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## HIGHWAY TO HELL? MANAGING EXPATRIATES IN CRISIS

**Purpose:** The aim of this article is to develop a conceptual framework of severe expatriate crises focusing on the occurrence of ‘fit-dependent’ crisis events, which is when the crisis is ‘man made’ and triggered by expatriates’ maladjustment or acculturation stress in the host country. We focus on the causes, prevention and management of fit-dependent expatriate crises.

**Design/Method/Approach:** We develop a conceptual framework of fit-dependent expatriate crises that involves different levels of analysis.

**Findings:** Our conceptual framework shows that crises can be triggered at micro, meso and macro levels ranging from the personal and family domains (micro), to the network and organisational domains (meso) as well as the host-country domain (macro). We conceptualise these ‘domains of causes’ as triggering maladjustment and acculturation stress that ultimately leads to a severe crisis event with correspondingly serious and potentially life-changing consequences. Furthermore, using a process perspective, we outline strategies for preventing and managing crises before, during, and after the crisis occurs, discussing the support roles of various internal (organizational) and external (specialist) stakeholders.

**Originality/value:** Studying the link between expatriation and crises is a highly relevant research endeavour because severe crisis events will impact on HRM policies, processes and procedures for dealing with employees living abroad, and will create additional challenges for HRM beyond what could normally be expected. Using attribution theory to explain why organisational support and intervention to assist expatriates during a crisis is not always forthcoming, and theories of social networks to elucidate the ‘first responder’ roles of various support actors, we contribute to the expatriate literature by opening up the field to a better understanding of the dark side of expatriation that includes crisis definition, prevention, management and solutions.

## INTRODUCTION

A crisis is an undesirable event causing changes that will affect one or more individuals negatively (Lerbinger, 2012). While crises can occur anywhere and hit anyone, people in a vulnerable situation are more likely to experience crises, and crises will often have a greater and more severe impact on such persons (Vigh, 2008). Expatriates have often been described as being particularly vulnerable, with little knowledge of local customs, and frequently experiencing acculturation stress, with only a small local support network to assist them (Bader and Berg, 2013; Luring and Selmer, 2010; McNulty, 2015). By ‘expatriates,’ we mean people who are assigned by organisations to occupy senior or upper middle rank positions in the international subsidiaries of their organisation as highly-paid experts (McNulty & Brewster, 2019). High-status expatriates may also include some SIEs who apply for a job as a senior specialist or even CEO in a country other than their own, or who have been ‘headhunted’ into such a role. This article seeks to shine a light on the ‘dark side’ of expatriation by examining crises that arise from expatriates’ deliberate actions when living abroad, which then results in serious and severe consequences for them and their families.

Building on person-environment fit theory, we label the type of crisis that we deal with as ‘fit-dependent’ expatriate crises (cf. Fee, McGrath-Champ & Berti, forthcoming; Fee, McGrath-Champ & Liu, 2013). Person-environment fit can be defined as a particular type of person-context interaction that involves the match between an individual’s values, behaviour and knowledge and environmental dimensions on and off the job (Chuang, Hsu, Wang & Judge, 2015; Makkonen, 2015). A poor fit with the foreign country environment has been found to result in stress, dissatisfaction and low commitment (Nolan and Morley, 2014). We argue that this may, in turn, trigger situations in which more serious crisis events occur. We extend typical crisis studies that have suggested working abroad is itself a stressor leading to a variety of negative outcomes (Takeuchi, 2010) such as impaired physical and mental well-

being (van der Zee, Ali & Salome, 2005; Valk, 2003), ‘culture shock’ (Oberg, 1951) and work-family conflict (Baker & Ciuk, 2015), and which has been focused mainly on stressors from the local environment that could hinder the job effort. Instead, we examine expatriate crises as a more radical event than ‘maladjustment’, where lack of adjustment and the consequent stress act as triggers for serious crisis events, with correspondingly severe (but avoidable) consequences such as death, injury, physical/ mental illness, divorce, forced job resignation, being fired, legal conviction and imprisonment, deportation, and/ or bankruptcy and destitution.

Fit-dependent expatriate crises are unpredictable, yet potentially avoidable; we view them as seriously negative events that happen to expatriates. These events are at least partly caused by expatriates’ more or less deliberate (‘man made’) actions or neglect while being assigned abroad, but triggered by deep levels of maladjustment or acculturation stress (cf. Turner & Pidgeon, 1997). We focus on fit-dependent crises because compared to literature on, for example, disaster-related crises, it is an area that has been dealt with very scantily. Additionally, as these crises are avoidable, there are greater opportunities to prevent them compared to where crises are derived from entirely uncontrollable events in the surroundings.

Studying the link between expatriation and crises is a highly relevant research endeavour because it will impact on HRM policies, processes and procedures for dealing with employees living abroad, and will create additional challenges for the HR manager beyond what could normally be expected. An increasing number of researchers and consultants have begun to address the topic of crisis more broadly (e.g., Bader & Berg, 2014; Gannon & Paraskevas, forthcoming; McNulty, 2015), including from an HRM perspective (Bader, Berg & Holtbrügge, 2015) and most particularly through a duty of care lens (BAL, 2017). We contribute to the research by developing a conceptual framework of fit-dependent expatriate crises that involves different levels of analysis; more broadly, crises are triggered

at micro, meso and macro levels ranging from the personal and family domains (micro), to the network and organisational domains (meso) and lastly the host-country domain (macro). We conceptualise these ‘domains of influence’ as triggering maladjustment and acculturation stress that ultimately leads to a severe crisis event with correspondingly serious and potentially life-changing consequences.

As we will show, research in this area is warranted and a conceptual structure is an appropriate first step. Doing so opens up the field to a better understanding of the dark side of expatriation and the potential role of relevant domains in causing crisis events as well as various stakeholders who can engage in crisis prevention, management and solutions. We acknowledge that the model rests on a highly exploratory foundation due to the scarcity of literature. Yet, based on a recent media search on fit-dependent crises as well as clusters of literature that supports our ideas more broadly (which we explain in subsequent sections), we show how our conceptual framework can be a starting point for future studies in this emerging, if not urgent, area of expatriate research.

The article begins by developing a definition of fit-dependent expatriate crises from related literatures on crisis and disaster management. To build our framework, we then outline five domains from which such crises can unfold and discuss interrelationships between them. Next, we introduce sources of support, namely within the organization, within the network, and from external specialists, as central actors to assist the expatriate before, during and after the crisis occurs. Finally, we discuss implications of the proposed model and how future research may deal with the issues raised in this article.

## **DEFINING FIT-DEPENDENT EXPATRIATE CRISES**

To begin building our framework, we first provide an initial overview of definitions of crisis from prior research, from which we subsequently develop a definition of fit-dependent expatriate crises as our core construct.

At the individual level, Vigh (2008, p. 5) defines a crisis “as an isolated period of time in which our lives are shattered,” resulting in “the loss of balance and the inability to control the exterior forces influencing our possibilities and choices.” At the organisational level, Lerbinger (2012) suggests there are eight characteristics that constitute a crisis event, including 1) it being sudden, unexpected, and unwanted, 2) being high impact and low probability, 3) being ambiguous regarding cause, effect, and resolution, 4) interrupting normal operations, 5) hindering goals and threatening survival, 6) requiring fast decision making, 7) causing problems if no action is taken, and 8) creating significant psychological stress. Critically, a crisis is viewed as a temporary state from which an individual or organisation will eventually reclaim a state of balance and calm. Depending on the nature of the crisis, this may occur in a relatively short time-frame (episodic) or take much longer to resolve and recover from (chronic) (Pidgeon & O’Leary, 2000). Thus, crises have been positioned as arising from an external event (or ‘trigger’), which is unplanned, is complex to understand and resolve, and which requires a short or long period of recovery.

