

SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATION

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The purpose of this DWG is to build on the research currently underway in the field of self-initiated expatriation (SIE).

Today, a rising number of people are spending part of their lives living and working in foreign countries. Whilst for a long time the contemporary expatriate literature has focused on assigned expatriates (AEs) sent overseas by their employers, self-initiated expatriation has now also gained an increasing interest and has become an important area of study in its own right.

Studies on SIE explore the labor market positions of individuals who change their dominant place of residence and move to another country on their own initiative either within their current organization or changing employers. Emphasis has been on many aspects including motivations for departure, career development and career capital. Recent research on SIE suggests that this type of mobility differs from traditional corporate expatriation along several dimensions. While AEs have been mainly associated with traditional career concepts, SIEs have been rather linked to 'the new career', for instance the protean career concept. It is assumed that SIEs differ from AEs in their individual background variables (e. g. personality), motives for expatriation (e. g. employment situation) and repatriation plans (e. g. duration of stay abroad). However, current research on SIE is diverse and the results do not deliver a consistent picture so far. Many questions remain to be unanswered such as repatriation challenges of SIEs or gender differences.

The aims of the DWG are:

1. To work out the state-of-the art as well as gaps in research about self-initiated expatriation.
2. Discuss approaches for further research and its theoretical orientation.
3. To explore opportunities for joint international research projects and find potential vehicles that can integrate the research activities in the various streams of research.