

# **Master's Thesis**

Submitted to:

Reykjavík University

School of Business

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

EXPATRIATES MOTIVATION, ADJUSTMENT

AND REPATRIATION

Reasons why Icelandic citizens expatriate to Norway

and why they repatriate to Iceland from Norway

Sandra Rún Jóhannesdóttir

24/05/2013

Supervisor

Aðalsteinn Leifsson

Reykjavík, May 2013

# Abstract

---

Businesses and organizations are increasingly becoming international in scope. It is more and more common that individuals as well as organizations view business skill development and foreign work experience as an increasingly important part of career progression. That applies to Icelandic individuals as well. The Nordic countries have been a very popular destination for Icelandic citizens and especially Norway after the economic collapse in October 2008. As it has been reported in the press, everything is apparently better outside of Iceland and it is especially better to live in Norway. The press has been reporting the expatriation of Icelandic citizens but their reports have been fairly homogenous.

This thesis examines the essential motivating factors of Icelandic citizens who are self-initiated expatriates and the reasons why they choose to expatriate to Norway. It also explores how well the Icelandic expatriates are adjusting to the life in Norway regarding general, work and interaction adjustment. Lastly this research examines what factors push, pull and/or shock Icelandic expatriates to repatriate back to Iceland from Norway. The research consists of qualitative interviews with five Icelandic self-initiated expatriates and five Icelandic repatriates. The main conclusions show that the Icelandic citizens moving to Norway is more diverse than the press has been reporting and that the reasons for expatriating are more than just because of unemployment and financial difficulties. The research also shows that the need to be close to the immediate and extended family has an effect on how long Icelandic citizens live in Norway.

**Keywords:** Self-initiated expatriates, Organizational expatriates, motivation, adjustment, repatriation, Icelandic citizens

## **Declaration of Research Work Integrity**

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature of any degree. This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

By signing the present document I confirm and agree that I have read RU's ethics code of conduct and fully understand the consequences of violating these rules in regards of my thesis.

Reykjavik May 24<sup>th</sup> 2013

200985-3629

---

Date and place

Kennitala

Signature

# Prologue

---

This thesis is the final assignment for a M.Sc. degree in International Business at Reykjavik University. The assessment of this thesis is 30 ECTS credits. The writing of the thesis took place during spring semester 2013, between January and May.

These last months have been both exciting and difficult. This thesis has had tremendous effect on my life and on those around me. I would therefore like to thank the following:

Aðalsteinn Leifsson for supervising this thesis and giving me support when needed as well as constructive feedback.

The Icelandic expatriates and repatriates that participated in this research and gave me insight into their lives, both the good parts and the bad.

Inga Jessen for giving good advice and overall support during the writing of this thesis.

Special thanks go to Birgir, for the enormous support during these past months and for always being there for me and supporting me during my education.

# Contents

---

Part I: Introduction.....	1
1. Research questions.....	2
2. Research overview .....	2
Part II: Literature review.....	4
3. Business environment .....	4
4. Expatriates .....	5
4.1. Organizational expatriates .....	5
4.2. Self-initiated expatriates .....	6
4.3. Motivation to go abroad .....	7
4.4. Cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates .....	11
4.5. Repatriation .....	13
Part III: Migration of Icelanders .....	17
5. Migration .....	17
5.1. Definitions .....	18
6. Population in Iceland .....	19
7. Migration of Icelandic citizens .....	20
7.1. Gender distribution amongst migrated Icelandic citizens .....	22
7.2. Age distribution amongst migrated Icelandic citizens .....	23
7.3. Icelandic Students.....	24
7.4. Nordic countries .....	25
7.5. Returning migrants .....	26

7.6. Missing data.....	28
Part IV: Methodology .....	30
8. Research Purpose .....	30
9. Research Approach .....	30
9.1. Type of Research .....	31
9.2. Research Philosophy .....	32
9.3. Interpretive Frameworks .....	32
9.4. Sample selection .....	33
9.5. Data collection method.....	34
9.6. Procedure .....	35
9.7. Data analysis.....	37
9.8. Ethics .....	38
9.9. Validity .....	38
Part V: Results .....	40
10. Icelandic expatriates.....	40
10.1. Motivation.....	41
10.2. Adjustment.....	45
11. Icelandic repatriates .....	52
11.1. The stay in Norway .....	52
11.2. Reasons to repatriate .....	53
11.3. Repatriation.....	56
12. Discussion .....	58

12.1. Icelandic expatriates .....	58
12.2. Icelandic repatriates .....	66
Part VI: Conclusion and recommendations .....	70
Bibliography .....	74
Appendices.....	85

# List of Tables

---

Table 1 Overview of differences between self-initiated expatriates and organizational expatriates (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).....	7
Table 2 Immigration and Emigration of Icelandic citizens (Statistics Iceland, 2013b) .	22
Table 3 Net migration of Icelandic citizens 1986-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013e).....	23
Table 4 Average age of migrated Icelandic citizens (Ómar S. Harðarson, 2010) .....	23
Table 5 Number of students abroad that receive student loans from Icelandic Student Loan Fund (Icelandic Student Loan Fund, n.d.) .....	24
Table 6 Demographics of respondents, Icelandic expatriates.....	40
Table 7 Participants employment information, Icelandic SIEs .....	49
Table 8 Demographics of participants, Icelandic repatriates.....	52



# List of Figures

---

Figure 1 Expatriate willingness model (Tharenou, 2008) .....	9
Figure 2 The Self-initiated expatriate repatriation model (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010) .....	16
Figure 3 Population in Iceland 1900-2013 (Statistics Iceland, 2013a).....	19
Figure 4 Migration of Icelanders 1961-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013b) .....	20
Figure 5 GDP per capita (%) and Net migration rate (per 1.000) of Icelandic citizens 1961-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013b; Statistics Iceland, 2013a; Statistics Iceland, 2013d).....	21
Figure 6 Net migration of Icelandic citizens in Nordic countries 1986-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013) .....	25
Figure 7 Immigration of Icelandic citizens to Nordic countries 1986-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013) .....	26
Figure 8 Immigration of Icelandic citizens by registration 1986-2008 (Statistics Iceland, 2010) .....	26
Figure 9 Cumulative rate of returning migrants of Icelandic citizens by age groups 1986-2008 (Statistics Iceland, 2009) .....	27
Figure 10 The rate of returning migrants of Icelandic citizens within three calendar years from emigration. Departure year of emigration 1991-2009 (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012).....	28
Figure 11 Expatriate Willingness Model (Tharenou, Disruptive decisions to leave home: Gender and family differences in expatriation choices, 2008) .....	60

# Part I: Introduction

---

Businesses and organizations are increasingly becoming international in scope. International assignments are a vital part of most international organizations and businesses, which requires deploying staff around the world through expatriate assignments. It is becoming more and more important for individuals to be capable of living and working in an international setting. Individuals as well as organizations view international business skill development and foreign work experience as an increasingly important part of career progression. As a result, individuals are increasingly spending part of their lives living and working in foreign countries as expatriates.

There has always been movement of Icelandic citizens to and from Iceland since the settlement of Iceland in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century. The movement of Icelandic citizens to and from Iceland has fluctuated greatly. Since the mid-sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the moving of Icelandic citizens has been effected by economic conditions, global environment and personal factors rather than natural disasters and hardship. The Nordic countries have always been a popular destination amongst Icelandic citizens. The economic collapse in October 2008 led the Icelandic economy into a state of crisis. The downturn resulted in immediate movement of Icelandic citizens away from Iceland, most of which moved to the Nordic countries where Norway was the most popular destination.

Since the economic collapse in October 2008 the press has reported through numerous articles and news stories that Icelandic citizens are fleeing Iceland and moving to Norway, where everything is apparently better. Icelandic citizens are looking for work and employment outside of Iceland. Interviews with individuals have been a big part of this news coverage and the reasons individuals give for moving to Norway are a bit diverse. The most common reason for leaving which are given in these interviews is difficulties in Iceland. People leave as they are unemployed or simply cannot support themselves and their family and make ends meet. The articles sometimes compare the moving of Icelandic citizens post 2008 to the movement of Icelanders to the Nordic countries in 1970 and 1995. According to some news in Iceland, never before have so many citizens moved from Iceland and for so many years. The news often state that those who are leaving Iceland are young, well-educated and have no intention of

returning back to Iceland, causing a ‘brain drain’ in Icelandic technical and knowledge society. Although there are some citizens moving back to Iceland that number is low compared to how many are moving away from Iceland.

The reports in radio, TV and newspapers are fairly homogenous. Thorough research on Icelandic citizens that move from Iceland to work in a foreign country, expatriates, is however limited and most are based on students B.Sc. and M.Sc. thesis. The available information is gathered by Statistics Iceland and by newspapers and television stations. There are gaps in the literature and this research is meant to address some of these gaps. This research is meant to add to the understanding and knowledge of Icelandic citizens who have moved to Norway and those who have returned back home to Iceland after having lived and worked in Norway during the period after the economic collapse in 2008 till 2013.

## **1. Research questions**

The research questions are asked in order to firstly, better understand the motivational factors of Icelandic citizens moving to Norway. Secondly, to explore how well Icelandic citizens adjust to life in Norway. Thirdly, to comprehend what factors push, pull and/or shock Icelandic citizens to repatriate back to Iceland.

The following research questions have been identified:

*Research question 1: Why do Icelandic citizens expatriate to Norway?*

*Research question 2: How has the general, interaction and work adjustment been for the Icelandic expatriates in Norway?*

*Research question 3: Why do Icelandic organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriate repatriate to Iceland from Norway?*

## **2. Research overview**

By formulating the problem into research questions, an overview of the thesis is presented. The first part is an introduction. The second part is a literature review where self-initiated expatriates and organizational expatriates are identified as well as the motivations to go abroad, cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates and repatriation. The

third part shows migration of Icelanders, returning migrants, gender and age distribution as well as most popular destination for Icelandic emigrants. The fourth part is called methodology where the type of research with the research philosophy and framework is explained with the research purpose, analysis and procedure. The research questions can be found in part four as well. The fifth part consists of results, discussions and the sixth part consists of conclusions and recommendations.

## **Part II: Literature review**

---

This chapter reviews earlier findings which will be used to analyzed the problem and answer the research questions. The chapter is split into two chapters. The first chapter consist of information regarding the expatriate and repatriate business environment. The second chapter consists of information regarding expatriates, organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates, their motivation to go abroad, their cross-cultural adjustment and their repatriation process.

### **3. Business environment**

Business environment is changing rapidly with globalization becoming a key strategic necessity for organizations. International assignments have therefore become a vital part of any internationally minded organization (Altman & Baruch, 2012). Global management skills are becoming a critical competitive resource for international organizations (Kraimer, Shaffer, & Bolino, 2009). International exposure is considered to be “the single most powerful experience in shaping the perspective and capabilities of effective global leaders” (Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall, & Stroh, 1999, p. 2). Thus, deployment of staff around the world through expatriate assignments continues to be an essential staffing strategy for building global talent (Kraimer, Shaffer, & Bolino, 2009). Organizations and individuals increasingly view international business skill development and foreign work experience as part of career progression (Biemann & Andersen, 2010). This has resulted in increased human mobility as more and more people are spending part of their lives living and working in foreign countries. These people are either organizational expatriates (OEs), who are transferred by their home companies to international post (Edström & Galbraith, 1977), or self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), who make the decision to move and work abroad themselves (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997; Suutari & Brewster, 2000; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Lee, 2005).

International assignments have been thoroughly researched in the international management literature and have dominated the research agenda of international human resource management (IHRM) for over three decades. Research focus in IHRM has expanded in recent years. However, issues regarding expatriate management remain a critical concern (Collings, Scullion, & Morley, 2007). Expatriates research has mainly

focused on employees sent on assignments by their company. However, an equally important topic is self-initiated expatriates. There have not been many researches regarding SIEs but it is a growing research trend among IHRM researchers (Suutari & Brewster, 2000; Richardson & Mallon, 2005).

This literature review will define OEs and SIEs along with a review of the difference between OEs and SIEs regarding: motivation, adjustment and repatriation. In addition, there will be an overview of Icelandic expatriates that move to Norway.

## **4. Expatriates**

Expatriates have been collectively defined, in broad sense, as individuals living and working in a foreign environment (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998). With the boundaries between countries becoming more permeable and careers more fluid, individuals are more and more initiating and financing their own expatriation (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). Thus, as expatriates are not exclusively individuals who take up international assignments arranged by their home companies (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997), the definition of expatriates needs to be analyzed in more detail as well as differentiate between organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates.

### **4.1. Organizational expatriates**

Organizational expatriates (OEs) are individuals who are transferred by their home companies to international post (Edström & Galbraith, 1977). The initiative for the international experience comes mainly from a company which operates internationally. International assignment may become available in a subsidiary in another country than the company is based. These international assignments require both knowledge of the company's strategy, procedures and knowledge of the inner working of the company as well as the ability to work and live successfully in a foreign environment. The individual suitable for the international assignment is allocated to the foreign country on a temporary basis and subsequently returns to another position in the same company in the original country (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997). Those selected individuals are sent abroad primarily because of their professional skills and therefore represent, typically, fairly well educated people who are skilled and often somewhat advanced in their career (Baliga & Baker, 1985; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). Additionally, OEs are usually employees of multinational enterprises (MNEs). They are

used in key positions in transferring knowledge and know how or controlling the foreign operations (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). Organizational expatriates are relocated to undertake a specific job or organization-related goal that they should accomplish within a pre-designated time period ranging from 6 months to 5 years (Aycan, 1997; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). They therefore typically operate in relatively high-level positions in the organizational hierarchy (Suutari & Brewster, 2000).

Organizational expatriates are relocated to accomplish international assignment by their company which is known to them before leaving their home company. They commonly receive training prior to leaving for assignment. Additionally, a package for OEs typically includes culture and language training as well as a compensation package that takes into account educational benefits for children, rental supplements, etc. (Peterson, Napier, & Shim, 1996; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010)

#### **4.2. Self-initiated expatriates**

The world has become one large employment pool and regardless of the ongoing economic uncertainty, employers around the globe identify a lack of available skilled talent as a continuing drag on business performance. This talent mismatch, shortage of professionals, creates lucrative work opportunities for the right individuals (ManpowerGroup, 2012) who are more and more initiating and financing their own expatriation. These individuals are called self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010).<sup>1</sup>

Absolute numbers for SIEs are not available however there can be found indirect evidence of SIEs from studies. Study by Suutari and Brewster (2000) on international experience showed that 33% of the respondents were SIEs (147 of 448 respondents). Furthermore, study by Peltokorpi and Froese (2009) on OEs and SIEs in Japan showed that 69% of the questionnaire respondents were SIEs (124 of 191 respondents). These researches indicate that SIEs are a growing part of the expatriates and show that people are increasingly looking for international experiences. Self-initiated expatriates are expected to form a larger and more potent global labor market segment than OEs (Myers & Pringle, 2005).

---

<sup>1</sup> International work experiences of self-initiated expatriates have been described in previous studies as overseas experiences (OEs) (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Myers & Pringle, 2005) and self-initiated foreign work experiences (SFEs) (Suutari & Brewster, 2000).

Self-initiated expatriates are defined as individuals that find work overseas on their own initiative and decision. The first to describe the self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) type of expatriate assignment were Inkson, Arthur, Pringle and Barry (1997). They refer to SIEs as individuals in their early career with mainly entertaining and social motives. The study conducted by Suutari and Brewster (2000) showed that the SIEs are more diverse group of individuals and can be extended by more experienced people who deliberately

**Table 1 Overview of differences between self-initiated expatriates and organizational expatriates (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010)**

	<i>Self-initiated expatriates</i>	<i>Organizational expatriates</i>
Initiation	Self	Company
Pre-departure preparation, training, etc.	Self	Company
Time-perspective	No limit	Limited
Job secured prior to expatriation?	Yes or No	Yes
Compensation package	No	Yes
Support in non-work issues	No	Yes

choose an international career. Howe-Walsh and Schyns (2010) defined self-initiated expatriates in a very broad and open way that does not exclude any individuals. They defined SIEs as individuals who decide to move to another country for work. The initiative and volition to go abroad and look for a job is driven by the individuals (Froese, 2012). Because the expatriation is by the SIEs own initiative the time spent working abroad is less clear than with organizational expatriates which have international assignments from 6 months up to 5 years, as was mentioned earlier. SIEs can plan to stay for a period of time or permanently but this will usually not be predetermined (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

### **4.3.Motivation to go abroad**

Motivation to go abroad and work can differ considerably between self-initiated expatriate and organizational expatriates. Some expatriates go abroad to start a new job or enhance their career while others may have been recruited by organizations that cannot find a specific skill locally. In addition, some individuals expatriate for personal reasons (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). The motivation to expatriate is therefore very diverse but it can be broadly categorized into three areas: expatriate willingness (Brett & Stroh, 1995; Tharenou, 2008), motivation factors of OEs (Stahl and Cerdin 2004; Dickmann, Doherty, Mills and Brewster 2008) and motivation factors of SIEs (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997; Suutari & Brewster, 2000; Richardson & Mallon, 2005).

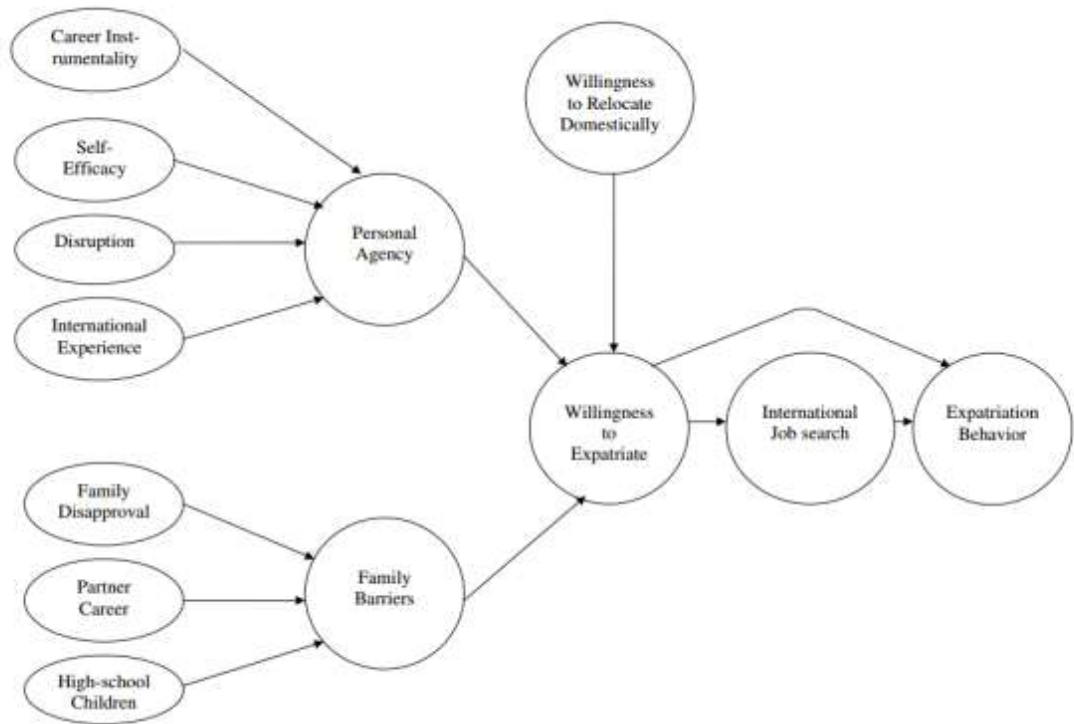


#### **4.3.1. Expatriate willingness**

Studies have identified a range of individuals' concerns regarding international working, including issues with location, work/life balance, financial concerns and the impact of an international assignment on career and career progression (Dickmann, Doherty, Mills, & Brewster, 2008). Factors such as age, education, race, gender, type of work, career ambition, attitude towards moving, job tenure, having a working spouse, having dependents, children at home, community links and tenure, openness to change and previous foreign experience affect the individuals willingness to relocate internationally. The importance of each factor is dependent on each individual (Brett & Stroh, 1995).

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is used to understand the processes through which individuals form interests, make choices, and achieve varying levels of success in educational and occupational pursuits. SCCT proposes that individuals' career interest and career choice goals come from the exercise of their personal activity and partly from environmental opportunities, support and barriers they have experienced or expect to experience. It indicates why some individuals are more or less inclined to expatriate (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994).

Expatriate willingness model, which distinguishes between personal agency and family barriers, explains individual willingness to expatriate and it is based on the social cognitive career theory. Personal agency is one of the two factors of the model that explains individual willingness to expatriate. "Personal agency is formed from its core components of outcome expectancies and self-efficacy judgments and from other social cognitive components that allow the exercise of forethought and self-regulation with respect to a specific activity" (Tharenou, 2008, p. 185). The second factor is family barriers which are the environmental element of the model. Barriers are events or conditions people perceive in their environment that make career choices difficult according to social cognitive career theory. Family barriers have effect on individuals' decision to expatriate for work (Tharenou, 2008).



**Figure 1** Expatriate willingness model (Tharenou, 2008)

When considering expatriation, individuals evaluate whether they can cope with the unique challenges, uncertainties, and demands caused by the new norms, values and attitudes they will face. It seems critical for individuals to anticipate that he or she can successfully deal with the challenges of expatriations. Therefore, individuals with high personal agency and fewer family barriers are more likely than others to adapt to a foreign culture and environment. Therefore, they are more willing to expatriate (Tharenou, 2008).

As mentioned above, when individuals consider expatriating to another country various reasons and motives such as personal agency and family barriers, including economic, political and religious factors have an effect on the decision. The effect either pushes the individual or pulls them toward a decision. The socioeconomic model helps to understand and explain the reasons why expatriates go overseas. Variety of individual and economic factors pushes or pulls individuals towards overseas work, according to this model (Massey & Espinosa, 1997; Froese, 2012). Individuals expatriate when there is demand-pull factors that draws them into a specific country and/or job and a push factor that pushes the individuals out of their own countries. Push factor is generally negative and involuntary, and is associated with the country or place of origin. Pull factor is positive and voluntary, and pertains to the country of destination (Toren, 1976).

