance, both a priori and post hoc.

A priori, the procedures to minimise CMV were mixing the sequence of independent and dependent variable measures (dependent variable appears before independent variables),

the use of varying scale formats (Likert scales with 5 and 7 points, and evaluative semantic differential scales) and presentations of the items in randomized order (Chang et al., 2010; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Further, participants were assured anonymity, and asked to respond as honestly as possible (Krishnan et al., 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Moreover, the complex proposed model, including interaction effects, is also unlikely to suffer from CMV. In fact, Shaffer et al. (1999) argued that the common method inflates only zero-order correlations, not interaction effects. Thus, the consideration of moderating and mediating variables in the study prevents the respondents from cognitively visualizing interaction terms (Chang et al., 2010) and prevents the threat caused by CMV.

Post hoc, CMV was assessed through Harman's single-factor test, an unmeasured latent method factor, and partial correlation method.

Harman's single-factor test explains that common method bias is present in the data set when a single factor emerges, or one factor accounts for 50% of the variance of the items in the exploratory factor analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

Harman's test was found to be an insensitive one. Thus the results were further controlled for an unmeasured latent "method" factor (Podsakoff et al., 2003) to confirm Harman's single-factor test. In this test, all items are loaded on both their expected factors and one common latent factor; the common latent factor is uncorrelated with the other factors. The pervasiveness of common method variance is observed by controlling for the effects of a method factor, comparing the fit of the measurement model and item loading with and without a common latent factor.

Finally, partial correlation methods (Lindell & Whitney, 2001) was also employed. According to this method, the procedure to account for CMV is introducing a theoretically unrelated marker variable and assessing the correlations with the other relevant variables in the model. Gender was the chosen marker variable. Correlations between the marker variable and the other relevant variables in the model indicate common method bias (Malhotra et al., 2017). Thus, the results of the correlations are analysed according to the strength of the correlations to indicate CMV: large correlations between gender and the models' variables indicate CMV, whereas low correlations indicate that CMV is not an issue in the study.

#### 4.5.6 *Non-response bias*

Data were analysed to verify the potential non-response bias. Non-response bias can occur when subjects who refuse to take part in a study are systematically different from those who participate. Since the researcher does not have access to data from non-respondents, the strategy proposed by Armstrong and Overton (1977) is applied. In this regard, data were firstly split into early and late quartiles based on when the questionnaires were received. Then, the means for the model's constructs were compared using Mann Whitney test to identify if they differ significantly across the groups.

#### 4.5.7 Hypothesis testing

Multigroup-Structural Equation Modelling (MG-SEM) was used to test and examine the relationships among variables within the proposed conceptual model. The software MPlus 8.6 was chosen for the analysis.

MG-SEM provides a powerful tool to assess the similarities and differences among different subgroups within a sample (Hair Jr. et al., 2006). Overall, it identifies whether data from multiple subsamples fit the same or similar models (Byrne, 2004; Hair Jr. et al., 2006). In this case, MG-SEM enables the evaluation of the extent of similarity in the structure of how the variables are related for the subsample of expatriates from developed countries and the subsample of expatriates from emerging markets.

The goodness-of-fit indexes used were  $\chi^2/df$  (chi-squared / degrees of freedom) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The  $\chi^2/df$  ratio must be lower than or equal to 5 or, preferably, lower than or equal to 3; RMSEA values should be close to or below 0.08 or, preferably 0.06 (Brown, 2015).

The magnitude of the relationships of interest were assessed in reference to effect size classifications for correlational data: 0.10 = small, 0.20 = medium, 0.30 = large (Gignac & Szodorai, 2016).

For the mediation analysis of the socio-cognitive variables on the relationship between the types of motivation and the intention to expatriate, the indirect effect was estimated through the MPlus command “model indirect”. The significance of the indirect effect was evaluated to conclude whether the relationships were or were not mediated.

While two samples are already employed (developed and emerging AEs) for the analysis of the direct and mediated effects, the moderating analysis requires samples to be split before proceeding. If moderators are latent variables, as is the case of PD, a single score for the moderator has to be obtained first. This was achieved by calculating the average score for each case, where rotated factor loadings were used to weight the individual scores. Then, for latent (PD) and observable variables (CD), the dataset was median split into two parts. Thus, MG-SEM was performed comparing two sub-samples (high versus low values of the moderator variable) to identify whether there is a moderating effect on the hypothesised relationships.

The Wald test (Wald, 1943) was used to test the statistical significance of the differences in the strength of the relationships between variables. It was employed in two

ways: a) to compare the samples of developed and emerging AEs for hypotheses 1 and 2; b) to compare the sub-samples of high and low moderating values for hypotheses 3 and 4.

This chapter aimed to describe the methodological choices in this research. Based on the method described in this chapter, the next section addresses the results and discussion.

## 5 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Chapter 3 described the proposed conceptual framework used to examine the formation of employees' intention to expatriate, which is tested and compared for expatriates from developed and emerging countries. In Chapter 5, the research method that guided the study to answer the research question was presented and justified. Finally, this chapter presents the analysis of the data obtained from the respondents.

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 28.0 was employed for preliminary data analysis, including data screening, mean and percentages, and normality tests. The MPlus version 8.6 was used for the subsequent procedures, including exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, invariance tests, and hypotheses testing.

This chapter comprises eleven main sections. The first one refers to preliminary data analysis and normality checks. The second section brings the descriptive statistics, including the respondents' profiles and the constructs' mean and standard deviation, followed by the exploratory factor analysis of the latent variables. Next, multi-group confirmatory factor analysis is employed to establish the baseline model, followed by constructs' convergent and discriminant validity verification. The baseline model is then analysed to verify invariance across developed and emerging AEs, followed by the test for common method variance and non-response bias. After these procedures, the chapter addresses the proposed hypotheses' results and compares the TPB-based, SDT-based, and integrated models. Finally, section 5.1.1 presents the summary and conclusions of this chapter.

### 5.1 Preliminary data analysis

A total of 528 questionnaires were collected. First, however, a few procedures were carried out to refine the data and define the study's sample. Firstly, data were checked to identify if all respondents fit the defined sample profile. Then, the answers were analysed to identify missing data, whether a respondent answered the same option in all the questions, and if the questionnaire filling was too short. These aspects could evidence a lack of appropriate attention and accuracy in the answers.

First, the researcher identified that 27 were filled by expatriates whose nationalities are not the focus of the current research (e.g., Argentinian, Bulgarian, Egyptian, Indian, Peruvian, Polish, Spanish, Turkish). This number is understandable considering the way the

survey was distributed: when contacting companies, chambers, and global mobility professionals, the focus was to ask them to distribute among AEs, and no other specification was given as it would be overwhelming. Moreover, when searching for respondents on LinkedIn, it is not easy or accurate to identify people's nationalities from the data provided. In this regard, invites were probably sent to people who did not meet the established criteria. Therefore, these 27 questionnaires were deleted from the sample.

Second, questionnaires were assessed to identify the cases of missing data, which is considered an influential problem in data analysis that may affect the research results (Hair, 2010). Sixty-eight questionnaires displayed several missing values. Most of them were from respondents who quit filling out the questionnaire at an early stage. Considering the importance of the demographic characteristics of the respondents (e.g., their nationality), the researcher decided to remove the questionnaires with missing data because such questions were at the end of the survey.

Third, answers were analysed to identify if a respondent answered the same option in all the questions. Another questionnaire was excluded at this stage.

Fourth, questionnaires were checked to identify whether the filling took too long or too short. The decision was to exclude only questionnaires answered too fast (less than 7 minutes), as it is expected to affect the quality of the answers. The reason to not exclude questionnaires that took too long is that the researcher identified that most of these respondents (as they could close and reopen the survey to finish filling it) started the questionnaire and, after long hours or on the other day, finished filling it. Since questions are not dependent on each other, it does not harm the quality of responses. Even though these questionnaires were not excluded (38 in total), their filling time was not considered in the computation of the average time for filling the survey, not to overestimate it. Questionnaires were filled, on average, in 15 minutes (minimum time was 7:00 minutes and maximum time was 43:83 minutes). Another questionnaire was removed because it took too short a filling time.

Finally, responses were cross-checked to identify impossible answers. For instance, comparing the respondents' time working for the company and the extent of time living abroad. As the incongruences identified referred to specific questions in the questionnaires, the individual values were deleted, but not the entire questionnaire. Table 7 summarizes the processes used to reach the final sample for the analyses.

**Table 7:** Final number of questionnaires resulting from preliminary data analysis

Process	
The initial number of questionnaires	528
Questionnaire excluded because expatriates from other nationalities filled them	27
Questionnaires excluded due to missing data	68
Questionnaires excluded because the respondents did not vary the answers throughout the questionnaire	1
Questionnaires excluded because filling in took too short a time	1
<i>Total number of questionnaires used for data analysis</i>	<i>431</i>

After the processes described in Table 7, the number of questionnaires included in the data analysis is 431. This can be considered a large sample in comparison to other expatriation studies, when, generally, it hardly reaches 300 (e.g., Fan et al., 2018; Marques et al., 2021; Silbiger et al., 2021; Song et al., 2021), with very few exemptions of samples larger than 1000 (e.g., Stoermer et al., 2021).

As part of the preliminary analysis, data was then tested to check the normality assumption described in the next section.

### 5.1.1 Testing the normality assumption

Skewness and kurtosis were calculated for all the items in the dataset for the entire population and the sub-samples of developed and emerging AEs. According to Hair Jr. et al. (2006), the normal range for skewness-kurtosis value is  $\pm 1.96$  (0.05 error level).

The assessment of the skewness and kurtosis is reported in Table 8.

**Table 8:** Normality check: skewness and kurtosis

	Total sample				Developed AEs				Emerging AEs			
	Skewness		Kurtosis		Skewness		Kurtosis		Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
SAT1	-1.615	0.118	3.455	0.235	-1.852	0.167	4.206	0.332	-1.268	0.165	2.119	0.328
SAT2	-1.648	0.118	2.534	0.235	-1.731	0.167	3.200	0.332	-1.577	0.165	2.054	0.328
SAT3	-1.418	0.118	2.299	0.235	-1.407	0.167	2.186	0.332	-1.395	0.165	2.278	0.328
SAT4	-1.157	0.118	1.381	0.235	-1.192	0.167	1.456	0.332	-1.117	0.165	1.315	0.328
PD1	-1.099	0.118	-0.245	0.235	-0.799	0.167	-0.886	0.332	-1.452	0.165	0.781	0.328
PD2	-1.079	0.118	0.015	0.235	-0.606	0.167	-0.882	0.332	-1.755	0.165	2.465	0.328
PD3	-1.187	0.118	0.435	0.235	-0.885	0.167	-0.388	0.332	-1.508	0.165	1.710	0.328
PD4	-0.701	0.118	-0.313	0.235	-0.639	0.167	-0.374	0.332	-0.762	0.165	-0.269	0.328
PD5	-0.959	0.118	-0.127	0.235	-0.743	0.167	-0.691	0.332	-1.189	0.165	0.726	0.328
PD6	-1.718	0.118	1.732	0.235	-1.356	0.167	0.573	0.332	-2.227	0.165	3.877	0.328
PD7	-0.599	0.118	-0.969	0.235	-0.067	0.167	-1.348	0.332	-1.234	0.165	0.621	0.328
INT1	-1.471	0.118	1.070	0.235	-1.452	0.167	1.007	0.332	-1.500	0.165	1.186	0.328
INT2	-1.197	0.118	0.392	0.235	-1.181	0.167	0.336	0.332	-1.218	0.165	0.475	0.328
INT3	-2.362	0.118	6.107	0.235	-2.455	0.167	7.243	0.332	-2.282	0.165	4.969	0.328

INT4	-1.685	0.118	1.967	0.235	-1.478	0.167	1.230	0.332	-1.943	0.165	3.076	0.328
AMot1	-0.916	0.118	-0.249	0.235	-0.867	0.167	-0.229	0.332	-0.989	0.165	-0.204	0.328
AMot2	-0.793	0.118	-0.170	0.235	-0.975	0.167	0.422	0.332	-0.641	0.165	-0.571	0.328
AMot3	-0.995	0.118	0.643	0.235	-1.175	0.167	1.342	0.332	-0.839	0.165	0.178	0.328
AMot4	-1.131	0.118	0.928	0.235	-0.978	0.167	0.758	0.332	-1.406	0.165	1.580	0.328
AMot5	-0.385	0.118	-0.895	0.235	-0.354	0.167	-0.892	0.332	-0.439	0.165	-0.881	0.328
AMot6	-0.889	0.118	-0.114	0.235	-0.781	0.167	-0.373	0.332	-1.007	0.165	0.217	0.328
AMot7	-1.414	0.118	1.542	0.235	-1.257	0.167	1.281	0.332	-1.644	0.165	2.152	0.328
AMot8	-0.127	0.118	-1.214	0.235	0.020	0.167	-1.193	0.332	-0.301	0.165	-1.153	0.328
CMot1	-0.360	0.118	-1.045	0.235	-0.238	0.167	-1.129	0.332	-0.510	0.165	-0.887	0.328
CMot2	0.678	0.118	-0.916	0.235	0.805	0.167	-0.809	0.332	0.570	0.165	-0.965	0.328
CMot3	2.334	0.118	4.931	0.235	2.078	0.167	3.700	0.332	2.610	0.165	6.377	0.328
CMot4	0.037	0.118	-1.196	0.235	0.119	0.167	-1.093	0.332	-0.191	0.165	-1.281	0.328
CMot5	-0.348	0.118	-1.014	0.235	-0.136	0.167	-1.157	0.332	-0.620	0.165	-0.633	0.328
CMot6	1.609	0.118	1.823	0.235	1.441	0.167	1.038	0.332	1.793	0.165	2.740	0.328
SN1	-1.326	0.118	1.229	0.235	-1.112	0.167	0.587	0.332	-1.594	0.165	2.254	0.328
SN2	-0.699	0.118	-0.483	0.235	-0.511	0.167	-0.776	0.332	-0.957	0.165	0.085	0.328
SN3	-0.154	0.118	-1.037	0.235	0.137	0.167	-0.871	0.332	-0.520	0.165	-0.774	0.328
SN4	0.198	0.118	-1.207	0.235	0.315	0.167	-1.049	0.332	0.031	0.165	-1.332	0.328
SN5	-0.265	0.118	-1.025	0.235	-0.153	0.167	-1.032	0.332	-0.456	0.165	-0.918	0.328
PBC1	-1.786	0.118	2.921	0.235	-1.862	0.167	2.997	0.332	-1.675	0.165	2.729	0.328
PBC2	-1.549	0.118	1.680	0.235	-1.788	0.167	2.623	0.332	-1.339	0.165	0.974	0.328
PBC3	-1.967	0.118	4.525	0.235	-2.361	0.167	6.744	0.332	-1.614	0.165	2.706	0.328
PBC4	-1.244	0.118	1.029	0.235	-1.304	0.167	1.162	0.332	-1.197	0.165	0.956	0.328
PBC5	-1.439	0.118	1.343	0.235	-1.760	0.167	2.671	0.332	-1.184	0.165	0.535	0.328
PBC6	-1.391	0.118	0.788	0.235	-1.762	0.167	2.193	0.332	-1.113	0.165	-0.010	0.328
ATT1	-3.140	0.118	11.063	0.235	-2.997	0.167	10.677	0.332	-3.262	0.165	11.471	0.328
ATT2	-2.217	0.118	4.467	0.235	-1.936	0.167	3.265	0.332	-2.601	0.165	6.453	0.328
ATT3	-1.631	0.118	2.447	0.235	-1.771	0.167	2.766	0.332	-1.510	0.165	2.271	0.328
ATT4	-1.266	0.118	1.440	0.235	-1.277	0.167	1.389	0.332	-1.256	0.165	1.529	0.328
ATT5	-2.728	0.118	7.551	0.235	-2.694	0.167	7.826	0.332	-2.775	0.165	7.504	0.328
ATT6	-2.432	0.118	6.346	0.235	-2.308	0.167	6.009	0.332	-2.563	0.165	6.822	0.328
N	431			213			218					

Note: SAT = Satisfaction with the IA; PD = Psychic Distance; INT = Intention to expatriate; AMot = Autonomous motivation; CMot = Controlled motivation; SN = Subjective norm; PBC = Perceived behaviour control; ATT = Attitude

Analysing data for skewness and kurtosis statistics, it is evident that many items are not normally distributed for the entire sample or the sub-samples. The verification that the items are not normally distributed hampers the condition for multivariate normality (Byrne, 2012). In this study, special attention should be given to skewness as it tends to impact covariance tests (among others) severely, and SEM is based on the analysis of covariance structures (Byrne, 2012).

Consequently, given that all the items were assessed with more than four categories (so estimators of continuous variables apply) and they are not normally distributed, the research follows the recommendations and opts to use the robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimator (Byrne, 2012), which corrects for potential biases in the standard errors induced by non-normality (Muthén & Muthén, 1998).

After presenting the preliminary data analysis, the following section describes the respondents' profiles and the descriptive statistics of the constructs' items.

## 5.2 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are employed to detail the characteristics of the sample, assess each variable against central tendency measures, and evaluate data variability measures. Using descriptive statistics, the profile of the respondents is described in the next section, followed by the descriptive statistics of the study's constructs.

### 5.2.1 Profile of respondents

The target samples for this survey were AEs from specific nationalities representing expatriates from developed (American, British, Dutch, and German) and emerging (Brazil and Mexican) countries. All the respondents not falling within these characteristics were excluded from the sample for analyses (as specified in section 5.1). The questionnaire had a series of questions to describe the respondents' profiles, what is now described for the entire population and the sub-samples of developed and emerging AEs. The results are further compared to other studies on expatriates.

Firstly, the respondents' distribution regarding nationality is presented in Table 9.

**Table 9:** Respondents' nationality

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Developed countries</i>	<i>213</i>	<i>49.4</i>
American	45	20.6
British	58	26.6
Dutch	33	15.1
German	77	35.3
<i>Emerging countries</i>	<i>218</i>	<i>50.6</i>
Brazilian	153	70.2
Mexican	65	29.8
<i>Total respondents</i>	<i>431</i>	<i>100</i>

As evidenced in Table 9, the sub-samples are balanced: 49.4% of the respondents are expatriates from developed countries, and 50.6% are from emerging countries. The percentage of Brazilian and Mexican respondents resonates with the number of MNCs in these emerging countries (Bureau van Dijk, 2017). However, the numbers for AEs from

developed countries do not follow the same tendency; otherwise, Americans would account for the largest proportion of respondents (Bureau van Dijk, 2017). This unbalanced percentage of developed AEs is an expected result of convenience sampling and is explained by two aspects. The first one is the receptivity to the research, once several people offered to distribute the survey among expatriate colleagues, facilitating its spread among specific groups. The second is the greater easiness of finding expatriates with specific characteristics compared to others. For instance, German expatriates are easier to find on LinkedIn than British expatriates: it was effective to use the MNCs' LinkedIn pages to find German expatriates by searching for people whose profile language was German and who were living in non-German speaking countries where the MNCs have subsidiaries. However, the same strategy was unsuccessful in finding British expatriates: since English is a much more common language, finding someone whose profile language was English working for a British company abroad was not enough evidence that they were British expatriates). To better understand the profile of the respondents, the subsequent analyses focus on the respondents' demographic characteristics (Table 10).

**Table 10:** Respondents' demographic characteristics

	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Developed AEs</b>	<b>Emerging AEs</b>
Gender	80.5% are male 19.5% are female	82.2% are male 17.8% are female	78.9% are male 21.1 are female
Spouse	68.68% had a spouse	64.32% had a spouse	72.93% had a spouse
Children	40.60% had at least one child	42.72% had at least one child	38.53% had at least one child
Spouse / Children accompanied	63.57% yes	56.34% yes	70.64% yes
Age	Mean = 39.24 SD= 8.75 Minimum = 23 Maximum = 67	Mean = 42.07 SD= 9.72 Minimum = 23 Maximum = 67	Mean = 36.51 SD= 6.66 Minimum = 24 Maximum = 59
Education (in years)	Mean = 22.23 SD = 3.39 Minimum = 10 Maximum = 36	Mean = 21.53 SD = 2.99 Minimum = 10 Maximum = 31	Mean = 22.92 SD = 3.63 Minimum = 14 Maximum = 36
Number of foreign language proficiency	None = 6.7% One = 29.9% Two = 38.3% Three = 18.8% Four = 5.3% Five or more = 1.4%	None = 13.1% One = 37.1% Two = 28.2% Three = 13.6% Four = 6.1% Five or more = 1.9%	None = 0.5% One = 22.9% Two = 48.2% Three = 22.9% Four = 4.6% Five or more = 0.9%
Host-country language proficiency	None = 30.2% Basic = 11.1% Conversational = 15.3% Fluent = 43.4%	None = 42.3% Basic = 11.7% Conversational = 9.9% Fluent = 36.2%	None = 18.3% Basic = 10.6% Conversational = 20.6% Fluent = 50.5%
The extent of time living abroad in previous experiences (for career and personal reasons) (years)	Mean = 4.09 SD = 5.55 Minimum = 0 Maximum = 30	Mean = 5.61 SD = 6.51 Minimum = 0 Maximum = 30	Mean = 2.59 SD = 3.85 Minimum = 0 Maximum = 25

Note: SD = standard deviation

Among the respondents, 80.5% are men, which, although it is a high percentage, is by other studies on expatriates (e.g., Joardar & Weisang, 2019; Kim & Froese, 2012; Shen et al., 2021; Stoermer et al., 2020) and large scale investigations that found that women hold just a quarter of all organisationally assigned expatriate positions (Brookfield, 2016; Meier, 2018).