Crises have further been defined by *location*. For example, there are workplace threats such as chemical spills, industrial accidents, and aircraft crashes (Claus, 2011), and non-work-related threats like illness, road accidents, and medical emergencies (Druckman, Harber, Liu & Quigley, 2012). Similarly, there are regional threats such as pandemics (SARS, MERS; Tan & Enderwick, 2006) and natural disasters such as landslides, earthquakes, and tsunamis (Schneid and Collins, 2001; Merlot and De Cieri, 2011) that can result in infectious disease, homelessness or life-threatening illness (Dagan et al., 2011). There may be worldwide economic events such as the global financial crisis of 2008-2009

that results in increased job loss (Metz, Kulik, Brown & Cregan, 2012); and there are unavoidable external risks in 'hostile environments' such as unprovoked or random assault, kidnapping, hijacking, robbery and terrorism (Henisz, Mansfield & Von Glinow, 2010; Bader & Berg, 2013). Key to these definitions is that the crisis is in some way 'accidental' and caused by external events in particular locations over which people have little or no control.

Extending these definitions to the context of expatriation, a core concept of the definition of fit-dependent expatriate crises is *agency*, which ignores (for the time being) issues of location (e.g., work vs non-work or one region vs another, aspects we come back to later). Unlike the crisis definitions above, fit-dependent expatriate crises are not 'accidents' but involve deliberate human action, the consequences of which are severe human suffering or loss that could have been avoided. Examples include arrest and imprisonment, deportation, and crime.

To explain how severe crisis events might occur for expatriates, we position them as arising primarily from acculturation stress or behavioural maladjustment, including contextual or cultural lack of knowledge, ignorance and incompetence as well as inappropriate emotional reactions caused by acculturation stress (cf. Fee et al., 2013; Fee et al., 2017; Turner & Pidgeon, 1997; Nolan & Morley, 2014; Wurtz, 2018). In our model, which is depicted in Figure 1, acculturation stress and/ or behavioural maladjustment are outcomes arising from triggers in the 'domains of causes'. By excluding other variants of typical crisis triggers, such as natural and environmental disasters, medical emergencies, 'accidents,' and terrorism (cf. Bader & Berg, 2014; Bader & Schuster, 2015; Fee et al., 2013), we do not suggest they are less important or any less impactful for the expatriate, but that our focus is on severe crises that can potentially be avoided through better management of expatriate adjustment and acculturation (whether by organisations or the expatriates themselves). In our case, expatriates' survivability and ability to cope with psychological

stress in a host location are key considerations, particularly as they have fewer resources at their disposal when living abroad. Departing from Pidgeon and O’Leary (2000), we further argue that the focus on fit-dependent expatriate crises is relevant from a practical point of view, as an understanding of these severe crisis events provides possibilities for organizational actors to prevent future similar crises from occurring.

[ INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE ]

Our definition and subsequent model, of fit-dependent expatriate crises is informed by several contexts. First, we conducted an exploratory analysis of crisis events among expatriates using secondary data (see Warren, 2019 for a similar approach) of recent media in Singapore, using online outlets (e.g., Facebook, Expat Living Magazine, Instagram, AsiaOne) and newspaper articles from *The Straits Times*, Singapore’s national daily newspaper published over a five-year period (2013 to 2018). From this, we identified comprehensive examples of the nature and seriousness of the types of crises expatriates might face. We chose Singapore because it hosts a typically large population of highly paid assigned and self-initiated expatriates (Ministry of Manpower, 2017).<sup>1</sup> Of the 103 articles we reviewed, some reported non-preventable crises such as cancer diagnoses and accidental traffic deaths (n=18), but the majority involved avoidable expatriate crises (n=85). In nearly half of these cases, the crisis situation was severe enough to warrant arrest, imprisonment and caning (n=41), with more than 90 per cent of cases (n=78) deemed to be potentially “life-changing”. Our preliminary analysis of the 85 avoidable crisis media articles enabled us to begin identifying and categorising the types of avoidable crises expatriates might face (see Appendix 1 for examples), noting that more serious criminal offences were far likelier to be

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<sup>1</sup> Singapore’s Ministry of Manpower (MOM) estimated in 2017 that 42% of its population are non-residents, being legally entitled to reside and/ or work there, of which high paid expatriates (‘employment pass holders’) represent 12%. The number of high-status expatriates is higher when taking into account ‘permanent residents,’ of which there are approximately half a million.



reported in the press than ‘personal interest’ stories about (for example) accidental drowning, which greatly facilitated our research efforts. Our analysis also included identifying the severe consequences that arise for expatriates from crisis events, the potential contributing factors that trigger crises, and the various stakeholders that play a role in supporting and resolving them.

In our next step, and using our preliminary findings, we then conducted an extensive review of crisis studies to assist in further conceptualising the nature of fit-dependent crises. From our review, we identified fit-dependent expatriate crises as constituting four key elements: (i) *knowledge-dependent threats* arising from expatriates’ cultural ignorance or personal incompetence (Fee et al., 2013), meaning that, being highly educated, expatriates should have known better; (ii) *predictable surprises* that could have been avoided (Bazerman & Watkins, 2004); (iii) *moral flexibility* or the belief by expatriates that morality is relative and not absolute (Lu et al., 2017), in other words that the ‘rules do not apply to them’; and (iv) *unthinkable events*, meaning that the crisis has occurred in the “inconceivable context” of expatriation (Lagadec, 2007, p. 489) which often contributes to the severity of the consequences.

In a third step, we conceptualised serious expatriate crisis events in the context of several important changes to expatriation over the past two decades (McNulty & Selmer, 2017). First, the shift to self-initiated expatriation has severed important headquarters (home-country) organisational ties for some expatriates meaning that traditional avenues of crisis prevention and support are no longer available to them. Second, the increase in self-initiated expatriation means that people are employed abroad for longer (and undefined) periods of time than a typical 3-year assignment, which, while making them more experienced, also means they are exposed to more crisis stressors than a ‘traditional’ expatriate might experience. Recent research shows that contemporary expatriation is a very different

experience than traditional notions about living abroad in the 1980's and 90's (see McNulty & Brewster, 2017 for a critique). Changes in the international labour market as well as changes in expatriates' conditions of employment have resulted in duty of care 'first responder' obligations shifting away from organisations onto employees. We elaborate on these elements in subsequent sections using attribution and social network theories.

Our understanding of crises enables us to begin to define fit-dependent expatriate crises as *involving deliberate human action arising from acculturation stress, cultural ignorance or personal incompetence*. Next, we discuss its causes, from which we further extend our definition.

## **DOMAINS OF CAUSES OF FIT-DEPENDENT EXPATRIATE CRISES**

In continuing to build our framework, we consider next the potential causes of severe expatriate crises. Here, we conceptualise the forces that potentially lead expatriates into avoidable crisis situations at three levels: micro, macro and meso dimensions. We contend there are five domains that can contribute to causing fit-dependent expatriate crises, namely the personal, family, network, organizational and host country domains. We illustrate these domains in Figure 2 and discuss each in turn in this section, noting interrelationships among them. We further elaborate on the domains of causes by providing examples of actual crisis situations and events in Appendix 1.

In Figure 2, we conceptualise the 'domains of causes' as contributing to or triggering outcomes such as maladjustment and acculturation stress, which then results in an expatriate crisis. We note, however, that it is not always clear which came first – whether maladjustment and acculturation stress exacerbates a domain of cause or whether one or more of these domains triggers maladjustment and acculturation stress. We conclude nonetheless that an expatriate crisis situation is preceded in most instances by a deep level of stress,

which in a foreign environment (and based on our secondary data) is most often expressed as maladjustment and lack of acculturation. For this reason, we position ‘outcomes’ as preceding the crisis and eventuating from the domains of causes, noting that the combination of causes and outcomes combine to produce the crisis.

[ INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE ]

### **The Personal Domain**

For most individuals, expatriation is a challenging experience. Usually, when being relocated, employees experience adjustment difficulties and subsequent acculturation stress. While maladjustment can lead to a misfit between personal behaviour and the environment, acculturation stress at the micro level can result in inappropriate emotional reactions (Lauring & Selmer, 2010; McNulty, 2015; Bader & Berg, 2013). Under certain circumstances, this can lead to conditions that eventually develop into a crisis. On the personal level, such situations can be caused by insufficient understanding of the local surroundings (e.g., laws that govern public behavior), moral relativity due to being away from home, and improper coping mechanisms to deal with the experienced stress.

In relation to expatriate adjustment, it is common for expatriates to have a deficient understanding of norms and customs in the host environment (Kubovcikova, 2016; Jonasson, Lauring, Selmer & Trembath, 2017), at least for a while. An individual’s belief about what is acceptable in one location may not be transferable to another; for example, there may be differences in how people of the opposite gender or certain categories of workers (e.g., those offering a service to the public) need to be treated. Misunderstandings may result in expatriates’ beliefs about norms in some locations (e.g., the public consumption of alcohol) giving rise to legal violations in other locations that have vastly different norms or even colonial-era laws (Walsh, 2007). Even if not intentional, expatriates may not be sufficiently informed about the specific host country situation (e.g., intolerance of LGBT people;

McPhail & McNulty, 2015) and may find themselves responsible for causing a crisis situation due to ignorance.

Moral relativity (changes in belief as to what is right and wrong; Greppin, Carlsson, Wolfberg & Ufere, 2017) can occur when expatriates are distanced from their home context. As such, it has been argued that individual behaviour, i.e., in relation to ethics and morality, can change when immersed in a foreign location (McNulty, 2015). Lu et al. (2017) found that the frequency of relocations (breadth) rather than the length of stay in any one location (depth) was a positive predictor of immoral behaviour. Studies (e.g., Lu et al., 2017; Wurtz, 2018) have thus concluded that it is not whether the host country is more or less moral than one's home country that matters (e.g., corruption, crime), but the number of foreign experiences one is exposed to. It suggests that when expatriates engage in frequent relocations abroad, they are more likely to experience moral relativism arising from "appreciating the differences in moral beliefs upheld by different cultures" (p. 13). Moral relativity, then, can lead to a severe crisis event to the extent that the expatriate violates norms either from the home country that may still be reinforced in the family (e.g. adultery, domestic abuse) but which are unacceptable or illegal in the host location (e.g., spousal rape or assault), or by violating laws in the host country of which they are not aware, such as assaulting public servants (taxi drivers, security guards) or accepting bribes to conduct business dealings (cf. Sarpong, Sajdakova, & Adams, forthcoming).

Improper coping mechanisms during stressful situations can also be a serious problem. Maladjustment has been found to be linked to symptom-focused coping strategies, where individuals attempt to minimize anxieties through physical or mental withdrawal from the situation or by avoiding the problem (Selmer & Leung, 2007). Substance abuse, especially alcohol, can be a destructive coping mechanism among male expatriates in particular (Wurtz, 2018), far exceeding its purpose as a mechanism to 'blow off steam' on a night out drinking

with colleagues (Ames, Cunradi, Moore, & Stern, 2007). Although research shows there is no single risk factor that is dominant for alcohol abuse (Schmidt, Makela, Rehm & Room, 2010), a person's 'vulnerability' is a leading cause, meaning that the more vulnerabilities that are present (disease, mental health issues, stress), the more likely a person is to develop alcohol problems, including social (family) and socio-economic (job loss) problems and injury to others (Shi & Stevens, 2005). Improper coping mechanisms among individuals facing increased levels of stress, such as expatriates, may eventually lead to actions that can trigger a severe crisis.

Each of these micro dimensions of the personal domain will often interact with each other. For example, stress can cause improper coping mechanisms, such as alcohol abuse, that may in turn affect moral decision-making. A vicious circle of events in the personal domain can thus develop, each reinforcing the other and resulting in a severe – but avoidable - crisis. Moreover, crises that arise due to personal ignorance and incompetence, and subsequent dysfunctional emotional reactions and responses, can crossover, for example, to crises in the organization and the local environment. However, the domain where personal factors have the greatest impact is the family.

### **The Family Domain**

Another micro domain that is central to expatriate well-being is the accompanying family (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998). Here, it has been shown that inter-individual transmissions of emotional states take place between closely related persons (Takeuchi, Yun, & Tesluk, 2002; Carlson, Kacmar, Thompson & Andrews, 2019). We argue that crisis events can result from the family domain if the expatriate experiences household dysfunctionality, a change in partner/ relationship dynamics, or family isolation from familiar support networks. These dimensions in the family domain are often inter-related; family dysfunctionality is not helped,

for example, by expatriates being cut off from immediate contact with friends and relatives back home that can provide support and guidance.

With regard to family dysfunctionality, we know that there are risk factors in terms of 1) increased relationship stress with partners and children (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; McNulty, 2012), 2) dual-career issues and loss of employment for the trailing spouse (Cole, 2011; McNulty & Moeller, 2018), and 3) overall cross-cultural family stress in the host location (Berry, 1997; Lazarova, Westman & Shaffer, 2010). Hence, the family needs to be a robust social unit in order to deal with stressors in the expatriate context. If the family is not functioning well, this can lead to situations that can eventually become a crisis (e.g. domestic violence, addiction, or substance abuse; cf. Westbrook, 2008).

In relation to changes in partner/ relationship dynamics, expatriation sometimes involves that not all family members can retain the labour market status that they enjoyed in the home country. Dependency by a trailing spouse upon, for example, a breadwinner expatriate spouse can exacerbate stress levels as ‘everything is riding on one person’ in terms of their income and work status and in turn the residency status of the entire family. Moreover, being unemployed in the host country can create a frustrating dual-career issue for a trailing spouse and, in turn, transfer the crisis to the expatriate ‘couple’ (cf. Lauring & Selmer, 2010; McNulty & Moeller, 2018).

Family isolation from familiar support networks is a further contributing cause of expatriate crises. McNulty (2015) found that the absence of strong, male family role models in the host location for expatriate husbands was suggested by their (ex)wives to be a contributing factor in expatriate divorce. Other research suggests that family stress among expatriates is likely to be exacerbated by the addition of frequent international business travel for the breadwinner (expatriate) spouse (common practice in cities such as Hong Kong and Singapore; Mäkelä, Sarenpaa & McNulty, 2017), thus giving rise to *intermittent partner*

*syndrome* (Morrice, Taylor, Clark & McCann, 1985), a work-induced separation that creates psychological strain resulting in anxiety and depression among family members, particularly left-at-home partners. Again, psychological strain for the trailing spouse or children can, in turn, transfer stress and/ or feelings of a crisis to the expatriate.

Problems such as isolation may be dealt with in a constructive manner if the family is well-functioning. However, in a dysfunctional family unit, the isolation of family members can develop into insurmountable maladjustment difficulties that trigger a more severe crisis. Crises unfolding in the family domain, however, may also affect an expatriate's work life and thus the organizational domain, as expatriates that are dissatisfied with the situation of their family tend to bring such negative emotions to the workplace, where it could cause further problems (Wurtz, 2018). Correspondingly, and at the same time, the expatriate will be embedded in a networked community of other expatriates (the expatriate 'bubble') upon which he or she is likely to draw support to assist them and their family members to acculturate to the host country. The network domain while intending to be helpful may however, further add to family dysfunction. We discuss these two domains next.

### **The Network Domain**

While expatriates frequently seek acculturation support at the meso level from the organisation, the informality and ease of access to the network domain of *other* expatriates, also at the meso level, is often the preferred option (e.g., families, clubs and associations; Chui, Wu, Zhuang & Hsu, 2009). Referred to as the expatriate 'bubble' (Beaverstock, 2011; Walsh, 2007), the network domain helps expatriates to preserve their unique home-country customs and autonomy by "retreating into their social cultural enclaves" (Levy, 2015, p. 77), to maintain a continual attachment to the comfort and familiarity of 'home' (Butcher, 2010). Adapting from theories of social networks (e.g., Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954), Bader &

Schuster (2015) emphasize that social networks are important sources of emotional and instrumental support for expatriates.