Therefore economic recessions and individual hardships are typical push factors that move people to find work overseas (Massey & Espinosa, 1997; Froese, 2012).

#### **4.3.2. Motivation factors of organizational expatriates**

Motivation factors of organizational expatriates have been linked to the job on offer, the opportunity to have new experiences and learning possibilities, personal interest in international experience, family and domestic issues, the location of the assignment, and the overall assignment offer including the repatriation package and the financial impact of working abroad (Miller & Cheng, 1978; Suutari & Brewster, 2000; Dickmann, Doherty, Mills, & Brewster, 2008). The most important motivation factors for OEs are career related factors such as position offered on assignment, potential for leadership skills development, career progression, potential for job skills development and professional challenge of working abroad. Family related factors such as willingness of spouse to move and children's educational needs followed as important motivation factors for OEs (Dickmann, Doherty, Mills, & Brewster, 2008).

#### **4.3.3. Motivation factors of self-initiated expatriates**

Studies of SIEs have found greater variety of motivation factors than within studies of OEs. The studies' findings have been rather mixed, perhaps because of the differences in the sample populations such as different nationalities, age and occupations. However, there are motivation factors that seem to be important in all previous studies and those factors are international experience, adventure and travel. Nevertheless, the importance of financial incentives, career and family vary across previous studies (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997; Suutari & Brewster, 2000; Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Thorn, 2009; Froese, 2012).

The dominant motivational factors for SIEs are the desire to seek international experience, adventure and travel. For British academics (Richardson J. , 2005) and married New Zealanders (Thorn, 2009) family was a very important reason to expatriate and had a positive influence on British academic decision to expatriate (Richardson, 2005; Richardson & Mallon, 2005). Nevertheless, family as a motivation factor was of less importance to Finnish SIEs (Suutari & Brewster, 2000) and of little importance for young New Zealanders (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997). In addition, career concerns were, to young New Zealanders, the least important factor to expatriate.

Financial incentives mattered more to the older New Zealanders (Thorn, 2009) as well as to British academics (Richardson J. , 2005) but were not important to Finnish SIEs (Suutari & Brewster, 2000) and young New Zealanders (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997).

This thesis is intended to understand better the essential motivational factors of Icelandic citizens which are either self-initiated expatriates or organizational expatriates, and particularly why they choose to expatriate to Norway. This leads to the following research question:

*Research question 1: Why do Icelandic citizens expatriate to Norway?*

#### **4.4. Cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates**

Cross-cultural adjustment is the degree to which expatriates are psychologically comfortable and familiar with different aspects of a foreign environment. It is the degree of ease or difficulty expatriates have with various issues related to life and work abroad (Black, 1988). Cross-cultural adjustment reduces uncertainty and change through which expatriates begin to feel more comfortable with the new culture and harmonize with it. By imitating and/or learning behaviors that are appropriate in the new culture expatriates are able to reduce uncertainty (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). Expatriates are open to the host culture if they are culturally adjusted. Thus, they are able to add new behaviors, norms and rules to the foundation provided by their home cultures (Church, 1982). In contrast, maladjusted expatriates tend to experience anxiety (Richards, 1996) and limited adjustment to the host culture has various negative work-related consequences for the expatriate (Naumann, 1993). In these scenarios the worst-case would be that the expatriates, OEs and SIEs, prematurely return home or find a job in another country.

Three distinct facets of cross-cultural adjustment have been identified: general adjustment, interaction adjustment and work adjustment (Black, 1988; Black & Stephens, 1989; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005). General adjustment is regarding the way in which expatriates cope with living in a foreign country and everyday life. It refers to the degree of psychological comfort with regard to various aspects of the foreign culture environment for example climate, food, healthcare, shopping and housing conditions (Black & Stephens, 1989; Peltokorpi &

Froese, 2009). General adjustment is likely to vary among OEs and SIEs. The main difference lays in the support as SIEs lack the non-work-related support for example education for their children and housing allowances that OEs receive from their companies (Suutari & Brewster, 2000).

Interaction adjustment addresses expatriates' efforts to establish relationships with locals. It is the degree of psychological comfort regarding different communication and interpersonal styles used in the host culture (Black & Stephens, 1989; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). Important predictors of cross-cultural adjustments are well-functioning social relationships with foreign country nationals. Social ties when living in foreign countries are anticipated to be an important part of adjustment because they provide emotional support for dealing with the associated stress and anxiety (Adelman, 1988). Expatriates can develop social relationships and receive the needed social support from a variety of sources, e.g. other expatriates or foreign country nationals. If expatriate do not develop social relationship because they are unable and/or unwilling it is likely that will cause social loneliness characterized by boredom and alienation (Johnson, Kristof-Brown, van Vianen, de Pater, & Klein, 2003; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009).

Work adjustment involves the manner in that expatriates fit into the workspace. It is about the degree of comfort regarding different performance standards and expectations, and work values (Black & Stephens, 1989; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). Perceived ethnocentrism among foreign country nationals and differences in work values influences expatriates ability to adjust effectively to work-related aspects in a foreign country (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991; Florkowski & Fogel, 1999). Work adjustment for OEs and SIEs differ because while OEs are sent by their companies to local subsidiaries to accomplish a specific job, SIEs have to find a new job at a new company in the foreign country (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). SIEs have therefore, not only to adjust with general aspects of the foreign country but also need to adjust to a new job at an unknown company. In addition company socialization can be a difficult process. In contrast, OEs are more familiar with the company policies and human resource (HR) practices, even though HR differs to a certain extent across countries, because they are still working within the same company just in another country. (Ferner & Quintanilla, 1998; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009).

Self-initiated expatriates can experience lower work adjustment than organizational expatriates and the reason lies in the nature of the job. OEs are sent abroad to occupy important management positions and/or because they have special skills that are needed in the foreign subsidiary (Edström & Galbraith, 1977). They therefore have a specific objectives and job descriptions that are defined before their arrival which helps OEs be better prepared for the new job and new country. SIEs that obtain a job before moving to a foreign country are in similar situations as OEs. However, those SIEs who move to a foreign country to search for a job may have limited knowledge of what they are getting themselves into and therefore may be less prepared in comparison to OEs and SIEs that have jobs prior to arrival (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009).

This thesis is intended to explore how well Icelandic expatriates are adjusting to life in Norway regarding general, work and interaction adjustment. This leads to the following research question:

*Research question 2: How has the general, interaction and work adjustment been for the Icelandic expatriates in Norway?*

## **4.5.Repatriation**

There is a vast difference between repatriation of an OE and a SIE. It is connected to reason for expatriation as OEs expatriate to accomplish a specific job or organization related goal that should be accomplished with a specific time period ranging from 6 months to 5 years (Aycan, 1997). However SIEs expatriate on their own initiative and find work on their own in a foreign country. Thus, there is no time limit for their stay in the foreign country and they can plan to stay for a period of time or permanently which is however not usually predetermined (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

### **4.5.1. Repatriation of organizational expatriates**

In most cases organizational expatriates repatriate by transferring within the company to return to their home country upon completion of an international assignment. OEs are therefore returning home when they repatriate (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). Most common reason why OEs repatriate is that the international assignment has concluded. International assignment period for expatriates is predetermined and OEs are aware that the expatriation is temporary (Luthans & Doh, 2003).

Other reasons why OEs repatriate and often results in them repatriating earlier than scheduled are: family, unsatisfied and international assignment failure. Family has great effect to the whole expatriation and repatriation process. It is highly important that family members of OEs are successful in adjusting to foreign country as it is for OEs. If the adjustment is not successful it puts a strain on OEs and the family. This can result in an early repatriation (Zeira & Banai, 1985). Organizational expatriates with children repatriate because they want their children to be educated in a home country school. However, the longer OEs and their family stay in the foreign country the less likely it is that will occur (Luthans & Doh, 2003). Unsatisfied organizational expatriates repatriate before the conclusion of the international assignment. Poor organizational support by the home office can leave the impression on the OEs that the assignment is not good. Which can result in unsatisfied OEs that leave them wanting to return back home. Thus, lack of support from the home office has a negative effect on the OEs ability to adjust to the international assignment (Kraimer, Wayne, & Jaworski, 2001). Failure to do a good and quality work on the international assignment will often result in early repatriation and may even result in demotion or termination (Luthans & Doh, 2003).

Repatriation is often a forgotten element of the international assignment. Common sense dictates, “They are coming home. How much adjustment is needed?” Most OEs are satisfied with their international assignment as a whole but are dissatisfied with the repatriation process (Tung, 1998). Returning home requires adjustment that is in some cases underestimated by both the company and OEs. OEs often find themselves facing readjustment problems. Repatriation can be as difficult if not more difficult than the original expatriation adjustment. How difficult the readjustment in the home country is, is dependent on the duration of the international assignment (Luthans & Doh, 2003).

Some of the main problems of repatriation identified are: adjusting to life back home, facing a financial package that is not as good as that of overseas, having less autonomy in the home country company job than in the overseas position, not receiving any career counseling from the company (Luthans & Doh, 2003; Larson, 2006)

#### **4.5.1. Repatriation of self-initiated expatriates**

Self-initiated expatriates choose themselves to repatriate, they decide whether to return to their home country and if they do decide to repatriate they decide at what time they will repatriate (Tharenou, 2008). Self-initiated repatriation is when “people return to

their country or place of origin after a significant period in another country” (King, 2000, p. 8). There is no absolute number for how many individual are self-initiated expatriates. Thus, it is unknown how high the SIEs repatriation rate is. Self-initiated expatriates need to manage their own repatriation, find a new job or other occupation, or else they return to home country unemployed. SIEs repatriation is therefore on their own initiative (Suutari & Brewster, 2000; Saxenian, 2005).

Repatriation of SIEs can be explained by adapting contemporary job turnover theory (March & Simon, 1958) similar to what Toren (1976) did with using push and pull factors to explain repatriation. However, the contemporary job turnover theory does not address the impact of embeddedness and “shocks”. Nor does it simultaneously explain why SIEs repatriate and their repatriation process which is similar to those identified in contemporary, integrated models of turnover (Allen & Griffeth, 1999; Lee, Gerhart, Weller, & Trevor, 2008). Reasons for repatriation of SIEs can be explained with three factors: push factor, pull factor and shocks (Toren, 1976; Allen & Griffeth, 1999; Lee, Gerhart, Weller, & Trevor, 2008). Push factors are those that drive a person away from his/her place of residence while pull factors draw him/her to a new destination. Push factors are generally negative and involuntary while pull factors are positive and voluntary (Toren, 1976).

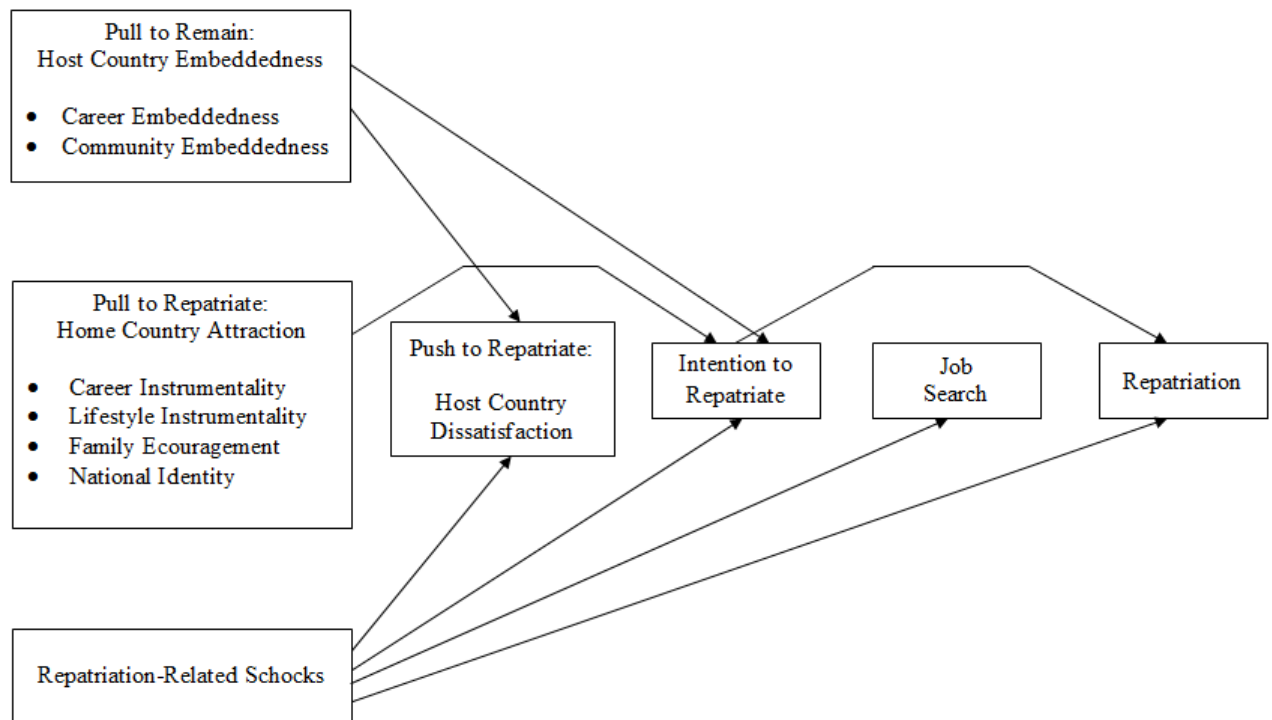
As SIEs choose to expatriate by their own initiative in accordance to their goals and plans they may become embedded in their host country which may cause them to be reluctant to repatriate. Host country factors both pushes SIEs to return to home country (dissatisfaction) and pull them to remain (embeddedness). SIEs that are strongly embedded in a host country they are pulled to remain and have little intent to leave, meaning they have little intention to return home (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010).

Home country pull factors are an attracting and influential force on a decision to repatriate. However, they are not likely to affect SIEs satisfaction with living in a host country because they are not directly related to an evaluation of life there (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). SIEs are pulled home by their family in their home country. Family that actively seeks SIEs repatriation may exert considerable pressure on SIEs to repatriate (Jones, 2003).

The third factor is shock, SIEs are inclined to repatriate when experiencing “shocks to the system”. Shocks may happen on or off the job, be positive or negative, and be



expected or unexpected. SIEs repatriation often occurs in response to a jarring event which causes SIEs to reevaluate their employment situation in the context of their values, goal and plans. Thus, resulting in dissatisfaction of SIEs that inclines them to quit which can be at times suddenly. A range of types of shocks can affect repatriation and they vary between individuals (Lee & Mitchell, 1994).



**Figure 2** The Self-initiated expatriate repatriation model (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010)

This thesis is intended to explore what factors push, pull and/or shock Icelandic citizens to repatriate back to Iceland from Norway. This leads to the following research question:

*Research question 3: Why do Icelandic organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriate repatriate to Iceland from Norway?*

## **Part III: Migration of Icelanders**

---

It was necessary to collect information on Icelandic expatriates in order to have knowledge of where information gap was in the literature. When searching for information it was clear that next to no information is available on Icelandic expatriates and what motivates them to move abroad and what motivates them to move back home. There is however information available about migration of Icelandic citizens and other statistical information regarding age, gender, returning migration and which countries Icelandic citizens are moving to. The information gathered about migration of Icelandic citizens was guided by the research questions as presented in previous chapters. This chapter covers population in Iceland, migration in Iceland, gender and age distribution amongst migrated Icelandic citizens, destinations for Icelandic citizens moving from Iceland and returning Icelandic migrants.

### **5. Migration**

International migrations are important in modern societies and have increased dramatically in recent years. Migration is influenced by a combination of economic, political and social factors: either in a migrant's country of origin (push factors) or in the country of destination (pull factors) (Eurostat, 2013). Never before have there been so many people living far away from their native countries and reasons for why people migrate are numerous. Deciding to migrate between countries can be highly influenced by factors such as poor living conditions, violence and armed conflicts, environmental problems, a lack of economic perspectives and the growing gap between rich and poor countries. Likewise have global mobility and the new media great influence on current migration trends (Federal Office of Migration, 2011). Individuals that can choose to migrate willingly without being under duress do it usually because of economic factors, personal financial situations, family, better quality of life or studies (Arango, 2000). Other factors that also influence individuals to migrate include conditions on the labor market, laws and regulations, international agreements, information flow, chain migration and the cost of migration (Glover, et al., 2001).

There has always been movement of Icelandic citizens to and from Iceland. Statistics Iceland has throughout the years collected, processed and disseminated data on economy and society and continues to do so. The information available regarding

Icelandic citizens moving to and from Iceland are statistical. Information regarding how many Icelandic citizens expatriate and how many of the expatriates are self-initiated expatriates or organizational expatriates is unknown as well as the motivation regarding why Icelandic citizens move. Analysis on Icelandic citizens' migration is presented, based on data gathered by Statistics Iceland, in order to have some perspective of how many Icelandic citizens move to and from Iceland, what influences them to move and to what country Icelandic citizens' move to.

## **5.1. Definitions**

*Natural increase in population* is the difference between the number of live births and the number of deaths during the year. The natural increase (or natural decrease) is negative when the number of deaths exceeds the number of births (OECD, 2005).

*Migration* is the movement of persons from one country or locality to another (Snara).

*Emigration* is when a person migrate from his/her own native country in order to settle in another (Snara).

*Immigration* is when person migrate to a country of which he/she are not a native in order to settle there (Snara).

*Emigration* and *Immigration* have similar meanings but they differ in point of view. Emigration means to leave one country to settle in another. Immigration means to settle in a country where one is not a native. Emigration stresses leaving while immigration stresses arriving (Snara).

*Net migration* is the difference between immigration and emigration from the country during the year (net migration is therefore negative when the number of emigrants exceeds the number of immigrants) (OECD, 2005).

*Returning migrants* are persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short-term or long-term) in another country and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year.

## 6. Population in Iceland

The population of Iceland has increased substantially from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The number of residents has more than doubled twice from 1900 to 2013. Before 1900 external factors such as disease and natural disaster had much impact on the population, so much that the increase was negligible (Land og saga, n.d.). Population increase in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was natural. Life expectancy increased steadily

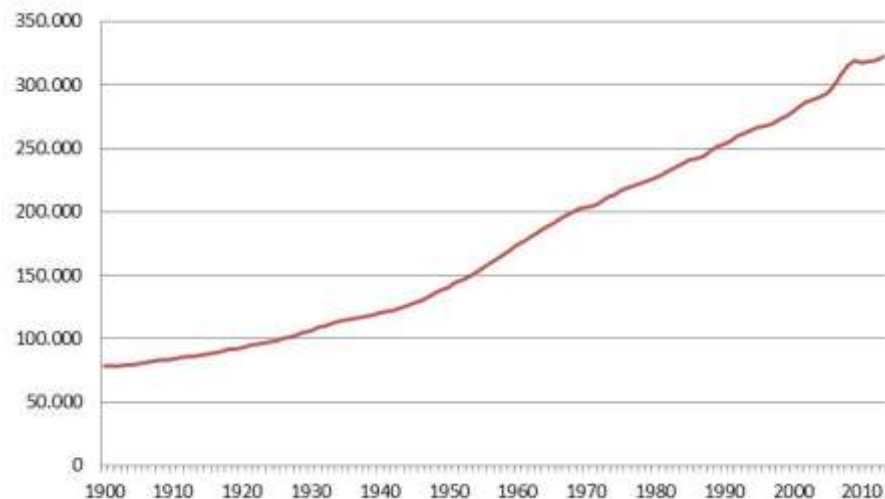


Figure 3 Population in Iceland 1900-2013 (Statistics Iceland, 2013a)

throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and birth rate continued to increase (Statistics Iceland, n.d.). Advances in technology and science have reduced the weight of external factors such as disease and natural disasters on the population. This had a positive impact on the population in Iceland. Also, more open international environment and overall positive development of economic factors such as employment rate and possibilities, purchasing power, income, interest rate, income and expenses of the state, inflation and exchange rate have had an impact on the rise of the country's population (Alberge, 2012).

The Icelandic economic system opened up when Iceland entered into the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA Agreement provides for the inclusion of European Union (EU) legislation covering the four freedoms, the free movement of goods, services, persons and capital, throughout the 30 EEA States (The European Free Trade Association, 2013). The impact the agreement had on migration to and from Iceland was that foreign nationals began to arrive in greater numbers and from more countries than before (Statistics Iceland, 2013a).

During the economic growth, in the middle of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, population growth in Iceland was more than in any other European country. The population growth was more affected of high migration of foreign citizen moving to Iceland than natural growth. Annual population growth in 2006 and 2007 in Iceland was over 2,5%. After the economic downturn in October 2008 population growth slowed down and was negative in 2009, -0,5%. This was affected because of high migration of foreign citizen moving from Iceland. However, the growth has been positive for the last three years, from 0,26% in 2010 to 0,71% in 2012 (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012; Statistics Iceland, 2013c).

## 7. Migration of Icelandic citizens

The number of individuals moving to and from Iceland has been considerably high over the recent years. Net migration can give a misleading picture of the extent of migration because it shows only the mere difference between immigration and emigration. The magnitude of migration can be quite different between countries with same net migration. Considerable extensive migration to and from a specific country may thus give same net migration as in a country where only a few individuals migrate.