Further, most of the sample had a spouse at the time of the assignment offer (68.68%), with 40.60% having at least one child, resembling the figures of other studies on expatriates (Shen et al., 2021; Stoermer et al., 2020). Further, 63.57% had their spouse and/or child(ren) accompanying them during the IA. Compared to the percentage of partnered respondents, the rate of emerging AEs having a spouse and/or children accompanying is higher (72.94% had a spouse and 70.64% had a spouse and/or children accompanying) than for developed AEs (64.32% had a spouse and 56.34% had a spouse and/or children accompanying).

The average respondents' age was 39.34 (SD=8.75), which resembles the sample in other expatriation studies, when authors found, for instance, the average age of 36.24 for Korean expatriates (Kim & Froese, 2012), 39.12 and 38.92 for multi-nationality samples

(Shen et al., 2021; Stoermer et al., 2021). The sample has a high level of education: on average, respondents reported having 22.23 years of formal education, the equivalent of graduate courses. On average, emerging AEs are almost six years younger than developed AEs, have studied, on average, 1.5 years more than developed AEs, and speak, on average, more languages than developed AEs (13.1% and 0.5% of developed and emerging AEs, respectively, are not proficient in any foreign language).

Further, respondents were asked about their host-country language proficiency. Most of the sample is fluent or has a conversational level in the host country's language (58.7%). However, the figure is inflated by emerging AE's numbers: 46.1% of developed AEs and 71.15% of emerging AEs were fluent or had a conversational level in the host country's language; on the other hand, 42.3% of developed AEs and 18.3% of emerging AEs reported no knowledge in the host country's language.

Additionally, respondents reported having lived abroad in previous experiences for an average of 4.09 years. However, this figure is inflated mainly by developed AEs, who have lived, on average, 5.61 (SD=6.51) years abroad, equivalent to a sample of Western expatriates in endangered countries (Bader et al., 2015). On the other hand, emerging AEs have lived, on average, 2.59 (SD=3.85) years abroad, which is similar to the 2.4 years of experience of Chinese expatriates (Song et al., 2021).

Respondents were also asked about their professional profile, which is reported in Table 11.

**Table 11:** Respondents' professional profile and IA's characteristics

	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Developed countries</b>	<b>Emerging countries</b>
Time working for the company	Mean = 10.37 SD = 7.20 Minimum = 0 Maximum = 37	Mean = 11.67 SD = 8.43 Minimum = 0 Maximum = 37	Mean = 9.09 SD = 5.47 Minimum = 0 Maximum = 26
Level of authority (before the IA)	Top management: 5.8% Senior management: 28.3% Middle management: 23.2% Lower management: 12.8% Nonsupervisory: 29.9%	Top management: 4.2% Senior management: 27.2% Middle management: 30.0% Lower management: 11.7% Nonsupervisory: 26.8%	Top management: 7.3% Senior management: 29.4% Middle management: 16.5% Lower management: 13.8% Nonsupervisory: 33.0%
Level of authority (during the IA)	Top management: 15.5% Senior management: 37.6% Middle management: 18.6% Lower management: 10.2% Nonsupervisory: 18.1%	Top management: 14.6% Senior management: 38.5% Middle management: 21.6% Lower management: 12.2% Nonsupervisory: 13.1%	Top management: 16.5% Senior management: 36.7% Middle management: 15.6% Lower management: 8.3% Nonsupervisory: 22.9%
Type of IA	Fixed term = 34.1% Open ended = 65.9%  For the expats in fixed-term IAs: M=29.84 months SD=14.02 Min.=2 Max.=72	Fixed term = 38.5% Open-ended = 61.9%  For the expats in fixed-term IAs: Mean=29.78 months SD=11.99 Min.=2 Max.=60	Fixed term = 29.8% Open-ended = 70.2%  For the expats in fixed-term IAs: Mean=29.92 months SD=16.32 Min.=2 Max.=72

Note: SD = standard deviation; Min = minimum value; Max. = maximum value.

The results presented in Table 11 reveal that respondents had a little more than ten years of work experience with their current employer ( $M=10.37$ ;  $SD=7.20$ ), with figures for developed AEs ( $M=11.67$ ;  $SD=8.43$ ) higher than for emerging AEs ( $M=9.09$ ;  $SD=5.47$ ). Further, for most of the AEs, IAs meant getting promoted. If 5.8% of the respondents were in top management positions before the expatriation, this figure reached 15.5% during their IAs; conversely, 29.9% of the sample worked in nonsupervisory positions before the assignment, which dropped to 18.1% during the assignment. Interestingly, the increase in the proportion of top management and senior management levels for developed AEs was 21.7% compared to before the IA, while the rise for emerging AEs was 16.5%. Further, it is interesting to observe that the proportion of emerging AEs that remained in nonsupervisory positions during the assignment is higher (69.4%) than for developed AEs (48.88%). Clearly, it corroborates that job opportunities offer different development and career opportunities (Shaffer et al., 2012).

Further, most of the sample was in open-ended IAs (65.9%), which was more common for emerging AEs (70.2%) than for developed AEs (61.9%). Considering the AEs in fixed-term IAs, the average expected length of stay abroad was 29.84 months ( $SD = 14.02$ ), which was similar for developed AEs ( $M=29.78$ ) and emerging AEs ( $M=29.92$ ). However,

the dispersity of the sample of emerging AEs was higher ( $SD=16.32$ ) than the sample of developed AEs ( $SD=11.99$ ), evidencing that emerging AEs in fixed-term IAs are a more diverse sample concerning the time abroad. Further, only 4.2% of the developed AEs and 4.1% of the emerging AEs in fixed-term IAs were in short-term assignments, which does not follow the reported popularity of STAs in organisations (KPMG, 2019), possibly because the benefits, such as lower cost (Konopaske et al., 2009), do not outweigh the attached hindrance to developing social capital with local colleagues (Dowling et al., 2015).

Besides identifying employees' nationality, their home and host countries enable an outline of AEs flows across the globe. Employees' nationality is the core information to define the samples of developed and emerging AEs, as addressed in Chapter 4. Complementary, employees' home country was specified as where they were living when they received the proposal to expatriate, and the host country is where they were currently living during the IA.

For the current assignment, most of the sample was moving from their country of nationality (82.37%). It evidences that the home country is the same as the country of nationality for the largest part of the sample. The percentage of emerging AEs moving from their country of nationality (Brazil or Mexico) was higher (88.07%) than that of developed AEs (Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States), for whom the percentage was 76.52%. These data complement the information on the extent of previous experiences abroad: there were more developed AEs already living abroad when they received the proposal for their current expatriation than emerging AEs, meaning the current IA is not their first international experience. Moreover, only 44.5% of emerging AEs were working for companies headquartered in Brazil and Mexico, while 87.32% of developed AEs were working for companies headquartered in Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, or the United States.

The information on the countries involved in the samples' expatriations is complemented by employees' host countries, which are depicted in Table 12.

**Table 12:** Destination of the IAs

Region	Host countries	Total respondents	Developed AEs	Emerging AEs
Asia	China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mongolia, Qatar, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam	89	67	22
Africa	Angola, Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa	6	4	2
North America	Canada, United States	130	40	90
Latin America	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru	62	20	42
Europe	Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Ukraine, United Kingdom	138	79	60
Australia/Oceania	Australia, New Zealand	3	3	0

The data in Table 12 shows a clear predominance of Europe and North America as host destinations, which follows the global migration patterns (Ministry of Defence - UK, 2018). However, the sample is diverse concerning the expatriates' host regions and countries. IAs were spread across six regions in the globe, in a total of 56 countries. It represents a more diverse sample than in other studies sampling expatriates, around 30 host countries (e.g., Marques et al., 2021; Silbiger et al., 2021; Song et al., 2021; Stoermer et al., 2021). Moreover, the sub-sample of developed AEs was living in 6 different regions while emerging AEs were taking their IAs in 5 different regions. The range of host countries avoids single-country bias and enables an understanding of the moderating role played by cultural distance.

Another essential piece of information to describe the respondents' type of expatriation refers to the direction of the transfer (Edström & Galbraith, 1994), whether it is the traditional transfer from a HQ to a subsidiary, the reverse direction from a subsidiary to a HQ, or between subsidiaries. Based on the information about the HQs' countries and the expatriates' home and host countries, it was possible to identify the sample distribution regarding the different transfer directions (Table 13).

**Table 13:** Distribution of the sample regarding the direction of the transfer

Direction	Total respondents		Developed countries		Emerging countries	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
HQ -> Subsidiary	212	49.19%	118	55.40%	94	43.12%
Subsidiary -> HQ	71	16.47%	21	9.86%	50	22.94%
Subsidiary -> Subsidiary	148	34.34%	74	34.74%	74	33.94%
Total	431	100%	213	100%	218	100%

Note: HQ = headquarter

However, the sample follows the reported tendency of having increasing numbers of talents coming from non-HQ locations (Bonache et al., 2020; Brookfield, 2016; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016) since more than half of the sample moved from the subsidiaries (50.81%). Lateral mobilities between the subsidiaries were the second most common transfer direction (34.34%), and developed and emerging AEs presented similar percentages (34.74% and 33.93, respectively). However, the proportion of emerging AEs moving from subsidiaries to HQs is higher (26.60%) compared to developed AEs (10.33%).

Besides describing the sample's profile, descriptive statistics were also employed to describe the constructs' items, which are addressed in the next section.

### *5.2.2 Descriptive statistics of the constructs' items*

The descriptive statistics for each independent, moderator, and the dependent variable used in the proposed research model are depicted in Table 14. Further, the last column brings the results for the Mann-Whitney test to investigate if the mean for each item varies across the samples of developed and emerging AEs. The overall results are described below.

**Table 14:** Descriptive statistics of the latent factors

		Total sample		Developed AEs		Emerging AEs		Difference
	Items	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value
Intention to expatriate	INT1	5.82	1.748	5.78	1.771	5.86	1.728	0.48
	INT2	5.58	1.738	5.59	1.723	5.58	1.756	0.99
	INT3	6.45	1.048	6.40	1.066	6.50	1.031	0.07
	INT4	6.00	1.560	5.85	1.634	6.14	1.473	0.02
Attitude	ATT1	6.46	1.142	6.45	1.096	6.47	1.188	0.36
	ATT2 <sup>R</sup>	6.16	1.456	6.00	1.526	6.31	1.369	<0.01
	ATT3 <sup>R</sup>	5.80	1.506	5.87	1.536	5.73	1.476	0.11
	ATT4 <sup>R</sup>	5.63	1.471	5.61	1.509	5.66	1.435	0.84
	ATT5	6.29	1.350	6.26	1.305	5.32	1.394	0.14
	ATT6	6.20	1.339	6.16	1.309	6.24	1.371	0.21
Perceived behaviour control	PBC1	6.03	1.387	6.00	1.455	6.06	1.320	0.85
	PBC2	5.88	1.592	6.09	1.416	5.67	1.725	0.01
	PBC3	6.30	1.045	6.37	1.049	6.23	1.040	0.02
	PBC4	5.55	1.539	5.55	1.525	5.55	1.557	0.89
	PBC5	5.79	1.591	6.04	1.407	5.54	1.720	<0.01
	PBC6	5.68	1.832	5.92	1.686	5.45	1.941	0.01
Subjective Norms	SN1	5.74	1.510	5.57	1.551	5.91	1.453	<0.01
	SN2	4.97	1.808	4.64	1.779	5.29	1.782	<0.01
	SN3	4.29	1.890	3.80	1.751	4.76	1.903	<0.01
	SN4	3.58	1.986	3.28	1.831	3.88	2.089	<0.01
	SN5	4.26	1.912	3.90	1.809	4.62	1.945	<0.01
Autonomous motivation	AMot1	5.21	1.885	5.10	1.829	5.32	1.936	0.05
	AMot2	5.04	1.678	5.12	1.591	4.96	1.759	0.52
	AMot3	5.33	1.524	5.44	1.428	5.22	1.608	0.18
	AMot4	5.51	1.497	5.18	1.511	5.83	1.416	<0.01
	AMot5	4.45	1.895	4.29	1.858	4.61	1.922	0.06
	AMot6	5.15	1.769	4.91	1.825	5.39	1.682	<0.01
	AMot7	5.73	1.537	5.53	1.534	5.92	1.519	<0.01
	AMot8	4.08	2.016	3.79	1.940	4.37	2.053	<0.01
Controlled motivation	CMot1	4.32	1.966	4.04	1.934	4.60	1.963	<0.01
	CMot2	2.91	2.040	2.77	2.073	3.05	2.002	0.08
	CMot3	1.66	1.304	1.71	1.303	1.61	1.306	0.27
	CMot4	3.85	2.005	3.40	1.779	4.29	2.116	<0.01
	CMot5	4.31	1.923	3.85	1.868	4.76	1.871	<0.01
	CMot6	1.93	1.419	1.95	1.433	1.90	1.407	0.85
Psychic distance	PD1	3.97	1.367	3.70	1.474	4.22	1.203	<0.01
	PD2	3.98	1.233	3.56	1.329	4.39	.974	<0.01
	PD3	4.06	1.138	3.81	1.246	4.31	.962	<0.01
	PD4	3.72	1.105	3.58	1.132	3.86	1.062	<0.01
	PD5	3.94	1.164	3.79	1.247	4.08	1.060	0.03
	PD6	4.29	1.209	4.11	1.282	4.46	1.108	<0.01
	PD7	3.56	1.381	2.99	1.406	4.13	1.095	<0.01
Satisfaction	SAT1	4.33	0.82	4.34	0.87	4.33	0.76	0.49
	SAT2	4.33	0.94	4.36	0.89	4.30	0.98	0.87
	SAT3	4.30	0.87	4.25	0.92	4.35	0.81	0.34
	SAT4	4.10	0.92	4.08	0.94	4.11	0.89	0.91

<sup>R</sup> Reversed scored items

N total sample = 432; N developed AEs = 213; N emerging AEs = 218.

p are p values of the Mann Whitney test (indicating the statistical significance of the difference between the corresponding coefficients on the left-hand side).

The intention to expatriate construct is conceptualised to capture the sample's readiness to expatriate. This variable was assessed by four items and was measured using a 7-point Likert scale. The results in Table 14 evidence that the sample presented a high intention to expatriate (the lower mean is 5.58 for item 2), and the means for developed and emerging AEs are quite similar. However, in two items (3 and 4), emerging AEs presented significantly higher means than developed AEs.

The attitude construct captures the degree to which the expatriates' have a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the IA offer. Six 7-point evaluative semantic differential scales assessed this variable. The results in Table 14 show that, in general, the sample evaluated favourably the IA offer (the lower mean is 5.63 for item 4). Further, means for developed and emerging AEs are similar in most items, except for item 2, for which the emerging AEs mean is more beneficial (opposed to harmful) than for developed AEs.

The PBC construct is conceptualised to capture the sample's perceived degree to which they are capable of expatriating or have control over expatriating. This variable was assessed by six items and was measured using a 7-point Likert scale. The results show that, in general, the sample's perceived capability and control over expatriating is high (the lower mean is 5.55 for item 4). Further, developed AEs presented significantly higher means in most items (except items 1 and 4), suggesting that their perception of their capability and control over expatriating is higher than for emerging AEs.

The SN construct captures the sample's perceived social pressure or support to expatriate, whether because they perceive that the most important people approve or disapprove of it or perceive their peers engaging in IAs. This variable was assessed by five items and was measured using a 7-point Likert scale. The results in Table 14 show that, in general, the sample perceived average high social pressure to expatriate (the lower mean is 3.58 for item 4). Further, emerging AEs presented significantly higher means in all items, indicating that they were more influenced by social pressure to expatriate than developed AEs.

The autonomous motivation construct is conceptualised to capture the expatriates' identified, integrated, and intrinsic reasons for expatriating. This variable was assessed by eight items and was measured using a 7-point Likert scale. The results in Table 14 show that, in general, the sample had high autonomous reasons for accepting the IA (the lower mean is 4.08 for item 8). Further, the means for the emerging AEs were significantly higher than for developed AEs for most items (except items 2 and 3), suggesting that they have higher

motivation to expatriate based on personal interest and identification, or because they thought the expatriation was professionally or personally important.

The controlled motivation captures the expatriates' external and introjected reasons for expatriating. This variable was assessed by six items and was measured using a 7-point Likert scale. The results show that, in general, the sample had low controlled reasons for accepting the IA (the higher mean is 4.32 for item 1). Further, emerging AEs presented significantly higher means in most items (except for items 3 and 6), suggesting that they had a higher motivation to expatriate based on external and introjected reasons: reasons such as being rewarded financially, attaining a certain standard of living, and the prestige of working in the host location or subsidiary were of higher importance for them.

The questionnaire also assessed the PD, which is conceptualised to capture the sample's perceived similarity or difference between home and host countries. This variable was assessed by seven items and was measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 14 indicates that the sample perceived moderated differences between home and host countries, but all the items' mean was significantly higher for emerging AEs.

Lastly, satisfaction with the assignment aims to control the impact of the actual satisfaction with the IA on the retrospective measure of intention. It was assessed by four items and was measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics reported in Table 14 indicate that the sample presents high satisfaction with the IA (the lower is 4.10 for item 4), and no significant difference is perceived across the samples of developed and emerging AEs.

After describing the variables' patterns across the subsamples, the next section addresses the constructs' exploratory factor analysis to evaluate the items pool in each of them.

### **5.3 Exploratory factor analysis**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to evaluate the item pool of each construct. MLR estimator with geomin (oblique) rotation was used and the decision about the number of factors in each construct was determined by the Classical Parallel Analysis (Horns, 1965).

First, the researcher removed items with correlations too high ( $>.80$ ) or too low (none or few correlations  $>.30$ ). Then, used a combination of item communalities after rotation

(<0.40), low items loadings (<0.32), and cross-loadings on the factors (<0.15 difference from an item's highest factor loading and absolute loadings higher than 0.32 on two or more factors) as deletion or retention criteria (Hair Jr. et al., 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006).

The results for each scale are shown in Table 15.

The first analysis of intention was to identify if items had correlations too high (>0.80) or too low (none or few correlations >0.30). All the correlations were within satisfactory parameters (Hair Jr. et al., 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006), so no item was deleted. Parallel analysis was performed, and the results indicated a one-factor solution for the items assessing intention to expatriate, confirming the unidimensionality of the construct.

Items on the attitude scale were analysed to identify if they had correlations too high or too low. All the correlations were within satisfactory parameters at this stage, so no item was deleted. EFA was conducted with the six items and parallel analysis results indicated a one-factor solution for the items assessing attitude towards expatriating, confirming the unidimensionality of the construct measuring attitude.

At the first analysis stage, Items 1, 3, and 4 on PBC regarding expatriating were excluded because their correlations to the other items were too low (none or few correlations >.30). EFA was conducted with the three remaining items. Item 6 was also removed because it presented low loading. Then, parallel analysis results indicated a one-factor solution for the two remaining items assessing PBC regarding expatriating, confirming the unidimensionality of the construct.

The first analysis on SN was to identify if items correlated too high or too low. All the correlations were within satisfactory parameters, so no item was deleted. EFA was conducted with the five items and parallel analysis indicated a 1-factor solution. However, items 1 and 4 were removed because they presented low loading and communality. EFA was conducted again. Then, parallel analysis confirmed the unidimensionality of the construct.