Crisis events can nonetheless arise from the network domain because bubbles are typically segregated communities that remain distinct and separate from the local population, where the people within it are no longer experiencing a “normal world” (Fechter, 2007, p. 47). Walsh’s (2007, p. 507) exposé of single British expatriates in Dubai revealed a seedy lifestyle of frequent sexual encounters rendered permissible within the context of “transnationalism as a holiday-like space.” It is well known that expatriates who frequently relocate tend to gravitate towards ‘bubble’ communities as it facilitates their adjustment and integration into the host society more quickly. But such deliberate exclusion from the host environment can result in a lack of familiarity with its customs, habits, traditions and laws (regardless of moral beliefs), which can blindside unaware individuals and result in significant personal harm.

We surmise that part of the problem may be the domain network itself - a ‘bubble’ that is out of touch and too far removed from the reality of the society in which it exists. Additionally, the network domain is a vulnerable system with fewer participants having expert knowledge, and with participants that are often transient in nature (i.e., expatriates leaving the system due to relocation).

### **The Organizational Domain**

At the meso level, life in the new (host country) organization can be stressful for expatriates. Work adjustment is a well-known stressor (Aryee & Stone, 1996; Black, 1988), as too is the recent shift to the localisation of employment (and reduction in expatriate salary benefits) arising from self-initiated expatriation (McNulty & Brewster, 2019). These changes can add to expatriate crises in several ways.



First, there may be conflict with host-country nationals (HCNs) in the subsidiary organization. Workplace conflict is the extent to which one individual feels obstructed or irritated by others on the job (Lauring, Andersen, Storgaard & Kragh, 2017). Research in the domain of close relationships clearly shows that interpersonal conflict has negative consequences for mental and physical well-being that could cause the individual to act improperly (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). In international environments, there is often more conflict due to misunderstandings and mismatches in norms and expectations (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001) and there may be resentment arising from compensation disparity between expatriates and HCNs (Leung, Zhu & Ge, 2009) or the perception that expatriates (especially assigned expatriates or AEs) receive ‘special treatment’ (Varma, Pichler & Budhwar, 2011). Expatriates may be excluded from informal networks and decision-making due to their cultural and linguistic differences or because of their affiliation with a parent company. Hence, the expatriate can feel isolated and excluded from other organizational members with negative consequences for his or her well-being (Aycaan 1997; Hailey 1996). Linked to conflict are often feelings of injustice (Mikula & Wenzel, 2000), which can potentially impact upon expatriate performance. Such stress could cross over into other domains such as the family (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998).

The recently introduced practice of localising expatriates can also contribute to stress and exacerbate potential crisis situations. Localisation applies especially to self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), meaning that salary benefits typically afforded to AEs are reduced or removed altogether, thus requiring the SIE (and their family members) to integrate into local society – and to live like locals - to alleviate their cost of living expenses that are no longer funded by the company. McNulty & Brewster (2019) argue that when organisations introduce localisation practices, the transition for expatriates may not be stress-free or simple; localisation removes any possibility of repatriation ‘back home’ or home-country

headquarters (HQ) assistance or intervention during a personal hardship. Thus, the duty of care obligation shifts to local (host-country) HRM support, which may not be capable of, or interested in, handling matters related to employees' foreigner status. Localised expatriates are situated somewhere between those in the 'bubble' and those who go-native, but without full ownership to either; instead, they form a separate community of expatriates defined by semi-permanent residence but without home-country organisational support.

Localisation means that AEs and SIEs will experience expatriate stress and any subsequent crisis differently: at the meso level, AEs are likely to rely heavily on HQ (home-country) HRM support in a 'first responder' capacity for legal and practical assistance, whereas SIEs will typically rely on non-HQ HRM support in the form of local (host-country) lawyers and embassies. While such support may be helpful in the short-term, over the long-term it is likely to be inadequate because local support actors are usually not versed in the intricacies of foreigner issues. For example, if a crisis requires lengthy court proceedings that restricts an expatriate from leaving the jurisdiction and/ or the crisis is compounded by economic distress arising from being fired (because the crisis event brings unwanted reputational harm to the organisation; Forstenlechner, 2010), it can escalate into a chronic crisis situation (see examples in McNulty's 2015 study of expatriate divorce).

### **The Host Country Domain**

While conflict at micro and meso levels can affect expatriates' maladjustment and stress and thereby contribute to causing crises, so too can conflict at the macro level in the host country where they are working. The legal, religious and economic development of the host country plays an important role in explaining crisis events, for example, through discriminatory behaviour and practices targeted at expatriates or from location-specific 'temptations' that plays on expatriates' moral relativity.

With regard to discrimination, some expatriate destinations may generally be averse to the presence of foreigners thereby potentially strengthening the likelihood of crisis situations (cf. Bader, Stoermer, Bader, & Schuster, 2018). Forstenlechner (2010), for example, has shown how discrimination at the host country level may lead the expatriate to be, in their own opinion, more easily the prosecuted or targeted party, for example, in road accidents. We see similar incidents in the examples given in Appendix 1.

Temptation can also be an important factor. There are ‘honey’ destinations that can very easily result in an avoidable crisis: Thailand, China, Vietnam and much of Africa are examples of destinations where the poverty of local women makes expatriate men very attractive. This may result in increased domestic conflict or even divorce (McNulty, 2015). Easier access in some host country locations to drugs, alcohol, pornography or sexual services could also lead to undesired actions that might not have taken place in the home country (Walsh, 2017). Temptations in the local context may interact with moral relativity leading to situations that could be the onset for a crisis in relation to, for example, a conviction.

Having outlined the five domains (causes) of serious man-made expatriate crises, we further develop our definition of fit-dependent expatriate crises as *involving deliberate human action arising from acculturation stress, cultural ignorance or personal incompetence, that is exacerbated in part or in whole by an individual’s personal, family, network, organisational and/ or host-country domain(s), the consequences of which are serious, severe, irreversible, long-term (chronic) and potentially life-changing, but which could have been avoided.*

Taking departure in the five domains of causes for fit-dependent expatriate crises, we next discuss potential supportive sources and actors, and the respective solutions they can provide, to assist expatriates before, during and after a crisis situation.

## **DOMAINS OF SUPPORT FOR FIT-DEPENDENT EXPATRIATE CRISES**

We conceptualise sources of support for fit-dependent expatriate crises at three levels: within the organisation, within the network, and from external specialists. We further conceptualise when support is provided across three stages: pre-, during and post-crisis. These are depicted in Figure 3 and Table 1 below.

### **Support from Within the Organization**

Research has for a long time shown that high-quality organisational support is beneficial to expatriates and their families and has positive crossover effects back to the organisation in terms of improved individual well-being and performance (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998; Takeuchi et al., 2002). Within organisations, primary support needs to be centred around crisis prevention, the expatriates' safety and health during the crisis, and the support needed to restore safety and/ or health at an appropriate juncture (Fee et al., 2013).

There are many studies that focus on the importance of organisational pre-expatriation cross-cultural and language training (Littrell et al., 2006) and, where necessary, providing evacuation briefings for employees entering dangerous locations, including well-designed procedures for acute crisis support and potential repatriation in the event of kidnapping or illness (Bader & Schuster, 2015; Lockwood, Rason, & Tanaya-Bloomer, 2014). These pre-crisis prevention measures typically entail 'one-off' training sessions or briefings, usually given before the expatriate has left their home country, and with little follow up post-arrival.