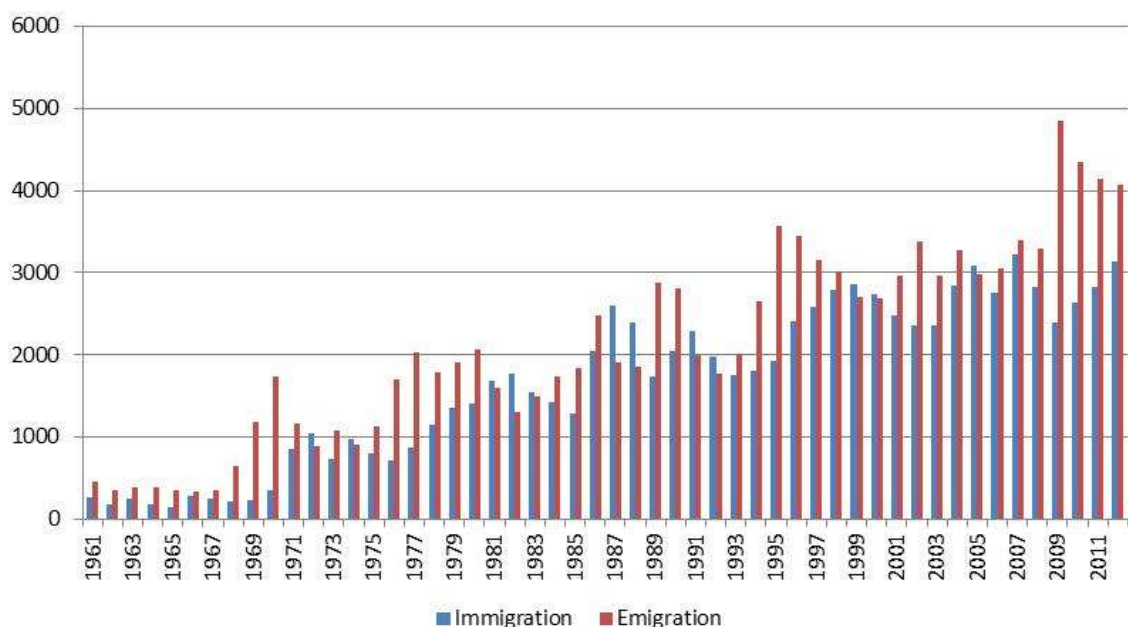
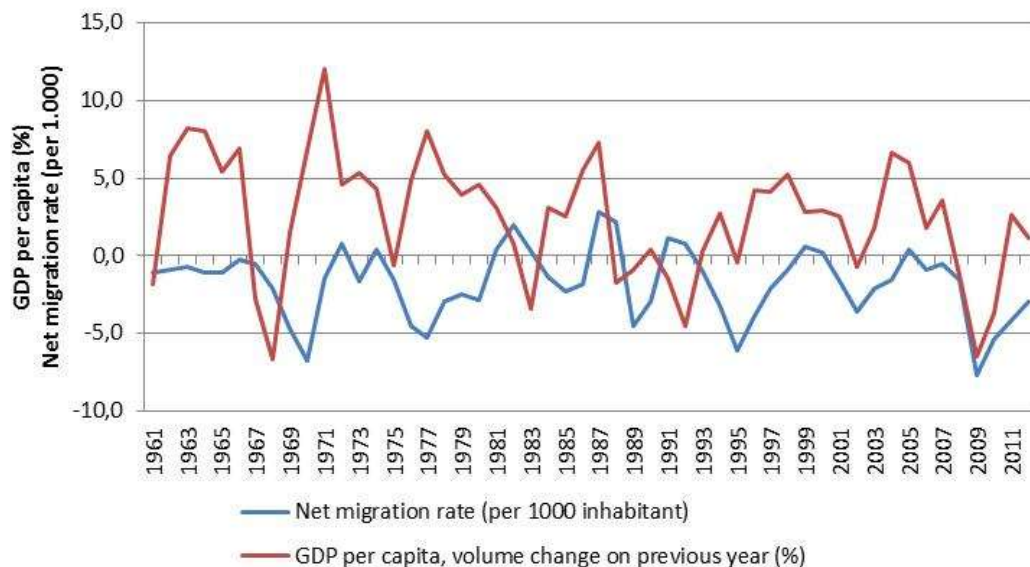


Figure 4 Migration of Icelanders 1961-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013b)

Migration to and from Iceland has been considerably high and an important factor in the population history of Iceland since the mid-sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Few foreign citizens migrated to and from Iceland before 1994 (Statistics Iceland, 2013b) but that is

the year when the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA-Agreement) entered into force. Following the collapse of herring stocks in the end of the sixties in 20<sup>th</sup> century migration increased among Icelanders. These years Icelandic citizens mostly emigrated out of Iceland and few moved back home. Shortly after 1970 it changed and since then a large number of Icelandic citizens has moved from Iceland and back home again. (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012).

There have been fluctuations in net migration amongst Icelandic citizens over the past half century which seems largely due to the economic conditions. However there is a delay between when a recession starts and the emigration of Icelandic citizens from Iceland. Recessions in Iceland have caused the net migration to go temporarily down below -5 per 1.000 inhabitants three times during the period 1966-2012. The delay of



**Figure 5 GDP per capita (%) and Net migration rate (per 1.000) of Icelandic citizens 1961-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013b; Statistics Iceland, 2013a; Statistics Iceland, 2013d)**

emigration is prominent in the recession in the sixties where the greatest decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was in 1968 and the emigration in reaction to the recession reached its heights, after the downturn, in 1970 when most of Icelandic citizens emigrated from Iceland. The same applies to the recession in the nineties when, the GDP reached its lowest point in 1992 but the emigration of Icelanders peaked in 1995. Therefore it is interesting to see that this delay in emigration did not follow in the recession that occurred in the wake of the economic collapse in October 2008. The maximum emigration of Icelandic citizens was immediately the year after, in 2009, and never before have so many number of individuals moved from Iceland. Though the number has of emigrated Icelandic citizens has never been so high, the net migration

rate since 2009 has been similar as it was during other downturns, such as in the late sixties and in the mid-nineties (as can be seen in Figure 5). However, since 2010 emigration from Iceland has reduced each year (as can be seen in Figure 4). Recessions in Iceland have therefore generally resulted in emigration increase 1-3 years after a decline in GDP has reached its lowest point. Thus far, this recession has not had more impact on net migration than previous downturns amongst Icelandic citizens (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012; Statistics Iceland, 2013b; Statistics Iceland, 2013d).

## 7.1. Gender distribution amongst migrated Icelandic citizens

Migration amongst Icelandic men and women has been fairly even from the late seventies. That has however changed since 2008 because emigrations of Icelandic men are somewhat more than women. This could be an indication of so-called chain migration in which one family member, in this case the man, moves first and then afterwards the family moves to him. If this is the case then one would expect that the emigration of Icelandic citizens will remain fairly high. Nevertheless, when looking at how many Icelandic men and women immigrate, move back home to Iceland, it is clear that men are significantly more immigrants than women. This suggests that men who move from Iceland are likely to return within a relatively short time. Immigration of Icelandic citizens back home to Iceland took a little downturn dive in 2009 but it has been increasing steadily from 2010 (Statistics Iceland, 2013b; Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012).

**Table 2 Immigration and Emigration of Icelandic citizens (Statistics Iceland, 2013b)**

	Total		Male		Female	
	Immigration	Emigration	Immigration	Emigration	Immigration	Emigration
1971-1980	9.899	14.653	4.670	6.902	5.229	7.751
1981-1990	18.528	19.914	8.987	9.881	9.541	10.033
1991-2000	23.121	27.020	10.636	13.839	11.345	13.181
2001	2.487	2.959	1.242	1.480	1.245	1.479
2002	2.360	3.380	1.212	1.734	1.148	1.646
2003	2.351	2.964	1.194	1.508	1.157	1.456
2004	2.838	3.276	1.455	1.603	1.383	1.673
2005	3.093	2.975	1.574	1.448	1.519	1.527
2006	2.762	3.042	1.405	1.522	1.357	1.520
2007	3.228	3.395	1.651	1.687	1.577	1.708
2008	2.817	3.294	1.419	1.667	1.398	1.627
2009	2.385	4.851	1.221	2.636	1.164	2.215
2010	2.637	4.340	1.428	2.272	1.209	2.068
2011	2.824	4.135	1.465	2.156	1.359	1.979
2012	3.130	4.066	1.609	2.115	1.521	1.951

## 7.2. Age distribution amongst migrated Icelandic citizens

Since 1986, most Icelandic citizens who emigrate from Iceland are 20 – 24 years old, followed closely by the age group 25-29. In 2009 the age group of emigrated Icelandic citizens changed drastically and a more diverse group of Icelandic citizen started to move from the country. The most increase in emigration is among individual 30-64 years old. The net migration of age groups 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 are lower than -300, which means that emigrated Icelandic citizens were 300+ more than immigrated Icelandic citizens (Statistics Iceland, 2013e).

**Table 3 Net migration of Icelandic citizens 1986-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013e)**

	1986-1995	1996-2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
0-4 years	15	23	3	0	6	-267	-189	-159	-50
5-9 years	-88	-41	-19	27	13	-160	-130	-85	-17
10-14 years	1	158	9	30	6	-139	-92	-75	-35
15- 19 years	-260	-103	-9	16	-11	-72	-58	-34	-23
20-24 years	-1.785	-2.247	-222	-178	-227	-361	-299	-203	-271
25-29 years	-870	-1.555	-73	-110	-100	-386	-259	-162	-141
30-34 years	-240	-503	-36	-53	-72	-336	-276	-169	-132
35-39 years	-91	85	-8	50	-44	-235	-135	-138	-73
40-44 years	-114	14	29	14	-17	-193	-63	-126	-36
45-49 years	-102	7	23	1	-19	-140	-77	-78	-61
50-54 years	21	57	-4	11	-18	-104	-73	-40	-63
55-59 years	8	56	13	12	3	-52	-41	-38	-32
60-64 years	19	42	-1	1	0	-19	-15	-19	0
65 years and older	0	0	15	12	3	-2	4	15	-2

The economic downturn in 2008 had the effect that more people moved from Iceland and at more diverse age than before. However, it is likewise interesting to see the net migration of Icelandic citizens in 2010-2012. The emigration is high but most individuals who emigrate in 2010 and 2011 are in age group 20-44 years. In 2012, the net migration has stabilized and is similar to what it was before 2009 however the age group has change slightly. Now most individuals that emigrate are in the age group 20-34 instead of 20-29 as it was before 2009 (Statistics Iceland, 2013e).

**Table 4 Average age of migrated Icelandic citizens (Ómar S. Hardarson, 2010)**

	Men		women	
	Immigration	Emigration	Immigration	Emigration
2000	23,7	23,5	23,5	23,1
2001	23,7	24,3	23,8	23,1
2002	24,4	24,5	23,9	22,9
2003	25,1	24,6	24,3	23,1
2004	24,8	24,1	23,0	23,0
2005	24,3	23,7	23,3	22,8
2006	25,3	24,4	23,8	23,4
2007	25,0	24,8	23,2	23,0
2008	23,8	25,3	23,4	23,4
2009	25,7	27,5	24,8	24,4

The average age of migrated Icelandic citizens has slowly been going up, which was in 2000-2007 caused by increase in foreign citizens. The average age has been around 24 years old. However, average age of migrated Icelandic citizens increased in 2009 with both genders, the



women average age went up by 1 year and men's went up by 2,2 years. The net migration and higher average age shows that after 2008 older individuals decided to emigrate (Ómar S. Harðarson, 2010).

The average age of migrated Icelandic citizens shows that there is no difference between the average age of immigrants and emigrants even though most of emigrants return to Iceland within three years after emigrating. This is caused by the relatively high number of children with Icelandic citizenship moving to Iceland. The net migration of Icelandic children age 0-14 shows that before 2009 was positive which lowers the average age of Icelandic immigrants. However, the net migration is negative 2009-2012. The change in children's emigration is drastic and 566 more children with Icelandic citizenship emigrated than immigrated. The emigration of Icelandic children slows down in 2010-2012 but there are still more emigrating than immigrating. This indicates that more families are moving from Iceland than moving to Iceland (Ómar S. Harðarson, 2010).

### 7.3.Icelandic Students

There is a long tradition that Icelandic citizens move temporarily abroad to study. There is no statistical data regarding how many in total Icelandic citizens move each year. However, Icelandic Student Loan Fund (LÍN) receives applications each year from students seeking assistance. The number of students who receive a loan from Icelandic Student Loan Fund to study abroad therefore gives an idea of how many emigrate from Iceland to study abroad (Icelandic Student Loan Fund, n.d.).

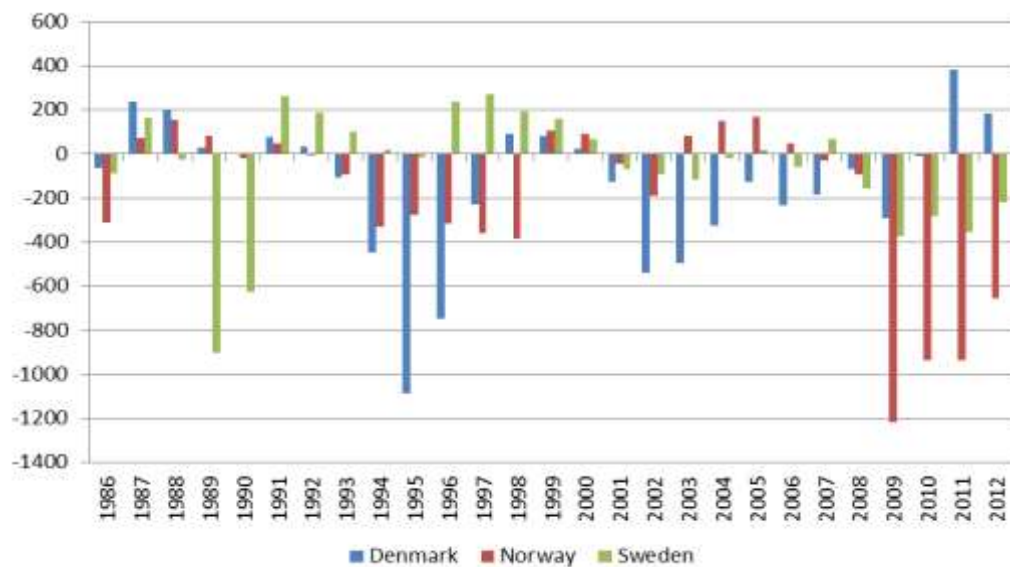
**Table 5 Number of students abroad that receive student loans from Icelandic Student Loan Fund (Icelandic Student Loan Fund, n.d.)**

	School year							
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Number of loan recipients	9.539	10.311	10.668	11.013	12.235	12.393	12.599	12.602
Of which are abroad	2.393	2.589	2.705	2.615	2.626	2.413	2.493	2.385
Loan recipients %	25%	25%	25%	24%	21%	19%	20%	19%

The number of student living abroad receiving a loan from LÍN increased gradually from the school year 2004-2005 to the school year 2008-2009, being up to 25% of loan recipients. However, since 2009 the number of students living abroad as decreased and is now only 19% of loan recipients. This may be explained by an increase in tuition fees (in ISK) after the collapse of the Icelandic currency.

## 7.4. Nordic countries

The Nordic countries are the main destination for Icelandic emigrants, ever since the beginning of the seventies approximately three-quarters of Icelandic citizens who emigrate go to Denmark, Norway or Sweden. Other popular destinations include Germany, United Kingdom and the United States (Statistics Iceland, 2013a). Since 2009 more Icelandic citizens have emigrated from Iceland to the Nordic countries than immigrated back home to Iceland. Net migration has never been as low as in 2009 when



**Figure 6 Net migration of Icelandic citizens in Nordic countries 1986-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013)**

the number of individuals who emigrated was 1882 more than the number of those who immigrated in the same period. During the previous recessions as well as this recession the majority of emigrants have moved residence to Scandinavia, especially to Denmark and Norway (Statistics Iceland, 2013a; Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012).

Large numbers of Icelandic citizens have immigrated to Norway since 2009, much more than to the other Nordic countries. Although the number of Icelandic citizens who immigrate to Norway the years after 2008 is high, it is less than the number of Icelandic citizens who immigrated to Denmark in previous years, from 2001 to 2009. Most Icelandic citizens have immigrated to Denmark during the past decade (Statistics Iceland, 2013a).

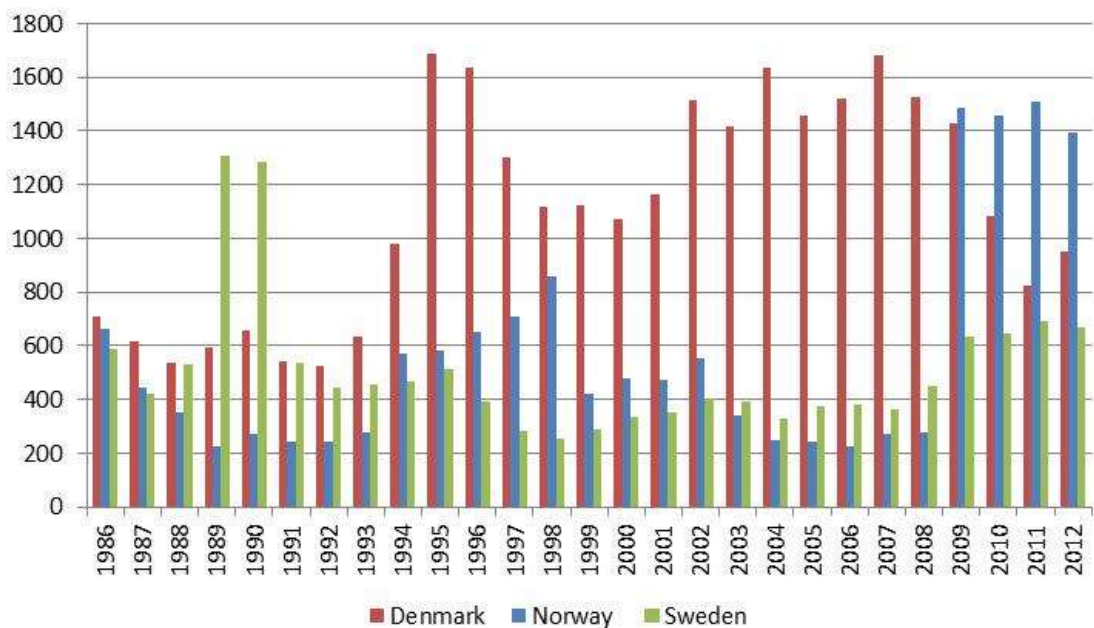


Figure 7 Immigration of Icelandic citizens to Nordic countries 1986-2012 (Statistics Iceland, 2013)

The relatively large stream of individuals immigrating to Norway from Iceland is not unique. Norway is now an important destination for individuals who want to migrate between countries. That in itself does not come as a surprise as the unemployment rate in Norway is lower than elsewhere in the European Economic Area (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012).

## 7.5. Returning migrants

The majority of Icelandic citizens who immigrate to Iceland are returning migrants, with 92% of 58.377 immigrants in 1986–2008 registered as returning migrants. Near all Icelandic citizens that emigrate from Iceland turn back home (Statistics Iceland, 2010).

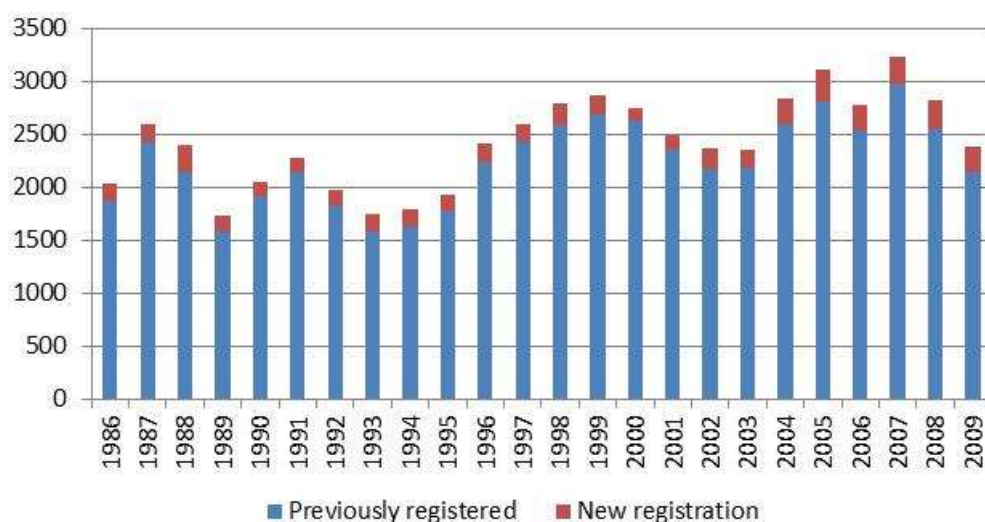
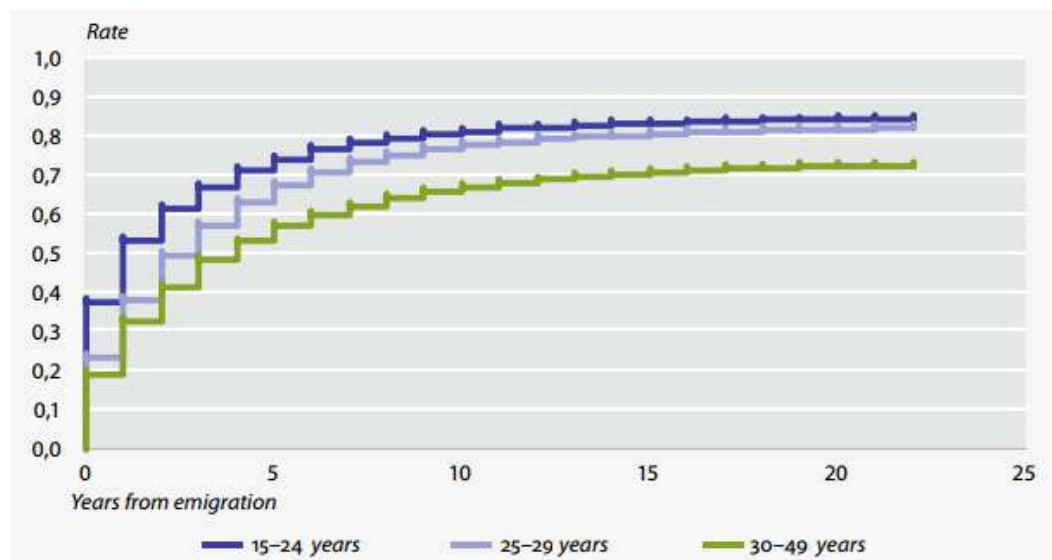


Figure 8 Immigration of Icelandic citizens by registration 1986-2008 (Statistics Iceland, 2010)

Cumulated the rate of returning migrants amongst Icelandic citizens is 78,6% and their average stay abroad is 2,4 years. Half of emigrated Icelandic citizens that move from Iceland have immigrated back to Iceland after four years. The rate of returning migrants differs by age. Younger individuals have higher rate of returning migrants than older individuals. Emigrated individuals aged 15-24 average stay abroad is 1,8 years. However, Icelandic citizens aged 30-49 are more likely to stay longer abroad or even not immigrating back to Iceland. The rate of returning migrants is the lowest in this age group, or 72,2% (Statistics Iceland, 2009).



