

**Home Sweet Home Abroad: Understanding and Harnessing Job Embeddedness of The  
Internationally Relocated Workers**

by

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## **Abstract**

Encompassing employees' interconnectedness with their communities, organizations, and career trajectories, job embeddedness serves as a potent predictor of crucial work outcomes for internationally relocated workers (IRWs). Despite its significance, current literature on the embeddedness of IRWs reveals several deficiencies, thus hindering its effective application in research and practice within this workforce. These limitations primarily stem from inadequate attention to cross-border relocation, thereby failing to differentiate the embeddedness of IRWs from that of native workers. In this thesis, we<sup>1</sup> systematically examine the influencing factors, theoretical framework, and important outcomes of job embeddedness among IRWs, taking their distinct circumstances of international relocation into consideration. Four key papers constitute this thesis. Identifying factors influencing IRWs' community, organizational, and career embeddedness in their host countries, the first systematic literature review (SLR) categorizing them into four levels: situational, individual, organizational, and institutional. We scrutinize current research gaps and delineate directions for future studies. The second SLR focuses on the unique characteristics of job embeddedness among IRWs, highlighting intensified spillover and crossover effects, as well as transnationalism. These characteristics elucidate how IRWs establish connections with their new environment and expand the constellation of the job embeddedness concept. These conceptual foundations lay the groundwork for two empirical studies within this thesis. The first study employs a person-centered approach and latent class analysis (LCA) to identify different embedding types among IRWs while also examining the role of personal initiative (PI) in shaping these types and their relationships with retention intent. Results unveil four embedding types, namely, 'host country community-focused embedders', 'home country community-focused embedders', 'host

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<sup>1</sup> The pronoun 'We' is consistently used throughout the dissertation to ensure coherence of content, as papers 2-4 were co-authored with the first supervisor of this dissertation.

country career-focused embedders’ and ‘transnational embedders’. ‘Transnational embedders’ exhibit the strongest inclination to stay, followed by ‘Host country community-focused embedders’. Furthermore, PI is also shown to play a significant role in fostering transnational and host country embeddedness. The final empirical study focuses on a subset of IRWs—dual-earner expatriate couples (DEECs). Through the utilization of actor-partner interdependence model (APIM), we demonstrate that a partner’s community embeddedness mediates the relationship between their self-enhancing humor (SEH) and career satisfaction. Additionally, the effects of humor positively cross over to a partner's community embeddedness and career satisfaction, with a particular influence on female career satisfaction through deepening their connection with the host community. The contributions of this thesis are manifold. Firstly, the thesis offers conceptual insights enhancing the understanding of job embeddedness among IRWs, bolstering its applicability and guiding future research. Secondly, employing innovative methods such as LCA and APIM, it provides empirical evidence on two novel personal antecedents of job embeddedness—PI and SEH—along with their mechanisms underlying retention and career satisfaction among IRWs. Lastly, practical recommendations are offered for stakeholders, including HRM practices and policymakers, to effectively leverage and augment job embeddedness among IRWs.

## **Acknowledgements**

This thesis was developed alongside my journey in my second homeland, Germany. The moment I began writing the first article within this thesis marked a significant turning point in my life in this country. The pages of this thesis, therefore, bear witness to the myriad transformations that have shaped my existence in this country. The me of six years ago would be surprised and tearfully joyful to know that I have now accomplished my doctoral thesis, become a mother, and is in the process of obtaining German citizenship. This thesis signifies a lot more than just an academic achievement; it deeply reflects my personal aspirations, experiences, and reflections as an internationally relocated worker in Germany. Various individuals have played crucial roles throughout this process, and their invaluable support was imperative for the formation, development, and completion of my doctoral research projects.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Problem statements

*“Migration is an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety, and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family.”*

*- Ban Ki-Moon -*

Throughout history, humankind has consistently migrated across borders, regions, and continents, in pursuit of a secure life, promising career opportunities, personal growth, and a new 'home' in their chosen destinations. However, establishing this new 'home' often becomes a predicament not only for the individuals themselves but also for the host countries and employer organizations (European Commission, 2020). Existing literature indicates that when compared to native residents of their host countries, people with an international relocation background often face greater disadvantages in the labor market, the risk of social isolation, and a diminished quality of life (European Commission, 2020). Various barriers simultaneously restrict individuals to construct their belongingness and connectedness to a new destination in both work and private life.