Research on man-made disasters (e.g., Turner & Pidgeon, 1997) nonetheless suggests that an incubation period typically exists prior to the onset of the crisis, where small undetected errors can build up over time through misunderstanding and miscommunication of risks. We contend that failure by expatriates and/ or their organisation to recognise the escalation of small but important acts of cultural ignorance or incompetence post-arrival may be a relevant explanatory factor in subsequent crises that arise. Compounding the risk is that

the accumulation of undetected errors over time is often prevalent in more vulnerable systems (Pidgeon & O'Leary, 2000), such as expatriation. Thus, while we have argued a crisis may be fit-dependent at the micro level, maladjustment errors may also relate to vulnerabilities at the meso level (in the organisational system).

The importance of the organization in the pre-crisis period means that central organisational members such as the HRM department and the expatriate's supervisor must be particularly sensitive for signs of maladjustment. This can include domains outside the organization such as in one's personal life, family unit or host country setting. Therefore, risk management policies may be necessary to address fit-dependent risks *other than* only financial and environmental risks within the organisation. It would ideally include detecting problems with expatriates' adjustment (including their family members) and capacity to cope with stress post-arrival and to address it in collaboration with, for example, the social network and/ or external specialists (e.g., well-being programs, work-life balance initiatives, coaching).

During the crisis period, organizations have an important internal role to play. Close colleagues, HRM personnel and supervisors can provide emotional support and function as coordinators of relevant external specialists linked to the organisation that could be needed (e.g., legal advisors, immigration specialists, counsellors, and medical professionals). Doing so can also help expatriates to get on with their life post-crisis.

During the crisis, it is also important to clarify the extent and implications of the crisis for the expatriate (will they be fired?) *as well as* the organisation (what is the reputational damage to the firm arising from the crisis?). Decisions relating to either may be explained by attribution theory, which holds that people will make judgments about the causes of events and intervene according to their belief that the event was or was not controllable (or avoidable) by the people involved (Weiner, Amirkhan, Folkes, & Verette, 1987; Kelley &

Michela, 1980). Especially needed is to develop and properly communicate an action plan of how to deal with crisis ‘fall out’. Organizations might need to be directly involved in providing support to others drawn into the crisis zone as ‘peripheral victims’ (e.g., family members and work colleagues) who will hold ties to the affected person and may require long-term legal assistance and/ or psychological counselling.

After the crisis event, the organization has a critical post-crisis role in learning from the situation in order to prevent such incidents in the future or to handle them better should they arise again (Fee et al., 2013). Building a network of external infrastructure support and activating external actors early in the crisis should be key areas of focus. Nonetheless, little attention has been paid as to how organisations might build such an infrastructure.

[ INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

[ INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

### **Support from Within the Network**

Researchers emphasize the role of social networks during expatriation, broadly defined as the web of social relationships that surrounds individuals and is a finite set of actors connected by one or more specific types of ties (Bader and Schuster, 2015; Chiu et al., 2009). We argue that the network can provide both emotional and instrumental support to expatriates in crisis. This is typically from the immediate network of family members and friends in the host country, including social networks in the expatriate community, and to a much lesser extent family members back home (Mahajan & Toh, 2014; Bader et al., 2015). It may also include various information sources (e.g., social media or chat groups) or expatriate clubs (Beaverstock, 2011).

In the pre-crisis phase, the network (especially family members) has an important role in being sensitive to indicators of a developing crisis situation. This could, for example, be increased stress reactions such as insomnia or aggressiveness, alcohol abuse or signs of moral

relativity (excessive use of pornography or extra-marital affairs). Alleviating sources of stress or seeking help for chronic stressors are key.

The network can also be highly supportive during the crisis functioning in a similar way as the organization by coordinating external specialists gleaned from expatriate community networks and providing emotional support. The extent of support required may be exacerbated by crises that involve the family (cf. Bader et al., 2015). We caution that support from immediate family members in the host country is unlikely to be an effective source of support given they will be in the ‘crisis zone’ (see Figure 3) as peripheral victims with their own crisis to deal with (e.g., the threat of forced repatriation for themselves and any children in the event of criminal conviction of their spouse). Thus, there may be an extraordinary need for support from external specialists being experts in handling some specific aspects of the crisis event related only to the spouse and children (e.g., divorce, domestic violence).

### **Support from External Specialists**

External stakeholders that can assist expatriates during a crisis include (among others) law enforcement, embassies, lawyers, medical professionals, counsellors, social workers, and religious institutions, which may help the organization and expatriates to gain more knowledge of the crisis situation and how best to handle it (Waxin, 2004; Eriksson et al., 2009; Fee et al., forthcoming). This group of actors can also perform treatments of a medical or psychological nature in order to bring the expatriate back to a balanced situation (cf. Stone, Cross, Purvis & Young, 2003; Tedeschi, Park & Calhoun, 1998). Some of the external specialists may handle formal bureaucratic or legal processes in the host or home country to assist the expatriate to solve the problems that are causing the crisis, while others might provide meals and accommodation in the event of job loss. We argue that the external stakeholders’ expertise in certain areas such as medical or legal disciplines makes them a

central support source which neither the social network nor the organization can fully replace.

Furthermore, as our illustrative examples in Appendix 1 have shown, there may be times when the organization does not provide support in fit-dependent crisis situations. On the one hand, the organisation may withdraw support due to its protection of the company's reputation or where the cause or centre of crisis is the family thereby excluding itself as a primary support mechanism. Alternatively, SIEs (as compared to AEs) will not be able to rely on HQ HRM support or even host-country HRM support given they are employed as locals. As suggested earlier, in such situations the expatriate may have no alternative but to seek and pay for support themselves from external experts. Very little research has, however, been conducted on this theme, and we therefore propose that it is an important area of future studies of serious fit-dependent expatriate crises.

## **DISCUSSION**

In this article, we have argued that avoidable and man-made crises are a specific area of 'dark side' themes in expatriate literature in need of more attention. We have, in particular, focused on the fit-dependent types of crisis where the expatriate bears a part of the responsibility for its development due to maladjustment and/ or subsequent acculturation stress. Such a crisis can develop in a number of overlapping domains; for example, the personal, family, network, organizational and host country domains. Often, more than one domain is involved such that problems grow into a genuine crisis. This also means that more stakeholders in the organization and the network may be needed to monitor the situation to prevent the unfolding of a crisis situation or to de-escalate a crisis after it has occurred. We illustrate our conceptualisation in Figure 1.

Many times, a negative situation only becomes a crisis when support systems are vulnerable and fail to provide preventive measures or immediate interventions. Whether a



crisis is relatively short-term or takes much longer to resolve and recover from is likely to be exacerbated by several inter-related crisis components.

First, the extent to which expatriates have access to, and familiarity with, appropriate external specialists will determine how well they are able to avoid or deal with a crisis. It includes (lack of) local know-how and experience concerning law and the legal process, medical systems including insurance, social welfare support structures, psychological support, and host-country laws that determine their freedom of movement to return home. Here, the organisation and the network have critical roles to play; during and after the crisis, their roles should centre on emotional support and contacting/ coordinating external specialists that can help the expatriate regain his/ her balance. These specialists are important especially when long-term treatment, counselling and advice is needed to ease, eradicate or deal with problems caused by the crisis.

Second, and related to the first, is the nature of the employment relationship between the expatriate and the organisation as a result of the crisis and, as a result, what then happens to any duty of care obligation the organisation may have had. If an expatriate loses their job as a result of the crisis event, organisational duty of care may cease and shift instead to external specialists in the home and host country. Similarly, if the expatriate is localised or employed as an SIE, duty of care obligations may also shift to non-organisational host country specialists. The point we make is that vulnerability in the employment relationship can exacerbate even a simple crisis (as shown in Appendix 1).