**Figure 9** Cumulative rate of returning migrants of Icelandic citizens by age groups 1986-2008 (Statistics Iceland, 2009)

The rate of returning migrants differs by country of original destination. Icelandic citizens emigrating to one of the Nordic countries are more likely to return than those migrating to other countries. The rate of returning migrants of Icelandic citizens that emigrate to one of the Nordic countries is 82,2% and half of the emigrated individuals have immigrated back to Iceland after 2 years abroad. Icelandic citizen who emigrated from Iceland to other European countries than the Nordic countries have the rate of returning migrants 73% and half of them return back to Iceland 5 years after they emigrated. There are no significant gender differences regarding returning migrants (Statistics Iceland, 2009).

When the rates of returning migrants of Icelandic citizens who moved abroad in 2008 is analyzed it shows that it is lower than the years before. The rates of returning migrants within three calendar years of emigration are the most often in the range of 35-44%. The rate of returning migrants of Icelandic citizen who emigrated 2007-2009 is the same as it was in 1993-1995 and 2001-2002 (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012).

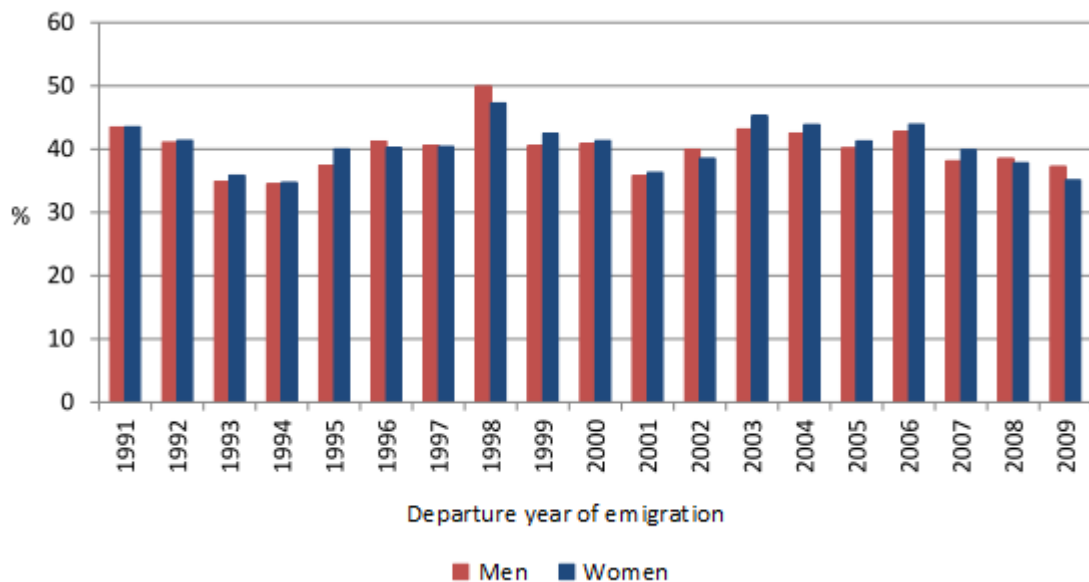


Figure 10 The rate of returning migrants of Icelandic citizens within three calendar years from emigration. Departure year of emigration 1991-2009 (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012)

## 7.6.Missing data

The numbers of migrated Icelandic citizens show only those that have moved their permanent residence to another country. Researches in the Nordic countries show that number of individuals that live in their home country but work in another has increased over the past decade. The Nordic statistical institutes have begun gathering information on work-related moves, where e.g. Swedish citizens go to work every day in Norway but their live in Sweden so they go over the borders each day. It is also known that individuals go abroad for longer work time period, one week to several weeks where they work and then go back to their home country for some vacation that can be one week to several weeks. That is all dependent on the work contract at each company. This work situation is especially common within the health industry and construction industry (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012).

There is no statistical data in Iceland regarding how many individuals have work-related moves. There are some indications that more and more Icelandic citizens are working temporarily abroad. Icelandic healthcare professionals have had relatively easy access to healthcare jobs in Norway and the same can be said about manual workers. Often these Icelandic citizens work part of the year in Norway and it is not unlikely that some of them will immigrate to Norway in the future (Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 2012).

There are no statistical data regarding what kind of education and occupation Icelandic citizens that emigrate from Iceland have. Therefore it is not possible to say what kind of Icelandic citizens are migrating to and from Iceland based on anything other than other than gender, age, countries, citizenship and region. However, it can be speculated that more educated individuals are emigrating from Iceland based on their age because it is more likely that older individuals have some higher education and/or a degree rather than a twenty year old individual.

## Part IV: Methodology

---

The most important theories have been discussed in previous chapter called “Literature review” where two types of expatriates and repatriation were introduced, motivation to go abroad, cross-cultural adjustment discussed as well as what pushes and pulls individuals to repatriate. The Literature Review chapter was used as a guideline for this research. This chapter describes the methodology used in this research, how data will be handled, collected and processed.

### 8. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is threefold. First, it is intended to understand better the essential motivating factors of Icelandic individuals which are either self-initiated expatriates or organizational expatriates, and particularly why they choose to expatriate to Norway. Second, it is intended to explore how well Icelandic expatriates are adjusting to life in Norway regarding general, work and interaction adjustment. Third and last, it is intended to explore what factors push, pull and/or shock Icelanders to repatriate back to Iceland.

The research includes information which will possibly decrease the gap in the literature on Icelandic expatriates. As well as gain a deeper understanding and knowledge on why Icelandic individuals move to Norway and why they move back home. The following research questions have been identified:

*Research question 1: Why do Icelandic citizens expatriate to Norway?*

*Research question 2: How has the general, interaction and work adjustment been for the Icelandic expatriates in Norway?*

*Research question 3: Why do Icelandic organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriate repatriate to Iceland from Norway?*

### 9. Research Approach

The research approach introduces the type of research used as well as the research philosophy and framework. This chapter presents how the sample selection was defined

and how the interviewers were reached. In addition there will be information regarding data collection, procedure and processing. In the end there will be discussions regarding ethics and validity of the research.

### **9.1.Type of Research**

When researchers lack information or knowledge about the research topic, exploratory studies are conducted. In the absence of knowledge, quantitative methods, such as questionnaire surveys are rather difficult to apply (Yin, 1994; Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2011). Kvale (1996) poses the question that if the researcher wants to know how individuals experience and/or perceive their life and environment, why not talk to them? In interviews, the researcher listens to the person discussing their life experiences, attitudes and beliefs that they articulate in their own words.

Qualitative research is both subjective and systematic. It is defined as:

... a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3).

Phenomenological approach pursues to explore, describe, and analyze the meaning of individual lived experience: “how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, makes sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 104). This approach, which is derived from the German philosophy of phenomenology, typically involves in-depth interviews with individual that have experienced the phenomenon of interest. The analysis proceeds from the central assumption that there is an ‘essence’ to an experience that is shared with others who have had that same experience. The experiences of the participants are analyzed as unique expressions and then compared to identify the ‘essence’ (Marchall & Rossman, 2011; Creswell, 2013).



This research can be classified as an exploratory study based on qualitative research under the influence of phenomenological approach. The choice of qualitative research was made as the result of a general lack of knowledge regarding the motivations and adjustment of Icelandic expatriates in Norway and Icelandic repatriates in Iceland.

## **9.2. Research Philosophy**

Researchers always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to their research whether they are aware of it or not. Philosophy means the use of abstract ideas and beliefs that inform the researchers' research. The first ideas in developing a research plan are typically philosophical assumptions; nevertheless it remains a mystery how they relate to the overall process of research (Creswell, 2013). Philosophy in research shapes how the researchers formulate their problem and research questions to study and how they gather information to answer the questions. A cause and effect type of question in which certain variables are predicted to explain an outcome is different from an exploration of a single phenomenon as found in qualitative research (Huff, 2009).

There have been four philosophical assumptions recognized throughout the last 20 years in the various SAGE Handbooks of Qualitative Research. These philosophical assumptions are beliefs about ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (what count as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified), axiology (the role of values in research) and methodology (the process of research) (Creswell, 2013).

The philosophical assumption used in this research is the *ontological* assumptions where different realities are embraced. When studying individuals it is with the intent of reporting multiple realities. Evidence of multiple realities includes the use of multiple form of evidence in themes using the actual word of different individuals and presenting different perspectives (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2013).

## **9.3. Interpretive Frameworks**

The four philosophical assumptions (ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology) are considered as key premises that are folded into interpretive frameworks used in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Interpretive frameworks consisted of positivism, interpretivism, transformative frameworks,

postmodernism, pragmatism, feminism, critical theory and critical race theory, queer theory and disability theories.

The interpretive framework used in this research in collaboration with the research philosophy is the *interpretivism*. *Interpretivism* is another worldview. Interpretivism framework is based on three principles; that the social world is constructed and is given meaning subjectively by people, the researcher is a part of what is perceived, and the research is driven by interest. Social elements are not simply imprinted on individuals but formed through interactions with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. The researcher makes an interpretation of what they find, an interpretation shaped by their own experiences and background. The researcher's intent is to make sense of or interpret the meanings others have about the world (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2011; Creswell, 2013).

#### **9.4. Sample selection**

Qualitative research uses non-probability samples for selecting the population to research. In a non-probability sample, units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of or groups within the sampled population. The sample is not intended to be statistically representative: the chances of selection for each element are unknown but, instead, the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection. Non-probability sampling includes: quota sample, snowball sample, accidental or convenience sample and purposive sample (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003; Þórlindsson & Karlsson, 2003). Non-probability samples used in this research are a snowball and convenience sample method.

In the snowball sample method one or more participants are selected to participate in the research and then asked to suggest other potential participants whom they know. Thus, the original individual or individuals provide other participants for the research, which is needed in order to locate other members of that population. Snowball sampling is not likely to lead a representative sample; however this method is often used when it is difficult to locate members of a certain population (Þórlindsson & Karlsson, 2003).

In the convenience sample method participants are selected because they are close to hand. That is, a sample population selected because it is readily available and convenient. The researcher using this sample cannot scientifically make generalizations

about the total population from the sample because it would not be representative enough (Þórlindsson & Karlsson, 2003).

Qualitative samples are usually small in size. There are three main reasons for this. First, if the data are properly analyzed, there will come a point where very little new evidence is obtained from each additional interview. This is because phenomena only need to appear once to be part of the analytical map. Therefore, there is a point of diminishing return where increasing the sample size no longer contributes new evidence. Second, statements about incidence or occurrence are not the concern of qualitative research. Thus, there is no requirement to ensure that the sample is of sufficient scale to provide estimates, or to determine statistically significant discriminatory variables. Third, the type of information that qualitative studies yield is rich in detail. There will therefore be many hundreds of pieces of information from each interview. In order to do them justice these sample sizes need to be kept to a reasonably small scale (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003).

There were two samples needed for this research. First sample were Icelanders who moved to Norway for work or in order to seek employment from 2008 till the end of 2012, Icelandic expatriates. Second sample were Icelanders who worked and lived in Norway and have moved back to Iceland from Norway from 2008 to 2012, Icelandic repatriates. Icelandic expatriates in Norway were reached using the convenience sample method. However, it was difficult to reach Icelandic repatriates in Iceland and there the snowballing sample method was used. Five individuals were interviewed for each sample.

## **9.5.Data collection method**

The research used the two-fold structure design of exploratory techniques in order to collect and analyze the research and data. The first stage in the two stage design defines the question and the design, and the second stage conducts the actual research (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2011). The secondary data and other pre-identified data were first explored in order to find relevant data for the research. When enough secondary data had been gathered then the research on Icelandic expatriates and repatriates was conducted. The first part of the research is both exploratory and descriptive while the second part is only descriptive.

Secondary data is the data which is collected for some purpose other than the present research purpose. The main advantage of using secondary data sources is that they already exist and it helps to make primary data collection more specific because researchers are able to make out what are the gaps and deficiencies and what additional information needs to be collected (Aaker, Kumar, Day, & Leone, 2011). The secondary data used in this research mainly consisted of scholarly articles from numerous journals as well as academic books.

Primary data are collected especially to address a specific research objective. Primary data is data that has not been previously published; it is information that is obtained directly by the researcher from first-hand sources by some means e.g. observation or interviewing. There are three fundamental types of research interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Aaker, Kumar, Day, & Leone, 2011). Interviews conducted for this research were all semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allows the researcher or participant to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. This format provides participants with some guidance on what to talk about, which many find helpful. The flexibility of this approach allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the researcher. There are some limitations to interviewing as they are often intimate encounters that are dependent on trust. Participants may, in some cases, be unwilling or uncomfortable sharing all that the researcher hopes to explore or the participants may be unaware of recurring patterns in their lives (Merriam, 2009).

## **9.6.Procedure**

The researcher started by reading scholarly articles from numerous journals as well as academic books regarding that was about similar issues. The secondary data, which is thoroughly presented in the Literary Review chapter above, helped with the research design and main research questions. Information about Icelandic expatriates is limited and therefore it was difficult to find any secondary data about that issue. Therefore, information from the Statistic Iceland about migration of Icelanders was used to have some idea on how many individuals move to and from Iceland and to which countries.

After gathering all necessary secondary data it was necessary to do some primary data collection in order to decrease gap in the literature on Icelandic expatriates.

There were two samples needed for this research. The first sample was Icelanders who moved to Norway for work or in order to seek employment from 2008 till the end of 2012, Icelandic expatriates. The second sample was Icelanders who worked and lived in Norway and have moved back to Iceland from Norway from 2008 to 2012, Icelandic repatriates. Icelandic expatriates in Norway were reached using the convenience sample method. In order to establish connection with these samples it was most convenient to go through Facebook pages and groups which had the agenda to connect people that are currently living in Norway, as well as contacting the Icelandic Association in Norway. It was easier to make contact and reach Icelandic expatriates. An introduction letter, which can be seen in Appendix A, was posted on all possible Facebook pages and groups that connected Icelanders in Norway together. The people in the Facebook groups and on the pages were asked to participate but also to assist the researcher to connect with people that might be interested in participating. There were several individuals that showed interest in participating, these individuals were all Icelandic expatriates working and living in Norway. Many individuals volunteered, more than was needed and therefore the researcher picked a group of individuals that was as diverse as possible so that the sample would represent different aspects of motivation and adjustment issues.

It was difficult to reach Icelandic repatriates that had lived and worked in Norway but had moved back home to Iceland. There are no association or Facebook forums making it easier to reach those people. Therefore, it was needed to use the snowball method to acquire some participants. The researcher asked the Icelandic expatriates who participated in the research, if they knew any Icelandic repatriates. Some did and that is how connections were made to Icelandic repatriates. The contact was made and then those Icelandic repatriates was asked if they knew other individuals who had relocated back home from Norway, and so on. In the end the researcher had more participants than were needed.

Semi-structured interviews with participants were conducted from April 2<sup>nd</sup> to April 24<sup>th</sup> 2013. It was decided that the researcher would start conducting interviews with three individuals in each sample group. Then after the interviews, write up the interviews,

read them over and see if there were similarities between the participants and if there were some additional information that was needed. There was a need for more interviews after the initial three for each sample group and therefore four more interviews were conducted with two individuals in each sample group. After those interviews were properly analyzed it was assessed that additional interviews were not needed because very little new evidence was obtained from the fifth interview in each sample groups. Therefore, there were in the end five Icelandic expatriates and five Icelandic repatriates interviewed for this research.

Questionnaire made was just in order to have some structure of the interview but all the questions were intentionally left open-ended to allow participants to describe their expatriation and repatriation experiences in their own words. Follow-up questions were asked whenever warranted. It was however necessary to ask and talk about few topics and if the participants did not talk about that or did not go into too much detail regarding some topics then the researcher asked specifically about that topic in order to have better understanding of it. The expatriate questionnaire was based on studies conducted of Dickman, Doherty, Mills and Brewster (2008), Tharenou (2008) and Forese (2012) and the interview questions are included in Appendix B and D. The repatriate questionnaire was based on studies conducted of Dickman, Doherty, Mills and Brewster (2008) and Tharenou and Caulfield (2010) and the interview questions are included in Appendix C and D.

## **9.7.Data analysis**

All interviews were conducted in Icelandic, and no communication issues occurred since all participants and the researcher are Icelanders. The interviews were conducted at various locations of convenience to the respondent, including the respondents home, coffee shops or through video conferencing. Each interview was recorded on a dictaphone and then fully transcribed afterwards. After all interviews were transcribed the data was read and reread to get a sense of the participants' experiences. This is done in order to acquire a feeling for the participants' descriptions and also in order to make sense out of them. The key statements and issues were identified and coded in themes. After the coding, the identified themes were connected to the research questions. Assumptions were made by the researcher, from the results of both secondary and primary data. The research questions were answered based on the result analysis.

## **9.8.Ethics**

Ethical issues are integral in research with human beings. Ethical research practice is grounded in the moral principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Respect for persons captures the idea that the researcher does not use the individuals participating in the research as a means to an end and that the researcher respects their privacy, anonymity, and their right to participate or not, which is freely consented to. Beneficence addresses the central statement, do no harm. This means that the researcher does whatever he/she reasonably can do to ensure that individuals are not harmed by participating in the study. And finally distributive justice which is considerations of who benefits and who does not from the research (Barbour, 2008; Marchall & Rossman, 2011).

Before each interview the researcher talked to the participants explaining the research purpose and showed two documents. The first document was a signed document by the researcher declaring research confidentiality; the sample document is available in Appendix E. The second document was a consent statement that individual participating in the research was asked to sign. All participants did without objections; the sample document is available in Appendix F.

## **9.9.Validity**

Validity is a contested term, it means different things to different observers and there is more than one type of validity. Qualitative research have argued that validity is a property of inferences rather than methods, and is never something that can be proven or taken for granted on the basis of the methods used (Mishler, 1990). Validity has to be assessed in relationship to the purposes and circumstances of the research, rather than being a context independent property of methods or conclusions (Maxwell, 2013). Validity threats are made far-fetched by evidence and not methods. Methods are simply a way of getting evidence that can help the researcher rule out threats (Irwin, 2008).

Validity threats in qualitative research are usually particular events or processes that could lead to invalid conclusions. There are two broad types of threats to validity that are most often raised in relation to qualitative studies: (1) researcher bias and (2) the researchers effect on the participants, often called reactivity (Maxwell, 2013; Creswell, 2013).

Researchers bias is affected by the selection of data that fit the researcher's existing theory, goals or preconceptions and the selection of data that 'stands out' to the researcher. It is impossible to eliminate the researcher's theories and beliefs. It is therefore important to understand how researcher's values and expectations may influence the conduct and conclusions of the research. These influences can be both positive and negative, so it is important to know them and avoid the negative consequences of these influences (Maxwell, 2013).

Reactivity is known as the influence researcher has on the setting and/or the participants. Eliminating researchers influence is impossible and it is not the goal in a qualitative research, however it is important to understand it and use effectively. Reactivity is a powerful and inescapable influence during interviews, what the participants says is always influenced by the researcher and the interview situation. By avoiding leading questions researchers can do small things to prevent consequences of reactivity. However, what is most important is to understand how the researcher is influencing what the participant says, and how that affects the validity of the conclusions the researcher can draw from the interview (Maxwell, 2013).



## Part V: Results

---

The results of the research are presented in this chapter. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part shows the results of the interviews with the expatriates and the second parts shows the results of the interviews with the repatriates. The results are analyzed down to the main themes, which are then detailed in sub themes in order to clarify the results further. Stories and quotes used are not linked to specific name. The third part is a discussion of the findings and the literature review and contains answers to the research questions.

Analysis of the interviews is based on the participants' own words and stories/backgrounds and contains some direct quotes from what they said during the interviews. Specific names of participants are not mentioned and not linked to the quotes to ensure the anonymity of the participants. The following symbols were used: [...] square bracket with three dots that means that part of the quote has been cut and ... three dots which means that the sentence is not finished or the beginning of the sentence has been cut.

### 10. Icelandic expatriates

Five interviews were conducted with participants who all were self-initiated expatriates. The main demographics of the respondents are shown in table 1. The results are analyzed in two main themes, motivation and adjustment, which are then further detailed into sub themes in order to clarify the results.

**Table 6 Demographics of respondents, Icelandic expatriates**

Participants	Relationship status	Children	Age	Moved to Norway	Education
Female	Married	2 children	31	May 2010	Interior design
Female	Single	No children	44	August 2010	Human Resource Manager
Female	Married	2 children	34	January 2011	Doctor
Male	Married	3 children	56	February 2012	Carpenter and craftsman
Male	In a relationship	1 child	34	May 2012	Software developer

## **10.1. Motivation**

The findings and sub themes presented are: willingness, career and professional development, adventure/change and Norway. The findings are presented with relevant quotes from respondents that shed light on motivating factors.

### **10.1.1. Willingness**

All of the participants said that they were, before they expatriated, excited and ready to move to a foreign country. They all felt that it was time to try something new and moving to a new country seemed to be very good idea as it was a change in their life. Prior to moving all the participants had some knowledge of Norway and had ideas about the living and economic situation and knew about the low unemployment rate. The participants found it appealing that it would be easy for them and their spouse to get a good job in Norway that would have a positive influence on their career. That was one factor that had much influence when they searched for jobs. One participant said: *“I applied for a job in Sweden and in Norway but we wanted more to go to Norway because it would be easier for my husband to get a job in Norway than in Sweden”*.