**Table 15:** EFA results for the latent constructs

Construct	Items		Loading
Intention to expatriate	I intended to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	INT1	0.90*
	I was likely to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	INT2	0.82*
	I was willing to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	INT3	0.72*
	I would make an effort to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	INT4	0.73*
Attitude	For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was bad...good	ATT1	0.67*
	For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was harmful...beneficial <sup>R</sup>	ATT2	0.83*
	For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was unenjoyable...enjoyable <sup>R</sup>	ATT3	0.90*
	For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was unpleasant...pleasant <sup>R</sup>	ATT4	0.85*
	For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was worthless...valuable	ATT5	0.67*
	For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was dull...exciting	ATT6	0.72*
PBC	I had control over relocating to work temporarily abroad.	PBC2	0.80*
	My relocation to work temporarily abroad was within my control.	PBC5	0.86*
SN	Most people who are important to me thought I should relocate to work temporarily abroad.	SN2	0.81*
	Most people who are important to me wanted me to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	SN3	0.83*
	People who influence my behaviour thought I should relocate to work temporarily abroad.	SN5	0.76*
AMot	To discover another culture.	AMot2	0.62*
	Because I wanted to acquire or improve professional knowledge, skills, abilities, and insights.	AMot4	0.68*
	To meet non-professional challenges, explore "the new", "the unknown".	AMot6	0.66*
	Because I thought it was important to broaden my horizons through new experiences and developing and extending my knowledge, skills, and insights.	AMot7	0.81*
CMot	To be rewarded financially by my company (salary, foreign inducement, hardship premium, allowances, and benefits).	CMot1	0.56*
	For the prestige of working in the host location or subsidiary.	CMot4	0.59*
	Because it would allow me a certain standard of living.	CMot5	0.74*
PD	Climatic conditions	PD1	0.53*
	Purchasing power of customers	PD2	0.72*
	Lifestyles	PD3	0.87*
	Consumer preferences	PD4	0.70*
	Cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions	PD5	0.66*
	Level of literacy and education	PD7	0.60*
Satisfaction	I am satisfied with my expatriation.	SAT1	0.84*
	If I were offered the same proposal to expatriate again, I would like to retake it.	SAT2	0.72*
	I would recommend this expatriation to a friend.	SAT3	0.79*
	This expatriation measures up to my expectation.	SAT4	0.85*

The number of observations is 431 for all measurement items.

\* Significant at 5% level

<sup>R</sup> Reversed scored items

EFA was conducted to ensure the unidimensionality of the autonomous motivation scale. The first analysis of autonomous motivation was to identify if items had a correlation too high or too low and two items (3 and 8) were removed because their correlations with the other items were too low. The initial pool of items assessing autonomous motivation indicated a two-factor solution. After deleting these items, the parallel analysis pointed to a 1-factor solution. After deleting items with low loadings (items 1 and 5) gradually, EFA was

conducted again on the four remaining items. Parallel analysis results confirmed the unidimensionality of the autonomous motivation construct.

In the first stage, items 2, 3, and 6 referring to controlled motivation were removed because they did not correlate well with the others. EFA was conducted with the three remaining items.

The first analysis on PD was to identify if items correlated too high or too low with each other. All the correlations were within satisfactory parameters, so no item was deleted. EFA was conducted with the six items and parallel analysis indicated a 1-factor solution. However, item 6 was removed because it presented low loading. EFA was conducted again. Then, parallel analysis confirmed the unidimensionality of the construct.

For the satisfaction construct, no item was deleted in the first stage because all were within satisfactory parameters regarding the correlation between the items. EFA was conducted with the four items and parallel analysis indicated a 1-factor solution.

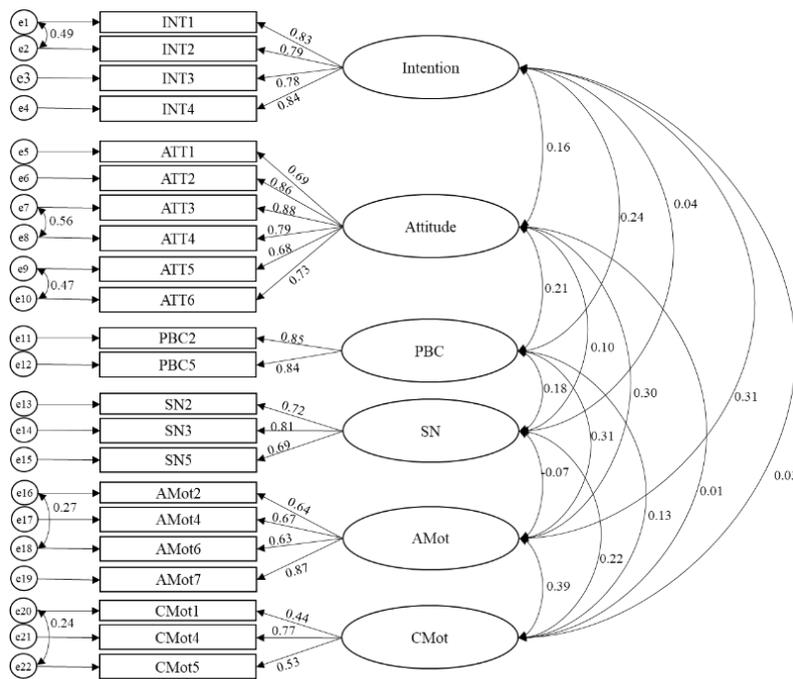
The EFA enabled the establishment of the item pool in each latent factor. These items are used in the definition of the baseline model, discussed in the next section.

#### **5.4 Establishment of a baseline model**

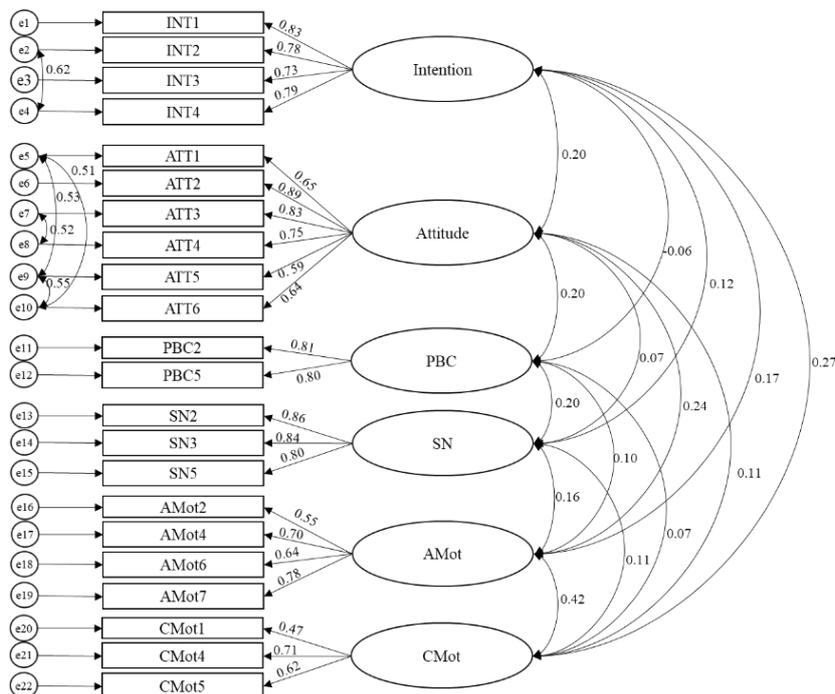
To establish the baseline model to test the hypotheses, a MG-CFA with robust maximum likelihood (MLR) was performed and the fit of this model was inadequate ( $\chi^2/df = 2.09$ , CFI = 0.87; TLI = 0.86; SRMR = 0.08; RMSEA = 0.07). Thus, the model was re-estimated based on the modification indices supported by theoretical reasoning. In this regard, a few items within the same constructs were allowed to correlate; some are common to developed and emerging AEs and some are unique to each sample. Thereafter, the model fit improved ( $\chi^2/df = 1.43$ , CFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.95; SRMR = 0.07; RMSEA = 0.05).

The final path diagram for developed AEs is depicted in Figure 10 and for emerging AEs in Figure 11.

**Figure 10: Confirmatory factor analysis path diagram for developed AEs**



**Figure 11: Confirmatory factor analysis path diagram for emerging AEs**



## 5.5 Convergent and discriminant validity

After establishing the baseline model, the scales' convergent and discriminant validity are assessed. The processes and results are described in the following sections.

### 5.5.1 *Convergent validity*

The constructs' Cronbach's Alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and items' loadings were calculated to provide information about convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results are presented in Table 16.

All item loadings exceed the threshold of 0.4 (Hinkin, 1998), the smallest being 0.44 for developed AEs and 0.47 for emerging AEs. The CA and CR values exceed the recommended value of 0.60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, 2010). Constructs have AVE values above the 0.50 recommended threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, 2010) except for autonomous motivation, with 0.45 for emerging AEs, and controlled motivation, with 0.36 and 0.37 for developed and emerging AEs, respectively. These values are not considered problematic because they are close to the threshold and the other related criteria to prove convergent validity is within the threshold. Especially, AVE is the most conservative construct reliability test (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and it is not uncommon for studies to report measures with AVE below 0.50 (e.g., Ambos et al., 2019; Lazarova et al., 2021).

**Table 16:** Convergent validity analysis

	Developed AEs				Emerging AEs			
	$\lambda$	CA	CR	AVE	$\lambda$	CA	CR	AVE
<b><i>Intention to expatriate</i></b>		<i>0.87</i>	<i>0.88</i>	<i>0.66</i>		<i>0.83</i>	<i>0.86</i>	<i>0.61</i>
I intended to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.83				0.82			
I was likely to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.79				0.78			
I was willing to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.78				0.73			
I would make an effort to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.84				0.79			
<b><i>Attitude towards expatriation</i></b>		<i>0.90</i>	<i>0.90</i>	<i>0.60</i>		<i>0.90</i>	<i>0.87</i>	<i>0.54</i>
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was bad...good	0.69				0.65			
For me, relocating to work temporarily abroad was beneficial...harmful <sup>R</sup>	0.86				0.89			
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was enjoyable...unenjoyable <sup>R</sup>	0.88				0.83			
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was pleasant...unpleasant <sup>R</sup>	0.79				0.75			
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was worthless...valuable	0.68				0.59			
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was dull...exciting	0.73				0.64			
<b><i>Perceived behaviour control</i></b>		<i>0.83</i>	<i>0.83</i>	<i>0.71</i>		<i>0.79</i>	<i>0.79</i>	<i>0.66</i>
I was confident in my ability to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.85				0.81			
Whether or not I would relocate to work temporarily abroad was completely up to me.	0.84				0.80			
<b><i>Subjective norm</i></b>		<i>0.78</i>	<i>0.79</i>	<i>0.55</i>		<i>0.87</i>	<i>0.87</i>	<i>0.70</i>
Most people whose opinion I value approved my relocation to work temporarily abroad.	0.72				0.86			
Most people who are important to me wanted me to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.81				0.84			
Many people like me were relocated to work temporarily abroad.	0.69				0.80			
<b><i>Autonomous motivation</i></b>		<i>0.80</i>	<i>0.80</i>	<i>0.50</i>		<i>0.77</i>	<i>0.77</i>	<i>0.45</i>
Because I enjoyed the job (related tasks, area of responsibility or expertise, the challenge of the role, and autonomy).	0.64				0.55			
Because I personally considered important the balance between work and nonwork activities I could experience in the host location.	0.67				0.70			
Because it was a way to reach my personal goal of living abroad.	0.63				0.64			
To discover another culture.	0.87				0.78			
<b><i>Controlled motivation</i></b>		<i>0.65</i>	<i>0.61</i>	<i>0.36</i>		<i>0.63</i>	<i>0.63</i>	<i>0.37</i>
To be rewarded financially by my company (salary, foreign inducement, hardship premium, allowances, and benefits).	0.44				0.47			
For the prestige of working in the host location or subsidiary.	0.77				0.71			
Because it would allow me a certain standard of living.	0.53				0.62			

Considering the information on the scales' Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted, and items' loadings, convergent validity is evident in the study's scales.

### 5.5.2 Discriminant validity

Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest that discriminant validity is established if a latent variable accounts for more variance in its associated indicator variables than it shares with other constructs in the same model.

To assess the discriminant validity, the square root of the average variance extracted for each latent construct (diagonal values) and the correlations between constructs are presented in (Table 17).

**Table 17:** Discriminant validity analysis

Construct			1	2	3	4	5	6	
	<b>M</b>		6.02	5.52	4.55	6.12	5.61	4.89	
		<b>SD</b>	1.24	1.23	1.50	1.12	1.57	1.68	
1. Intention	5.90	1.36	<i>0.81</i>	<i>0.80</i>	1.71	0.27	0.20	-0.03	0.12
2. Amot	5.19	1.27	0.31	<i>0.68</i>	0.42	0.24	0.10	0.16	
3. CMot	3.76	1.43	0.13	0.39	<i>0.60</i>	<i>0.61</i>	0.11	0.08	0.29
4. Attitude	6.06	1.15	0.16	0.30	0.00	<i>0.80</i>	<i>0.74</i>	0.20	0.08
5. PBC	6.06	1.3	0.24	0.31	0.03	0.21	<i>0.84</i>	<i>0.81</i>	0.10
6. SN	4.11	1.48	0.04	-0.07	0.22	0.10	0.18	<i>0.74</i>	<i>0.84</i>

Note: M = mean, SD = standard deviation.

The upper triangle corresponds to emerging AEs (N = 218);

the lower triangle corresponds to developed AEs (N = 213).

Values in italics are the square root of the average variance extracted.

From the results presented in Table 17, discriminant validity is also evident when observing that the square root of the AVE values of each latent variable is higher than the correlations between the construct and all other constructs.

Constructs were also analysed based on their proposed heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). HTMT criterion was computed for each pair of constructs based on the item correlations and is presented in Table 18.

**Table 18: HTMT for developed and emerging AEs**

Construct	Intention	Attitude	PBC	SN	AMot	CMot
Intention		0.24	0.01	0.14	0.24	0.29
Attitude	0.14		0.17	0.06	0.30	0.13
PBC	0.24	0.20		0.10	0.08	0.11
SN	0.00	0.10	0.16		0.16	0.22
AMot	0.30	0.32	0.25	0.10		0.41
CMot	0.10	0.00	0.07	0.21	0.32	

Note: The upper triangle corresponds to emerging AEs (N = 218); the lower triangle corresponds to developed AEs (N = 213).

The computation yielded values between 0.00 and 0.32 for developed AEs and between 0.01 and 0.41 for emerging AEs. Using a conservative criterion of 0.85 (Kline, 2011), the findings corroborate the existence of discriminant validity for the sub-samples of developed and emerging AEs.

Thus, the results from both methods evidence that each construct is unique and distinct from other constructs.

Next, the section addresses the procedures and results to verify the invariance across the groups.

## 5.6 Invariance test

A sequential testing procedure was performed to establish measurement invariance across the subsamples of expatriates. The initial model with free factor loadings and item intercepts (i.e., configural invariance) exhibited good fit ( $\chi^2/df = 1.37$ , CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.96; SRMR = 0.06; RMSEA = 0.04). Next, constraining the factor loadings to be equal across groups (metric invariance), the model also exhibited good fit ( $\chi^2/df = 1.34$ , CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.96; SRMR = 0.06; RMSEA = 0.04). Lastly, another nested model with constraints on both factor loadings and item intercepts (scalar invariance) was tested, showing good fit ( $\chi^2/df = 1.43$ , CFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.95; SRMR = 0.07; RMSEA = 0.05). The model fit for each stage of the analysis as well as the changes in CFI are addressed in Table 19.

**Table 19:** Measurement invariance testing

	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\chi^2/df$	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA (90% IC)	CFI	$\Delta$ CFI
Configural	520.611(378)	1.37	0.96	0.06	0.042(0.03-0.05)	0.96	
Metric	528.262(394)	1.34	0.96	0.06	0.040(0.03-0.05)	0.96	0.00
Scalar	585.322(410)	1.427	0.95	0.07	0.045(0.04-0.05)	0.95	0.01

A comparison of the nested models (Table 19) suggests measurement invariance as changes in CFI were less than or equal to 0.01 (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

As noted earlier (5.4), the baseline models for developed and emerging countries allowed some parameters of non-invariant items to vary across groups. In this regard, it is considered a partial measurement invariance, which is enough of a requisite for comparisons across groups to be made (Byrne et al., 1989). Thus, it is possible to compare the latent means across samples.

Another essential step before the hypotheses test is the test for common method variance, which is reported in the next section.

### 5.7 Test for common method variance

Besides the a priori procedures to minimize CMV already addressed (e.g., mixing the sequence of independent and dependent variables in the questionnaire, using varying scale formats and presentations of the items in randomized order, and assuring participants anonymity - Chang et al., 2010; Podsakoff et al., 2003), three tests were conducted to post-check common method variance (CMV): Harman's single factor test, the unmeasured latent method factor, and the partial correlation method.

For Harman's single factor test, using principal components factor analysis, six factors were extracted, with the first factor accounting for only 22.73% of the 70.10% explained variance.

Following Podsakoff et al. (2003), the results were further controlled for an unmeasured latent "method" factor to confirm Harman's single-factor test.

To that end, in a first measurement model the items of all constructs were allowed to only load on their corresponding factors ( $\chi^2 = 585.32(410)$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.43$ , CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.95, SRMR = 0.07, RMSEA = 0.05). In a second model, the items of self-rated constructs were load onto a single unmeasured factor in addition to their corresponding factors ( $\chi^2 = 505.20(386)$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.31$ , CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96, SRMR = 0.07, RMSEA = 0.04). The common method factor was set to have no covariance with the other scale factors. Comparing

the fit of the measurement model with and without a method factor, the model with the method factor showed a slight improvement over the model without it. However, the change to CFI was only 0.02, which is less than the cut-off value of 0.05 suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1990), item loadings remained significant and correlations among the scales remained largely unchanged in the presence of the common method factor. The item loadings with the common method factor are detailed in Table 20.

**Table 20:** Items' loadings on their respective constructs with the presence of CMV

	Developed AEs		Emerging AEs	
	$\lambda$	$p$	$\lambda$	$p$
<b><i>Intention to expatriate</i></b>				
I intended to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.81	0.00	0.80	0.00
I was likely to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.78	0.00	0.78	0.00
I was willing to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.76	0.00	0.72	0.00
I would make an effort to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.83	0.00	0.78	0.00
<b><i>Attitude towards expatriation</i></b>				
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was bad...good	0.65	0.00	0.62	0.00
For me, relocating to work temporarily abroad was beneficial...harmful <sup>R</sup>	0.93	0.00	0.95	0.00
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was enjoyable...unenjoyable <sup>R</sup>	0.82	0.00	0.78	0.00
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was pleasant...unpleasant <sup>R</sup>	0.75	0.00	0.70	0.00
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was worthless...valuable	0.64	0.00	0.57	0.00
For me, to relocate to work temporarily abroad was dull...exciting	0.66	0.00	0.58	0.00
<b><i>Perceived behaviour control</i></b>				
I was confident in my ability to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.85	0.00	0.81	0.00
Whether or not I would relocate to work temporarily abroad was completely up to me.	0.83	0.00	0.80	0.00
<b><i>Subjective norm</i></b>				
Most people whose opinion I value approved my relocation to work temporarily abroad.	0.74	0.00	0.86	0.00
Most people who are important to me wanted me to relocate to work temporarily abroad.	0.77	0.00	0.83	0.00
Many people like me were relocated to work temporarily abroad.	0.66	0.00	0.78	0.00
<b><i>Autonomous motivation</i></b>				
Because I enjoyed the job (related tasks, area of responsibility or expertise, the challenge of the role, and autonomy).	0.42	0.01	0.41	0.01
Because I personally considered important the balance between work and nonwork activities I could experience in the host location.	0.66	0.00	0.71	0.00
Because it was a way to reach my personal goal of living abroad.	0.50	0.00	0.56	0.00
To discover another culture.	0.70	0.00	0.68	0.00
<b><i>Controlled motivation</i></b>				
To be rewarded financially by my company (salary, foreign inducement, hardship premium, allowances, and benefits).	0.44	0.00	0.47	0.00
For the prestige of working in the host location or subsidiary.	0.75	0.00	0.71	0.00
Because it would allow me a certain standard of living.	0.54	0.00	0.63	0.00

The third method refers to the partial correlation method. The procedure entails the introduction of a theoretically unrelated marker variable and the assessment of the correlations with the other relevant variables in the model. For this test, the chosen marker

variable was gender and the results of its correlations with the other constructs are presented in Table 21.

**Table 21:** CMV test: results for partial correlation method

Constructs	Correlations	
	Developed AEs	Emerging AEs
Intention and Gender	-0.013	-0.056
Attitude and Gender	0.043	0.073
PBC and Gender	0.004	-0.037
SN and Gender	0.023	0.008
AMot and Gender	0.013	-0.029
CMot and Gender	0.052	0.010

Note: None of the correlations is significant at the 0.01 or 0.05 levels.

The correlations between the gender of respondents and other variables varied from 0.004 and 0.052 for developed AEs and from 0.008 and 0.073 for emerging AEs. These are considered low correlations and further attest to the fact that the variances are attributed to the constructs, not to the measurement method.