### **Implications for Theory**

Looking through media accounts of expatriate crises in Singapore (Appendix 1), we see examples of situations where one or more potential support systems available to expatriates failed to prevent or alleviate a fit-dependent crisis; some actors (e.g., organisations) made the situation worse by firing the employee. Our point is that, while support and intervention are

often available, the willingness to help when the individual is partly responsible for the misfortune is not always forthcoming. When man-made crises occur, the organisation's reluctance to assist can be explained by attribution theory in terms of the extent of help it is willing to offer as determined by who caused the crisis – the employee or the organisation. However, one has to acknowledge that expatriates are vulnerable in the foreign context, even among those that are paid handsome 'hardship allowances' because of the difficulties they are likely to encounter. Hence, although they may be partly responsible for triggering the crisis themselves, they are also in a situation where adjustment difficulties and the subsequent stress put a great deal of pressure on them. We see this mismatch between the need to handle an expatriate crisis and the willingness to intervene by the organisation as an important theme to be taken up in future research on expatriate crises; specifically, how attribution theory moderates' sources of support made available to expatriates during a crisis situation, and what can be done to overcome reluctance to help among (potential) supportive actors.

Related to the above is a need to more fully understand the functional importance of the network domain during expatriation more broadly as well as during a crisis. Studies of expatriates' experiencing a terrorist threat shows that social support in the network domain can be crucial for their well-being and performance (Bader & Schuster, 2015). While the network domain has inherent vulnerabilities in relation to expatriate crisis detection or crisis management (i.e., lack of expertise, transience), it is likely to be increasingly relied upon to provide support to expatriates in more contemporary forms of employment (i.e., as SIEs or expatriate entrepreneurs), where the expectation of organisational support is reduced or severed. Theories of social networks can be helpful in understanding how to strengthen the network domain.

### **Implications for Practice**

Severe crisis events will impact on HRM policies, processes and procedures for dealing with employees living abroad, and will create additional challenges for HRM beyond what could normally be expected. A major challenge for organisations is to overcome deficiencies in duty of care obligations that do not currently extend beyond being responsive only to unavoidable crises such as natural disasters and workplace accidents. BAL (2017) advises that an employer's duty of care towards employees is now a legal requirement in terms of workplace standards and safety; in many jurisdictions (Australia, New Zealand, Spain, France) it is extended to employees working abroad, and even foreigners employed locally (e.g., in Canada). Duty of care implies that employers take reasonable steps to protect employees from foreseeable risks in the course of their work, including preventing or mitigating harm. 'Work' can include any location where an employee is assigned to complete it. What is 'reasonable' is obviously open to wide interpretation, however, ignorance on the basis of not knowing, it never being a problem in the past, or it not being foreseeable are an inadequate defence under the law. Changes in the employment relationship for some expatriates (e.g., SIEs, locally-hired foreigners, expatriate gig workers) that has reduced or severed organisational support in the event of a crisis obviously increases the risk of organisational non-compliance related to duty of care obligations for expatriates. If the organisation is to be replaced as a primary support mechanism for expatriates in crisis, is the network domain a reliable substitute? Moreover, where does legal responsibility for duty of care reside if organisations are increasingly being sued for failure to provide it?

## **LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

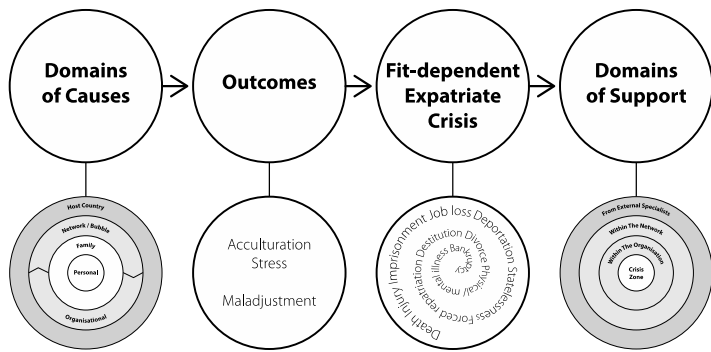
As with all research, our study has some limitations. There is a scarcity of literature related to serious expatriate crises with the exception of only a few studies related to terrorism (Bader & Berg, 2013, 2014; Bader et al., 2015; Bader & Schuster, 2015), expatriate divorce (McNulty, 2015), hostile environments (Dickmann & Watson, 2017; Faeth & Kittler, 2017)

and alcohol abuse (Wurtz, 2018). While a large body of literature about crises exists in other fields (e.g., medicine, aid work, disaster relief), there is almost no inter-disciplinary link to expatriate studies. As a result, our model is highly exploratory being based on a preliminary media search within a large-city context, as well as experiences from own research on fit-dependent crisis events. On this basis, we argue that there is a need for examining this area further, particularly as our model is heavily context dependent since it was developed with Singapore in mind; a small location in, say, China, where the expatriate is single/unaccompanied and there are no other expatriates, let alone countrymen of the expatriate, will require different domains of support, some of which will not be available in the host country.

Additionally, while our use of secondary data is justifiable on several grounds (see Sarpong, Sajdakova & Adams, forthcoming), it does not fully account for internal or external (personal) factors that may precipitate a crisis, hence we are unable to establish from data clear links between a variety of risk factors and the actual crisis event. Moreover, the reason for a crisis (e.g. arrest, imprisonment) may not represent the true cause of the crisis itself, suggesting that causes of fit-dependent expatriate crises are likely to be complex and to accumulate over time (both before and during the time abroad), which we incorporate into our model.

As a starting point, our model of fit-dependent expatriate crises, its domains of causes, and sources of support provides an overview of the phenomenon from which further research can be expanded. By conceptualizing and depicting a model of causes for and support of fit-dependent expatriate crises, we aim to establish a foundation for future empirical research within an area of the ‘dark side’ of expatriation. We find this theme to have great personal and organisational impact.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Fit-dependent Expatriate Crises: Domains of ‘Causes’ and ‘Support’**