The participants had moderate knowledge of at least one Nordic language and had lived abroad before made them therefore more prepared to move. One participant said: *“I have gone through the experience and process of living abroad before and that went fine, that’s how I knew that it would also be fine living abroad this time. I knew what to expect”*.

All of the participants had their spouses’ and families’ approval to expatriate, even though one participants spouse did not expatriate with him. She was nevertheless supportive of his choice to go abroad. The participants’ extended family encouraged them to do what made them happy.

All of these factors had very positive effect on the participants’ willingness to expatriate.

### **10.1.2. Career and professional development**

All participants except from one moved to Norway to further their career and professional development. All mentioned that they felt that they had stagnated in their

work and wanted a more challenging work environment. One participant said that she always knew that she would be moving abroad 1-2 years after she graduated from University of Iceland.

It is just something that you have to do in order to acquire expertise in the field you are interested in. It is difficult to specialize in Iceland because of the small size of the country. It is therefore better if you go abroad; you will see more difficult and rare cases and gain more diverse experience.

Another participant felt that he was not increasing his knowledge in his work and sensed that the companies and jobs available in Iceland were all the same. His experience was that it did not matter if he worked at a bank or at an insurance company the work conducted by him and what was required of him in his job was the same. Therefore, he felt that by going abroad he would get different experience and expertise that was not available in Iceland. In addition, he felt that by going abroad and acquiring international experience that it would further his career in Iceland if he decided to go back home to work.

Two participants shared the same story. They felt that the environment in Iceland was very negative and did not sense that the work environment in Iceland would have some interesting opportunities for them for the next years.

I got a job offer to do basically the same work as I was doing in Iceland but in Norway. [...] Even though it was not the most exciting job I wanted to go because I saw more potential in getting promoted in the workplace in Norway rather than at home. I just saw and still see more potential in jobs in Norway; it is bigger country and has more opportunities.

As a result of the economic crisis in 2008 one participant had fewer and fewer projects each month after October 2008. She had begun taking projects that were neither within her expertise nor interest in order to get higher pay each month.

Participant said that it was their belief, prior to the move to Norway, that there are more valuable experiences as well as more interesting work opportunities available in Norway than in Iceland. Furthermore, that working abroad would have more positive impact on their career than if they continued working in Iceland.

The odd one out did not mention career or professional development as a factor that influenced his decision to expatriate because he was unemployed when he moved to

Norway and that was the main influence factor. However, during the interview he often mentioned that if he had stayed at home he would have been doing nothing but because he is in Norway he has been working and maintaining his craftsman skills.

### **10.1.3. Adventure/Change**

The participants all talked about wanting to make some changes in their lives and some mentioned that they desired to be adventurous. They also mentioned that their desire to change their lives and go on an adventure was related to their experience of the current situation regarding their job and the stagnated work environment. They felt that the changes that they wanted needed to be bigger than just changing jobs. Or as one participant said: *“I just had enough of Iceland and what was going on there. I needed some break from it all and go somewhere with a fresh start.”*

### **10.1.4. Norway**

All of them had been looking for jobs both in Iceland, Norway and in some cases in other countries. However, there were three factors that made Norway more attractive than other countries. Those factors were good family environment, connection to the Nordic countries and friends.

#### **10.1.4.1. *Good family environment***

Three participants have children that are younger than 6 years old and that are now in kindergarten. One participant has three children but they are 15 years and older and did not move with him to Norway. Therefore the environment for children as well as how work life and non-work life combines together in a country had an enormous effect on which country the participants chose to search for jobs in. It was important to these families that the kindergarten and family environment would be similar to what it is in Iceland. The participants mentioned that they wanted to move to a country where they felt it was safe for their children and that had quality kindergartens. In addition, they wanted to move to a country where they could combine work and family and where it was possibility for their spouse to get employed. Due to what the participants had heard and the knowledge they had on the standard of living, employment opportunities and family environment that made Norway one of the more interesting countries to expatriate to.

#### 10.1.4.2. *Connection to the Nordic countries*

All participants had lived abroad before, in the Nordic countries. Two participants had lived and studied in Sweden, one as an exchange student for one semester and the other took his master's degree there. One participant lived and worked in Norway for a number of years 20 years ago and another took her bachelor degree there. The last participant lived and had strong ties to Denmark. All of the participants said that because they had lived abroad before they knew a little bit what it was like to move to another country and what to expect, which helped with the decision to move to Norway.

I had lived in Sweden before and knew what it was like to live abroad and I think it made the decision to move to Norway easier. My stay in Sweden was very pleasant so I think that also made me want to do it again.

All of the participants said that because of their previous stay in a Nordic country they had moderate knowledge of a Nordic country language; they were not fluent but could interact with Norwegian people and did talk Norwegian, Danish or Swedish at the job interview. One of the participants said: *"I knew the language and liked the country so it was more interesting for me and my family to move there than to other countries that we had looked at."*

#### 10.1.4.3. *Friends*

All of the participants had friends and/or acquaintances that lived and worked in Norway before they expatriated to Norway. Three of the participants had only Icelandic friends but two of the participants had both Icelandic and Norwegian friends. All participants contacted their friends that were living in Norway to ask a few questions regarding the work environment, how it was living there with kids, how and where to look for apartment and jobs etc. The friends were very helpful as one participant said:

It was really good to call my friend and just ask him how he and his family did it and how it has been for them. Just to hear that they liked it and had a good life there was really good and influenced my vision, perception of Norway and how it was to live there. My friend was very helpful and answered all of my questions, he actually sent my CV around to a few places and I got interviews because of his help. His help and from his wife helped me and my family to decide to move.

The friends of the participants all encouraged the participants to move to Norway, apply for a job and try something new and different. The friends helped the participants while they were in Iceland regarding what was important to have ready before expatriating to Norway and other important information dependent on each individual. This help had a very positive influence on all of the participants' motivation and decision to expatriate to Norway.

## **10.2. Adjustment**

The findings of the adjustment factor are presented in the sub themes. The sub themes are: general adjustment, interaction adjustment and work adjustment. The findings are presented with relevant quotes from participants that shed light on adjustment of a self-initiated expatriate in a foreign country.

### **10.2.1. General adjustment**

All of the participants were well adjusted to the general (non-work) environment in Norway. One participant moved without his family to Norway because his children were almost all grown up and his wife did not want to move to Norway with him. Another participant is single with no children and moved to Norway by herself. The other three participants moved to Norway with their families, spouse and children.

Regarding shopping, everyday life and cost of living the participants said that it took some time to get used to the prices, get the normal day routines and learn how to shop. However with help from friends that showed them what stores were affordable and with trips to Sweden for some bulk grocery shopping the participants slowly learned how it worked and adjusted. One of the participants said that:

... the first month we only used Icelandic krona (ISK) to pay for everything and it was extremely expensive. I recalculated everything and one candy bar cost 400 ISK, we had a hard time buying it. But as soon as I got paid in NOK it was not as expensive and especially when my husband started working and we had two paychecks every month. Now we buy what we want and need and still have money left at the end of the month. But I still catch myself converting the Norwegian prices to ISK. It is difficult to let that completely go even though I know it is silly of me to do that because we aren't using our Icelandic money here in Norway.

Another participant adapted to a more Norwegian style of shopping when she moved to Norway.

I have become more Norwegian when I shop. What I mean is that now I pay everything in cash, here you have these debit cards that can work as a credit card. [...] I pay everything I buy with my Norwegian debit card and have not used my Icelandic credit card since I moved to Norway. Now I wait until I have the money in the bank to buy what I want. [...] It is just different here [in Norway], it is normal to save up until you can afford to buy.

When adjusting to everyday life the family of one participant has different daily routine in Norway than in Iceland and they have adapted to Norwegian habits.

We have lived here for three years and we have been adapting more to the Norwegian culture. When we lived in Iceland we had dinner around seven or half past seven in the evening. Now the dinner is ready at six in the evening. [...] The family environment here makes it possible to eat dinner at six o'clock; we get home earlier than we did in Iceland and therefore can prepare dinner earlier. [...] There are also smaller things that have changed since we moved. For example, we are more punctual than before. Norwegian people are very punctual and it has just rubbed on us.

What was more difficult and/or more time consuming according to the participants was finding an apartment, applying for a Norwegian ID, kindergarten and other important documents. Even though the participants are self-initiated expatriates they had assistance in adjusting to the Norwegian non-working environment. The assistance and help came from their Icelandic friends that had gone through the same thing when they had moved to Norway and gave tips on what to do and what not to do as well as in what order. One participant had exceptional help from her Norwegian friends because they had rented a small apartment for her, with her knowledge and approval. They had found some very basic furniture and bed for her so she had from the day she moved to Norway a place of her own and could sleep there her first night in Oslo.

One participant got assistance from his work that bought service from an expat relocation service company that helped with all the general adjustment issues needed.

This service that my work bought from this company helped with everything, for me, my girlfriend and baby. They found five potential apartments based on what we said we wanted, drove us around to go look at the apartments and negotiated the rent with the landlord. This was extremely valuable for us and

saved a lot of time and helped us find apartment just 2 weeks after we came to Oslo.

The participants mentioned that in order to rent an apartment it is required to be able to put the amount of three months rent as deposit in a special bank account. The rent is very high in Norway and because of the currency restrictions in Iceland it is difficult to transfer the money from an Icelandic bank account to a Norwegian bank. One participant was granted a loan without interest from his employer so he could make the deposit for an apartment. Another participant could stay for up to three years in an apartment provided by the employer which she and her family accepted. Meanwhile they stayed there, she and her husband saved up money for over a year which made them able to have enough money to buy their own house in Norway.

One participant said that her *“...husband moved to Norway 5 months before we moved to Norway to join him. He lived at his friend’s house and saved money so we could put up the deposit when we started renting a place.”* While another participant said that she had 3 months in Iceland to prepare for the deposit and other things before she moved to Norway and that she saved money to be able to pay for the deposit when she moved.

### **10.2.2. Interaction adjustment**

All of the participants interact mostly with other Icelanders outside of work and have friends that are Icelanders. All of them talked about difficulties getting to know Norwegian people outside of work. All participants talked about how private the Norwegian people they have met are and that the Norwegian people, in all of the participants’ opinion, do not mix their work life with their private life. Any social gathering at the participants work is never with the family, it is only for employees which makes it more difficult to connect on a friendlier level.

*“The children are the key to Norwegian society.”*

The participants that have young children said that they have become acquainted with Norwegian people through their children by arranging play dates with children from the kindergarten as well as talking to parents on the playground. One of the participants explained:

We live in an apartment building and on the same floor lives a Norwegian family that has a daughter that is two months older than ours. The first few



weeks we borrowed things from them such as tools for putting some furniture together and have talked many times in the stairwell. Our girls have never played together. But we have arranged play-dates with children from the kindergarten.

Two of the participants were pregnant and gave birth to a baby in Norway. When women have a baby in Norway the local health center forms these mother groups with 5-8 mothers that have had a baby on a similar date and live close to each other. Both participants found that this was a very good way to get to know and get in contact with Norwegian mothers and because of this group they have made a few bonds and become friends with some of the mothers in the group.

One participant has bought a house and has been living there for over 9 months. She said that after living there in the house for 8 months she and her family have become more a part of the local society as she has been making contacts with her neighbors and parents at her children's kindergarten. As she said that *"... it is my experience that the longer you stay in Norway you are more likely to make more Norwegian friends because you are more a part of the neighborhood and the society."*

However, the participants have several Icelandic friends. The participants say that it is very easy to meet Icelanders and becoming friends with them because you have something in common, being in Norway, and the motivation behind that move are often similar and based on that the people connect and become friends. One of the participants mentioned that:

I was always judging the polish people that had moved to Iceland. I was always talking about and saying that they should try to make Icelandic friends and not grouping together and only have polish friends. I feel so silly now because I am living in Norway and most of my friends are Icelandic. So I understand the polish people in Iceland now. [...] We don't have any close family living in Norway, everyone is in Iceland. So therefore it is really good to have Icelandic friends here because they become your family and your support system.

One participant is single and moved by herself to Norway said that it was fortunate for her that the week after she moved to Norway she was invited to an Icelandic only women party. There she formed bond with several Icelandic women that are close to her age and they formed a group, called in Icelandic *saumaklúbbur*. She also said that because she is alone she needs to be very active and open in trying to meet new people.

Only one participant took actively part in social events hosted by the Icelandic association and he was a part of the Ice-choir, choir with only Icelanders. He said that being in the choir has been a good way for him to meet other Icelanders that have similar interests and to make new friends. The other had participated in the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, the Icelandic day of independence celebration and not much more.

### 10.2.3. Work Adjustment

All of the participants except from one had been employed before moving to Norway.

**Table 7 Participants employment information, Icelandic SIEs**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Employment contract</b>	<b>Job status</b>	<b>Norwegian job vs. Icelandic job</b>
Female	Interior designer	Permanent	Employed	Promotion
Female	Human Resource Manager	Temporary	Unemployed	The same as before
Female	Doctor	Temporary	Employed	Promotion
Male	Carpenter and craftsman	Permanent	Employed	Demotion
Male	Software developer	Permanent	Employed	The same as before

One participant has a one year temporary employment contract and has worked for two different employers. However, it is common to have temporary employment contract for the first couple of years because a permanent contract is a four year contract. It is in the company's best interest to have the same people working for them and therefore the contracts are renewed every year.

One participant had a job when she moved to Norway with 7 month temporary contract that was renewed three times for 5 months each time. She was offered a permanent contract within the company but she declined because she did not want to work there any longer. She is currently unemployed and has been for 10 months. She says that she feels that being unemployed is a natural part of life in Norway, it will happen to everyone at least once in a lifetime. Now she is looking for jobs but finds that it is difficult to get a job even though she is fluent in Norwegian and has Norwegian recommendation. However, she said that she is looking for a job that is very different from what she had and that she has little experience within that field, which might cause difficulty for her to get a job. Another participant moved to Norway without having a job. She explained her experience:

My husband got a job and moved to Norway and he loved it. So the boys and I decided to go also. [...] I applied for jobs everywhere but nothing happened. It is really difficult to get a job here in Norway, I could speak Danish but still I

couldn't get a job. After 8 months or so I decided to take a course in Interior design just to be better and also to learn the Norwegian words in that industry. That was successful but I only got hired as a part time contractor, but I write articles and assist people, now I am doing more than I had been in Iceland. But once I had a job it was easier to get another job. I liked my contract job so I took a job in kindergarten to get more paid each month.

One participant said that the work he is doing here in Norway is a demotion from the job he had in Iceland. He explained:

Well, I live here alone because my family didn't want to move to Norway. And because of that I only work for contractor company that sells me out on temporary project. It can be 2 days job or 4 months job. If I don't like what I am doing I can get transferred. I am overqualified for this job but because I want to have flexible holidays and be able to take one or two weeks here and there to go to Iceland to see my family, in that case this is the perfect job for that. But it is not that interesting job and it is lonely to be here alone. I have gotten many offers to become a permanent employer with higher salary and a promotion but I need the flexible holidays so I can go to Iceland and that is why I stay in this job.

One participant says that his position in Norway is similar to what he had in Iceland. But he says that he is learning more in his current job by working on new technology. This job is therefore more valuable because he is expanding his knowledge within his field of work.

The participants felt like they fit in the working environment of their jobs but there were some minor adjustment needed. All participants said that they felt that the Norwegian co-workers were more disciplined and punctual than they were used to back in Iceland. There were minor adjustment needed regarding performance standard and expectation but the participants said that it was just because some of the work in Norway is executed a little bit differently than in Iceland and therefore there were small difference in performance standard and expectations that they easily adjusted to.

The connection with co-workers is more impersonal with the Norwegian co-workers than they were used to in Iceland. The participants all mentioned that most of the office talk during breaks was more impersonal; more talked about general everyday life or the news. When the work is over the Norwegian co-workers go home to their family and friends, they do not mingle that much after office hours with co-workers because, in the

participants opinion, they have a family and friends outside of work and are satisfied with that. One participant is working in a more multicultural environment. He said that:

I am acquainted with my Norwegian co-workers but I am friends with some of my co-workers that are not from Norway. It is much easier to get to know them probably because we are in similar situations. I don't have many friends here and neither do they so therefore if I want to do something after work I ask my non-Norwegian co-workers if they want to join and they ask me if I want to join if they are going to do something. I used to ask the Norwegian co-workers also but they were always busy or not interested so I just stopped asking them.

All of the participants said that they work less in Norway than in Iceland and still get more paid in Norway and have more money left in the bank account at the end of each month. They feel that they have more opportunities to get more experience and have a good career here in Norway because it is a larger country than Iceland. They did not feel that there were much difference between working in Norway and working in Iceland.

When asked if they are going to move back home to Iceland all of them said that they wanted to someday but did not know exactly when. One participant said that she and her family would move to Iceland in 6-10 years, when she had finished her specialization and worked for a few years after that. Another participant that has lived in Norway since 2010 said that there are periods where she and her family want to move back home but they do not last for very long. However, they see themselves as Icelanders and they will move back home when they feel that the situation in Iceland has improved. And another participant mentioned that he and his family would not be moving to Iceland just yet. They wanted to live abroad for a few years more and that they are thinking about moving from Norway to another foreign country in the near future.

One participant was not sure where she will be living in the future because that depends on if she would get hired soon or not but she wants to live in Norway for a few more years more before moving back home to Iceland. Another participant said that he would be moving back to Iceland this year and the reason for that is only because he misses his family and that he does not like to be living so far from his wife.

## 11. Icelandic repatriates

Five interviews were conducted and all of the participants were self-initiated expatriates. The main demographics of the participants are shown in table 3. The results are analyzed in three main themes: the stay in Norway, reasons to repatriate and repatriation.

**Table 8** Demographics of participants, Icelandic repatriates

Participants	Relationship status	Children	Age	Moved to Norway	Moved from Norway	Job in Iceland
Male	Married	3 children	46	August 2010	December 2011	Teacher
Male	Married	3 children	28	March 2011	February 2012	Software developer
Male	Married	1 child	34	June 2010	August 2012	Craftsman
Female	Single	No children	30	August 2003	July 2011	Student
Female	Married	2 children	41	October 2010	January 2012	Social worker

### 11.1. The stay in Norway

Four participants lived in Norway for 11, 15, 17 and 27 months and one participant lived for eight years in Norway. Four participants had permanent employment contracts. All of them worked only for one company the entire time they were working in Norway. One participant had 15 month temporary employment contract with a Norwegian company. She only wanted a 15 month contract because her husband was assigned on a temporary project in Norway for an Icelandic company. Her husband was an organizational expatriate which is the reason why she and her family moved to Norway.

Another participant moved with her mother when she was 20 years old to Denmark where she stayed for 3 months until she met her boyfriend which was Norwegian. She decided to move to Norway with him and to start working because she did not know what she was going to study in University. Two participants decided to move because they got fired from their jobs in Iceland. Both they and their families had been considering moving to a foreign country before they got fired. Then when the participants were fired from their job in Iceland they felt that it was the perfect time and opportunity to try something new. The last participant had recently graduated from University of Iceland with a B.Sc. degree. He was unemployed and looking for a job in Iceland when he was offered a job in Norway. He and his family had been talking about

living abroad in the future but since there was an opportunity to move they did not want to miss it, and said: “...*why not try this out. We had nothing to lose.*”

In regards to their career only two said that the job was for professional growth and development. Both said that they gained different experience and worked on more difficult problems that they would have in Iceland. Other participants mentioned that moving to Norway was more an adventure and the jobs they had in Norway were the same or a demotion from what they had in Iceland. Participants said that it was their opinion that they would benefit from working in Norway and would have a positive effect on their job search in Iceland. They said that they learnt many things about themselves and how to work in a different work environment and gained a different perspective in regard to their work.

All of the participants were very happy with their stay in Norway both living and working and felt that they adjusted well to the Norwegian society and work environment. Many mentioned that while living in Norway they felt that they had a better quality of life than they had in Iceland. The participants with families mentioned that they had spent more time together as a family and did more together as a family than they had in Iceland. Three participants said that they had travelled more within Norway and Europe than they had before moving to Norway because they had more money left after each month and they could afford to travel more frequently than they had previously.

However there were some adjustment difficulties for three participants’ families that are explained in the next chapter, 11.2. Reasons to repatriate.

## **11.2. Reasons to repatriate**

Each participant had a unique story and reasons for why they repatriated. Each story will be told individually because their experiences cannot be linked together.

The first participant had lived in Norway for eight years and had been struggling with back ache for a few years and in 2010, a year before she moved back to Iceland, she had to take a 9 months sick leave because of her back pain and other medical conditions. At the same time there were difficulties in the relationship, she had a Norwegian boyfriend. After a while these difficulties resulted in her ending the relationship with the

boyfriend. She did not have any permanent place to stay in Norway. This event caused her to reevaluate her stay in Norway. Through this difficult time her family in Iceland was extremely helpful, which made her interested in moving back to Iceland. Another factor that made her keener on leaving Norway was that she got accepted in to University of Iceland to study Norwegian. She was eligible for Norwegian student loans. If she studied in Norway and only had the student loans she would have a considerable lower income than when she was working. However, if she had the Norwegian student loans and studied in Iceland she would not have to work along with her studies. There were more interesting opportunities for her in Iceland than in Norway at this point in her life and what also influenced her decision and motivation to move was that she had not been to Iceland often since she moved in 2003 and she felt that it was time to go back. Instead of finding a permanent apartment in Norway she moved to her family in Iceland. She said that based on her breakup and illness, moving to Iceland was exactly the right thing to do for her at that point. She felt that it was the right timing to start a new life in Iceland.