Within the diverse population, those who are characterized by self-initiated or company-sponsored cross-border relocations and legal employment in the host countries are referred to as internationally relocated workers (IRWs). These workers are designated under diverse terms in different scientific fields. As a case in point, they may be called (first-generation) legal migrant workers in sociology, economics, or political sciences (Andresen et al., 2014; United Nations, 1990; Usher, 2004), and expatriates or (business) expatriates in business and management studies (Andresen et al., 2014; McNulty & Brewster, 2017). The IRWs represent a substantial portion of the global talent pool, which numbered 169 million worldwide as of 2021 (Mcauliffe &

Triandafyllidou, 2021). Their presence is critical for addressing labor shortages (EURES, 2023). IRWs make up 20% to 40% of the total working population in various regions, such as Western Europe and the Arab States, rendering them indispensable for sustaining these economies (Mcauliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021).

IRWs demonstrate the capacity to foster innovation (Kerr & Kerr, 2020), enhance productivity (Peri, 2009), facilitate knowledge transfer (Boberg-Fazlic & Sharp, 2019), increase national human capital (Eberhard, 2012) and stimulate economic growth. All these myriad contributions underscore their importance in host countries (UK Government, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2015). They are highly valuable in terms of promoting knowledge transfer (Liu et al., 2015), innovation and firm performance in their respective organizations (Fornaro et al., 2019). In the wake of these benefits received from them, host countries and organizations understandably exhibit desires to leverage their capabilities as well as promoting their retention.

Nevertheless, the attainment of these goals has proven to be onerous due to inherent impediments, such as an underdeveloped system for recognizing their qualifications (European Commission, 2020) and a distinctive propensity of IRWs for mobility (Andrijasevic & Sacchetto, 2016). Surmounting these obstacles requires the development of effective tools for managing the retention and work outcomes of IRWs.

Job embeddedness, which describes individuals' connectedness to their community, organization and career domains through links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell et al., 2001; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010), has been known as a powerful predictor of various work outcomes among IRWs. Its most significant effects are observed in IRWs' retention within the host organizations (Chen et al., 2022a; Ren et al., 2014; Yunlu et al., 2018) and settlement in the receiving countries (Meuer et al., 2019; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). Furthermore, job embeddedness illustrates a



positive influence on diverse IRWs' critical work consequences, including performance organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Andresen, 2015), knowledge transfer (Froese et al., 2021; Stoermer et al., 2020) and career satisfaction (Linder, 2019). Individual embeddedness of IRWs significantly contributes to the joint ventures' performance at the organization level by promoting firms' tacit knowledge acquisition (Yin & Bao, 2006). At the national level, the enmeshment of these workers fosters institutional trust, such as trust in public services and news media, in their host countries (Lehtonen et al., 2022).

Thus, embedding IRWs in their immediate environments becomes a significant priority for harnessing their potential and optimizing work outcomes, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of both the formation and evolution of job embeddedness among IRWs. Unfortunately, whereas literature on IRWs' job embeddedness has steadily progressed over time, an in-depth scrutiny of its theory, research and practice remains missing in current research. Limitations are notably evident in a lack of systematic view on contributing factors to IRWs' embeddedness and scrutiny on the boundary conditions (i.e. the accuracy and applicability of a theory in a specific context) of the original job embeddedness theory for the IRW population. An imprecise and incomplete understanding of job embeddedness among IRWs hampers the breadth and depth of research, the application of suitable and innovative methods, as well as the design of efficacious and multifaceted embedding strategies. As a case in point, predominantly relying on the original theory and variable-centered method, extant literature has concentrated on IRWs' embeddedness in a single domain or country, overlooking the fact that these workers often immerse themselves in multiple nations, i.e. transnationalism (Linder, 2016). Similarly, lack of scrutiny as to the reciprocity in the embedding process within the family unit among IRWs leads to an underestimation of dyadic influences of each family member in the other's embeddedness and related outcomes. This shortage is reflected in the centralization of embedding support in the sole

host countries (Chen & Shaffer, 2017) and the exclusion of partner's characteristics in designing embedding aids for the IRWs (McNulty & Moeller, 2018).