**Figure 2. ‘Domains of Causes’ of Fit-dependent Expatriate Crises**

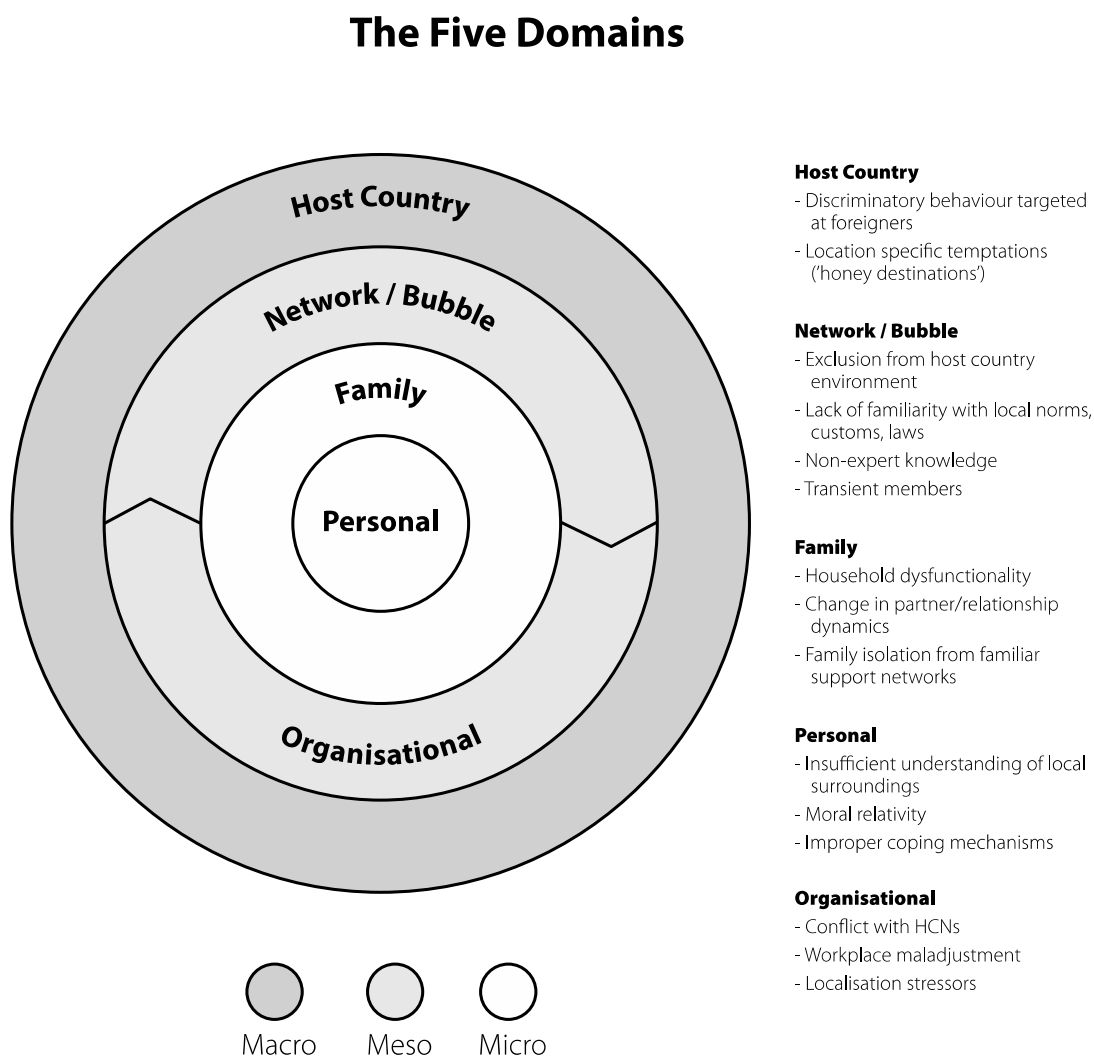
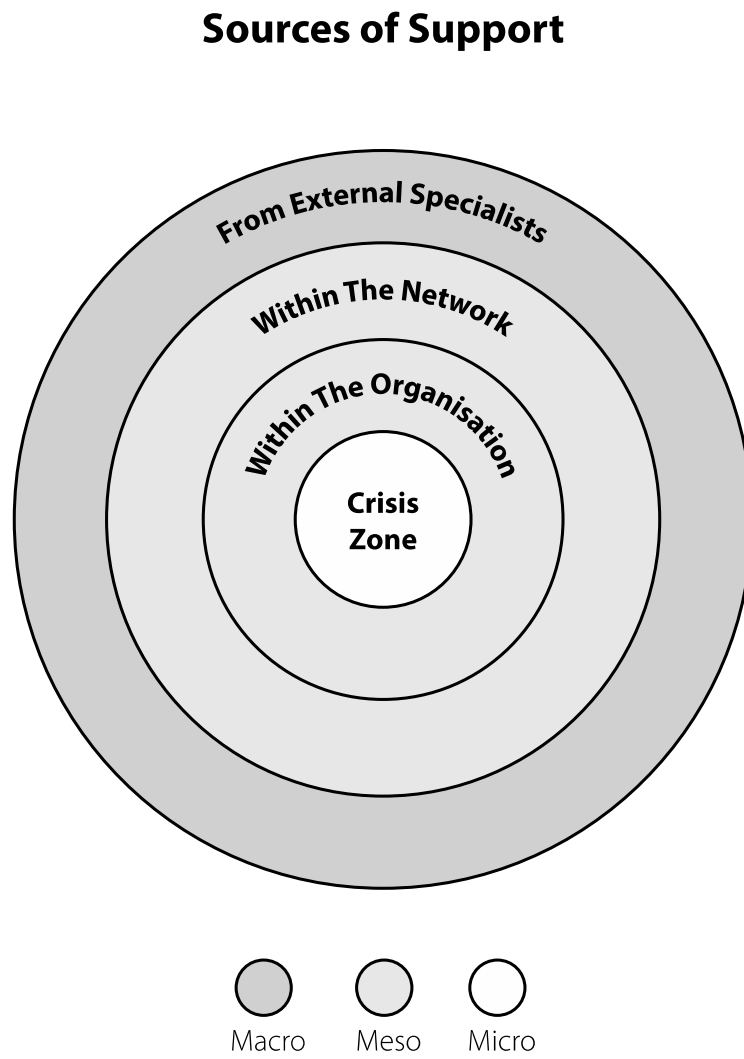


Figure 3. 'Domains of Support' for Fit-dependent Expatriate Crises



**Table 1. Domains of Support for Fit-dependent Expatriate Crises**

<i>Actors</i>	<i>Responsibilities and/or Support</i>	<i>Stage of Crisis</i>
<b>WITHIN THE ORGANISATION</b>		
<b>HRM/ Supervisor/ Colleagues</b>	Monitor and reduce stressors for expatriates Watch for potential development of crisis ‘incubation period’	<b>Pre</b>
<b>HRM</b>	Comply with host country laws including duty of care obligations; enforce company policies and procedures (may result in job loss) Provide professional referrals (e.g., lawyer, counsellor); (partially) fund legal costs; repatriate family members; liaise with Embassy	<b>During</b>
<b>Supervisor</b>	Manage relationships with external stakeholders in host country; manage relationships with internal stakeholders in home country	
<b>Colleagues</b>	Mitigate geographical isolation from family support back home (emotional)	<b>Post</b>
<b>HRM</b>	Facilitate organisational learning/ knowledge to prevent and handle crises in future	
<b>WITHIN THE NETWORK</b>		
<b>Host-country family/ Expatriate friends</b>	Monitor and reduce stressors for expatriates Watch for potential development of crisis ‘incubation period’	<b>Pre</b>
<b>Expatriate friends/ Clubs/ Associations/ Online media</b>	Provide professional referrals (e.g., lawyer, counsellor)	<b>During</b>
<b>International school</b>	Provide counselling support for children	
<b>Expatriate friends</b>	Give emotional support (a listening ear) Offer practical support to family members (housing, meals)	
<b>FROM EXTERNAL SPECIALISTS</b>		
<b>Medical Professional</b>	Provide mental health support for individual and/ or family members	<b>Pre</b>
<b>Counsellor</b>	Provide emotional support to individual and/ or family members	
<b>Religious Institution</b>	Provide faith-based emotional and practical support to individual and family members	
<b>Law Enforcement</b>	Facilitate immediate communication with relevant Embassy about an individual’s arrest or situation; arrest individual to prevent further offending/ escalation of unlawful behaviour; conduct thorough investigation of situation that led to arrest or situation	<b>During</b>



<b>Embassy</b>	Liaise with relevant local authorities to ensure individual's physical and psychological wellbeing; facilitate communication with family members in host and home country; provide emergency travel documents; advise on transfer of funds from home country; offer referral services for lawyers, interpreters, doctors and funeral directors
<b>Lawyer</b>	Inform individual of their legal rights/ how legal process works, including timelines; prepare individual for court proceedings; advise on post-crisis implications regarding work pass/ immigration status of individual and family members; manage local media
<b>Medical Professional</b>	Provide mental health support for individual and/ or family members; liaise with relevant local authorities and lawyer as required
<b>Counsellor</b>	Provide emotional support to individual and/ or family members to work through immediate crisis situation and aftermath
<b>Social Worker</b>	Provide practical support to individual and/ or family members (interim housing, meals, child custody/ visitation)
<b>Religious Institution</b>	Provide faith-based emotional and practical support to individual and family members