The second participant had stayed for 2 years and 2 months. He and his girlfriend liked living in Norway, they both had jobs and adjusted well in both work and non-work environment. Everything was wonderful. Then they had a baby together in May 2012. All went extremely well, a baby girl that was healthy and still is. However, it was their first child and the first grandchild in in both their families. He said that: *"After we had the baby we just felt more alone. We wanted our families around and friends. It just didn't fit anymore living in Norway"*. It was the first time since they moved to Norway that they felt the importance of having family around. They had friends in Norway but it still was not the same. They wanted to be near their family and friends in Iceland. They felt that they had been long enough in Norway and wanted to see if they could get a job in Iceland. He applied and looked for a job and he felt that the work environment had change in Iceland since he had left because he found a few jobs and was hired three months later. He said:

I just applied everywhere and made some contacts with acquaintances that I had within the field. It worked; I was lucky and was offered a job. It was very convenient that my wife had been working in Norway because she could finish her Norwegian maternity leave, which is much better and longer than the Icelandic one, in Iceland. So we only needed to find a job for me and then had

10 months to find a job for my wife. It made it much easier to move back to Iceland.

The third participant had expatriated to Norway with his wife and one child. They had two boys that stayed at their grandparent's home because they were in high school and did not want to move, they were 18 and 19 years old. The participant said the he had adjusted very well to the work and non-work environment in Norway. There were more adjustment difficulties for his wife and child. His wife did not speak Norwegian when they moved which made it difficult for her to get a job as a hairdresser and beautician, which she is trained in and has studied. Their daughter, that was 9 then, had difficulty studying in school and they felt that there might be something wrong because their daughter was not happy and was experiencing difficulties learning the language and other subjects. In a few months they realized that she needed to get a specific diagnosis from specialists. They did not know the system in Norway and knew that it would take some time before their daughter would get an appointment at the specialist. It was more tempting to go to the doctors in Iceland because they knew how the system worked there. At the same time a work opportunity appeared for his wife that made it possible for her and her friend to open up a hair and beauty salon in their home town in Iceland. The participant wanted to stay longer in Norway but because of the adjustment difficulties for both his wife and child, the need for specialist diagnoses and the business opportunity, they decided to repatriate back to Iceland. Therefore after spending a year in Norway the wife and daughter moved back to Iceland. The repatriation process all happened very quickly for the wife and child but the participant said that he decided to stay in Norway while he searched for a job in Iceland because he did not want to move to Iceland and be unemployed. He found work in Iceland within 3 months of his wife and child departure from Norway and repatriated back home to his family.

The fourth participant moved to Norway without his family for the first 7 months and liked the country very much and adjusted well with both work and non-work environment. His family, pregnant wife and two children aged 3 and 7 moved to him in October just a month before his wife gave birth to their third child. They lived about an hour from Oslo, did not have a car, did not know anyone in that part of Norway, did not have a place for the three year old child in kindergarten and they could not speak Norwegian. When the third child was born his wife stayed home for maternity leave and took care of the new born and the three year old. They moved to Norway during winter



which made it difficult for the wife to go out with the three year old because the new born could not go out in such cold weather. His wife was very unhappy and unsatisfied with the living condition and did not adjust to the country right from the start. He therefore started to look for work in Iceland in January, three months after his wife moved to Norway. He only applied for one job and got it. The company wanted him to start working immediately, the company in Norway was very helpful and released him from the contract so the whole family moved back to Iceland in the beginning of March, a year after the participant had moved to Norway. He wanted to stay longer but could not put his family through these difficulties.

The fifth participant has a different story than the other repatriates. She expatriated to Norway only because her husband was an organizational expatriate working on a 15 month project for an Icelandic company. She had lived in Norway before, both studied and worked. She could speak Norwegian and write fluently. Her adjustment as well as her family's was smooth. The Icelandic company rented an apartment for them, helped them with the children's elementary school, legal documents and other important information that were needed. The whole family was very happy to stay in Norway but always knew that this would only be 15 months. Therefore they looked at these months as an adventure to experience something new. They enjoyed their stay in Norway and would have liked to stay longer in that town but that was not a possibility. If they would have stayed longer in Norway they would have been relocated to another town where the participant's husband would start another temporary project. That was not appealing to them with two young children in elementary school, they did not want to disrupt the children schooling any more than was necessary. They therefore decided that it was the best for their children to go back home to Iceland after the project her husband was working on as an organizational expatriate had concluded.

### **11.3. Repatriation**

Four out of five participants are working in Iceland now. The four participants all said that they are working in similar jobs as they were before moving to Norway. They said that they felt that working in Norway did not have that much effect on their career at this point but feel that it might have more influence later on when they are looking for something different or more demanding.

The one participant, that repatriated after 15 months in Norway because her husband was an organizational expatriate, had been on unpaid leave from her work in Iceland. When she and her family repatriated back to Iceland she started working again in her former job. They had rented their house during the 15 month period and the tenants had left when they repatriated back to Iceland. The repatriation was very easy and smooth. They had, within a few weeks from their repatriation back to Iceland from Norway, unpacked all of their belongings and started their daily routines. There were no apparent difficulties with adjustment in Iceland or as she said it: *"It is just like we never left"*.

Only one participant had difficulties repatriating back to Iceland. She repatriated to Iceland because she was having back problems as well as other injuries, she broke up with her boyfriend and because she got accepted to the University of Iceland. She is currently studying Norwegian at the university. She had lived in Norway for eight years before she repatriated back to Iceland. She was very well adjusted in Norway, had friends and a support group. She did not keep contact with her Icelandic friends she had before she moved to Norway therefore when she moved back to Iceland she did not have any friends. The first months before she started her studies she spent most of her time with her family. She said about the repatriation: *"It has not been easy for me. I am having difficulties speaking Icelandic. I always need to translate from Norwegian to Icelandic before I talk. I didn't realize how little I spoke Icelandic in Norway"*.

She had and still has difficulties speaking Icelandic because she has not spoken much Icelandic in over eight years and did not come often to Iceland for a visit while she lived in Norway. She did not prepare her repatriation to Iceland before she moved, other than packing and looking for an apartment. She said that she did not see the point in preparing for the repatriation as she said: *"Why should I? I am an Icelander and I know this country"*. She adjusted well to the Icelandic society and country.

It is good to live so close to the family and I really like the University of Iceland. I have made some new friends here but I still feel a little bit out of place and that I don't belong here as well as I do in Norway.

She is very protective of Norway and feels that the news is very negative towards Norway and the Icelanders that move to that country. That makes her sad because she feels that there are so many opportunities for people who move to Norway and that the news should be reporting these news in a more optimistic and positive light. She is

moving back to Norway now and is not planning on returning back to Iceland to live only to visit. She will be continuing her studies in Norway and has already secured her a job with her school.

Three participants did not experience any difficulties repatriating back to Iceland from Norway. They all had stayed for the duration of 27 months or shorter in Norway. Two of them felt that they had repatriated earlier than they had wanted but it was necessary because other family members were not happy with the stay in Norway. Three out of the four participants had just sublet their apartment/house and it was easy for them to get it back. They miss certain things about Norway but it does not outweigh the benefits of being at home in Iceland.

All of the participants said that they wanted to go and live abroad again. Two participants said that they were now ready to move again to a new country or back to Norway but they need to convince their spouse for that to happen. One participant said that she would love to stay in Norway and move back there again but only when her children are older and living on their own. Another participant said that he and his family are ready to go somewhere abroad, different from Norway. When they go again they are little bit wiser on what to do and what not to do.

## **12. Discussion**

This research explored the motivating factors and adjustment of Icelandic SIEs in Norway and the push, pull and shock factors of Icelandic SIEs and OEs repatriates. The interviews have provided new information about Icelandic expatriates and repatriates. The discussion includes the overall results of both primary and secondary data and answers the research questions. Models from the literary review will be used when analyzing the data where it is relevant. This research is among the first to explore in an in-depth manner the factors influencing the motivation and adjustment of Icelandic expatriates and the reasons why Icelandic expatriate repatriate.

### **12.1. Icelandic expatriates**

All five interviewed participants were self-initiated expatriates. The results can therefore only indicate motives and adjustment of Icelandic SIEs and the results cannot be generalized over Icelandic OEs. The participants were a diverse group of individuals.

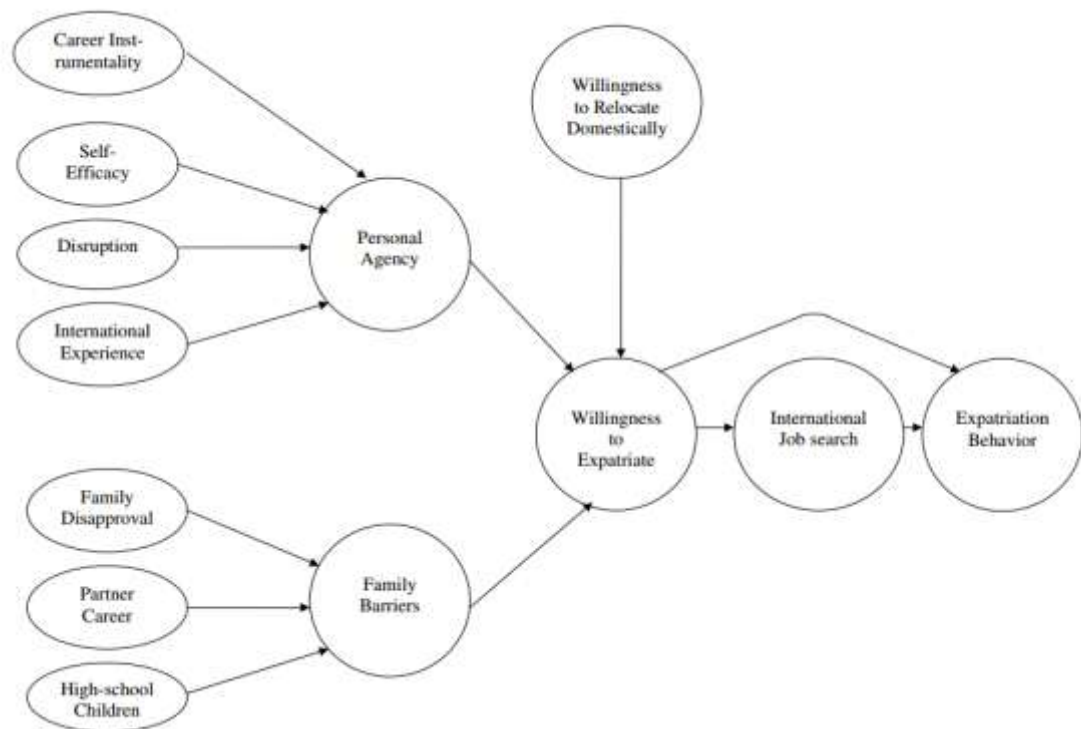
One participant was single and expatriated alone. Four out of five participants were in a relationship or married and had one child or more and of those participants only one expatriated without his family. The remaining three participants expatriated with their spouse and child/children. The first expatriation of the participants was in May 2010 and the latest expatriation was in May 2012.

None of the participants had the same education or occupation. Only one of the participants did not have a masters degree from a university. However, that participant was a mastered craftsman and carpenter from a technical school in Iceland. The youngest participant was 31 years old and the oldest 56. Three participants were female and two male. All except from one participant had a permanent employment contract. That one participant had a temporary job but was unemployed at the time of the interview.

#### **12.1.1. Research question 1: Why do Icelandic citizens expatriate to Norway?**

Expatriation is an important decision for an individual. There are two main factors that influence an individual's decision to expatriate. They are expatriates willingness and motivation. There is a range of personal concerns regarding international working that affect the individual's willingness to expatriate to a foreign country. The Expatriate Willingness Model distinguishes the personal concerns in two categories; personal agency and family barriers. Expatriation requires the individual to summon up great personal resources and the ability to overcome major obstacles (Tharenou, Disruptive decisions to leave home: Gender and family differences in expatriation choices, 2008).

The Expatriation Model assists in explaining how expatriation, both self-initiative expatriates and organizational expatriates, occurs for individuals. Personal agency and family barriers affect the progress of career interest which results in the willingness to expatriate. The individual's willingness to expatriate translates into the career outcome of expatriation be affecting career action such as the international job search (Tharenou, Disruptive decisions to leave home: Gender and family differences in expatriation choices, 2008).



**Figure 11 Expatriate Willingness Model (Tharenou, Disruptive decisions to leave home: Gender and family differences in expatriation choices, 2008)**

Personal agency affects the willingness to expatriate. Personal agency is affected by career instrumentality, self-efficacy, disruption and international experience. When individuals expect that expatriation will be instrumental for a better career, that they have international capabilities and when the individuals review that they can learn to live and work in a foreign culture, they believe that they will exert control over a foreign environment and can handle its challenges. That results in a high personal agency. High personal agency therefore predicts the willingness to expatriate (Bandure, 2001; Tharenou, Disruptive decisions to leave home: Gender and family differences in expatriation choices, 2008). Personal agency can decrease willingness to expatriate if the individuals experiences that they will not have control over a foreign environment and if their perceptions of likelihood of success in the foreign country is low. That results in a low personal agency which indicated that the individual is reluctant to expatriate. Personal agency is a key resource for an individual considering expatriation (Tharenou, Disruptive decisions to leave home: Gender and family differences in expatriation choices, 2008). The Icelandic self-initiated expatriates that participated in this research had all relatively high personal agencies. They were all very open to the idea of living abroad and experiencing a new culture. They had a desire to advance their careers, they were confident that they would adjust well to the environment because of

previous experience of living in a Nordic country and they wanted a change in their lives.

Family barriers reduce willingness to expatriate. Family barriers are affected by family disapproval, partner career and high-school children. Women are more affected by family barriers than men. When considering expatriation, there are some concerns amongst the individuals and families with child/children. The main concerns are regarding disruption of their children's schooling; kindergarten, elementary school or high school. The older the children are the more disruption will occur on the children's lives and schooling. It can be difficult for individuals with young children to get a placing within kindergarten for their children and in some countries a place for the child/children is not available from the day the individual expatriate. That may cause a gap between the time of expatriation, when daycare facilities are needed, and when the daycare facilities are available. This can also happen for children in elementary and high school if the families expatriate during the summer. This results in higher family barrier which reduces the willingness to expatriate. It is also a concern amongst the individuals the loss of childcare support and assistance received from the extended family (Tharenou, Disruptive decisions to leave home: Gender and family differences in expatriation choices, 2008). The Icelandic SIEs that participated in this research had all low family barriers. The SIEs chose Norway because of the low employment rate which made it more likely for their spouse to get employed within their field of work.

Their spouse, children and the extended family were all very supportive of their motivation and wanting to expatriate to Norway. No family member showed disapproval towards the SIEs because they understood the reasons behind the expatriation and they only wanted the best for the expatriated individuals. All of the SIEs with young children that expatriated to Norway did not have a place in kindergarten for the children. The spouse of the SIE therefore needed to stay at home to bridge the gap between arriving to Norway and until they had a place in a kindergarten. They had prepared for that it would be hard with the spouse at home with the child/children but all of the SIE and their spouses knew that before they moved to Norway and had prepared themselves to a certain extent for that.

Individuals that have high personal agency and fewer family barriers are more likely to adapt than others and is more likely to be willing to expatriate to a foreign country.

Individuals that are highly willing to expatriate are more likely to search for work abroad and expatriate. The relationship between job search and expatriation results from job search being a purposive, volitional activity directed towards the goal of gaining a job, which in this research is a job abroad. If the willingness to expatriate is low, it has the effect that individuals reduce the job search which ultimately leads to that the individual no longer wants to expatriate and cancels the expatriation (Wanberg, Glomb, Song, & Sorenson, 2005). The Icelandic SIEs had all high willingness to expatriate and that combined with high personal agency and few family barriers made them all very likely to adapt well in foreign countries and more likely to be willing to expatriate to a foreign country, which they all did.

However, SIEs are not all driven solely by inner conviction or lured by the attractiveness of overseas jobs, some SIEs expatriate rather because of poor labor conditions at home (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). The inner conviction pushed and the attractiveness of overseas jobs pull but the poor labor conditions at home pushed them as well. That was certainly the case for some of the Icelandic SIEs in this research. The results showed that all except from one had a job before expatriation. They all felt that the labor market in Iceland for each of their field of work had stagnated and there were fewer opportunities to grow which pushed them to expatriate. The opportunities and low employment rate in Norway as well as the good family environment pulled them into searching for jobs in Norway.

The result of this research is that all of the expatriated Icelandic individuals that were SIEs had high personal agency and low family barriers. They were all very willing to expatriate. Their willingness influenced their motivations in a positive manner.

One characteristic of SIEs is that they are not sent by companies, but they seek employment abroad on their own initiative (Vance, 2005; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009; Froese, 2012). SIEs are therefore expected to be more highly motivated than organizational expatriates that are sent by their employers (Harris & Brewster, 1999). The important motivation factors of participants in previous researches have varied and those differences are attributable to the different demographics of the respondents. Most of the Icelandic SIEs who participated in this research were family people which give insight into the role of family in willingness and motivation. The findings of this research are consistent with the findings of Richardson (2005), Richardson and Mallon

(2005) and Froese (2012), in that family was found to exert a positive influence on the decision to expatriate.

The dominant motivational factors for SIEs, across all ages, are the desire to seek international experience, adventure and travel. It is dependent on if the participant is married, single, has a family or not, young or old and difference between nationalities and other demographics that influence what motivational factor is of the highest importance. As mentioned before (chapter 4.3.3.) that family was important to academics and married people and had a positive influence on the SIEs' decision to expatriate. Family was of lesser importance to younger people as was the career concern. The Icelandic SIEs in this research felt it was important to have an adventure and an international experience as the result from previous research shows. However they combined the international experience with the importance of a career and professional development. The international experience enhanced their career development along with learning new skills within their field of work. The fact that all of the SIEs had lived abroad before had a very positive motivation on the participants and their decision to expatriate. The country had an enormous effect on SIEs motivation to expatriate because of the good family environment, their own connection to the Nordic countries and the fact that they had friends living in Norway already.

The Icelandic self-initiated expatriates were highly willing and motivated to expatriate to Norway. All the participants had low family barriers and a high personal agency. They were motivated by having a new adventure, international experience and further career development. The country itself had influence on the motivation and decision to expatriate because of good family environment, opportunity for the SIE and their spouse to get employed as well as their previous experience of living abroad.

#### **12.1.2. Research question 2: How has the general, interaction and work adjustment been for the Icelandic expatriates in Norway?**

Three distinct facets of cross-cultural adjustment have been identified: general, interaction and work adjustment (Black, 1988; Black & Stephens, 1989; Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005). The focus in this discussion is on SIEs because all of the participants in this research were all self-initiated expatriates. Also three of the participants expatriated with their family to Norway and that gives great insight into the role of family in adjustment.



General adjustment is regarding the way in which expatriates cope with living in a foreign country and everyday life (Black & Stephens, 1989; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). There is a difference with general adjustment between organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates. The main difference is that SIEs lack the non-work-related support that OEs receive from their companies (Black & Stephens, 1989; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). The Icelandic SIEs in this research all adjusted well to the general environment in Norway. The findings of this research is not consistent with the findings of Inkson, Arthur, Pringle and Barry (1997) and Suutari and Brewster (2000) that said that SIEs have difficulties adjusting to general aspects of living and working in foreign countries due to lower organizational support. The findings of this research is more consistent with the findings of Peltokorpi and Froese (2009) that showed that SIEs can get well adjusted to the general aspects in a foreign country and that the personal intentions, willingness and motivation are found to have a positive impact on SIEs' general adjustment. The fact that SIEs make personally the decision to move to a foreign country makes them more motivated to live there and therefore adjust well to general aspects. All participants in this research had support from their friends and two of the participants had additional support from their employer to adjust to the non-work-related environment in Norway. This had the effect that the Icelandic SIEs in Norway all adjusted very well and did not experience major difficulties with the general adjustment.

Interaction adjustment addresses expatriates' efforts to establish relationships with locals (Black & Stephens, 1989; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). Among the three facets of cross-cultural adjustment, interaction proved to be most problematic for the participants in this research and consistent with the findings of Froese (2012). Froese's research stated that limited host-country language skills and different socialization patterns were the main reasons for the difficulties of SIEs in establishing relationship with host-country nationals. The Icelandic SIEs in this research found it difficult to socialize with the Norwegian people because of the socialization patterns in Norway are bit different from what it is in Iceland. This made it more difficult to interact with Norwegians because the Icelandic SIEs had difficulty approaching them. The participants in this research found that their family and children opened a gate to the Norwegian society. Through the children they became friends with some Norwegian and other nationals

because they had something in common, the children, and that opened up a common platform that could then be built on.

Interaction adjustment with host nationals appears to be a time-related process. The results of this research indicates that once the Icelandic SIEs had adjusted better to the general environment by buying a house, giving birth to a child in Norway, having children in kindergarten or elementary school, that the Norwegian people were more open to socializing with the Icelandic SIEs than before any of those incidents happened. According to this research it is an indicator that when the Norwegians experience that the foreign country national is serious about adjusting to the general environment and settling in, in Norway that they open up and make the effort of socializing with the SIEs. Social ties when living in foreign countries are expected to be an important part of adjustment because they provide emotional support for the expatriate (Adelman, 1988). Froese's (2012) research showed that SIEs receive social support and draw satisfactory interaction adjustment from social interactions with fellow nationals or other foreigners. Some of these research participants only had social interactions with Icelandic people outside of work and were very satisfied with that arrangement.

Work adjustment involves the manner in which expatriates fit into the workspace, the degree of comfort regarding different performance standards and expectations, and work values (Black & Stephens, 1989; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). Work adjustment differs for IEs and SIEs because OEs are sent by their company or an international organization to accomplish a specific job while SIEs have to find a job on their own at a new company in the foreign country (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). SIEs are less frequently employed at international organizations than traditional expatriates. International organizations are better equipped to manage expatriates and provide more specific training and mentoring, thereby resulting in greater expatriate job satisfaction. (Froese, 2012). Self-initiated expatriates can therefore experience lower work adjustment (Edström & Galbraith, 1977). The Icelandic SIEs adjusted well to the work environment in Norway. Only one participant worked for a large international organizations but they all adjusted well to their own work environment. SIEs can be more motivated to adjust to work environment if it helps them to find a better position in the future, helps with their career (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). This is consistent with the result of this research where some of the Icelandic SIEs saw their current job as a stepping stone to some better job in the future. They were learning new and different

skills that made them a more knowledgeable within their field and a more attractive candidate for new and hopefully better work positions.