These findings from Harman’s single-factor test, the unmeasured latent method factor, and the partial correlation method suggest common method bias is not a problem and should not influence the results (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

The following section brings the results concerning the assessment of non-response bias.

## 5.8 Non-response bias

The sample was firstly divided into the early quartile and late quartile to check for non-response bias. Then, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare if there is a significant difference between early and late responses concerning all measures of the model constructs. The results are presented in Table 22.

**Table 22:** Mann-Whitney test for non-response bias

<b>Construct</b>	Mean Early respondents	Mean Late respondents	Mann-Withney U	<i>p</i>
Intention	5.89	6.13	3513	0.21
Attitude	5.94	6.27	3617	0.11
PBC	5.96	5.46	2617	0.06
SN	4.43	4.73	3521.5	0.21
AMot	5.54	5.27	2754.5	0.16
CMot	4.18	4.19	3257.5	0.74
<i>N</i>	80	79		

Note: *p* are *p* values of the Mann-Whitney test (indicating the statistical significance of the difference between the corresponding coefficients on the left-hand side). *N* = number of respondents

No significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) were revealed between the early quartile ( $n = 80$ ) and late quartile ( $n = 79$ ) respondent groups on all construct measures. Thus, the results show that non-response bias does not pose a concern in this study (Armstrong & Overton, 1977).

Having proceeded with the mentioned tests, there is enough confidence about the quality of the scales, the scales' invariance across the sub-samples, and the improbable influence of a common method and non-response bias on the results. Thus, the results of the hypotheses test are presented in the next section.

## 5.9 Hypotheses testing

The hypotheses were tested using Multigroup Structural Equation Modelling in MPLUS 8.6 in a stepwise manner. The first model (Model 1) tests the effect of the control variables (gender, education, having a spouse, having children, number of languages in which the respondent is proficient, time abroad since moved for the current IA, time spent abroad in previous opportunities, and satisfaction with the IA) on the intention to expatriate. Then, Model 2 tests the effect of the socio-cognitive variables on the intention to expatriate (Hypothesis 1) after controlling for the referred variables. In this regard, hypothesis 1 tests the relationships predicted according to the TPB. Next, model 3 adds the motivation variables from the SDT and tests their indirect impact on the intention to expatriate through the socio-cognitive variables (Hypothesis 2). Then, Models 4 and 5 test the moderating impact of CD (Hypothesis 3) and PD (Hypothesis 4) on the relationship between the socio-cognitive variables and the intention to expatriate.

### 5.9.1 Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 is grounded on the TPB and predicts the positive relationship between the socio-cognitive variables - attitude towards expatriating (a), PBC regarding expatriating (b), and SN regarding expatriating (c) - and the intention to expatriate. Table 23 presents the results. Model 1 refers to the effect of the control variables on the intention to expatriate and Model 2 tests the impact of the socio-cognitive variables on the intention to expatriate.

**Table 23:** Results of Hypotheses testing: Hypothesis 1

Dependent variable: Intention to expatriate									
	Model 1				Model 2				p(W)
	Developed AEs		Emerging AEs		Developed AEs		Emerging AEs		
	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	
<i>Control variables</i>									
Gender	-0.04(0.07)	0.55	-0.04(0.06)	0.50	-0.04(0.07)	0.61	-0.06(0.06)	0.34	
Education	-0.01(0.06)	0.83	0.08(0.07)	0.23	-0.04(0.07)	0.52	0.08(0.07)	0.25	
Spouse	0.16(0.08)	0.06	0.09(0.08)	0.25	0.15(0.09)	0.08	0.11(0.08)	0.15	
Children	-0.16(0.08)	0.04	-0.09(0.07)	0.19	-0.15(0.08)	0.05	-0.12(0.07)	0.11	
Languages	0.00(0.07)	0.91	-0.04(0.06)	0.48	-0.03(0.06)	0.62	-0.03(0.06)	0.63	
Time abroad	0.09(0.06)	0.14	-0.21(0.07)	<0.01	0.07(0.05)	0.18	-0.19(0.07)	<0.01	
Foreign experience	0.15(0.09)	0.11	0.08(0.06)	0.21	0.15(0.09)	0.09	0.07(0.06)	0.26	
Satisfaction with IA	0.14(0.09)	0.11	0.24(0.08)	<0.01	0.05(0.08)	0.51	0.19(0.07)	<0.01	
<i>Direct effects</i>									
Att					0.09(0.07)	0.21	0.16(0.07)	0.02	0.55
PBC					0.19(0.09)	0.03	-0.10(0.08)	0.18	0.01
SN					-0.02(0.09)	0.87	0.09(0.08)	0.29	0.45
<i>Goodness-of-fit</i>									
R <sup>2</sup>	7.2%		12.7%		11.2%		16.2%		
$\Delta R^2$					4%		3.5%		
$\chi^2/df$ / RMSEA	1.11 / 0.02				1.27 / 0.04				
<i>N</i>	213		218		213		218		

Note: Gender (1 = Male), Education (in years), Spouse (1 = has a spouse), Children (1 = has at least one child), Languages (proficiency in foreign languages: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more), Time abroad (during the current IA: in months), Foreign experience (in years), Satisfaction with IA (4 items with 5 point-Likert scale).

The parameters in the first two columns of each condition are standardized coefficients, and *p*(W) are *p* values of the Wald tests (indicating the statistical significance of the difference between the corresponding coefficients on the left-hand side).  $\chi^2$  = chi-squared; *df* = degrees of freedom; RMSEA = root-mean-square error approximation.

Model 1 in Table 23 examines the effect of the control variables on the intention to expatriate. Different control variables contributed to explaining the intention to expatriate for the sub-samples of developed and emerging AEs, which are now taken into detail. For developed AEs, having a spouse and having children are the only control variables significantly affecting the intention to expatriate. Having a spouse has a positive effect on the intention to expatriate ( $\beta = 0.16$ ;  $p = 0.06$ ) and having children has a negative impact on their intention to expatriate ( $\beta = -0.16$ ;  $p = 0.04$ ). For emerging AEs, the control variables with a

significant effect on the intention to expatriate are those added to account for the fact that data were collected retrospectively (when employees were already abroad): the satisfaction with the IA has a positive effect on their intention to expatriate ( $\beta = 0.24, p < 0.01$ ) while the time they have spent abroad during the current IA has a negative impact on the intention to expatriate ( $\beta = -0.21, p < 0.01$ ). Thus, controlling for these variables should alleviate the potential problem regarding the distance in time between the event (the IA offer) and the survey by capturing any time trend in the answers. Overall, as the focus of this research is on the effect of the psychological variables on employees' intention to expatriate, it is coherent to control for variables that impact the relationships of interest.

Having identified the role played by the control variables for developed and emerging AEs, Model 2 in Table 23 reports the results to test hypothesis 1, examining the effect of the socio-cognitive variables on intention to expatriate after controlling for the control variables. For developed AEs, among the socio-cognitive variables, only PBC had a significant positive effect on the intention to expatriate ( $\beta = 0.19, p = 0.03$ ), supporting H1b, but not H1a and H1c. In general, it means that developed AEs' intention to expatriate is largely formed by their perception of themselves as capable of and in control over expatriating.

For emerging AEs, the attitude was the only socio-cognitive variable with a significant positive effect on the intention to expatriate ( $\beta = 0.16, p = 0.02$ ), supporting H1a, but not H1b and H1c. It means that emerging AEs' intention to expatriate is largely formed by their favourable evaluation of the IA and its expected consequences.

SN has a non-significant impact on the intention to expatriate for both developed and emerging AEs.

A further analysis regards the comparison of the significance of the difference between the groups. The results point out that there are no significant differences between developed and emerging AEs concerning the impact of attitude on intention (Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 0.38, p = 0.55$ ) and SN on intention (Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 0.57, p = 0.45$ ). It means that there is insufficient evidence of a measurable difference between the two groups and that the differences could be explained by chance. The effect of PBC on intention is significantly different across subgroups (Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 6.61, p = 0.01$ ): for developed AEs, the positive effect of PBC on intention is significantly stronger than for emerging AEs, which is not significant.

Having examined the relationships between the socio-cognitive variables and the intention to expatriate (TPB), the next section investigates the results when the types of motivation (SDT) are added to the model.

### 5.9.2 Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 states that the socio-cognitive variables mediate the relationship between autonomous motivation and intention to expatriate (H2a) and between controlled motivation and intention to expatriate (H2b). Table 24 presents the results to evaluate these hypotheses.

**Table 24:** Results of hypotheses testing: Hypothesis 2

	<b>Model 3</b>				
	Developed AEs		Emerging AEs		<i>p</i> (W)
	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	
<i>Direct effects</i>					
Att → Int	0.02(0.07)	0.82	0.15(0.07)	0.03	0.21
PBC → Int	0.12(0.09)	0.19	-0.11(0.08)	0.17	0.07
SN → Int	0.02(0.09)	0.83	0.02(0.09)	0.82	0.97
AMot → Int	0.28(0.11)	<0.01	0.02(0.10)	0.81	0.08
CMot → Int	0.02(0.11)	0.87	0.22(0.12)	0.06	0.27
AMot → Att	0.32(0.10)	<0.01	0.21(0.11)	0.05	0.48
AMot → PBC	0.31(0.11)	<0.01	0.06(0.12)	0.63	0.18
AMot → SN	-0.19(0.12)	0.10	0.00(0.12)	0.95	0.29
CMot → Att	-0.14(0.10)	0.15	-0.05(0.11)	0.66	0.45
CMot → PBC	-0.12(0.09)	0.19	0.03(0.14)	0.83	0.36
CMot → SN	0.29(0.12)	0.02	0.30(0.11)	<0.01	0.91
<i>Indirect effect</i>					
AMot → Att → Int	0.01(0.02)	0.82	0.03(0.02)	0.17	
AMot → PBC → Int	0.04(0.03)	0.25	0.00(0.01)	0.63	
AMot → SN → Int	0.00(0.02)	0.83	0.00(0.00)	0.96	
CMot → Att → Int	0.00(0.01)	0.82	0.01 (0.02)	0.68	
CMot → PBC → Int	-0.02(0.02)	0.37	0.00(0.02)	0.84	
CMot → SN → Int	0.01(0.03)	0.83	0.01(0.03)	0.82	
<i>Goodness-of-fit</i>					
R <sup>2</sup> Intention	20%		20.4%		
$\Delta$ R <sup>2</sup> Intention	8.8%		4.2%		
R <sup>2</sup> Attitude	22.6%		13.4%		
R <sup>2</sup> PBC	17%		3.7%		
R <sup>2</sup> SN	10%		14.2%		
$\chi^2$ /df / RMSEA	1.37 / 0.04				
<i>N</i>	213		218		

Note: The parameters in the first two columns of each condition are standardized coefficients, and *p*(W) are *p* values of the Wald tests (indicating the statistical significance of the difference between the corresponding coefficients on the left-hand side).  $\chi^2$  = chi-squared; df = degrees of freedom; RMSEA = root-mean-square error approximation. The models were controlled for gender, education, spouse, children, languages, time abroad, foreign experience, and satisfaction with IA.

Including the motivation variables in the model adds to the explained variance of the intention to expatriate. Compared with Model 2, this model explains a further 8.8% of the developed AEs' intention to expatriate and 4.2% of the emerging AEs' intention to expatriate.

The analysis of the mediation role of the socio-cognitive variables is based on the indirect effects (Table 24). The non-significant indirect effects evidence that the socio-cognitive variables do not mediate the impact of the types of motivation (autonomous and controlled) and intention to expatriate, so H2 is not supported for developed and emerging AEs.

Instead of an indirect effect, for developed AEs, AMot has a positive direct impact on the intention to expatriate, which is not significant for emerging AEs ( $\beta_{\text{developed}} = 0.28, p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta_{\text{emerging}} = 0.02, p = 0.81$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 3.12, p = 0.07$ ). Conversely, CMot has a positive and significant impact on the intention to expatriate for emerging AEs but not for developed AEs, however the difference across the sub-samples is not significant ( $\beta_{\text{developed}} = 0.02, p = 0.87$ ;  $\beta_{\text{emerging}} = 0.22, p = 0.06$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 1.19, p = 0.27$ ).

The TPB also establishes that the three socio-cognitive variables are conceptually independent predictors of intentions but are free to correlate with each other (Ajzen, 1991, 2020). In the present study, not all were correlated: for developed AEs, PBC has a medium correlation with attitude ( $\beta = 0.21, p = 0.02$ ) and a small correlation with SN ( $\beta = 0.17, p = 0.08$ ); for emerging AEs, attitude has a medium correlation with PBC ( $\beta = 0.21, p < 0.01$ ).

Although the socio-cognitive variables do not mediate the impact of AMot and CMot on the intention to expatriate, the types of motivation still impact the socio-cognitive variables. AMot has a large positive impact on developed AEs' attitude towards expatriating and a medium positive impact on emerging AEs' attitude towards expatriating ( $\beta_{\text{developed}} = 0.32, p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta_{\text{emerging}} = 0.21, p = 0.05$ ). AMot has a large positive impact on PBC regarding expatriating for developed AEs ( $\beta_{\text{developed}} = 0.31, p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta_{\text{emerging}} = 0.06, p = 0.63$ ). Finally, CMot has a medium to large significantly positive impact on SN for developed and emerging AEs ( $\beta_{\text{developed}} = 0.29, p = 0.02$ ;  $\beta_{\text{emerging}} = 0.30, p < 0.01$ ).

Having identified the role played by the types of motivation on the formation of employees' socio-cognitive variables and the intention to expatriate, the next section assesses the moderation role of cultural distance in the model.

### 5.9.3 Hypothesis 3

To assess the impact of CD on the relationship between the SN and the intention to expatriate, the samples of developed and emerging AEs were median split into 2, representing high and low CD.

For developed AEs, examples of countries representing low CD are: the UK to the USA (or vice versa), Germany to Switzerland, and the Netherlands to Sweden. On the other hand, examples of high CD include: from the Netherlands, the USA and the UK to Mexico, from the USA to Brazil, from the UK to the UAE, and from Germany to China.

For emerging AEs, examples of IAs considering countries representing low CD are: Mexico to Brazil (and vice versa), Mexico to Panama and Guatemala, and Brazil to Argentina and Peru. On the other hand, examples of countries representing high CD for emerging AEs comprise: Mexico to the Netherlands and the USA, and Brazil to the UK and the Netherlands. The results for the moderating role of CD are presented in Table 25.

**Table 25:** Results of hypotheses testing: Hypothesis 3

<b>Model 4</b>										
	Developed AEs					Emerging AEs				
	High CD		Low CD		<i>p</i> (W)	High CD		Low CD		<i>p</i> (W)
	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>		$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	$\beta$ (SE)	<i>p</i>	
<i>Direct effects</i>										
Att → Int	0.00 (0.08)	0.95	0.06 (0.12)	0.59	0.70	0.16(0.11)	0.14	0.18(0.13)	0.16	0.71
PBC → Int	0.12(0.10)	0.24	0.13(0.17)	0.45	0.90	-0.25(0.08)	<0.01	-0.02(0.12)	0.87	0.19
SN → Int	0.04(0.11)	0.73	0.00(0.20)	0.99	0.86	-0.17(0.11)	0.12	0.23(0.13)	0.07	0.02
AMot → Int	0.40(0.12)	<0.01	0.12(0.18)	0.53	0.10	0.13(0.12)	0.26	-0.23(0.14)	0.08	0.04
CMot → Int	-0.04(0.14)	0.77	0.15(0.18)	0.42	0.44	0.34(0.16)	0.04	0.18(0.16)	0.27	0.62
AMot → Att	0.37(0.14)	<0.01	0.28(0.14)	0.04	0.48	0.17(0.14)	0.21	0.17(0.16)	0.27	0.95
CMot → ATT	-0.15(0.16)	0.35	-0.16(0.14)	0.24	0.94	-0.07(0.17)	0.66	0.04(0.16)	0.81	0.63
AMot → PBC	0.16(0.15)	0.26	0.38(0.15)	0.01	0.34	0.07(0.14)	0.59	0.03(0.18)	0.85	0.86
CMot → PBC	-0.06(0.12)	0.63	-0.16(0.13)	0.23	0.56	0.06(0.17)	0.72	-0.06(0.22)	0.79	0.66
AMot → SN	-0.02(0.15)	0.92	-0.29(0.14)	0.04	0.22	-0.08(0.12)	0.51	0.19(0.20)	0.36	0.26
CMot → SN	0.13(0.17)	0.45	0.32(0.15)	0.04	0.51	0.46(0.125)	<0.01	0.12(0.18)	0.52	0.12
<i>Goodness-of-fit</i>										
R <sup>2</sup> Intention	26.6%		28.8%			36.8%		29.6%		
R <sup>2</sup> Attitude	26.3%		28.4%			14.6%		25.2%		
R <sup>2</sup> PBC	16.9%		21.9%			3.5%		7.9%		
R <sup>2</sup> SN	16.8%		22.2%			28.4%		20.3%		
$\chi^2$ /df / RMSEA	1.42 / 0.06									
<i>N</i>	106		107			109		109		

Note: The parameters in the first two columns of each condition are standardized coefficients, and *p*(W) are *p* values of the Wald tests (indicating the statistical significance of the difference between the corresponding coefficients on the left-hand side).  $\chi^2$  = chi-squared; df = degrees of freedom; RMSEA = root-mean-square error approximation. The models were controlled for gender, education, spouse, children, languages, time abroad, foreign experience, and satisfaction with IA.

When CD is added as a moderating variable to the model, the explained variance of the intention to expatriate is 26.6% (high CD) and 28.8% (low CD) for developed AEs, and 36.8% (high CD) and 29.6% (low CD) for emerging AEs. These figures represent an increase in the explained variance compared with model 3, when the explained variance for developed and emerging AEs was 20% and 20.4%, respectively.

The first analysis aims to assess the moderating effect of CD on the relationship between the SN and the intention to expatriate. The impact of SN on intention to expatriate does not vary across the levels of CD for developed AEs ( $\beta_{\text{highCD}} = 0.04, p = 0.73$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowCD}} = 0.00, p = 0.99$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 0.03, p = 0.86$ ), but it does vary for emerging AEs ( $\beta_{\text{highCD}} = -0.17, p = 0.12$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowCD}} = 0.23, p = 0.07$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 5.41, p = 0.02$ ). Therefore, CD moderates the relationship between SN and intention to expatriate for emerging AEs but not for developed AEs. For emerging AEs, SN has an impact on the intention to expatriate only when CD is low. It means that when the host country is culturally similar to the country of nationality, the perceived social support positively influences their intention to expatriate.

Since the model to explain the employees' intention to expatriate proves to have a direct relationship between the types of motivation and the intention to expatriate (hypothesis 2), it is also interesting to analyse how CD impacts such relationships.

The positive effect of AMot on intention to expatriate for developed AEs marginally varies across the levels of CD: AMot has a large positive impact on intention when relocation is to highly culturally distant countries, while the impact is not significant to host culturally similar countries ( $\beta_{\text{highCD}} = 0.40, p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowCD}} = 0.12, p = 0.53$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 2.61, p = 0.10$ ). Thus, while AMot does not contribute to the formation of developed AEs' intention to expatriate to culturally similar countries, their intention to expatriate to culturally distant countries is largely based on feelings of excitement, enjoyment, and interest. The impact of AMot on the intention to expatriate for emerging AEs is only significant when CD is low ( $\beta_{\text{highCD}} = 0.13, p < 0.25$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowCD}} = -0.25, p = 0.08$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 4.31, p = 0.04$ ). In fact, without the moderating variable, the relationship between AMot and intention to expatriate was non-significant. Interestingly, the higher the emerging AEs' AMot to expatriate, the lower their intention to expatriate to culturally similar countries.

Further, there were no significant differences on the effect of CMot on intention across the levels of CD for the sample of developed AEs ( $\beta_{\text{highCD}} = -0.04, p = 0.77$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowCD}} = 0.15, p = 0.42$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 0.60, p = 0.44$ ). Even though CMot only positively impacts emerging AEs' intention to expatriate when CD is high, the difference between the two

groups is also not significant ( $\beta_{\text{highCD}} = 0.34, p = 0.04$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowCD}} = 0.18, p = 0.27$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 0.25, p = 0.62$ ).

Having identified the moderating role of CD in the model, the following section explores the moderating impact of the individual-level variable, PD.

#### 5.9.4 Hypothesis 4

To assess the moderating impact of PD on the relationship between the PBC and the intention to expatriate, the samples of developed and emerging AEs were median split into 2. The results are presented in Table 26.