## Appendix 1: Examples of Fit-dependent Expatriate Crises from a Media Search Conducted 2013-2018 in Singapore

<i>Crisis Situation</i>	<i>Crisis Outcome</i>	<i>Source</i>
<b>PERSONAL DOMAIN</b>		
A male German CEO in Singapore physically assaulted a taxi driver that refused to offer his service because the expatriate was drunk. The expatriate was charged, convicted and jailed (#41). In a similar case, a female Taiwanese broker, who assaulted a taxi driver while intoxicated and then a security guard who tried to intervene, was later sentenced to three weeks jail (#19). There are many similar cases (#5).	Lawful conviction and imprisonment Job loss	[The Straits Times] CEO gets jail for slapping cabby   15 September 2016, A3 [The Straits Times] Broker jailed and fined for assault and abuse after night of drinking   3 January 2018, B8 [The Straits Times] Law don who beat up cabby gets 4 months' jail   27 June 2015, Online
An expatriate CEO and father of three sons went on trial in 2018 on charges of child sexual assault for molesting his youngest son's nine-year-old classmate at a 2015 Halloween sleepover at his home in Singapore. The CEO was sentenced to 14 years' jail and 24 strokes of the cane in August 2018. During sentencing, further charges were raised of sexual assault of an eight-year-old child in 2011, in Singapore, under similar circumstances. The man's wife and three children have subsequently relocated back to their home country (#18).	Lawful conviction, imprisonment, caning Forced repatriation of family members	[The Straits Times] CEO gets jail, caning for sex assault on son's friend   1 September 2018, A9
A high-level academic from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at National University of Singapore had his permanent residency cancelled after being identified as "an agent of influence of a foreign country" who worked with intelligence organisations and agents from that country to influence Singapore's foreign policy. He and his wife, both US citizens, have been permanently banned from Singapore (#34).	Permanent residency revoked Fired from job Deportation	[The Straits Times] LKY School professor Huang Jing banned, has PR cancelled, for being agent of influence for foreign country   4 August 2017, Online.
A naturalised Singaporean, originally from Male, had his citizenship taken away for his involvement in a global match-fixing syndicate constituting criminal conduct. Upon appeal, his citizenship was reinstated with stringent conditions to not reoffend.	Citizenship revoked Statelessness	[The Straits Times] Man losing citizenship was part of match-fixing ring   8 December 2017, A4
A self-employed Australian expatriate was sentenced to 11 months' jail and 3 strokes of the cane for molesting (inappropriately touching) two women in separate bar incidents (#27).	Lawful conviction, imprisonment, caning	[The Straits Times] Australian gets 11 months' jail, 3 strokes of cane for molesting 2 women at 2 Boat Quay bars   6 December 2017 (online)
<b>FAMILY DOMAIN</b>		
In 2015, a Belgian expatriate smothered and killed his five-year-old son at his apartment in the midst of a divorce and custody battle with his estranged French wife, who had wanted full custody of the child in order to relocate back to France. The father, who had become distressed and tired of the legal proceedings, decided to smother his son before committing suicide. The suicide attempt failed and the expatriate is now serving a five-year prison sentence on reduced charges of culpable homicide arising from a 'depressive disorder' which the judge concluded "substantially impaired his judgment" at the time of the incident.	Death of child (homicide) Divorce Lawful imprisonment Loss of job	[The Straits Times] Belgian gets 5 years' jail for killing son   23 August 2016, B1

The mother, who has since relocated back to France where she buried their son, claimed that killing their child was intended “to hurt me as much as possible” (#17).		
A spate of expatriate divorce cases in Singapore resulted in several crises for dependent spouses (mothers), including: (1) forced repatriation and abandonment of their child/ren due to cancellation of their residency permit by the children’s father (#36, #37, #38); and/ or (2) restricted freedom of movement to return to their home country due to enforcement of Hague Convention laws (#24).	Divorce Loss of residency, forced repatriation Restricted freedom of movement	[The Straits Times] Hope for trailing expat spouses in divorce cases   3 January 2017, Online [The Straits Times] More expat spouses left in lurch in divorce cases   18 September 2016, Online [Expat Living] Marriage breakdown, April 2015, 150 [The New Paper] An expatriate’s life can be tough on a marriage   18 October 2015, Online
<b>NETWORK DOMAIN</b>		
Unlike in countries from which many expatriates originate, assault of a public transport worker in Singapore frequently entails a ‘deterrent’ jail sentence and/ or a heavy fine under the Protection from Harassment Act (#16, #20). Yet, the sheer number of cases we observed over a short period of time suggests that nearly all expatriates are unaware of Singapore’s laws until they find themselves in the unenviable position of being charged with a crime punishable by prison, fine and/ or caning, often over little more than a \$20 taxi fare (#15). The process of arrest, being charged, convicted and then jailed can take more than 12 months to reach its conclusion (see #19).	Conviction, fine and/ or imprisonment Job loss	[The Straits Times] Youth gets four weeks jail for spitting in cop's face   13 September 2017, B6 [The Straits Times] German jailed for headbutting police officer   26 October 2017, B3 [The Straits Times] Two weeks jail for man who beat up cabby over \$20 fare   20 November 2013, Online
A British expatriate banker in Singapore faced a personal crisis in 2014 after posting several disrespectful and insulting remarks about Singaporeans on social media (#32). His mocking of ‘poor people’ taking public transportation and calling a taxi driver a ‘retard’ led to death threats after unknown individuals, in retaliation, posted his home address online. His organization reacted by firing the expatriate and the situation resulted in him and his family fleeing the country for Australia. In a similar situation, an Indian bank employee was fired and given a stern police warning after posting an image of a ripped Singapore flag on social media (#28).	Death threats Job loss Loss of residency Restricted freedom of movement	[The Straits Times] Briton loses job amid furore over online remarks   26 January 2014, 2 [The Straits Times] Man given stern warning over torn flag image   25 October 2018, B2
A New Zealand company director was fined \$2500 for causing hurt to a local Singaporean he had bumped into outside a McDonald’s (#59). Witnesses testified that the expatriate “showed no remorse immediately after the incident and flaunted his wealth to the victim, saying he was able to hire a lawyer”. Further, he had “said this with an arrogant tone”.	Conviction and fine	[The Straits Times] Man fined \$2500 for hurting another   21 December 2017, B5
<b>ORGANISATION DOMAIN</b>		
A French MD, who was jailed for 3 weeks after causing hurt to another expatriate in a bar, was made redundant from his job as a result of his conviction, despite his lawyer pleading for leniency for an incident that was “completely out of character and not premeditated”	Conviction, fine Job loss Loss of residency	[The Straits Times] Ex-MD jailed for smashing glass against man's head   1 August 2017, B6

<p>(#3). The case took 9 months to resolve from arrest to jail. During this time, his passport would have been impounded, but with no job, he would likely have faced financial difficulties without being able to leave the jurisdiction. He has subsequently relocated to Hong Kong in self-employment. There are countless cases of the same nature where organisations fire an employee upon them being charged (but not yet convicted) of a crime that may result in either minimal jail time or only a fine (#77).</p>	<p>[The Straits Times] Briton given four weeks' jail for assault   9 May 2018, B6</p>
<p><b>HOST COUNTRY DOMAIN</b></p>	
<p>A 39-year old Australian expatriate in Singapore punched a local female jazz singer after she had made provocative, insulting and racist comments to him (#23). While the expatriate made no excuse for his actions, he was convicted of causing hurt, fined \$3000, and lost his job two days after he was arrested because he now had a “tarnished image due to the comments made by the victim on various blog sites”. His case, like others (#30), took more than 12 months to be resolved.</p>	<p>Conviction, fine Job loss</p> <p>[The Straits Times] Man fined \$3k for punching jazz singer   26 March 2015, B5 [The Straits Times] \$4k fine for manager who punched cabby after vomiting in taxi   17 April 2018, B6</p>
<p>A Norwegian expatriate in Singapore was wrongly accused and convicted of assaulting a taxi driver after a heavy night of drinking (#12). While it eventually became known eight-months after the incident that the taxi driver had provoked the assault for which the expatriate fought back to defend himself, the Norwegian was nonetheless fired from his high-paying job, estranged from his wife, now lived abroad, and had served five-weeks of a 10-week prison sentence, before a retrial found him guilty of a lesser charge requiring no additional prison time. The judge conducting the retrial concluded there was discrimination involved, in which the foreigner was targeted to take the blame because he was drunk.</p>	<p>Falsely accused of a crime Job loss Divorce</p> <p>[The Straits Times] Man jailed for 'brutish' attack on taxi driver   2 April 2015, A8</p>

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