SIEs' work adjustment can be affected by spill-over from their general and interaction adjustment. SIEs that have their needs satisfied outside of work may be better able to tolerate poor fit at work because of the spill-over affect. SIEs can also be motivated to remain and adjust to their work because of bleak employment opportunities in their home countries or unwillingness to return there (Peltokorpi & Froese, 2009). This is consistent for at least of the Icelandic SIEs, the one that took a job in Norway which was a demotion from the job he used to have in Iceland but was fired from. The participant in this case is active outside of work and has adjusted fairly well in interaction and very well in general environment. Those outside activities keep him satisfied and therefore he tolerates poorer fit at work, spill-over affect. He has not quit his job and he is not thinking of repatriating back to Iceland from Norway because of the work environment in Iceland and bleak employment opportunities for him within his field of work.

The Icelandic self-initiated expatriates that participated in this research adjusted well both with the general environment and work environment. Interaction adjustment proved to be the most problematic for the SIEs of the three adjustment facets. Few of the Icelandic SIEs made friends with the Norwegians. They had however social support and interaction with the Icelanders and had a good network of Icelandic friends around them that became their family in Norway.

## **12.2. Icelandic repatriates**

Four of the five interviewed Icelandic participants were self-initiated expatriates. The fifth participant was a spouse of an organizational expatriate so her reasons for repatriation were the same as reasons of an OE. The results do therefore show reasons why both Icelandic OEs and SIEs repatriate back to Iceland. The participants were a diverse group of individuals. One participant was single and did not have children, the other four participants were married and had one or more children. Four of five participants expatriated and repatriated with their family but only one expatriated with her parent and repatriated alone. First repatriation of the participants was in July 2011 and the last repatriation was in August 2012. They all have had time to readjust to the Icelandic environment.

None of the participant had the same education or occupation. Only one of the participants did not have a masters degree from a university. However, that participant is currently studying at University of Iceland. The youngest participant was 28 years old and the oldest 46 years old. Three participants were male and two female. All except from one participant had employment in Iceland after repatriation. That one participant is currently a student.

### **12.2.1. Research question 3: Why do Icelandic organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriate repatriate to Iceland from Norway?**

There is a difference between repatriation of an OE and a SIE. Repatriation of OEs is by transferring within the company to return to their home country upon completion of an international assignment (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). Most common reason why OEs repatriate is that the international assignment has concluded (Luthans & Doh, 2003). One Icelandic expatriate that repatriated like OEs because her husband was the main reason why they moved to Norway and he was the reason why they repatriated back to Iceland. Therefore the motivation and reasons behind her decision to repatriate is directly affected by her husband the organizational expatriate. The whole family adjusted well in Norway and if they could have stayed longer in Norway they would have. But the main reasons why the participant repatriated was her children that needed stability regarding their education and also because her husband's international assignment had concluded. The repatriation of this participant back to Iceland has gone very well.

Repatriation of SIEs is more complex because they choose themselves to repatriate, they decide whether to return to their home country and if they do decide to repatriate they decide at what time they will repatriate (Tharenou, 2008). Repatriation of SIEs is defined as when the SIEs return to their home country or place of origin after a significant time in a foreign country (King, 2000). SIEs manage their own repatriation on their own initiative (Saxenian, 2005). When SIEs choose to expatriate by their own initiative they may become embedded in their host country which may cause them to be reluctant to repatriate. Dissatisfaction towards the host country pushes the SIEs to return to home country but the embeddedness of the SIEs towards the host country pulls them to remain. SIEs that are strongly embedded in a host country have little intent to leave and it is unlikely that they have the intention to return home (Tharenou & Caulfield,

2010). The findings of this research are consistent with the findings of Tharenou and Caulfields (2010) which suggested that shocks are key factors in repatriation. Shocks are more likely to prompt an expatriate to redirect his or her thought away from living in the host country is undesirable. All the Icelandic SIEs that participated in this research had a shock happening to them, most were negative but one participant had a positive shock, which made them reevaluate their expatriation in Norway.

Self-repatriation may therefore not begin as a result of being dissatisfied with a life in a host country. It is more connected towards the SIEs embeddedness towards the host country. While the embeddedness is controlled the link between dissatisfaction and intention to repatriate is non-significant. SIEs with weak embeddedness in a host country make staying less desirable and are associated with a greater intent to return. The intensity of embeddedness in a host country may therefore better explain the intention to return than dissatisfaction (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). That is what happened to the Icelandic self-repatriates. They went through a shock which weakened their embeddedness with Norway and that lead to a link between their shock, dissatisfaction and the intention to repatriate. The weakened embeddedness in Norway made the SIEs stay in Norway less desirable and made repatriation more desirable to them.

Three out of the four SIEs had stayed in Norway for 27 months or shorter and they repatriated easily back to the Icelandic society and environment. It was easy for them because they had not been living away from Iceland for a long period. There was only one SIE participant that struggled with the repatriation. She had lived in Norway for eight years. She was satisfied with her decision to repatriate however once she had moved to Iceland from Norway the adjustment to the Icelandic society and environment did not feel right, it did not click as she thought it would. She struggled with the language and did in the beginning struggle with socializing and meeting new people. As was stated in Froese's (2012) research that limited host-country language skills and different socialization patterns were the main reasons for the difficulties of SIEs in establishing relationship with host-country nationals. Even though the participant was Icelandic citizen and was before she moved to Norway fluent in Icelandic, she struggled with the language because she had not spoken Icelandic for a long period. She regretted the decision to repatriate back to Iceland. The participant was not embedded with Iceland which made her evaluate her dissatisfaction with the repatriation and made the

intention to expatriate back to Norway stronger. She is moving this fall back to Norway and for good this time.

Repatriation after a long stay abroad can be tricky and because of the long time spent away from the home country the SIE can lose touch with what is happening in the home country and the SIEs become more embedded with the host country. The home country becomes more distant, the SIEs make their lives in the host country, meeting new friends, making a family and they may become more distant from their relatives. Because live of friends and relatives in the home country move on. When SIEs repatriate after a long time spent abroad they need to find new accommodation and renew social ties. If the expatriated did not prepare for that and believed that the repatriation would not require much effort may become dissatisfied with the repatriation process, experience culture shock and consider expatriating back to a foreign country (Christofi & Thompson, 2007).

## Part VI: Conclusion and recommendations

---

The purpose of this thesis was made clear in the methodology chapter and in beginning of this thesis. The purpose of this research is to better understand the essential motivating factors of Icelandic individuals which are either self-initiated expatriates or organizational expatriates and particularly why they choose to expatriate to Norway. It was also the intent to explore how well Icelandic expatriates are adjusting to the life in Norway regarding general, work and interaction adjustment. In addition it was intended to explore what factors push, pull and/or shock Icelanders to repatriate back to Iceland. The following research questions were therefore formed in order to reach a conclusion:

*Research question 1: Why do Icelandic citizens expatriate to Norway?*

*Research question 2: How has the general, interaction and work adjustment been for the Icelandic expatriates in Norway?*

*Research question 3: Why do Icelandic organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriate repatriate to Iceland from Norway?*

Businesses and organizations are increasingly becoming international in scope. It is more and more common that individuals as well as organizations view business skill development and foreign work experience as an increasingly important part of career progression. That applies to Icelandic individuals as well. There has been movement of Icelandic citizens to and from Iceland since the 9<sup>th</sup> century. However, the movement since the mid-sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been more effected by economic conditions, global environment and personal factors rather than natural disasters and hardship. The Nordic countries have been very popular destination for Icelandic citizens and especially Norway after the economic collapse in October 2008. As it has been reported in the press, everything is apparently better outside of Iceland and it is especially better to live in Norway. The press has been reporting the expatriation of Icelandic citizens but their reports have been fairly homogenous. This research is therefore meant to add to the understanding and knowledge of Icelandic citizens who have moved to Norway and those who have returned back home to Iceland after having lived and worked in Norway during the period 2008 till 2013.

In order to add to the understanding of this research topic qualitative method was conducted under the influence of phenomenological approach. Participants were Icelandic citizens who moved to Norway for work or in order to seek employment from 2008 till the end of 2012, Icelandic expatriates, and Icelandic citizens who worked and lived in Norway and have moved back to Iceland from Norway from 2008 to 2012, Icelandic repatriates.

All of the Icelandic expatriates were self-initiated expatriates. They were very willing and motivated to expatriate. Their willingness to expatriate was affected by personal agency and family barriers. They were motivated by having a new adventure, international experience and further career development. The country itself had influence on the motivation and decision to expatriate because of good family environment, opportunity for the SIE and their spouse to get employed as well as their previous experience of living abroad. The Icelandic SIEs adjusted well within the general and work environment. The interaction adjustment proved to be the most problematic for the SIEs because few of the participants made friends with the Norwegians. However, they had social support and interaction with fellow Icelanders which provided a good network of friends that also became their “Norwegian” family.

Four of the five interviewed Icelandic participants were self-initiated expatriates. The fifth participant was a spouse of an organizational expatriate so her reasons for repatriation were the same as reasons of an OE. The repatriation process for the fifth participant was very smooth and the main reason why the participant repatriated was her children that needed stability regarding their education and also because her husband’s international assignment had concluded. It was different repatriation process for the other expatriates that were SIEs or self-repatriates. The SIEs started considering repatriation after a shock had happened to them. The shock had the effect of weakening the embeddedness the participant towards Norway, and because of this lower embeddedness it made the participants stay in Norway less desirable and the repatriation to Iceland more desirable to them. Three of the four Icelandic SIEs repatriated successfully back to Iceland. Only one had trouble with the repatriation process and living in Iceland. The repatriation was too much shock to the participant because she had lived in Norway for eight years and that had made her distant from Iceland and her family and friends there. She was not embedded with Iceland which made her dissatisfied with her decision to repatriate to Iceland and she had difficulties



with the Icelandic language. These factors made her intention to expatriate back to Norway stronger. She is moving this fall back to Norway and for good this time.

Since the economic collapse in October 2008 the press has reported through numerous articles and news stories that Icelandic citizens are fleeing. Those leaving Iceland are just he once that are unemployed or simply cannot support themselves and their family. That is the impression that many Icelanders have of the individuals moving away from Iceland. The interest was there for to conduct a research to see if that is true. Based on the results from the interview it is partly true. Of course there are Icelanders moving to Norway because there are limited opportunities for them to work in Iceland. However, there are also different group of individuals expatriating from Iceland to Norway. Those individuals are expatriating because they were looking for enhancing their career and professional development, to experience some adventure and change. Norway was also a pull factor for expatriates because they wanted to expatriate to a country where they could combine work and family and where it was a high possibility for their spouse to get employed. The motivations for why Icelandic citizens move are more diverse than just unemployment and hardship. It is also connected to the internationalization of the world and the fact that international assignments are a vital part of most international businesses and it is becoming more important that the working individuals participate in this trend and develop an international business skill and foreign work experience.

The Icelandic expatriate adjust well in Norway however they experience difficulties connecting with the Norwegian people. They therefore surround themselves with Icelandic friends who are in similar situations. That community helps the expatriates through many obstacles and becomes the family of the expatriates.

The press has also indicated that the Icelandic citizens moving from Iceland to Norway are not returning because their life is much better in Norway than it is in Iceland. The emigration of Icelandic citizens reached its heights in 2009 after the economic downturn in 2008. Since 2010 the emigration from Iceland has reduced each year. The reasons why the expatriate repatriate from Norway to Iceland are connected to friends and family. The expatriate experience a shock, which has the effect that they reevaluate their expatriation. Their dissatisfaction resulted often in home sickness and missing their families and friend back home in Iceland.

It is recommended to conduct further research regarding Icelandic expatriates, both organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates because little is known about this topic in Iceland. More research is needed to gain better understanding of the realities of Icelandic expatriates and what the same national social network role is in the expatriates. It would be beneficial for the Icelandic environment if further research would be conducted on larger group of Icelandic repatriates to better understand the reasons for why they repatriate. Results of that sort of research would give good information on what pulls the Icelandic expatriates back to their home country. And finally it is recommended that Statistics Iceland start collecting data regarding how many individuals have work-related moves, expatriates and repatriates, as the Nordic statistical institutes have begun to gather.

# Bibliography

---

- Aaker, D., Kumar, V., Day, G., & Leone, R. (2011). *Marketing Research*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Adelman, M. (1988). Cross-cultural Adjustment: A Theoretical Perspective on Social Support. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 183-204.
- Alberge, D. (2012, August 5). *Mass grave in London reveals how volcano caused global catastrophe*. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/aug/05/medieval-volcano-disaster-london-graves?INTCMP=SRCH>
- Allen, D., & Griffeth, R. (1999). Job Performance and Turnover: a Review and Integrative Multi-Route Model. *Human Resource Management Review*, 525-548.
- Altman, Y., & Baruch, Y. (2012). Global self-initiated corporate expatriate careers: a new era in international assignments? *Personnel Review*, 233-255.
- Arango, J. (2000). Explaining migration: a critical view. *International Social Science Journal*, 283-296.
- Aycan, Z. (1997). Expatriate adjustment as a multifaceted phenomenon: individual and organizational level predictors. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 434-456.
- Baliga, G. M., & Baker, J. C. (1985). Multinational Corporate Policies for Expatriate Managers: Selection, Training, Evaluation. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 31-38.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 1-26.
- Barbour, R. S. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research: a student's guide to the craft of doing qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

- Bhaskar-Shrinivas, P., Harrison, D., Shaffer, M., & Luk, D. (2005). Input-Based and Time-Based Models of International Adjustment: Meta-Analytical Evidence and Theoretical Extensions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 257-281.
- Biemann, T., & Andersen, M. (2010). Self-initiated foreign expatriates versus assigned expatriates Two distinct types of international careers? *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 430-448.
- Black, J. (1988). Work Role Transitions: A Study of American Expatriate Managers in Japan. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 277-294.
- Black, J., & Stephens, G. (1989). The Influence of the Spouse on American Expatriate Adjustment and Intent to Stay in Pacific Rim Overseas Assignments. *Journal of Management*, 529-544.
- Black, J., Gregersen, H., Mendenhall, M., & Stroh, L. (1999). *Globalizing People through International Assignments*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Black, J., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1991). Toward a Comprehensive Model of International Adjustment: An Integration of Multiple Theoretical Perspectives. *Academy of Management Journal*, 291-317.
- Blumberg, B., Cooper, D., & Schindler, P. (2011). *Business Research Methods*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Brett, J. M., & Stroh, L. K. (1995). Willingness to Relocate Internationally. *Human Resource Management*, 405-424.
- Christofi, V., & Thompson, C. (2007). You Cannot Go Home Again: A Phenomenological Investigation of Returning to the Sojourn Country After Studying Abroad. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 53-63.
- Church, A. (1982). Sojourner Adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin*, 540-572.
- Collings, D. G., Scullion, H., & Morley, M. J. (2007). Changing patterns of global staffing in the multinational enterprise: Challenges to the conventional expatriate assignment and emerging alternatives. *Journal of World Business*, 198-213.

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln, *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-19). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Dickmann, M., Doherty, N., Mills, T., & Brewster, C. (2008). Why do they go? Individual and corporate perspectives on the factors influencing the decision to accept an international assignment. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 731-751.
- Edström, A., & Galbraith, J. (1977). Transfer of Managers as a Coordination and Control Strategy in Multinational Organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 248-263.
- Eurostat. (2013, March 26). *Migration and migrant population statistics*. Retrieved March 30, 2013, from Eurostat: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics)
- Federal Office of Migration. (2011, June 23). *Reasons for migration*. Retrieved March 30, 2013, from Federal Office for Migration: [http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/bfm/en/home/themen/migration\\_analysen/veltwerte\\_migration/migrationsgruende.html](http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/bfm/en/home/themen/migration_analysen/veltwerte_migration/migrationsgruende.html)
- Ferner, A., & Quintanilla, A. (1998). Multinationals, National Business Systems and HRM: The Enduring Influence of National Identity or a Process of "Anglo-Saxonization". *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 710-731.
- Florkowski, G., & Fogel, D. (1999). Expatriate Adjustment and Commitment: The Role of Host-unit Treatment. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 783-807.
- Froese, F. J. (2012). Motivation and adjustment of self-initiated expatriates: the case of expatriate academics in South Korea. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1095-1112.

- Glover, S., Gott, C., Loizillon, A., Portes, J., Price, R., Spencer, S., et al. (2001). *Migration: an economic and social analysis*. London: Home Office, Communications and Development Unit.
- Harris, H., & Brewster, C. (1999). The Coffee-Machine System: How International Selection Really Works. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 488-500.
- Harris, H., & Brewster, C. (1999). The Coffee-Machine System: How International Selection Really Works. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 488-500.
- Howe-Walsh, L., & Schyns, B. (2010). Self-initiated expatriation: implications for HRM. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 260-273.
- Huff, A. (2009). *Designing research for publication*. Los Angeles: SAGE publications.
- Icelandic Student Loan Fund. (n.d.). *Ársskýrslur*. Retrieved April 17, 2013, from Icelandic Student Loan Fund: [http://www.lin.is/lin/UmLIN/Utgefid\\_efni/Arsskyrslur\\_linkar.html](http://www.lin.is/lin/UmLIN/Utgefid_efni/Arsskyrslur_linkar.html)
- Inkson, K., & Myers, B. (2003). "The Big OE": Self-Directed Travel and Career Development. *Career Development International*, 170-181.
- Inkson, K., Arthur, M., Pringle, J., & Barry, S. (1997). Expatriate Assignment Versus Overseas Experience: International Human Resource Development. *Journal of World Business*, 351-368.
- Irwin, S. (2008). Data analysis and interpretation: Emergent issues in linking qualitative and quantitative evidence. In P. Leavy, & S. Hesse-Biber, *Handbook of emergent methods* (pp. 415-435). New York: Guilford Press.
- Johnson, E., Kristof-Brown, A., van Vianen, A., de Pater, I., & Klein, M. (2003). Expatriate Social Ties: Personality Antecedents and Consequences for Adjustment. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 277-288.
- Jones, R. (2003). Multinational investment and return migration in Ireland in the 1990 - A country-level analysis. *Irish Geography*, 153-169.

- King, R. (2000). Generalizations from the history of return migration. In B. Gosh, *Return migration* (pp. 7-45). Geneva: United Nations.
- Kraimer, M. L., Shaffer, M. A., & Bolino, M. C. (2009). The influence of expatriate and repatriate experiences on career advancement and repatriate retention. *Human Resource Management*, 27-47.
- Kraimer, M., Wayne, S., & Jaworski, R. (2001). Sources of Support and Expatriate Performance: The Mediating Role of Expatriate Adjustment. *Personnel Psychology*, 71-99.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Land og saga. (n.d.). *Skaftáreldar og móðuharðindin*. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from Land og saga: [http://www.landogsaga.is/section.php?id=504&id\\_art=955](http://www.landogsaga.is/section.php?id=504&id_art=955)
- Larsen, H. H. (2004). Global career as dual dependency between the organization and the individual. *The Journal of Management Development*, 860-869.
- Larson, D. A. (2006). Here We Go Again: How a Family's Cross-Cultural and Repatriation Adjustment Relates to the Employee's Receptivity to Future International Assignments. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 46-57.
- Lee, C. H. (2005). A study of underemployment among self-initiated expatriates. *Journal of World Business*, 172-187.
- Lee, T., & Mitchell, T. (1994). An alternative approach: The unfolding model of coluntary employee turnover. *Academy of Management Review*, 51-89.
- Lee, T., Gerhart, B., Weller, I., & Trevor, C. (2008). Understanding Voluntary Turnover: Path-Specific Job Satisfaction Effects and the Importance of Unsolicited Job Offers. *Academy of Management Journal*, 651-671.
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Contextual Supports and Barriers to Career Choice: A Social Cognitive Analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 36-49.

- Luthans, F., & Doh, J. (2003). *International Management: Culture, Strategy, and Behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
- ManpowerGroup. (2012). *Talent Shortage Survey: Research results 2012*. Retrieved March 2013, 5, from [https://candidate.manpower.com/wps/wcm/connect/93de5b004b6f33c0ab3cfb4952b5bce9/2012+Talent+Shortage+Survey+Results\\_A4\\_FINAL.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](https://candidate.manpower.com/wps/wcm/connect/93de5b004b6f33c0ab3cfb4952b5bce9/2012+Talent+Shortage+Survey+Results_A4_FINAL.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)
- March, J., & Simon, H. (1958). *Organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- Marchall, C., & Rossman, G. (2011). *Designing Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Massey, D., & Espinosa, K. (1997). What's Driving Mexico-U.S. Migration? A Theoretical, Empirical, and Policy Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 939-999.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative Research Design: An interactive Approach*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, E. L., & Cheng, J. (1978). A closer look at the decision to accept an overseas position. *Management International Review*, 25-33.
- Miller, E., & Cheng, J. (1978). A Closer Look at the Decision to Accept an Overseas Position. *Management International Review*, 25-33.
- Mishler, E. (1990). Validation in inquiry-guided research: The role of exemplars in narrative studies. *Harvard Educational Review*, 415-442.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Myers, B., & Pringle, J. (2005). Self-initiated Foreign Experience as Accelerated Development: Influences of Gender. *Journal of World Business*, 421-431.