Table 26: Results of hypotheses testing: Hypothesis 4

Model 5										
	Developed AEs					Emerging AEs				
	High PD		Low PD		$p(W)$	High PD		Low PD		$p(W)$
	$\beta$ (SE)	$p$	$\beta$ (SE)	$p$		$\beta$ (SE)	$p$	$\beta$ (SE)	$p$	
<i>Direct effects</i>										
Att → Int	0.03(0.11)	0.80	-0.06(0.07)	0.37	0.44	0.08(0.09)	0.37	0.28(0.12)	0.02	0.13
PBC → Int	-0.22(0.10)	0.04	0.46(0.15)	<0.01	<0.01	-0.14(0.11)	0.22	-0.15(0.13)	0.26	0.97
SN → Int	0.04(0.13)	0.76	0.00(0.12)	0.97	0.81	-.06(0.10)	0.58	0.06(0.13)	0.63	0.47
AMot → Int	0.39(0.15)	<0.01	0.18(0.13)	0.17	0.38	0.23(0.12)	0.05	-0.25(0.17)	0.15	0.03
CMot → Int	0.10(0.19)	0.60	0.07(0.13)	0.60	0.86	0.23(0.14)	0.10	0.39(0.19)	0.04	0.45
AMot → Att	0.42(0.12)	<0.01	0.22 (0.14)	0.12	0.19	0.31 (0.14)	0.03	0.19(0.14)	0.19	0.20
CMot → ATT	-0.17(0.11)	0.11	-0.06(0.16)	0.70	0.41	-0.03(0.13)	0.84	-0.14(0.15)	0.34	0.69
AMot → PBC	0.27(0.17)	0.12	0.25(0.15)	0.10	0.99	0.30(0.16)	0.06	-0.16(0.17)	0.35	0.08
CMot → PBC	0.06 (0.14)	0.68	-0.18(0.12)	0.14	0.22	-0.10 (0.16)	0.54	0.23(0.23)	0.31	0.25
AMot → SN	-0.27(0.16)	0.09	-0.13(0.18)	0.45	0.54	-0.03(0.14)	0.80	0.05(0.19)	0.81	0.73
CMot → SN	0.34(0.20)	0.08	0.27(0.15)	0.06	0.54	0.35(0.13)	<0.01	0.27(0.19)	0.15	0.91
<i>Goodness-of-fit</i>										
R <sup>2</sup> Intention	31.8%		32.1%			33.4%		26.7%		
R <sup>2</sup> Attitude	31.5%		26.9%			19.2%		27.3%		
R <sup>2</sup> PBC	12.2%		40.3%			20.5%		16.7%		
R <sup>2</sup> SN	23.2%		11.1%			21%		13.1%		
$\chi^2/df$ / RMSEA	1.43 / 0.06									
<i>N</i>	106		107			109		109		

Note: The parameters in the first two columns of each condition are standardized coefficients, and  $p(W)$  are  $p$  values of the Wald tests (indicating the statistical significance of the difference between the corresponding coefficients on the left-hand side).  $\chi^2$  = chi-squared;  $df$  = degrees of freedom; RMSEA = root-mean-square error approximation. The models were controlled for gender, education, spouse, children, languages, time abroad, foreign experience, and satisfaction with IA.

When PD is added as a moderating variable, the explained variance of the intention to expatriate is 31.8% (high PD) and 32.1% (low PD) for developed AEs, and 33.4% (high PD) and 26.7% (low PD) for emerging AEs. These figures represent an increase in the explanation

power of the model compared with model 3, when the explained variance for developed and emerging AEs was 20% and 20.4%, respectively.

Considering the results in Table 26, the first analysis assesses the moderating effect of PD on the relationship between PBC and the intention to expatriate. H4 predicted that the relationship between PBC and intention to expatriate would be stronger (weaker) when PD was low (high). The effect of PBC on intention to expatriate varies with the levels of PD for developed AEs ( $\beta_{\text{highPD}} = -0.22, p = 0.04$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowPD}} = 0.46, p < 0.01$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 10.18, p < 0.01$ ), but not for emerging AEs ( $\beta_{\text{highPD}} = -0.14, p = 0.22$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowPD}} = -0.15, p = 0.26$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 0.00, p = 0.96$ ), thus supporting H4 for developed AEs, but not for emerging AEs. For developed AEs, the self-confidence in their ability to expatriate and the higher internal locus of control have a positive and large influence on their intention to expatriate to countries they perceive to be similar to their country of nationality (small PD),  $\beta_{\text{lowPD}} = 0.46, p < 0.01$ . On the other hand, PBC has a medium negative effect on the intention to expatriate when PD is high ( $\beta_{\text{highPD}} = -0.22, p = 0.04$ ). The higher the self-confidence in their ability to expatriate and the higher their perceived control over expatriating, the lower their intention to expatriate to countries towards which they perceive high PD.

Since the model to explain the employee's intention to expatriate proved to have a direct relationship between the types of motivation and the intention to expatriate (Section 5.9.2), it is also interesting to analyse how PD impacts such relationships. With respect to the relationship between AMot and the intention to expatriate, despite the difference in statistical significance, the Wald test result reveals that for developed AEs the positive effect of AMot on intention does not vary with the levels of PD ( $\beta_{\text{highPD}} = 0.39, p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowPD}} = 0.18, p = 0.17$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 0.76, p = 0.38$ ). For emerging AEs, the result reveals that AMot impacts intention only when PD is high ( $\beta_{\text{highPD}} = 0.23, p = 0.05$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowPD}} = -0.25, p = 0.15$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 4.88, p = 0.03$ ). Therefore, when the expatriation is to countries towards which employees perceive large PD, AMot contributes to the formation of emerging AEs' intention to expatriate with a positive effect of medium magnitude.

With regard to the relationship between CMot and intention to expatriate, the results reveal that there is no significant difference between the PD conditions for developed AEs ( $\beta_{\text{highPD}} = 0.10, p = 0.60$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowPD}} = 0.07, p = 0.60$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 0.03, p = 0.86$ ), while CMot does not have a significant effect on intention under any of the PD conditions. For emerging AEs, the effect of CMot on intention also does not significantly varies across the two PD conditions ( $\beta_{\text{highPD}} = 0.23, p = 0.10$ ;  $\beta_{\text{lowPD}} = 0.39, p = 0.04$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 0.58, p = 0.45$ ), even

though controlled motivation has a large and positive impact on intention to expatriate to perceived similar countries while it has a medium and only marginally significant effect when the perceived difference is high.

### 5.10 A comparison of the TPB-based model, SDT-based model and the integrated model

One final analysis aims to compare the explanatory power of the model predicting the intention to expatriate based on the TPB, the SDT, and the integration of both theories. The TPB-based model refers to Model 2, addressed in section 5.9.1, and the integrated model refers to Model 3, addressed in section 5.9.2. The SDT-based model was not addressed before, and it is presented here for comparison. Table 27 presents the results.

**Table 27:** A comparison among the models explaining the intention to expatriate

	TPB-based model (Model 2)		SDT-based model		Integrated model (Model 3)	
	Developed AEs	Emerging AEs	Developed AEs	Emerging AEs	Developed AEs	Emerging AEs
<i>Goodness-of-fit</i>						
R <sup>2</sup> Intention	11.2%	16.2%	18.7%	18.2%	20%	20.4%
$\chi^2$ /df / RMSEA	1.27 / 0.04		2.05 / 0.07		1.37 / 0.04	
<i>N</i>	213	218	213	218	213	218

$\chi^2$  = chi-squared; df = degrees of freedom; RMSEA = root-mean-square error approximation.

The results evidence that the TPB-only model is the one explaining the lower variance of the intention to expatriate for developed (11.2%) and emerging (16.2%) AEs, followed by the SDT-based model, which explains 18.7% of the variance for developed AEs and 18.2% for emerging AEs. Of the two models, the SDT-based one explains a larger variance in the intention to expatriate. However, when the variables from both theories are integrated, the intentions' variance is higher, accounting for 20% of the developed AEs' intention to expatriate and 20.4% of emerging AEs' intention to expatriate. Compared to the most commonly used TPB-based model, the integrated model explains an extra 8.8% of the variance of intention to expatriate for developed AEs and 4.2% for emerging AEs. Although not large, this increase is attributable to the integration of the SDT and the TPB model. In previous studies that extended the TPB model with other constructs, small variance increases as low as 1% were noted (e.g., Ponnareddy et al., 2020; Song et al., 2012). The additional explanatory power supports the utility of an integrated model of the TPB and the SDT to investigate employees' intention to expatriate.

## 5.11 Summary of the chapter

This study's main results are subdivided into two parts: the descriptive results and the hypotheses test.

The descriptive results clarify the profile of the sub-samples of developed and emerging AEs in terms of their personal and professional characteristics. Although the samples of developed and emerging AEs resemble in aspects such as the proportion of male expatriates (82.2% and 78.9% of the sample of developed and emerging AEs, respectively) and having children (42.72 and 38.53% of the sample of developed and emerging AEs had at least one child, respectively), they differ in other many aspects: emerging AEs are fluent in more foreign languages than developed AEs (13.1% of developed AEs are not fluent in any foreign language while the figure is 0.5% for emerging AEs), and have, on average, three years less of previous international experience than developed AEs ( $SD_{\text{developed}} = 6.51$ ;  $SD_{\text{emerging}} = 3.85$ ). Concerning the IA itself, the IA was more frequently associated with promotion for developed AEs than emerging AEs, and the proportion of developed AEs in fixed-term IAs (39.5%) was also higher than for emerging AEs (29.8%). These results evidence how the sample of developed and emerging AEs differ concerning their demographic characteristics and the characteristics of their IAs.

For the second part of the results, an overview of the hypotheses assessment is presented in Table 28. The table also provides information on the non-hypothesised relationships that were found significant while testing the pre-determined hypotheses.

First, when testing the mediation effect (section 5.9.2), it became apparent that the types of motivation had a direct effect on the socio-cognitive variables: a) AMot has a positive effect on attitude for developed and emerging AEs; b) AMot has a positive effect on PBC for developed AEs; and c) CMot has a positive effect on SN for developed and emerging AEs.

Further, when testing the moderating effect of CD on the socio-cognitive variables and intention to expatriate (section 5.9.3), another moderating effect was supported: CD moderates the effect of AMot on the intention to expatriate for emerging AEs in a way that the relationship is only significant when CD is low. Thus, the higher the emerging AEs' AMot to expatriate, the lower their intention to expatriate to culturally similar countries.

Finally, when testing the moderating effect of PD (section 5.9.4), the results also revealed that PD moderates the effect of AMot on the intention to expatriate for emerging

AEs in a way that the relationship is only significant when PD is high. It means that emerging AEs form their intention to expatriate to countries towards which they perceive large distances by more internally evoked incentives, such as discovering another culture and meeting non-professional challenges.

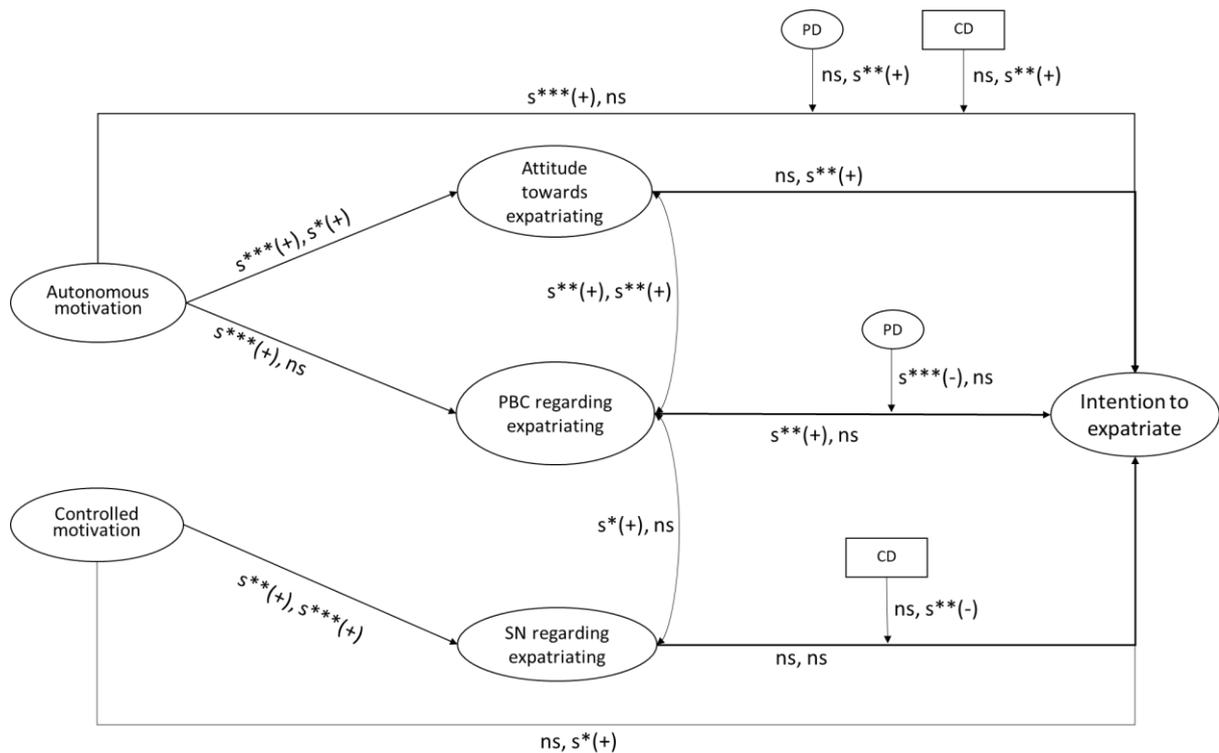
Based on the amount of explained variance, the results also support the utility of an integrated model of the TPB and the SDT to investigate employees' intention to expatriate.

**Table 28:** Outcome of the hypotheses

<b>Hypothesised relationships</b>				
	Developed AEs		Emerging AEs	
Hypothesis	Decision	Interpretation	Decision	Interpretation
H1a	Unsupported	Attitude does not significantly impact the intention to expatriate.	Supported	Attitude has a positive impact on the intention to expatriate.
H1b	Supported	PBC has a positive impact on the intention to expatriate.	Unsupported	PBC does not significantly impact the intention to expatriate.
H1c	Unsupported	SN does not significantly impact the intention to expatriate.	Unsupported	SN does not significantly impact the intention to expatriate.
H2	Unsupported	The socio-cognitive variables do not mediate the relationship between the types of motivation and intention to expatriate. Instead, AMot has a positive direct impact on intention.	Unsupported	The socio-cognitive variables do not mediate the relationship between the types of motivation and intention to expatriate. Instead, CMot has a positive direct impact on intention.
H3	Unsupported	CD does not moderate the relationship between SN and intention to expatriate.	Supported	CD moderates the relationship between SN and the intention to expatriate: the relationship is stronger when CD is low.
H4	Supported	PD moderates the relationship between PBC and the intention to expatriate: the relationship is stronger when PD is low.	Unsupported	PD does not moderate the relationship between PBC and the intention to expatriate.
<b>Non-hypothesised relationships</b>				
	Supported	AMot has a positive effect on Att.	Supported	AMot has a positive effect on Att.
	Supported	AMot has a positive effect on PBC.	Unsupported	AMot does not significantly impact PBC.
	Supported	CMot has a positive effect on SN.	Supported	CMot has a positive effect on SN.
	Unsupported	CD does not moderate the effect of AMot on the intention to expatriate.	Supported	CD moderates the effect of AMot on the intention to expatriate.
	Unsupported	PD does not moderate the effect of AMot on the intention to expatriate.	Supported	PD moderates the effect of AMot on the intention to expatriate.

Based on the results presented in Table 28, Figure 12 depicts the conceptual model with the results, including the additional significant non-hypothesised relationships.

**Figure 12: The final model**



Note: Information for developed AEs is presented before and emerging AEs after the comma; ns = non-significant; s = significant; \*\*\* <0.01; \*\* <0.05; \* <0.1; one-headed arrow = causal relationship; two-headed arrow = covariance between variables

The core conclusion of this chapter is captured through the final model: the samples of developed and emerging AEs noticeably differ concerning the formation of their intention to expatriate. Overall, different socio-cognitive and motivation types impact their intention to expatriate, and moderator variables also play different roles in explaining the interaction effects in the model.

After addressing the results of this study, the next chapter provides the interpretation of the results and discusses the study's limitations, and directions for future research.

## 6 DISCUSSION

This chapter first interprets the results presented in chapter 5 into research findings, from the results concerning the sample characteristics to the hypothesis testing. Then, the chapter addresses this study's empirical, theoretical, and managerial contributions. Finally, this study's limitations and future directions are discussed.

### 6.1 Discussion of findings on the sample characteristics

While describing the samples of developed and emerging AEs, the results led to interesting findings, which are now discussed.

First, the sample of developed AEs more frequently expatriate without their families. Previous research has found that split family situations are led by aspects such as children's education issues, when parents want a stable education or believe the home country's education to be superior (Dickmann & Watson, 2017; Kim & Tung, 2013). In this sense, in the face of an IA opportunity, developed AEs seem to consider the home and host countries' educational systems: the higher educational level of the developed home countries (Briscoe, 2014; Clarke et al., 2017) combined with the desire to provide their children with stable education, may have led these developed AEs to expatriate without their family. Another aspect that may impact this decision is the host country's language proficiency: 42.3% of developed AEs do not know the host country's language. If they can more easily adapt because they are fluent in the *lingua franca* spoken in the company, which can even put them in a superior position (Zhang & Harzing, 2016), another scenario is presented to spouses: not having a good command of the host language has proved to impact spouses' adjustment, especially because it inhibits bonding with host nationals (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001), which consequently impacts the IA's success as well (Canhilal et al., 2015). In this regard, relocations to countries whose native languages expatriates and their spouses do not speak may also explain developed AEs' split family situations.

Emerging AEs are younger than developed AEs, have studied longer than developed AEs, and speak more languages than developed AEs. It is per the findings of a study exploring Brazilian expatriates, in which the authors identified that the sample is mainly better-educated young managers that speak English in their 30s (Aguzzoli et al., 2021). Notably, emerging AEs' qualifications in terms of years of formal education and foreign

language proficiency does not resemble the Latin American population. Latin American countries have lower levels of education compared to developed countries (Cuervo-Cazurra & Genc, 2008; United Nations, 2020a), and a small part of the population is fluent in a foreign language: in Brazil, for instance, only 1% of the population, usually young people, are fluent in English (Ribas, 2019), the common *lingua franca* adopted in MNCs (Brannen et al., 2014; Neeley, 2017). Other contextual aspects may explain the higher competence of emerging AEs. First, emerging countries are characterised by a large informal labour market and few MNCs (Schneider, 2009). In turn, MNCs are attractive workplaces in emerging countries because they provide legal contracts, higher salaries, and better benefits, especially for expatriates (Tung, 2016). Further, people from emerging countries that were colonised in the past tend to present an inferiority complex, which potentially amounts to the discourse that construed ex-colonies as inferiors<sup>2</sup> (Prasad, 2003). Thus, the national inferiority complex, termed ‘malinchismo’ in Mexico (Boyer, 2005) and ‘mutt complex’ in Brazil (Rodrigues, 1993), combined with the high competition for positions in MNCs, may explain why emerging AEs are more prepared than developed AEs: they put more effort into developing their competencies to overcome the inferiority complex and to be more competitive against country fellows and foreigners. This mechanism is understood from Adlers’ theoretical perspective (Adler, 1928/2013): people’s feeling of inferiority leads to the attempt to overcome those emotions by achieving a higher level of development; they strive to find a situation in which they excel.

Emerging AEs are more frequently fluent in the host countries’ language. This result has the same trend as the number of languages the expatriates speak but also reflects that English is the *lingua franca* in most MNCs (Brannen et al., 2014; Neeley, 2017). UK and US nationals (English is their native language) compose the sample of developed AEs, and there seems to have no requirement to learn the host country’s language to engage in IAs in non-native English-speaking countries. Despite it, knowing the host country’s language affects many aspects of the IA, such as expatriates’ relationship with host country nationals and knowledge processing (Tenzer et al., 2021; Zhang & Harzing, 2016).

Developed AEs’ have a longer foreign living experience than emerging AEs. It is also an expected finding considering that developed MNCs are more internationalised (Cuervo-

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<sup>2</sup> Mexico was a Spanish colony from 1521 to 1821 (Russell, 2010) and Brazil was a Portuguese colony from 1500 to 1822 (Fausto, 1999).

Cazurra & Genc, 2008; Gammeltoft et al., 2010), which contributes to the formation of a workforce with more international and multicultural experiences compared to emerging AEs.

Another finding concerning the sample's characteristics refers to career development issues during the IA. In this regard, promotions were more common among developed AEs, while lateral transfers were more common among emerging AEs. Lateral transfers might be more common among emerging AEs to facilitate knowledge acquisition and experience development, given that they have low international experience.