In the following sections, we will discuss these limitations in detail, formulate the research questions to address these gaps, present the relevance of the issues, and highlight our contributions.

## **1.2. Research questions, relevance and contributions**

### ***1.2.1. Factors contributing to job embeddedness in the international relocation context***

Job embeddedness theory was originally developed based on the native population, with limited consideration for individuals with an international relocation background ( Mitchell et al., 2001). Literature has systematically explored multi-level factors contributing to job embeddedness in the domestic context, illuminating its formation and development (Feldman et al., 2012; Kiazad et al., 2015). However, such investigations are noticeably lacking within the international relocation context. Numerous elements related to international relocation shape the job embeddedness of IRWs, although they have little impact on the native population. For instance, at the individual level, studies have shown that factors like language proficiency and cultural intelligence play crucial roles in IRWs' immersion into their host country communities and organizations (Ren et al., 2014; Stoermer et al., 2020). Institutional factors, such as diversity climate, also influence the connectedness that IRWs establish with host countries (Chen, 2012). Conversely, they have limited effects on the embeddedness of natives within their own nations (cf. Kiazad et al., 2015).

The limited perspective on factors contributing to the job embeddedness of the specific IRW population could be attributable to two characteristics of the existing literature. First, management studies tend to concentrate on the outcomes of job embeddedness among IRWs; much less emphasis is placed on its influencing factors, particularly those pertaining to the international relocation context (e.g. Lehtonen et al., 2022; Linder, 2016; Meuer et al., 2019). Second, job

embeddedness, which uniquely involves the connectedness of IRWs to both work (i.e., organization and career) and non-work (i.e., community) domains (Mitchell et al., 2001; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010), is addressed in diverse disciplines such as sociology and economics. However, for employees within the international relocation context, a study taking an interdisciplinary approach to review contributing factors of job embeddedness remains noticeably lacking.

In our pursuit of acquiring in-depth knowledge of the factors influencing job embeddedness among IRWs, we employ an interdisciplinary approach and a systematic literature review (SLR) in order to answer the first research question: “*Which factors contribute to the embeddedness of IRWs in their host country?*” This research question guides the first article of this thesis (Chapter 5).

Findings derived from the interdisciplinary SLR are essential because the current shortage in recognizing factors contributing to the job embeddedness of IRWs presents a dual and significant challenge. On the one hand, it impedes the progress of future research, as the 'known' and 'unknown' factors affecting the job embeddedness among IRWs remain ambiguous. On the other hand, organizations encounter significant difficulties in devising and implementing effective practices without a comprehensive understanding of these influencing factors, as implications derived from the domestic population may be incomplete or ill-suited for IRWs (Al Ariss & Sidani, 2016).

The first paper thus provides valuable contributions to theory, research, and practice. A comprehensive understanding of influencing factors, categorized into four levels including situational, individual, organizational and institutional, illuminates the development of job embeddedness in the particular cross-border relocation context. This insight not only enhances the understanding of embeddedness among IRWs but also becomes a foundation for developing a more integrated measurement (such as community embeddedness), for the IRW population. The findings also systematically acknowledge nebulous aspects, leading to several promising avenues for future

research. Finally, the findings offer more tailored embedding policies and practices for IRWs' specific circumstances through a comprehensive perspective on factors particularly pertaining to IRWs' embeddedness, which may differ from that in the domestic population.

### ***1.2.2. Revisiting theoretical framework to understand job embeddedness among the internationally relocated workers***

Similar to the inadequacy in recognizing factors that contribute to job embeddedness abroad, a lack of scrutiny with regard to the applicability and precision of the original job embeddedness theory for IRWs represents a critical limitation. As per previous SLRs, the international relocation situation presents an idiosyncratic context for IRWs to establish, develop, and structure their job embeddedness, resulting in new perspectives on theory, research, and practices (e.g. Linder, 2016). However, while significant progress has been made in the context of empirical research on job embeddedness among IRWs over the years, efforts to scrutinize and develop a more comprehensive theoretical framework that accurately portrays the enmeshment of these workers remain lacking in the existing literature. The neglected areas are primarily conspicuous in elucidating the manner in which IRWs establish their embeddedness in a new country and the constellation of job embeddedness concept among this specific population.