- Naumann, E. (1993). Organizational Predictors of Expatriate Job Satisfaction. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 61-79.
- OECD. (2005, July 7). *Glossary of statistical terms*. Retrieved April 20, 2013, from OECD: <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/index.htm>
- Ólöf Garðarsdóttir. (2012, March). *Fólksflutningar til og frá Íslandi 1961-2011 með áherslu á flutninga á samdráttarskeiðum*. Retrieved March 4, 2013, from Velferðarráðuneyti: rit og skýrslur 2012: [http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/rit-og-skyrslur2012/Folksflutningar\\_03042012.pdf](http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/rit-og-skyrslur2012/Folksflutningar_03042012.pdf)
- Ómar S. Harðarson. (2010, July 13). *Athugun á búferlaflutningum til og frá Íslandi 1961-2009*. Retrieved April 17, 2013, from Statistics Iceland: <http://www.hagstofa.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?itemid=11238>
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Peltokorpi, V., & Froese, F. J. (2009). Organizational expatriates and self-initiated expatriates: who adjust better to work and life in Japan? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1096-1112.
- Peterson, R. B., Napier, N., & Shim, W. S. (1996). Expatriate Management - The Differential Role of National Multinational Corporation Ownership. *The International Executive*, 543-562.
- Richards, D. (1996). Strangers in a Strange Land: Expatriate Paranoia and the Dynamics of Exclusion. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 553-571.
- Richardson, J. (2005). Self-directed expatriation: family matters. *Personnel Review*, 469-486.
- Richardson, J., & Mallon, M. (2005). Career Interrupted? The Case of the Self-directed Expatriate. *Journal of World Business*, 409-420.
- Richardson, J., & Mallon, M. (2005). Career Interrupted? The Case of the Self-directed Expatriate. *Journal of World Business*, 409-420.

- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Elam, G. (2003). Designing and selecting samples. In J. Ritchie, & J. Lewis, *Qualitative research practise: A guide fro social science studnets and researchers* (pp. 77-108). London: Sage.
- Saxenian, A. (2005). From brain drain to brain circulation. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 35-61.
- Shadish, W., Cook, T., & Campbell, D. (2002). *Experimental and quasi- experimental design for generalized causal inference*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Shaffer, M., & Harrison, D. (1998). Expatriates' Psychological Withdrawal from International Assignments: Work, Nonwork, and Family Influences. *Personnel Psychology*, 87-118.
- Snara. (n.d.). *English*. Retrieved April 3, 2013, from Snara English dictionary: <http://hrproxy.hir.is:2059/8/>
- Statistics Iceland. (2009, December 10). *Population*. Retrieved April 17, 2013, from Statistical Series: <https://hagstofa.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?ItemID=10480>
- Statistics Iceland. (2010, February 16). Retrieved April 17, 2013, from Statistics Iceland:  
[http://statice.is/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01420&ti=Immigration%20by%20registration,%20citizenship,%20sex%20and%20age%201986-2008%20%20%20%20&path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/&lang=1&units=Fj%F6ldi](http://statice.is/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01420&ti=Immigration%20by%20registration,%20citizenship,%20sex%20and%20age%201986-2008%20%20%20%20&path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/&lang=1&units=Fj%F6ldi)
- Statistics Iceland. (2013, January 22). *External migration by countries and citizenship*. Retrieved March 20, 2013 a, from Statistics Iceland:  
[http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01404%26ti=External+migration+by+sex%2C+countries+and+citizenship+1986-2012++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01404%26ti=External+migration+by+sex%2C+countries+and+citizenship+1986-2012++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number)
- Statistics Iceland. (2013a, January 22). *External migration by sex, countries and citizenship 1986-2012*. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from Statistics Iceland:

[http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01404%26ti=External+migration+by+sex%2C+countries+and+citizenship+1986-2012++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01404%26ti=External+migration+by+sex%2C+countries+and+citizenship+1986-2012++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number)

Statistics Iceland. (2013a, 02 12). *Population - key figures 1703-2013*. Retrieved 3 18, 2013, from Statistics Iceland: [http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1170&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN00000%26ti=Population+-+key+figures+1703-2013+++++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Yfirlit/%26lang=1%26units=Number](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1170&src=/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN00000%26ti=Population+-+key+figures+1703-2013+++++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Yfirlit/%26lang=1%26units=Number)

Statistics Iceland. (2013b, 01 22). *External migration by sex and citizenship 1961-2012*. Retrieved 04 12, 2013, from Statistics Iceland: [http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01400%26ti=External+migration+by+sex+and+citizenship+1961-2012++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01400%26ti=External+migration+by+sex+and+citizenship+1961-2012++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number)

Statistics Iceland. (2013b, 01 22). *Population: Migration*. Retrieved 04 12, 2013, from Statistics Iceland: [http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01400%26ti=External+migration+by+sex+and+citizenship+1961-2012++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01400%26ti=External+migration+by+sex+and+citizenship+1961-2012++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number)

Statistics Iceland. (2013c, 02 12). *Population - key figures 1703-2013*. Retrieved 3 18, 2013, from Statistics Iceland: [http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1170&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN00000%26ti=Population+-+key+figures+1703-2013+++++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Yfirlit/%26lang=1%26units=Number](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1170&src=/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN00000%26ti=Population+-+key+figures+1703-2013+++++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Yfirlit/%26lang=1%26units=Number)

Statistics Iceland. (2013c, 1 22). *Population: Migration*. Retrieved 04 12, 2013, from Statistics Iceland:

[http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01404%26ti=External+migration+by+sex%2C+countries+and+citizenship+1986-2012++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01404%26ti=External+migration+by+sex%2C+countries+and+citizenship+1986-2012++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number)

Statistics Iceland. (2013d, March 8). *Overview of Gross Domestic Product and Gross National Product 1945-2012*. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from Statistics Iceland: [http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1267&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=THJ01000%26ti=Overview+of+Gross+Domestic+Product+and+Gross+National+Product+1945-2012%26path=../Database/thjodhagsreikningar/landsframleidsla/%26lang=1%26units=Index/percent/number](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1267&src=/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=THJ01000%26ti=Overview+of+Gross+Domestic+Product+and+Gross+National+Product+1945-2012%26path=../Database/thjodhagsreikningar/landsframleidsla/%26lang=1%26units=Index/percent/number)

Statistics Iceland. (2013e, January 22). *External migration by sex, age and citizenship 1986-2012*. Retrieved April 14, 2013, from Statistics Iceland: [http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01401%26ti=External+migration+by+sex%2C+age+and+citizenship+1986-2012+++++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1171&src=/temp_en/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MAN01401%26ti=External+migration+by+sex%2C+age+and+citizenship+1986-2012+++++++%26path=../Database/mannfjoldi/Buferlaflutningar/%26lang=1%26units=Number)

Statistics Iceland. (n.d.). *Population*. Retrieved March 19, 2013, from Statistics Iceland: <http://www.statice.is/Statistics/Population>

Statistics Iceland. (n.d.). *Statistics: Population*. Retrieved March 19, 2013, from Statistics Iceland: <http://www.statice.is/Statistics/Population>

Suutari, V., & Brewster, C. (2000). Making Their Own Way: International Experience through Self-Initiated Foreign Assignments. *Journal of World Business*, 417-436.

Tharenou, P. (2008). Disruptive decisions to leave home: Gender and family differences in expatriation choices. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 183-200.

Tharenou, P., & Caulfield, N. (2010). Will I Stay or Will I Go? Explaining Repatriation by Self-initiated Expatriate. *Academy of Management Journal*, 1009-1028.

- The European Free Trade Association. (2013). *EEA Agreement*. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from EFTA: <http://www.efta.int/eea/eea-agreement.aspx>
- Thorn, K. (2009). The Relative Importance of Motives for International Self-Initiated Mobility. *Career Development International*, 441-464.
- Toren, N. (1976). Return to Zion: Characteristics and Motivations of Returning Emigrants. *Social Forces*, 546-558.
- Tung, R. (1998). American expatriates abroad: From neophytes to cosmopolitans. *Journal of World Business*, 125-144.
- Vance, C. (2005). The personal quest for building global competence: A taxonomy of self-initiating career path strategies for gaining business experience abroad. *Journal of World Business*, 374-385.
- Wanberg, C. R., Glomb, T. M., Song, Z., & Sorenson, S. (2005). Job-Search Persistence During Unemployment: A 10-Wave Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 411-430.
- Yin, R. (1994). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.
- Zeira, Y., & Banai, M. (1985). Selection of Expatriate Managers in MNCs: The Host-Environment point of View. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 33-41.
- Þórlindsson, Þ., & Karlsson, Þ. (2003). Um úrtök og úrtaksaðferðir. In S. Halldórsdóttir, & K. Kristjánsson, *Handbók í aðferðafræði og rannsóknum í heilbrigðisvísinum* (pp. 51-66). Akureyri: Háskólinn á Akureyri.

# Appendices

---

## Appendix A: The introductory text to potential participants

Góðan daginn,

Ég heiti Sandra Rún og er að ljúka mastersnámi í Alþjóðaviðskiptum frá Háskólanum í Reykjavík. Sem hluta af lokaverkefni mínu er ég að framkvæma rannsókn á flutningum Íslendinga til og frá Noregi á tímabilinu 2008 til 2013.

Ég er að leita að aðilum til að taka viðtöl við. Þetta eru tveir hópar fólks sem ég er að leita að:

- A. Íslendingar sem hafa flutt til Noregs vegna vinnu eða atvinnuleitar á tímabilinu 2008 til 2012
- B. Íslendingar sem unnu í Noregi og fluttu frá Noregi til Íslands á tímabilinu 2008 til 2012

Ég er að leita að 1 manns í hvorum hópi fyrir sig. Viðtölin munu fara fram í eigin persónu og er ég því að leita að viðmælendum á Stór-Reykjavíkursvæðinu og Osló og nágrenni. Fyllsta trúnaðar verður gætt.

Vinsamlegast hafið samband við mig hér á facebook, e-mail: [sandra.johannesdottir@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.johannesdottir@gmail.com) eða í síma: +47 4139 7958.

Ég væri mjög þakklát ef þið gætuð aðstoðað mig við þessa rannsókn með því að áframsenda þetta til aðila sem gætu fallið í þessa áður nefndu hópa. Einnig væri ég mjög þakklát ef þið gætuð látið mig vita af aðilum sem gætu haft áhuga á að taka þátt. Ég mun þá hafa samband við þá.

Með fyrirfram þökk,

Sandra Rún Jóhannesdóttir

## **Appendix B: Questions for Icelandic OEs and SIEs living in Norway**

### **Hvatning:**

Af hverju fluttir þú til Noregs? Hvað varð til þess að þú fluttir?

Hver var staða/aðstaða þín áður en þú fluttir til Noregs?

Hvaða þættir höfðu áhrif á ákvörðun þína til að flytja út?

- Starf
- Starfsþróun/atvinnuþróun
- Peningar/Tekjur
- Dvalarland (öryggi, lífskjör, ákveðin staðsetning innan lands)
- Atvinna (áskorun í vinnu, ábyrgð, streita/álag)
- Vinna/líf
- Fjölskylda og vinir

Getur þú skrifað og talað norsku reiprennandi? Kanntu önnur tungumál og ef svo er hversu góð(ur) ertu í þeim tungumálum?

Undirbjóstu þig að einhverju leiti fyrir flutninginn til Noregs?

### **Almenn aðlögun:**

Ert þú sátt(ur) með lífsskilyrði þín í Noregi?

- Lífskjör
- Húsnæði
- Framfærslukostnaður
- Versla
- Daglegt líf

Flutti fjölskylda þín með þér til Noregs?

Fékkst þú einhverja aðstoð frá fyrirtækinu sem þú vinnur hjá eða öðrum við að aðlagast hinu daglega lífi í Noregi?

- Sækja um kennitölu
- Önnur mikilvæg skjöl og aðrar umsóknir
- Íbúð
- Leikskóli

### **Samskipta aðlögun:**

Ert þú sátt(ur) með félagslífið þitt í Noregi?

Hverjum eyðir þú venjulega tíma þínum með?

- Íslendingum
- Norðmönnum
- Fólki frá öðrum þjóðum en Noregi og Íslandi

Sækir þú virkur í að skemmtanir eða félagslega viðburði eða hópstarf?

- Íslendingafélagið
- Ískórinn
- Íþróttahópa
- Norska hópa

### **Vinnu aðlögun:**

Hversu lengi hefur þú unnið í Noregi? Hveru þú unnið hjá fleiri en einum vinnuveitanda?

- Tímabundinn eða varanlegur ráðningasamningur

Hversu lengi hefur þú unnið hjá núverandi vinnuveitanda?

Hvernig stendur starfið þitt í tengslum við starfsferilinn, þarfir þínar og áætlanir, og eins varðandi starfsframa, sérmenntun? Vöxt og þróun á þér sem fagmanneskju?



Er samræmi á milli þinnar hæfni og reynslu og starfsins sem þú ert í?

- Stöðuhækkun, stöðulækkun eða sú sama og áður

Er þú sátt(ur) í starfi þínu?

Hefur þú upplifað einhverja aðra mælikvarða/viðmiðun varðandi frammistöðu, væntingar og vinnugildi? Ef svo, á hvaða hátt?

Hvernig semur þér við samstarfsfélagana?

Ertu vinur einhverra samstarfsfélaga?

Hvernig upplifir þú þína starfsreynslu og lífsskilyrði í Noregi í samanburði við Ísland?

- Eru meiri eða minni tækifæri á að hafa góðan starfsferil?
- Meira eða minna af atvinnutækifærum í Noregi?
- Hefur þú meira eða minna í tekjur á mánuði? Það er að segja, hefur þú meiri eða minni peninga til að eyða í hverjum mánuði eftir að þú hefur greitt leigu, mat og aðrar nauðsynjar?
- Eru fleiri eða færri viðskiptatækifæri í Noregi?

*English translation*

**Motivation:**

Why did you move to Norway? How did your expatriation come about?

What was your position/situation before you moved to Norway?

What factors influenced your decision to expatriate?

- Career
- Professional development
- Money/income
- Host country (security, standard of living, specific location within country)
- Work content (job challenge, responsibility, stress)
- Personal considerations
- Work/life
- Family and friends

Are you fluent in written and spoken Norwegian? Are you fluent in other languages?

Did you prepare yourself in any way before moving to Norway?

**General adjustment:**

Are you satisfied with your living conditions in Norway?

- Standard of living
- Housing
- Shopping
- Cost of living
- Everyday life

Did your family move with you?

With adjusting to everyday life in Norway did you have support from your company or anyone else?

- Applying for ID
- Other important documents and applications
- Apartment
- Kindergarten

**Interaction adjustment:**

How satisfied are you with your social life in Norway?

With whom do you usually spend your time?

- Icelanders
- Norwegians
- Other nationalities
- Socializing and interacting with people on a daily basis

Do you actively seek out any entertainment/social events?

**Work adjustment:**

How long have you worked in Norway? Have you worked for more than one employer?

- Temporary or permanent work employment contract

How long have you worked with permanent employer?

How is your job in regards to your career needs and plans as well as professional growth and development? As well as, regarding your qualification and experience?

- Promotion, demotion or the same as before

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied in your job?

Have you experienced other performance standards and expectations as well as work values? If so, how?

How do you get along with your coworkers?

Are you friends with some of your coworkers?

How do you experience your work experience and living conditions in Norway compared with Iceland?

- Are there more or less opportunities to have good career?
- More or less opportunities to get employed in Norway?
- Do you have more or less in revenue per month? That is, do you have more or less to spend each month after you have paid rent, food and other necessities?
- Are there more or less business opportunities in Norway?

## **Appendix C: Questions for repatriated OEs and SIEs living in Iceland**

### **Óánægja og embeddedness í dvalarlandi:**

Hversu lengi bjóst þú í Noregi?

Hvernig var starfið þitt í tengslum við starfsferilinn, þarfir þínar og áætlanir, og eins varðandi starfsframa, sérmenntun? Vöxt og þróun á þér sem fagmanneskju?

- Tímabundinn eða varanlegur starfsamningur
- Hversu lengi starfaðiru í Noregi
- Fjöldi vinnuveitenda
- Samstarfsmenn

Hvernig upplifir þú þína starfsreynslu og lífsskilyrði í Noregi í samanburði við Ísland?

- Eru meiri eða minni tækifæri á að hafa góðan starfsferil?
- Meira eða minna af atvinnutækifærum í Noregi?
- Hefur þú meira eða minna í tekjur á mánuði? Það er að segja, hefur þú meiri eða minni peninga til að eyða í hverjum mánuði eftir að þú hefur greitt leigu, mat og aðrar nauðsynjar?
- Eru fleiri eða færri viðskiptatækifæri í Noregi?

Hvernig var líf þitt í Noregi?

- Lífsskilyrði
- Virkni
- Félagsstarf og viðburðir
- Fjölskylda, vinir og félagsleg tengsl
- Lífstíll

Ertu sátt(ur) við dvöl þína í Noregi?

### **Áföll**

Var einhver einn eða fleiri sérstakir atburðir eða þættir sem urðu þess valdandi að þú fluttir heim til Íslands?

## Heimaland

Þegar þú bjóst í Noregi varstu að leita að störfum á Íslandi?

- Undibjóst eða endurskoðaðir ferilskránna þína fyrir starf á Íslandi
- Spurðist fyrir um störf í boði
- Sóttir um starf á Íslandi
- Leitaðir markvisst að atvinnu á Íslandi

Þegar þú bjóst í Noregi var fjölskylda þín að hvertja þig til að flytja aftur til Íslands?

Almennt séð er það að vera Íslendingur mikilvægur hluti af þinni sjálfsmynd? Hvers vegna eða hversvegna ekki?

- Sterk tengsl við Ísland
- Sterk tengsl við aðra Íslending
- Líður vel með að vera Íslendingur

## Flutningur heim

Af hverju fluttir þú aftur til Íslands og hvaða þættir höfðu áhrif á ákvörðun þína að flytja aftur heim?

- Atvinnu tækifæri
- Peningar / tekjur
- Lífstíll
- Umhverfi og/eða veður
- Öryggi
- Betri staður til að ala upp börn
- Koma sér upp heimili og rætur
- Fjölskylda og vinir á Íslandi

Hvaða áhrif hafði dvöl þín í Noregi á starfsferil og –frama?

Hvert er núverandi starf þitt?

Telur þú að núverandi starf þitt sé stöðuhækkun eða stöðulækkun í samanburði við starf þitt í Noregi? Hvað með í samanburði við starfið sem þú hafðir áður en þú fluttir út til Noregs?

Ert þú núna alfarið komin(n) til Íslands og ætlar að búa hér til frambúðar eða eru plön um að flytja aftur til annarra landa?

*English translation:*

### **Host country embeddedness and dissatisfaction**

For how long did you stay in Norway?

How was your job in regards to your career needs and plans as well as professional growth and development?

- permanent or temporary employment contract
- how long did you work in Norway
- number of employers
- Co-workers

How do you experience your work experience and living conditions in Norway compared with Iceland?

- Are there more or less opportunities to have good career?
- More or less opportunities to get employed in Norway?
- Do you have more or less in revenue per month? That is, do you have more or less to spend each month after you have paid rent, food and other necessities?
- Are there more or less business opportunities in Norway?

How was your life in Norway?

- Living conditions
- Activities
- Social activities and events
- Family, friends and social ties
- Lifestyle

Are you satisfied with your stay in Norway?

### **Shocks**

Was there any particular single or multiple events or factors that caused you to repatriate home to live?

### **Home country**

When you lived in Norway did you look for jobs in Iceland?

- Prepared or revised CV for a job in Iceland
- Asking around for a job
- Applied for jobs in Iceland
- Actively looked for a job

While you lived in Norway did your family encourage you to return back home?

In general, is being an Icelander an important part of your self-image? Why or why not?

- Strong ties to Iceland
- Sense of connection to other Icelanders
- Feeling good about being an Icelander

### **Repatriation**

Why did you move back to Iceland and what influenced your decision to move back home?

- Career opportunities
- Money/income
- Lifestyle
- Physical environment and/or weather
- Security
- A better place to bring up children
- Settling down
- Family and friendships at home

What impact did the stay in Norway have on your career and career prospects?

What is your current work position?

Do you regard your current job as a promotion or demotion in relation to your job abroad? How about in regards to your job before you moved abroad to work?

Have you now settled down in Iceland and tend to live here permanently or do you plan to go abroad again?



## **Appendix D: Background questions for Icelandic expatriates and repatriates**

### **Background**

Information about background may be revealed in the interview therefore making these questions unnecessary. However, if some or all information is not provided in the interview it will be required to ask these questions:

Ertu einhleyp(ur), gift(ur), skilin(n), í sambúð eða sambandi?

Áttu börn? Ef svarið er já, hversu mörg?

Hversu gömul/gamall ert þú?

*English translation:*

Are you single, married, divorced or in a relationship?

Do you have children? If yes, then how many?

How old are you?

## Appendix E: Declaration of discretion and confidentiality



### Rannsóknin

Ástæður fyrir flutninga Íslendinga til og frá Noregi

### Þagnarskylda

Undirrituð er mastersnemandi í alþjóðaviðskiptum við viðskiptafræðideild Háskólans í Reykjavík og vinnur að rannsókn um ástæður fyrir því af hverju Íslendingar flytjast til Noregs og af hverju koma þeir heim aftur. Ég heiti fullum trúnaði gagnvart þátttakendum í rannsókn minni og fer með allar persónuupplýsingar sem trúnaðarmál.

---

Sandra Rún Jóhannesdóttir

## Appendix F: Consent statement



### Rannsóknin

### Ástæður fyrir flutninga Íslendinga til og frá Noregi

### Samþykkisyfirlýsing

Ég undirrituð/aður lýsi hér með yfir að ég hef lesið og búið er að kynna fyrir mér upplýsingar um rannsókina: **Ástæður fyrir flutninga Íslendinga til og frá Noregi** og samþykki að taka þátt í henni.

Ég samþykki að rannsakandi taki við mig eitt viðtal sem mun fara fram í apríl 2013 og ef til vill verði haft samband símleiðis ef þurfa þykir. Viðtalið mun taka frá 30 mínútum upp í eina klukkustund.

Ég geri mér grein fyrir því að rannsakendur eru bundnir þagnarskyldu og gæta nafnleyndar og fyllsta trúnaðar. Þátttaka mín í rannsókninni er mitt val en ég hef þann rétt að hafna þátttöku en kjósi ég að halda áfram get ég hætt þátttöku eða neitað að gefa upplýsingar án allra óþæginda.

Dags: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Undirskrift þátttakanda

\_\_\_\_\_  
Undirskrift rannsakanda