Important evidence comes from the evaluation of the promotion from the perspective of the samples' age (emerging AEs are younger than developed AEs), working experience (emerging AEs have less work experience with the current employer), and foreign experience (emerging AEs have less international experience than developed AEs): compared to developed AEs, emerging AEs are getting to top positions with less working and foreign experience and earlier in their careers.

The large number of emerging AEs working in their home countries for foreign MNCs is in accordance with the fact that most production and credit are concentrated with foreign MNCs in Latin American countries (Schneider, 2013).

Another interesting finding emerges when jointly analysing the country where the HQs are located and the proportion of promotion and lateral move for developed and emerging AEs. 37.11% of emerging AEs working for emerging MNCs were promoted, while 58.76% were transferred laterally. The figures are similar for those working for developed MNCs: 35.04% were promoted and 61.54% had a lateral move. Comparatively, 44.73% of developed AEs working for developed MNCs received a promotion for the IA and 51.58% had a lateral move (the number of developed AEs working for emerging AEs is 7, so there is no confidence to draw a scenario from this figure). In this regard, emerging AEs may prefer to work for developed MNCs for reasons such as higher salaries and opportunities for training and development (Tung, 2016), but there seems to have no difference concerning career progression compared to their experience in emerging MNCs. Complementary, their chance of getting a promotion in the IA even in companies sharing their nationality is lower than developed AEs.

Notably, relocations from the HQ to the subsidiary are the most common among the sample (49.19%), which purposes are generally controlling and coordinating the subsidiaries and sharing the organisational culture (McNulty & Brewster, 2017a; Reiche & Harzing,

2011; Waxin, 2007). Notably, moving from the HQ to the subsidiary is most common for developed AEs (55.40%) than emerging AEs (43.12%).

There is also samples disparity concerning the flow between the MNCs units. In fact, the proportion of emerging AEs moving from the subsidiary to the HQs is higher than for developed AEs. It is per the fact that most emerging AEs were working at the subsidiary of developed countries' MNCs in their country of nationality, where they return after their assignment at the HQ. Thus, proportionally more emerging AEs were enrolled in IAs with the role of knowledge transfer and boundary-spanning, when they intend to learn the organisational culture or specific competencies in the HQ to take back to their subsidiary, which serves as a developmental relocation (McNulty & Brewster, 2017a; Reiche, 2006, 2011; Reiche et al., 2011). These data complement the results about promotions (more common for developed AEs) and lateral relocations (more common for emerging AEs): promotions are more common for developed AEs moving from the HQ to subsidiaries, while lateral relocations are more common for emerging AEs moving from subsidiaries to HQ.

## **6.2 Discussion of findings on the impact of the socio-cognitive variables on employees' intention to expatriate**

Before discussing the findings regarding the impact of the socio-cognitive variables on employees' intention to expatriate, it is worth considering the findings concerning the control variables' effects.

First, there were differences for the samples concerning the effect of the control variables. For developed AEs, having a spouse has a positive effect on their intention to expatriate, contrary to previous studies that found a non-significant or negative effect (e.g., Haines et al., 2008; Kim & Froese, 2012; Tharenou, 2003). This unexpected positive relationship may be due to the social and emotional support spouse can provide during IAs (Schütter & Boerner, 2013). On the other hand, having children has a negative impact on the intention to expatriate ( $\beta = -0.16$ ;  $p = 0.04$ ), as per the findings of previous studies (e.g., Haines et al., 2008; Kim & Froese, 2012; Yurkiewicz & Rosen, 1995). This negative effect can be attached to education concerns (Dickmann & Watson, 2017; Kim & Tung, 2013), given the parents' consideration that education in their home-developed countries is superior. Thus, while having a spouse enhances developed employees' intention to expatriate, having

children weakens their intention. For emerging AEs, the control variables with a significant effect on the intention to expatriate are the satisfaction with the IA, which has a positive effect on their intention to expatriate while the time they have spent abroad during the current IA has a negative impact on the intention to expatriate. The result for the relationship between satisfaction and intention to expatriate sounds reasonable, indicating that the current satisfaction with the IA tended to increase their intention to expatriate. The result concerning the negative impact of the time they have spent abroad and the retrospective assessment of their intention to expatriate clarifies that the more time they spent abroad, the lower is their retrospective assessment of their intention to expatriate. Clearly, for the sample of emerging AEs', the actual experience and evaluations impact their retrospective assessment of the intention to expatriate. Comparing both samples, it is evident that family issues played a more important role for employees from developed countries while the current condition played a more important role for employees from emerging countries.

Testing hypothesis 1, the results evidence that PBC was the only socio-cognitive variable influencing employees' intention to expatriate. This result is per expectations based on individuals' cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds: a) people from individualistic cultures take personal evaluations (such as PBC) into consideration for their decisions (Shukri et al., 2016); b) people with a background of more material and informational resources available to them (also provided by well-structured mobility programs) have their decisions influenced by stronger beliefs about the extent to which they can shape their social outcome and higher self-efficacy (Ali et al., 2005; Kraus et al., 2012); c) employees working for companies with more IA opportunities -developed countries' employees working for developed MNCs (Luo & Tung, 2018) - also have a higher perception of controllability supporting their intention to expatriate. The results also shows that attitude is the only socio-cognitive variable influencing emerging AEs' intention to expatriate. This finding is per previous studies on expatriation, in which attitude played an important role in the prediction of the intention to expatriate (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Joardar & Weisang, 2019). The significant influence of emerging AEs' attitudes on their intention to expatriate may be related to the job opportunities in their home countries: most of them were living in Brazil and Mexico, where international job opportunities are few and well-valued. For those working for emerging MNCs, IA opportunities are not abundant as emerging MNCs, when entering an advanced country, tend to use local managers rather than PCNs due to emerging employees' lack of managerial competence, because local managers are important sources of

knowledge and capabilities needed to enhance emerging MNCs global competitiveness, or because developed countries' nationals do not accept well to work for foreign bosses from emerging markets (Amighini et al., 2015; Tung, 2016). Opportunities are also restricted for those working for developed MNCs' subsidiaries since developed MNCs usually send PCNs to control subsidiaries and hire qualified local nationals to work for them in their foreign subsidiaries (Luo & Tung, 2018). Crucially, the availability of something (object or experience) is directly related to its value in a way that scarcity enhances its value (or desirability) (Brock, 1968). Then, amidst the scarcity of international job opportunities in emerging countries, emerging AEs' intention to expatriate is influenced by their favourable evaluation of expatriating.

SN has no significant influence on the sub-samples' intention to expatriate, what goes against previous studies that identified SN as an important predictor of individuals' intention to expatriate (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Remhof et al., 2014). However, the samples of these previous studies are formed by undergraduate business students not necessarily facing the decision to expatriate. Thus, the manifest difference may be because salient features of a behavioural situation often activate beliefs towards the behaviour that are different from the beliefs that are activated in hypothetical situations (Ajzen et al., 2004). Further, for developed AEs, the non-impact of SN on intention may be related to the fact that a high internal locus of control (high PBC) tends to reduce the impact of social norms on intention (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2020). Basically, if individuals are relatively confident about their ability and control over performing the behaviour, they are inclined to gather and process information without considering the behaviour or opinion of others as a main source of information. Then, while PBC significantly predicts developed AEs' intention to expatriate, their SN has no significant impact on it. In other words, developed AEs base their intention to expatriate on their perception of their control over the expatriation and do not consider their perception of what others expect from them to form their intention to expatriate.

### **6.3 Discussion of findings on the relationship between the types of motivation and employees' intention to expatriate**

The results evidence that the socio-cognitive variables from the TPB do not mediate the impact of the types of motivation on employees' intention to expatriate for none of the

samples. It contradicts previous studies integrating the TPB and the SDT, which found the socio-cognitive variables mediating the referred relationships (e.g., Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009; Lee et al., 2020; Luqman et al., 2018). These previous findings are mostly from health studies, and it evidences how much the psychological process may differ for the formation of different behavioural intentions.

Instead, AMOT has a positive impact on developed AEs' intention to expatriate and CMOT has a positive effect on emerging AEs' intention to expatriate. These findings are primarily attached to the employees' cultural backgrounds. In individualistic cultures (developed AEs), people are more likely to refer to themselves as independent, self-contained, and more differentiated from others (Hofstede, 1983), so their internal wishes and personal attributes are expected to regulate their behaviours (Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), accentuating the autonomous reasons for acting. In contrast, people from collectivist societies (emerging AEs) act primarily according to the expectations of others (Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), enabling them to gain appreciation and recognition from individuals of importance, thus stressing controlled reasons for acting. Alongside the influence of the cultural background, national contexts with more material, cognitive and social resources (developed countries) are conducive to more intrinsic reasons motivating individuals' behaviours (Welzel & Inglehart, 2005).

Although the socio-cognitive variables do not mediate the impact of AMot and CMot on the intention to expatriate, the types of motivation still impact the socio-cognitive variables. Firstly, AMot has a positive impact on developed and emerging AEs' attitudes towards expatriation. In this regard, a motivation to expatriate driven by an inherent interest or personal meaning leads to having more positive attitudes towards the expatriation. Internalisation plays an important role in explaining the positive impact of AMot on attitude (Gagné, 2009). Essentially, when employees internalise the value of the expatriation (external reasons are transformed into self-regulation), their attitudes towards expatriation become more positive. Secondly, AMot has a positive impact on PBC regarding expatriating for developed AEs. In the continuum from controlled to autonomous motivation, autonomy increases in a way that autonomously motivated individuals are said to appreciate the activity and join it voluntarily, without external pressure or gains (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Thus, the perceived degree of control over an activity becomes more positive when the need for autonomy is satisfied. In this sense, the more the employees are motivated to expatriate for autonomous reasons, the more likely they perceived the behaviour to be achievable regardless

of difficulties (Chan & Hagger, 2012b). Finally, CMot has a positive impact on SN for developed and emerging AEs. The rationale for such results lay in the fact that SN relates to the expectations of others, reflecting beliefs about the controlling nature of others (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009). Essentially, controlled reasons, such as financial incentives and a better standard of living, can induce positive opinions about the IA among relevant others, leading employees to have a higher perception of their approval (higher SN).

#### **6.4 Discussion of findings on the moderation analyses**

The analyses provide evidence of how the model varies across levels of CD and PD.

The moderation role played by the CD in the relationship between SN and emerging AEs' intention to expatriate clarifies under which boundary conditions people from collectivist societies would form their intention based on the consideration of the expectation of close others (Begley & Tan, 2001): SN plays an essential role in the formation of emerging AEs' intention to expatriate only when the host country is culturally similar to the country of nationality. One possible reason explaining this result is that when the host country seems like the country of nationality, individuals are more prone to believe that their important ones have some valid and reliable knowledge that should be considered (due to the similarities between them). Only under this circumstance do they account for their perception of what important others expect them to do. It evidences the idea from social sciences that it is reasonable to grant authority to others' opinions, and the perception of others' opinions, only when there is enough information to believe that they are reliable concerning the matter of interest (Foley, 2001). There is also reason to believe the host countries' development level may also play a role in this result. When further analysing the host countries that represent large CD for emerging AEs, it is evident that they are mostly developed countries: for instance, Mexican employees in IAs in the Netherlands and the USA, or Brazilian employees assigned in the UK and the Netherlands. In this sense, it may happen that when the host country has superior socioeconomic conditions, employee does not even consider others' opinions because there is little doubt about the decision to accept the proposal (in the face of the numerous contextual advantages).

CD also moderates the relationship between AMot and intention to expatriate for emerging AEs in a way that the relationship is negatively significant when CD is low. This

result might be explained by employees' underestimation of the challenges attached to IAs in culturally close host countries (Perret, 2022; Tanure et al., 2009). In a way, they believe the IAs in culturally close countries are not good opportunities to discover another culture, have new experiences, and meet optimal challenges.

Further, PD also plays a moderation role in the relationship between PBC and intention to expatriate for developed AEs: their self-confidence in their ability to expatriate and the higher internal locus of control have a positive and large influence on their intention to expatriate to countries they perceive to be similar to their country of nationality (small PD). It is per the fact that the familiarity linked to close psychic distant countries is associated with higher cognitive certainty (Burleigh & Schoenherr, 2015; Cheetham et al., 2011). On the other hand, PBC has a negative effect on the intention to expatriate when PD is high. A possible reason explaining this result is related to the formation of PBC: higher PBC can result from previous experience with the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In fact, individuals enhance their perceived self-efficacy through different cultural experiences (Remhof et al., 2013), which leads employees with previous international experience to have a higher perception of their ability to expatriate. Developed AEs' extensive international experience ( $M = 5.61$  years;  $SD = 6.51$ ) may have led them to feel that the disadvantages of expatriating to dissimilar countries (associated ambiguity, obstacles, and unpredictability, Xu and Shenkar, 2002) outweigh the advantages, so they are unwilling to engage in such assignments even though they feel confident about their ability to do it.

PD also moderates the relationship between AMot and intention in a way that this relationship is only significant when PD is high. It means that emerging AEs form their intention to expatriate to countries towards which they perceive large distances by more internally evoked incentives, such as discovering another culture and meeting non-professional challenges. This result seems closely related to the IA characteristics: in assignments in countries towards which employees perceive high differences, they are also more prone to expect more challenges, new experiences, and personal development; thus, their intention to expatriate is formed by more internalised reasons. In this regard, PD is an intention-enhancing condition: in conditions of high PD, there is a boost in the impact of AMot on the intention to expatriate, whereas, in the presence of a low level of PD, the chance that AMot will affect the intention diminishes.

It is worth noticing how the results differ for the moderation role of CD and PD. For instance, for emerging AEs, AMot significantly impacts the intention to expatriate only when

CD is low (not when CD is high) and when PD is high (not when PD is low). These results corroborate the understanding that individuals' perceptions of the differences between countries of nationality and host countries do not necessarily reflect objective measures of such differences. In fact, the correlation between CD and PD is as low as 0.22 for developed AEs and 0.24 for emerging AEs. In this case, considering moderating variables at the individual and national levels (Cerar et al., 2021; Nebus & Chai, 2014) brings complementary explanations about the formation of employees' intention to expatriate. Notably, the distinction between PD and CD has become increasingly blurred over time (Håkanson & Ambos, 2010; Tung & Verbeke, 2010) and the uncritical acceptance and employment of the constructs of PD and CD have increasingly been questioned (Ambos & Håkanson, 2014; Sousa & Bradley, 2006). Thus, the empirical results from this study corroborate the theoretical claim that CD and PD are conceptually different and that they provide complementary explanations about the formation of employees' intention to expatriate.

## **6.5 Empirical Contributions**

This study makes five main empirical contributions. The first one refers to the comparison of the formation of employees' intention to expatriate for those from developed and emerging countries. The second contribution is the focus on assigned expatriates. The third refers to the integration of the SDT and the TPB to explain employees' intention to expatriate. The fourth contribution regards the assessment of the effect of the reasons to expatriate on the intention to expatriate, and the fifth is the contemplation of a large number of host countries. Each of these contributions is now discussed.

The first empirical contribution is this study's comparison of the results for employees from developed and emerging countries. It is acknowledged that most research to date has focused on expatriates from a few 'WEIRD' countries (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) (Farndale et al., 2017; McNulty & Brewster, 2019). Further, when expatriates from emerging countries were researched, studies concentrated on Chinese or Indians (Farndale et al., 2017). In this context, Latin American countries are appreciated not only because they are under-researched in expatriation research but also due to their increasing importance in the world economy and homogeneous characteristics across countries (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2016). Specifically, Brazil and Mexico are the countries with the highest GDP and population among Latin American countries, and they are responsible for

the most significant part of the total OFDI issued by the region (UNCTAD, 2020). Although focusing only on emerging AEs would be a valuable contribution, comparing the results to other studies would be somehow biased because aspects such as the theoretical background and the samples' profile (e.g., types of expatriates) would not be the same across studies. In this regard, using the same theoretical framework and the same type of expatriates from developed and emerging countries provides reliable data to compare the samples. Thus, the present study's novelty lies in its comparative understanding in respect of how employees from emerging and developed countries form their intention to expatriate.

The second empirical contribution refers to sampling assigned expatriates. Although a few previous studies investigating the reasons to expatriate have focused on assigned expatriates (e.g., Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011; Shortland, 2016), most of the studies applying the TPB have relied on students or employees not facing a real decision to expatriate (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Yurtkoru et al., 2017). In fact, intentions do not remain stable over time (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) and respondents are likely to provide more favourable results when facing hypothetical scenarios (e.g., more positive attitudes and higher intention to expatriate) (Ajzen et al., 2004). In this regard, the results, specifically those from the TPB studies, may not reflect AEs' psychological process to forming their intention to expatriate. Thus, the second empirical contribution lies in the fact that this study focused solely on assigned expatriates, enabling the discovery of the actual psychological process in forming their intention to expatriate.

The third empirical contribution relates to integrating the SDT and the TPB to explain employees' intention to expatriate. So far, studies that have investigated the psychological formation of employees' intention to expatriate have primarily relied on the TPB (e.g., Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Eby & Russell, 2000; Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Joardar & Weisang, 2019; Yurtkoru et al., 2017) and a rare have relied on the SDT (e.g., Haines et al., 2008). Each of these theories offers valuable information about the antecedents of individuals' intention to expatriate. However, although these theories were proven to provide complementary information about behaviour formation (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009; Lee et al., 2020), no previous study was found integrating them to explain expatriation intentions. The empirical contribution lies in the use of an integrated model of the TPB and the SDT to investigate employees' intention to expatriate, which provided: a) a broader picture of the psychological process involved in the formation of individuals' intention to

expatriate than previous studies on the topic and; b) a reduction of the distance between the integrated model of the SDT and TPB and the expatriation research.

The fourth empirical contribution refers to assessing the effect of the reasons to expatriate on the intention to expatriate. It is acknowledged that most research that has investigated individuals' reasons for expatriating has relied on descriptive statistics, enquiring respondents about the importance of each reason to their decision to expatriate (e.g., Bader, 2017; Dickmann, 2012; Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011). However, while this method enables assessing the importance of the reasons, it does not provide information about the effect of the motives on individuals' intention to expatriate. In the present research, structural equation modelling was applied to assess multivariate causal relationships. It enabled the assessment of the effect of autonomous and controlled reasons on individuals' intention to expatriate. This study's results provide clear evidence of the difference between these methods of data analysis: although emerging AEs presented higher mean than developed AEs in most items assessing AMot (section 5.2.2), SEM showed that AMot is not as relevant for the formation of their intention to expatriate as it is for developed AEs (section 5.9.2). Thus, the method applied provides information on the strength and character of the relationship between autonomous and controlled reasons to expatriate and the formation of employees' intention to expatriate.

The last empirical contribution relates to the number of host countries in the sample. In total, the sample was assigned to 56 different host countries across six world regions. It represents a more diverse sample than found in other studies sampling expatriates, when it hardly reaches 30 host countries (e.g., Marques et al., 2021; Shortland, 2016; Silbiger et al., 2021; Song et al., 2021; Stoermer et al., 2021). The range of host countries avoids single-country bias and enables an understanding of the moderating role of cultural distance in the model. More broadly, the large number of host countries reflects the diversity of IAs concerning host countries' characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic development, national culture, institutional context, geographical location). Therefore, the last contribution lies in the fact that the heterogeneous host countries provide results relevant to the most varied types of international assignments.

After describing the empirical contributions, the next section addresses this study's theoretical contributions.

## 6.6 Theoretical Contributions

The findings of this study provide six theoretical contributions to a large body of work on the expatriation literature and IHRM. The first one sheds some light on the emerging AEs' profile, of whom there has been scant research. The second theoretical contribution originates from the proposed conceptual framework, which combines explanations of two prominent theories in a new context, namely employees' expatriation intention. The third one elucidates the distinct relationship between the types of motivation and the socio-cognitive variables in the context of expatriation intention. The fourth and fifth theoretical contributions emerge from the investigation of the moderating role played by the CD and PD on the relationship between the socio-cognitive variables and the intention to expatriate. The fourth one clarifies the peculiar cultural conditions for emerging AEs' social norms to inform their intention to expatriate, and the fifth refers to the relationship between developed AEs' PBC and intention to expatriate, revealed when the perceived difference between home and host countries is taken into account. Finally, the sixth theoretical contribution underscores the country of nationality's impact on the psychological formation of expatriation intentions.

The first theoretical contribution derives from a thorough sample analysis and sheds light on emerging AEs' profiles. A priori, emerging AEs were expected to present lower education and qualification than developed AEs due to the lower investment in education and training in emerging countries compared to developed countries (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Schneider, 2009, 2013; United Nations, 2020a). However, the results show that emerging AEs have higher qualifications concerning formal education and language proficiency than developed AEs. The interconnection between the national, organisational, and historical contexts must be acknowledged to appreciate this result. Emerging countries are characterised by a large informal labour market and few MNCs (Schneider, 2009). In turn, MNCs are attractive workplaces in emerging countries because they provide legal contracts, higher salaries, and better benefits (Tung, 2016). It is also important to note that English is the *lingua franca* in most international organisations (Brannen et al., 2014; Harzing & Pudelko, 2013). While this offers less incentive for English speakers to learn another language (Zhang & Harzing, 2016), it makes a prerequisite for those from Spanish and Portuguese backgrounds (Neeley, 2017). Further, it needs to be acknowledged that the discourse that construed ex-colonies as inferiors still resonates, leaving individuals from these countries (e.g., Brazilians and Mexicans) with an inferiority complex (Prasad, 2003).

Consequently, the competition for work opportunities available in MNCs, summed with individuals' inferiority complex, leads emerging countries' individuals to put massive efforts into human capital and developing their competencies to be competitive among country fellows and people from 'WEIRD' countries. The theoretical contribution identified here lies in the fact that the emerging AEs qualifications emanate from a source other than that of the extensively studied developed AEs. While constrained by home countries and workplaces that do not offer the conditions for their development, emerging AEs' personal agency is the leading force to them becoming highly qualified employees.

Further theoretical insights were derived from the proposed theoretical framework. Considering that theoretical contributions come from demonstrating how the integration of variables alters the understanding of the phenomena by reorganising the causal maps (Whetten, 1989), it is important to appraise the merits of the study's conceptual framework in explaining developed and emerging AEs' intention to expatriate. Previous studies in other research areas, especially health-related aspects, have used SDT and TPB in combination because they are thought to provide complementary explanations of the motivational process that precedes action (e.g., Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009; Lee et al., 2020). As theoretically sustained and supported by the results, any one of the single theories reviewed (TPB and SDT) presented a lower explanation power compared to the integrated model. Thus, either theory alone is unable to capture the inherent complexity of the psychological process involved in the decision to expatriate. Therefore, the second theoretical contribution lies in the fact that combining explanations of the SDT and the TPB in the context of expatriation intention can offer a better understanding of the formation of employees' intention to expatriate compared to SDT or TPB-based models, evidencing the explanatory value of integrating the SDT and TPB in expatriation research.

The investigation of employees' intention to expatriate through the integrated model provided the third theoretical contribution. The results lead to novel insights into the relationships between the types of motivation, the socio-cognitive variables, and the intention to expatriate. Previous studies using the integrated model in other research fields found that the socio-cognitive variables mediate the relationship between the types of motivation and behavioural intention (e.g., Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2009; Lee et al., 2020; Luqman et al., 2018). Moreover, the TPB's sufficiency assumption (sustaining that the three socio-cognitive variables should mediate the relationship between any other variable and the intention to engage in behaviours) and the established connections between the types of motivation and

the intention to expatriate (e.g., Haines et al., 2008) and between the socio-cognitive variables and the intention to expatriate (e.g., Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015; Eby & Russell, 2000; Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Joardar & Weisang, 2019; Yurtkoru et al., 2017), suggested that the socio-cognitive variables could mediate the relationship between the types of motivation and the intention to expatriate. Nevertheless, the results of this study revealed that the types of motivation affect employees' intention to expatriate, but these effects are not mediated by the socio-cognitive variables. Instead, motivations have a direct impact on employees' intention to expatriate. This finding advances theory on key psychological pathways for the formation of employees' intention to expatriate because it shows that in the context of expatriation, motivations and socio-cognitive variables predict the intention to expatriate, but they may act independently of one another. Therefore, although the motives from the SDT indicate the source of information that influences the cognitive process about the expatriation behaviour, the socio-cognitive variables are not enough to explain the effect of the types of motivation on employees' intention to expatriate. Thus, employees' motivations to expatriate and their weighing of the available information about the IAs can trigger their intention to expatriate, showing that a decision on expatriation is very complex and the result of a number of varied influences that can be cognitive and driven by motivations.

Such complexity is also found in the moderation role played by individual-subjective and national-level variables in the model of employees' intention to expatriate. PD at the micro level and CD at the macro level are situational factors that describe the generalisability of the model across contexts and circumstances (Busse et al., 2017). The addition of the moderating variables enhanced the prognostic accuracy of the model, adding a considerable amount of explanatory power to it. While incorporating these moderating variables, this study adds another layer of analysis to enrich the existing expatriation literature by examining interaction effects that provide complementary explanations to previous studies (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Remhof et al., 2014; Yurtkoru et al., 2017). Although the inclusion of moderating variables that address the context (when, where, and who) does not configure a theoretical contribution itself (Whetten, 1989), incorporating the moderating variables in the model provided two theoretical insights, which are now addressed.

This study's fourth theoretical contribution arises from the analysis of the moderation role of cultural distance on the model explaining employees' intention to expatriate. By considering national-level boundary conditions, the model acknowledges the relevance of

context for IHRM research (Cooke et al., 2020; Harzing & Pudelko, 2016), which, in this study, clarifies the influence of qualitatively different home and host contexts in the formation of employees' intention to expatriate. Previous studies applying the TPB to investigate individuals' intention to expatriate have found small to large effects of the SN on the intention to expatriate (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Remhof et al., 2014; Yurtkoru et al., 2017). This research accentuates that the CD between employees' country of nationality and host country can provide a more detailed understanding of this relationship. SN is theorised to have a larger impact on the formation of the intention to engage in specific behaviours for individuals from emerging countries (collectivist cultures) compared to those from developed countries (individualist culture) (Begley & Tan, 2001). However, this proved not entirely true in the context of employees' expatriation: SN plays an important role in the formation of employees' intention to expatriate only when the host country is culturally similar to the home country. This result can be explained from at least two perspectives. The first one evidences the idea from social sciences that it is reasonable to grant authority to others' opinions and the perception of others' opinions only when there is enough information to believe that they are reliable concerning the matter of interest (Foley, 2001). In this regard, emerging AEs only consider their perception of important others' opinions when they believe they have some valid and reliable knowledge, which happens when the country of nationality and host countries share cultural characteristics. The second perspective refers to the host countries' development level. For the sample of emerging AEs, a large CD is also linked to IAs in more developed countries. In this regard, when the host country has superior socioeconomic conditions, employees may not consider others' opinions because they have little doubt about the decision to accept the proposal given the various improvements in living conditions. Thus, the fourth theoretical contribution adds to the expatriation literature while clarifying under which contextual conditions people from collectivist societies (emerging AEs) would form their intention to expatriate based on the consideration of the expectation of close others: only when the host country is culturally similar to the home country, which may be linked to a) the fact that employees only consider others' opinions when they believe others have reliable information concerning the host country and b) the perceived difference in socioeconomic factors between home and host countries, leading to higher weight on personal evaluations instead of social norms when the expatriation is from emerging to developed countries.

The fifth theoretical contribution is also linked to the addition of moderating variables into the model. It emerges from the investigation of an individual-level moderating variable, the PD. The results supported that PD weakens the relationship between PBC and intention to expatriate for developed AEs in a way that they are unwilling to expatriate to countries towards which they perceive high differences even though they believe they have the necessary abilities to perform well and overcome the difficulties (high PBC). The theoretical contribution here lies in the discovery that for developed AEs, because an international assignment is feasible (high PBC) does not automatically mean that it is desirable. Remarkably, the employees' perceived difference between the country of nationality and the host country (PD) plays a crucial role in this relationship. This finding provides a complementary and more complete picture concerning the formation of employees' intention to expatriate than previous studies that found a positive effect of PBC on expatriation intention (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Remhof et al., 2014). In fact, the negative relationship between PBC and intention to expatriate is only revealed when considering the perceived difference between the country of nationality and the host country. This result adds to the TPB-based studies on expatriates and possibly TPB-based models in other domains, highlighting the importance of incorporating employee perceptions of country differences into future research.

The sixth theoretical contribution emanated from the filling of the gap concerning the lack of knowledge about the expatriation of emerging countries' expatriates (e.g., Clarke et al., 2017; López-Duarte et al., 2020; Tung, 2017; Zhu et al., 2018). While previous investigations have used different theoretical perspectives to explore the expatriation intention of individuals from developed countries or mixed-nationality samples (e.g., Baluku et al., 2018, 2019; De Eccher & Duarte, 2018; Doherty et al., 2011; Farcas & Gonçalves, 2019; Pinto et al., 2012; Shortland, 2016), this research uncovered the development process of emerging AEs' intention to expatriate. Moreover, this study compared the model for developed and emerging AEs: they were found to form their intention to expatriate through different psychological processes, once there are remarkable differences regarding the role played by the motivations and the socio-cognitive variables for each sample. For example, the present study provided evidence that both AMot and CMot explain employees' intention to expatriate, but in different circumstances: AMot explains the intention to expatriate for developed AEs and CMot for emerging AEs. It goes contrary to previous studies, in which authors identified that intrinsic reasons had a positive impact on the willingness to accept the

IA, while external reasons did not have a significant effect on it (Haines et al., 2008). In fact, the results from the present research are well aligned with the SDT: AMot and CMot are both powerful types of motivation, with the difference that controlled-motivated individuals are unlikely to sustain behaviour in the long term (Ryan & Deci, 2019). Clearly, contextual aspects of the countries where employees were born and grown have a lasting impact on psychological processes explaining the intention to expatriate. It is thus flawed to attribute homogeneous explanations to the formation of all AEs' expatriation intentions. In this sense, well-established psychological theories based on individuals from developed countries may not necessarily apply to individuals from emerging countries, which may also be valid for psychological-based research on other topics related to expatriation (e.g., turnover intention, and well-being). Thus, this research underlines the embeddedness of employees' expatriation intentions in the more distal societal context, emphasising that theories on employees' intention to expatriate are not universally applicable across nations with different levels of development. Altogether, this study adds to the expatriation and IHRM literature from a cross-cultural perspective and claims that the individuals' country of nationality has a significant impact on the psychological formation of their expatriation intentions. Such a claim is particularly relevant because it impacts the decision to expatriate and subsequent decisions from the expatriate. This study highlights that expatriation is context-dependent and there is a need for researchers to acknowledge the employees' nationalities and national context in further research.

The theoretical contributions are summarised in Table 29.

**Table 29:** A summary of the theoretical contributions

Topic	Theoretical contribution
Emerging AEs' profile	1. While constrained by home countries and workplaces that do not offer the conditions for their development, emerging AEs' personal agency is the leading force to them becoming highly qualified employees.
The integrated model	2. Combining explanations of the SDT and the TPB in the context of expatriation intention provided an improved framework to investigate the formation of employees' intention to expatriate compared to SDT or TPB-based models.
The relationship between the types of motivation and the TPB's variables	3. Employees' motivations to expatriate and their weighing of the available information about the IAs can trigger their intention to expatriate, showing that a decision on expatriation is very complex and the result of a number of varied influences that can be cognitive and driven by motivations.
The role played by the CD	4. Collectivist societies (emerging AEs) form their intention to expatriate based on the consideration of the expectation of close others only when the host country is culturally similar to the home country (low CD), which may be linked to a) the fact that employees only

	consider others' opinions when they believe others have reliable information concerning the host country and b) the perceived difference in socioeconomic factors between home and host countries, leading to higher weight on personal evaluations instead of social norms when the expatriation is from emerging to developed countries.
The role played by the PD	5. For developed AEs, because an international assignment is feasible does not automatically mean that it is desirable. Remarkably, the employees' perceived difference between the country of nationality and the host country (PD) plays a crucial role in this relationship.
Individuals' country of nationality	6. Employees' expatriation intentions are context-dependent because individuals' country of nationality has a significant impact on the psychological formation of their expatriation intentions.

Notably, except for the first theoretical contribution, the others contribute to the efforts to fill the identified research gaps. The second and third contributions are directly linked to the use of the integrated model. As such, this study filled the dearth of studies applying the integrated model to explain employees' intention to expatriate. The fourth and fifth theoretical contributions are clear answers to the lack of knowledge of the moderation role played by individual-subjective (PD) and national-level (CD) variables to explain employees' intention to expatriate and evidence the importance of incorporating such variables into studies. Finally, the sixth theoretical contribution answered the dearth of studies on expatriates from emerging countries, particularly Latin America, and emphasises the country-of-nationality importance in expatriation intention formation.

After delineating this study's theoretical contributions, the following section addresses the managerial contributions.

## 6.7 Managerial Contributions

The results of this research have practical implications for handling key challenges in MNCs while they can assist managers in dealing with the issue of how organisations can encourage their employees to accept a foreign assignment (Waxin & Brewster, 2020). This study's findings can primarily guide HRM practices to increase the pool of employees willing to expatriate. There is evidence that employees' intention to expatriate positively impacts their adjustment (Selmer & Leung, 2003) and that employees with lower intentions are more prone to return prematurely (Joardar & Weisang, 2019). Thus, the results of this study provide useful avenues to develop or improve expatriate practices with the potential to impact the entire process, from the recruitment of potential expatriates to their experience abroad.

Crucially, the results give evidence of the inefficacy of a "one size fits all" expatriation policy. Instead, different psychological processes explain the formation of

developed and emerging employees' intention to expatriate. Among the assessed socio-cognitive variables, developed AEs' intention to expatriate is mainly influenced by their PBC. This information is enriched when combined with developed AEs' characteristics concerning their low proficiency in foreign languages and lack of knowledge about the host country's language. In this regard, organisations should emphasise practices to enhance their PBC, particularly focusing on language skills. It is especially relevant in the recurrent scenario where MNCs tend not to emphasise the employees' proficiency in the host country's language before or during expatriation (Zhang & Harzing, 2016). Notably, language training can increase employees' perception of having the necessary ability to cope with the expatriation difficulties, positively impacting their intention to expatriate. Further, it enables more positive experiences and results during the IA because knowing the host country's language facilitates expatriates' relationship with host-country employees and the knowledge processing during the IA (Tenzer et al., 2021; Zhang & Harzing, 2016), irrespectively of knowing the *lingua franca* adopted in MNCs. On the other hand, emerging AEs' intention to expatriate is mainly influenced by their attitude towards expatriation. Thus, evidencing the benefits of IA for personal and career development is an avenue of action. There seems to be a remarkable gap concerning the integration of IAs into the career management process, and the uncertainty that the career gain is worth the life disruption is an important reason for assignment refusal (Brookfield, 2016). Thus, global mobility managers should focus on integrating international mobility with career management, proposing a clear and realistic career path with opportunities for advancement upon return. Then, special attention should be given to communicating the importance of international assignments to employees' careers, which can increase their attitude toward expatriation and, consequently, their intention to expatriate.

Further, this study identified the effect of autonomous and controlled motivation in the model explaining employees' intention to expatriate. The results may help to reduce the gap between self-determination theory and practice in organisations (Forner et al., 2020). The findings evidence that developed and emerging AEs also differ in the type of motivation predicting their intention to expatriate: autonomous motivation is the strongest predictor for developed AEs, and controlled motivation is the strongest predictor for emerging AEs. In this regard, to increase developed AEs' intention to expatriate, investing more in practices aimed at increasing employees' autonomous motivation to expatriate is advisable. Autonomous motivation can be promoted by satisfying the core psychological needs for autonomy and

competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Attached to the reasons that reflect the need for competence and autonomy, HR practitioners could give employees the freedom to accept or decline an international assignment instead of compelling them to go abroad (Bolino et al., 2017; Pinto et al., 2012). Further, HR practitioners could provide employees with learning opportunities from successful current or former expatriates, evidencing the opportunities for development and optimal challenges. On the other hand, for emerging AEs, controlled motivation is the most influential type of motivation in forming their intention to expatriate. In this sense, multinational firms could provide workshops for prospective expatriates, highlighting the financial incentives, the higher standard of living, and the expected prestige attached to the international experience. Particular emphasis could be given to prestige if the IA is in more developed countries. In this case, social connections sharing the inferiority complex would respect and admire the employee due to the overestimation of foreign opportunities in such countries. These kinds of practices would possibly have a positive effect on their intention to expatriate. Since the cost of compensation packages is a major organisational concern (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016), and previous research showed that organisations may overestimate the importance of financial incentives (Dickmann et al., 2008), it is important to highlight that controlled reasons (encompassing financial incentives) are only crucial for the emerging AEs' intention to expatriate. It suggests that it is more fruitful for companies to focus on other practices with the potential to enhance autonomous motivation when addressing employees from developed countries.

Because the types of motivation are attached to different behavioural outcomes, adaptive and maladaptive, the types of motivation contributing to the formation of employees' intention to expatriate are also expected to influence the expatriates' experiences abroad. When the intention to expatriate is primarily based on AMot (developed AEs), expatriates are expected to have better overall experiences during their IAs because autonomous functioning allows for openness to ongoing experience (Hodgins & Knee, 2002) and is especially valuable when greater effort or persistence is required to perform a behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, their satisfaction, work engagement, and well-being are expected to be high (Gagné et al., 2010; Van den Broeck et al., 2013), as well as their effort and persistence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Past research found that individuals with higher intrinsic motivation to expatriate showed a higher willingness to communicate with people from many cultures who speak different languages (Haines et al., 2008), demonstrating their openness to ongoing experience and fostering international adaptability (Black, 1990). In this

regard, during the IA, they are likely to express spontaneous interest in the related activities, regardless of supportive organisational policies. Thus, organisations do not need to provide constant incentives to keep developed AEs satisfied and motivated abroad. On the other hand, externally regulated behaviours are less persistent and are dependent on the continuous presence of the control or incentive (Ryan & Deci, 2006). It is per the results that individuals with external motives to expatriate expect greater difficulty abroad and put more importance on supportive organisational practices (Haines et al., 2008), and those compelled by their organisations to engage in IAs have higher withdrawal intentions (Pinto et al., 2012). In this regard, when the intention to expatriate is formed by controlled motivation, besides the external incentives to increase employees' intention to expatriate, keeping them willing to persist under the adversities of the IAs can become much more costly and effort-consuming to organisations because they need to provide expatriates with continuous incentives and support during the time abroad. Thus, the results of this study, combined with theoretical insights and previous findings, provide some preliminary direction for managing employees abroad according to their reasons for expatriation.

The results about the moderating role of CD provide further insights into managing emerging AEs. When the assignment is to culturally close countries, emerging AEs' autonomous motivation has a negative impact on their intention to expatriate. There is a possibility that this negative relationship between AMot and the intention to expatriate may be due to misinformation concerning IAs in culturally close countries. Commonly, expatriates underestimate the challenges of assignments in culturally close countries (Dickmann et al., 2008; Felix et al., 2019; Lazarova et al., 2015; Perret, 2022; Tanure et al., 2009), the so-called presumed cultural similarity paradox (Vromans et al., 2013). In this regard, employees may not perceive such IAs as exciting, challenging, and interesting, and the expected impossibility of fulfilling their autonomous motives leads to a negative impact on their intention to expatriate. The misinformation may also reflect employees' lack of international experience. Training can help overcome the lack of exposure to other cultures because both are opportunities for individuals to learn how to perform effectively in cross-cultural settings (Johnson et al., 2006). In such a way, providing cross-cultural training and portraying the challenges and opportunities for new experiences in culturally close countries could be helpful strategies to increase emerging AEs' intention to expatriate to these countries through their autonomous (and adaptive) reasons. Additionally, cross-cultural training can positively impact expatriates' experiences abroad because it improves their

cultural intelligence and facilitates their capacity to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Earley & Peterson, 2004; Presbitero, 2017).

## **6.8 Limitations and Future Research**

Although this research offers several empirical, theoretical, and managerial contributions, it is not without limitations, which need to be recognised.

Common method bias is a potential methodological limitation. However, it is crucial to mention that the essence of SDT and TPB means that only a person themselves can truly evaluate their own motivations and perceptions, making self-report a valid measure in keeping with the theories. Using a complex model, including interaction terms, mitigated CMV substantially because this issue is more frequent in simplistic models (Chang et al., 2010). Further, the potential for CMV was also reduced by using computer-based anonymous and confidential questionnaires and placing the dependent variable before the independent variables in the questionnaire (Krishnan et al., 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Moreover, the statistical tests performed to check for a possible common method bias (Harman's single-factor test, an unmeasured latent method factor, and partial correlation method) provided evidence that this is likely not an issue in this study. Hence, the estimates of the different coefficients are as unbiased as possible in this setting.

It is also important to acknowledge a limitation concerning the construction of the scale to measure autonomous and controlled motivation, as many items were removed during the statistics procedures. This aspect is consistent with previous literature, which states that the initial set of items should be at least twice the desired number in the final scale, as a good way to ensure internal consistency of the scale (DeVellis, 2022). While tracing the reason for the exclusion of the items, it is likely attached to the samples' characteristics. Notably, factor analysis will likely yield different results when samples are compared from populations distributed differently on the underlying dimensions (Hair, 2010). Thus, finding a generalisable common factorial structure for emerging and developed AEs, which is invariant across the samples, results in the retention of fewer items. Critically, as the proportion of noninvariant items on a factor increases, so does the bias in mean estimates for subgroups and, consequently, the estimated difference between subgroup means, leading to misinterpretation of means differences (Chen, 2008). In this sense, the retention of fewer invariant items enables better estimations of means differences compared to factors with

more, but non-invariant items. After all, despite the exclusion of many items, there is enough confidence to support that the research findings accurately described the intended underlying concepts because diverse procedures were taken to develop and validate the scales. These procedures include a comprehensive literature review to generate the items, constructs' content validity analysis, use of oblique rotation, robust maximum likelihood as factor extraction model, classical parallel analysis to define the number of items, and assessment of the scales' goodness of fit to support the theoretical dimensionality of the items (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003; Hinkin, 1998).

Another limitation is the sample size, especially concerning the assessment of moderation effects. When median-splitting samples to test the moderation hypothesis, the number of respondents in each sub-group may not be sufficiently large to have enough power to detect a difference between the groups (Aguinis et al., 2017). In this regard, the moderating effects were likely to have gone undetected. For instance, the moderation impact of CD on the relationship between AMot and expatriation intention for developed AEs had a significance of 0.10. There may be a moderation effect in this relationship, which was not detected due to the small sample in each group. Future studies applying this model should try to gather a larger number of respondents to check if other effects are detected.

There is still another limitation concerning the sample. Data was collected from AEs from different developed (Germany, the Netherlands, the US, and the UK) and emerging countries (Brazil and Mexico). While they can well represent developed and emerging countries, it is important to acknowledge that there is variation within developed and emerging countries concerning development level and cultural aspects, hindering the generalisability of the findings to samples of employees from other developed and emerging countries. Thus, this study's results would be more generalisable if the data were obtained from a multitude of developed and emerging countries, including expatriates from other under-researched emerging countries (e.g., from Central and Eastern Europe, and Africa). Testing the model in various settings would allow a further understanding of how context affects the relationships among the variables and, consequently, the model's inherent limiting conditions.

This study investigated the formation of employees' intention to expatriate. Although this is considered an important prediction of actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), no recent study has investigated the relationship between expatriation intention and behaviours. Thus, future studies should build on this and examine the effect of the intention to expatriate on actual

behaviour (i.e., acceptance or rejection of international assignments). In this sense, real-time longitudinal studies would be required: at time 1, employees who have been offered a position abroad answer the questions about motivations, attitude, PBC, SN, and intention to expatriate; then, a second data collection should ask whether or not they have expatriated, so investigating the effective behaviour. This approach would benefit the growing research on the intention-behaviour gap in different research fields (e.g., Park & Lin, 2020; Sheeran & Webb, 2016).

Moreover, the survey relied on retrospective accounts of employees' expatriation motivations and socio-cognitive drivers. Thus, data may have been blurred by time and experiences. To account for this issue, the models were controlled for time abroad and actual satisfaction with the assignment. Future research should use real-time longitudinal research, as previously described, which could also potentially rectify this issue.

This study's results are based on a quantitative investigation and are explained based on a theoretical foundation. However, a few findings go contrary to theoretically assumed relationships and previous studies, which claim for further investigation with other quantitative studies and qualitative studies. For instance, the impact of the socio-cognitive variables on the intention to expatriate differs substantially from previous studies adopting the TPB (e.g., Engle et al., 2015; Froese et al., 2013; Remhof et al., 2014), especially because not all the variables significantly predict the intention to expatriate for developed and emerging AEs. As most previous studies were based on hypothetical cases of expatriation because people were not facing a real decision to expatriate, future studies based on real expatriation offers are necessary to investigate if this pattern persists. Such an investigation is important because it is theoretically and empirically supported that real and hypothetical scenarios activate different psychological processes and that people have a strong bias to overestimate their attitudes and the likelihood that they will engage in socially desirable behaviours (Ajzen et al., 2004).

This research focused on the psychological process leading to expatriate intentions because it is the most practical level at which people can intervene in human behaviour affairs (Ryan & Deci, 2017). It also incorporated individual and national-level moderating variables, which added to the variance explained of employees' intention to expatriate. Omitting these moderating variables when investigating employees' intention to expatriate or other related topics, such as integration and adaptation into the host country, may lead to a bias in the expatriation literature. For example, without adding CD as a moderating variable,

a researcher would conclude from this study's results that SN does not impact emerging AEs' intention to expatriate, which is a biased conclusion. However, as the findings suggest, despite the significant relationships among the variables, there still is a significant proportion of unexplained variance in the intention to expatriate. This suggests that future research should identify and incorporate theoretically driven individual, organisational, and society-level factors into the model that would further reduce the unexplained variance. As for moderation variables, it is important to acknowledge that other factors may be relevant as potential boundary conditions to forming employees' intention to expatriate. Future research is encouraged to integrate these into expatriation research. For example, how much the home and host countries differ regarding the economic and social features and whether employees are moving from and to more or less developed countries (Briscoe, 2015; Perera et al., 2017; Tung, 2017) could play an important role further to grasp the national context variables effect on the model. Further, the antecedents of employees' intention to expatriate and the expatriation itself could be influenced by organisations' support systems and career management practices (Dickmann et al., 2008; Joardar & Weisang, 2019), while few studies have investigated the effect of HR support on willingness to relocate (Velde et al., 2017). For example, perceived organisational support was found to impact employees' autonomous and controlled motivation in research about SIEs' embeddedness (Chen & Shaffer, 2017). In this regard, future studies could incorporate organisational-level variables as well. These factors that are external to employees need to be examined in the future for further insight into expatriation intentions.

As specified earlier, investigations based on an integrated model of SDT and TPB have been mainly used in health-related research. Thus, other research opportunities fall within the application of the proposed model in fields that have widely used TPB-only models. It would add to our understanding of whether the integrated model enables better explanations of organisational phenomena compared to TPB-only models in areas such as unethical behaviour (e.g., Lin et al., 2018) and hiring (e.g., Araten-Bergman, 2016).

## 7 CONCLUSION

This final chapter concludes the thesis, intending to highlight how the research questions have been explored and the research findings to these questions.

The research questions were developed based on the need for a better understanding of how employees form their intention to expatriate to facilitate organisations' widening of the international talent pool and a number of gaps on the topic concerning. In summary, the gaps were related to the theoretical background, the boundary conditions on the formation of employees' intention to expatriate, and the sample characteristics. More precisely, the TPB and the SDT have been used to investigate individuals' intention to expatriate, but, despite being integrated to explore other research topics, they were not integrated to investigate expatriation intention. Further, CD and PD have been found to affect individuals' intention to expatriate and were expected to render the relationship between the socio-cognitive variables and the intention stronger or weaker. However, they have not been incorporated as moderator variables in previous studies investigating individuals' intention to expatriate. Additionally, while most expatriation research has focused on individuals from Western developed countries, very limited research has been conducted on those from Latin emerging countries.

In this regard, the investigation aimed at answering two research questions:

What are the processes involved in forming developed and emerging employees' intention to expatriate?

Do the employees' nationality countries influence the formation of their intention to expatriate?

Four objectives were developed to answer these questions. They were examined based on a sample of 431 AEs, from which 213 were from developed countries and 218 were from emerging countries. Notably, the research has an appropriate balance of rigour and relevance attached to the methodological choices (Parry et al., 2021). First, sample relevance is evident since data was gathered from respondents relevant to the research question, meaning current AEs (compared to often used samples of students or employees in general). Second, rigour was reached through diverse procedures, including employing translation and back translation of questionnaires, doing pre-test to refine the instrument, and testing for measurement invariance. Having enough confidence in the quality of the scales and the methodological procedures, MG-SEM was performed to achieve the objectives and answer the research questions.

The first objective was to identify the impact of the socio-cognitive variables on the intention to expatriate for developed and emerging AEs. The results revealed that PBC was the only socio-cognitive variable contributing to the formation of developed AEs' intention to expatriate, while attitude was the only one explaining the same relationship for emerging AEs. Contextual characteristics help clarify these results. People from individualistic cultures take personal evaluations (such as PBC) into consideration for their decisions (Shukri et al., 2016); people with a background of more material and informational resources available to them have their decisions influenced by stronger beliefs about the extent to which they can shape their social outcome and higher self-efficacy (Ali et al., 2005; Kraus et al., 2012); employees working for companies with more IA opportunities - developed countries' employees working for developed MNCs (Luo & Tung, 2018) - also have a higher perception of controllability supporting their intention to expatriate. On the other hand, amidst the scarcity of international job opportunities in emerging countries, emerging AEs' intention to expatriate is influenced by their favourable evaluation towards expatriating (Brock, 1968).

The second objective was to empirically analyse how the types of motivation impact the intention to expatriate for developed and emerging AEs. The results showed that AMot has a positive direct impact on the intention to expatriate for developed AEs, and CMot has a positive direct impact on the intention to expatriate for emerging AEs. These results are explained by employees' contextual backgrounds. In individualistic cultures (developed AEs), individuals' internal wishes and personal attributes strongly regulate their behaviours (Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and; better socioeconomic conditions are conducive to more intrinsic reasons motivating individuals' behaviours (Welzel & Inglehart, 2005). On the other hand, individuals from collectivist countries (emerging AEs) act primarily according to the expectations of others (Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), enabling them to gain appreciation and recognition from individuals of importance, thus stressing controlled reasons for acting and; national contexts with less material, cognitive and social resources are conducive to more extrinsic reasons motivating individuals' behaviours (Welzel & Inglehart, 2005).

The third objective was to test the moderation effect of cultural distance on the relationship between SN and the intention to expatriate for developed and emerging AEs. The moderating effect of CD was confirmed between the SN and the intention to expatriate for emerging AEs: the larger the CD, the smaller the impact of SN on the intention, which becomes non-significant at high CD levels. Contrary to theoretically sustained, collectivist

societies (emerging AEs) form their intention to expatriate based on the consideration of the expectation of close others only when the host country is culturally similar to the home country (low CD), showing that they only take the perception of important others' opinions into account when home and host countries share cultural aspects.

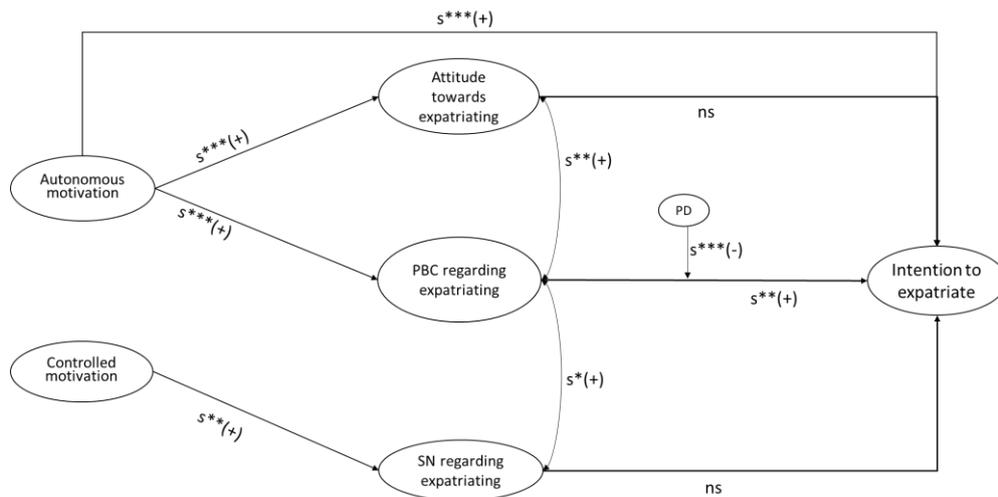
The fourth objective was to test the moderation effect of psychic distance on the relationship between PBC and the intention to expatriate for developed and emerging AEs. The moderating effect of PD was confirmed between the PBC and the intention to expatriate of developed AEs: PBC has a positive and large influence on their intention to expatriate to countries they perceive to be similar to their countries of nationality but a negative impact on their intention to expatriate to countries towards which they perceive high PD. The positive relationship between employees' self-confidence to expatriate on intention to expatriate when PD is low is explained by the fact that the familiarity linked to close psychic distant countries is associated with higher cognitive certainty (Burleigh & Schoenherr, 2015; Cheetham et al., 2011). On the other hand, the higher the PBC, the lower their intention to expatriate to countries towards which they perceive high PD. A possible reason explaining this result is related to the formation of PBC: higher PBC can be a result of previous experience with the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), leading employees with previous international experience to have a higher perception of their ability to expatriate. Thus, the high PBC resulting from their extensive international experience may have led them unwilling to expatriate to dissimilar countries due to aspects such as the associated ambiguity, obstacles, and unpredictability (Xu & Shenkar, 2002).

The objectives of the current research were achieved and the findings provided answers to the research questions.

First, the results provide empirical evidence on the processes involved in forming developed and emerging employees' intention to expatriate, providing an answer to research question 1. In a nutshell, developed AEs form their intention to expatriate based on internalised motivations and their perception of control and ability to expatriate, while emerging AEs form their intention to expatriate based on external motivations and their evaluations of the IA.

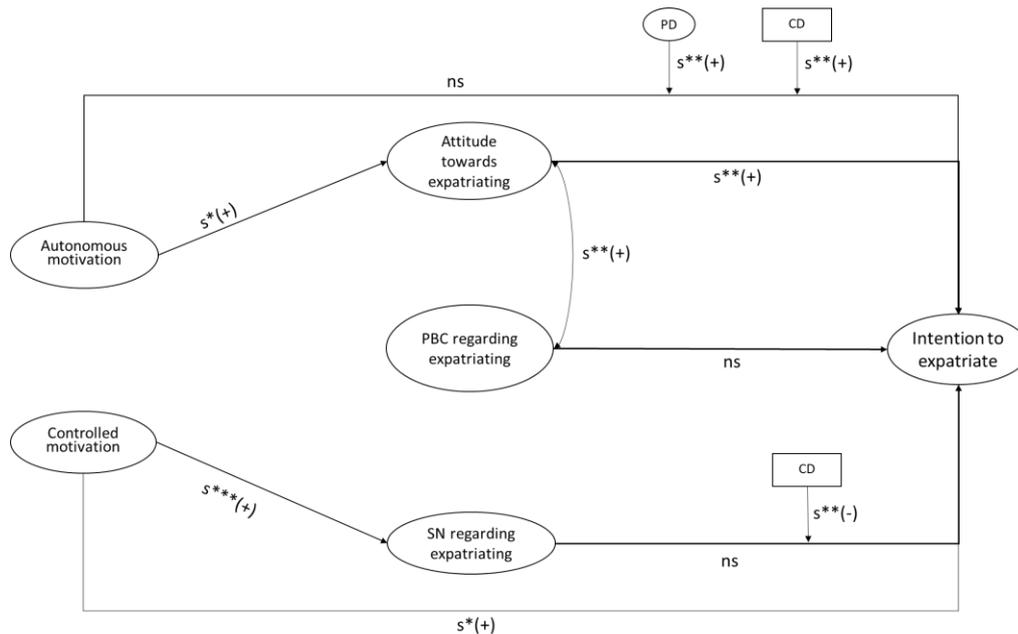
Figures 13 and 14 provide the model explaining developed and emerging AEs' intention to expatriate.

**Figure 13: Developed AEs' model of expatriation intention**



Note: ns = non-significant; s = significant; \*\*\* <0.01; \*\* <0.05; \* <0.1; one-headed arrow = causal relationship; two-headed arrow = covariance between variables

**Figure 14: Emerging AEs' model of expatriation intention**



Note: ns = non-significant; s = significant; \*\*\* <0.01; \*\* <0.05; \* <0.1; one-headed arrow = causal relationship; two-headed arrow = covariance between variables

Second, the model explaining employees' intention to expatriate was tested to compare those from developed and emerging countries. Controlling for variables that were found to impact the variables of interest in previous studies, there is enough confidence to support that the empirical differences between developed and emerging AEs' models point out the impact of contextual aspects of employees' countries of nationality. Several national

context aspects attached to culture and socioeconomic characteristics help explain why different models are needed to explain employees' intention to expatriate for those from developed and emerging countries.

This investigation provided a number of contributions. Foremost, the theoretical contributions advance the knowledge on emerging AEs' profile, the use of the integrated model in expatriation research, the relationship between the types of motivation and the TPB's variables, and the role played by the CD and the PD in explaining employees' intention to expatriate. First, while constrained by home countries and workplaces that do not offer the conditions for their development, emerging AEs' personal agency appears to be the leading force to them becoming highly qualified employees. Secondly, combining explanations of the SDT and the TPB in the context of expatriation intention provided an improved framework to investigate the formation of employees' intention to expatriate compared to SDT or TPB-based models. Third, the results showed that the relationship between the types of motivation and the intention to expatriate is not mediated by the socio-cognitive variables, which rejects the TPB sufficiency assumption, and provides evidence that motivations affect intention impulsively (rather than reflectively). The investigation also pointed out the role of CD on individuals' intention to expatriate. Contrary to theoretically sustained, collectivist societies (emerging AEs) form their intention to expatriate based on the consideration of the expectation of close others only when the host country is culturally similar to the home country (low CD), which may be linked to the fact that employees only consider others' opinions when they believe others have reliable information concerning the host country. Fourth, this study provides a further understanding of the relationship between PBC and behavioural intention. For developed AEs, because an international assignment is feasible does not automatically mean that it is desirable. Remarkably, the employees' perceived difference between the country of nationality and the host country (PD) plays a crucial role in this relationship. Lastly, this investigation provided evidence that employees' expatriation intentions are context-dependent because individuals' country of nationality has a significant impact on the psychological formation of their expatriation intentions.

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## 9 APPENDIX

### 9.1 Appendix 1: The summarised curriculum of the consulted experts

1. Professor at Durham University Business School. One of the experts' research focus concerns motivation and self-regulation. The expert is an editorial board member of *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *Leadership Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. The expert has published their papers in top journals with a focus on Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Psychology, and Management. A sample of the most recent journals in which the expert published includes the *Academy of Management Review*, *Organization Science*, *The Leadership Quarterly*, and *Journal of Management*.

2. Associate Professor at the School of Applied Social Sciences at Durham University. This expert is a fellow of the Wolfson Research Institute for Health and Wellbeing and motivation is a primary focus of research, specifically self-determination theory. The expert has published their papers in top journals with a primary focus on Psychology and Sport and Exercise Sciences, such as *Personality and Individual Differences*, *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, and *Public Health Nutrition*.

3. Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Durham University. The expert research interests include motivation and self-regulation. The expert has published their papers in top journals with a primary focus on Psychology such as *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* and *Motivation and Emotion*.

4. Assistant Professor at The Chinese University of Hong Kong Shenzhen, School of Science and Engineering. The expert discipline is Positive Psychology with expertise in Self-determination theory. The expert is currently working on a project called "Applying SDT in higher education". The expert has published their papers in top journals with a primary focus on Psychology and Education, such as the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, and *Computers in Human Behavior*.

5. Faculty of Psychology, University of Sumatera Utara, Indonesia. PhD in Psychology from KU Leuven, Belgium. The expert has published their papers in journals such as *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, and *Frontiers in Psychology*.

6. Middle school teacher and PhD in Education, Durham University. The expert's PhD research concerns the interface of motivation and education, with a special focus on the self-determination theory. Their thesis investigated the impact of standards-based grades and report cards on students' learning and motivation.

## 9.2 Appendix 2: General information and consent form

### A study on employees' relocation to work temporarily abroad

I kindly request your participation in a study I am conducting as part of my PhD at Durham University. The aim of the study is to investigate the formation of employees' intention to relocate to work temporarily abroad. The research is sponsored by CAPES and it has been approved by the Business Faculty Ethics Committee of Durham University. There are no risks from taking part in this survey.

You have been invited to take part in this study because you are an *expatriate assigned by an organisation to temporarily work abroad*. The study should take you around 15 minutes to complete and your participation in this research is voluntary. If you agree to take part, you may still withdraw from the study at any time by closing the browsing page, without giving a reason.

The data you provide is completely anonymous, and you will not be asked to provide any personal information. Your responses will only be reported in aggregate form and will only be used for research purposes.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please speak to me or my supervisors.

**Researcher:** Denise Rossato Quatrin, PhD student

**Department:** Durham University Business School

**Contact details:** denise.rossato-quatrin@durham.ac.uk

**Supervisors' names:** Roberta Aguzzoli; Jorge Lengler

**Supervisors' contact details:** roberta.aguzzoli@durham.ac.uk; jorge.lengler@durham.ac.uk

If you remain unhappy or wish to file a formal complaint, please submit a complaint via the University's [Complaints Process](#).

By participating in this study, you are agreeing that:

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project.
- I have had sufficient time to consider the information and asked any questions I might have, and I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.
- I agree to take part in this survey.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

### **Do you consent to these terms?**

( ) Yes      ( ) No