First and foremost, international relocation presents a unique situation for employees to establish, develop, and maintain their job embeddedness in a country where they did not have prior root. This results in a distinct difference between IRWs and the native workers as to their job embeddedness. Typically, native employees' immersion in their countries commences in early childhood and develops naturally through existing family roots, absorption of their own culture, alignment with their societal way of life, qualifications adhering to national systems, and recognized work experiences (Andresen, 2021; Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020). In contrast, the embeddedness of IRWs in host countries begins much later in their lives.

Their connectedness with the host countries, typically built from scratch, is much more arduous (Pawlak & Goździak, 2020) and necessitates far more personal effort (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). The original theory of job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001) and current literature has historically overlooked such distinguishable and essential features of embeddedness among IRWs, leading to an incomplete understanding of job embeddedness formation and evolution within the international relocation context.

In the domestic context, the interrelations between development of embeddedness in different domains have been well-documented (Ng & Feldman, 2014). This phenomenon is referred to as the spillover effects, which native employees can deliberately leverage or postpone based on their personal goals (Feldman et al., 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2014). In a similar vein, a body of research explores crossover effects, describing how the embeddedness of family members in employees' communities and organizations contributes to their own enmeshment in respective domains (Kiazad et al., 2015; Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010).

While the roles of spillover and crossover effects in native workers' embedding process are acknowledged in the literature (Kiazad et al., 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2014), the applicability of these effects in explaining how IRWs establish themselves in new destinations remains underexplored. Notably, certain conditions concerning the spillover and crossover effects in the domestic population are significantly divergent for the IRWs. For instance, IRWs are characterized by their initially limited levels of embeddedness in host country domains and the heightened interdependence between themselves and their family members. These conditions can affect the significance of the spillover and crossover effects, especially in terms of elucidating how IRWs immerse themselves in their locality.

Second, while the domestic population is embedded in their own countries, IRWs' embeddedness amass distant locations, including their host and home nations, and sometimes, even

third countries (Linder, 2016). This characteristic, defined as transnationalism (Faist, 2010), was proposed to have ‘no equivalence’ in the domestic context, suggesting an extensive component from the original theory (Linder, 2016). However, literature on IRWs’ embeddedness shows lack scrutiny on transnationalism until now. Despite being discovered, a systematic incorporation of this characteristic into job embeddedness theory remains absent in extant research. Consequently, the application of original theory demonstrates certain limitations in guiding future research directions. As a case in point, whereas many studies have investigated home country embeddedness among IRWs (e.g. Froese et al., 2021; Lo et al., 2012; Shen & Kram, 2011), the antecedents of being concurrently embedded in different locations and how this state varies across the IRW population remain under-researched. Furthermore, methods applied appear to be narrowed to linear regression analysis and can be inefficient to investigate transnational embeddedness combining multiple nations and their inclusive domains (cf. Linder, 2016)

Put succinctly, existing literature indicates that the original job embeddedness theory's boundary conditions (its accuracy and applicability) appear limited when applied to IRWs. Moreover, certain particularities elucidating the formation and progress of embeddedness among IRWs and depicting more accurately the constellation of their enmeshment necessitate scrutiny. To address this research gap, our aim is to formulate a more comprehensive theoretical framework, encompassing particularities that effectively encapsulates and elucidates IRWs’ job embeddedness yet were not effectively incorporated into the original theory. We explore this topic by asking the following questions: *What are the characteristics of job embeddedness among IRWs, particularly discerning its constellation and development in the host country, that have not been comprehensively addressed in the original embeddedness concept? And What are the theoretical, research, and practical implications of these characteristics?* To answer these inquiries, we conduct a second SLR (Chapter 6) on job embeddedness among the IRW population using the

framework synthesis method, an approach that has proven to be effective for refining established theory for a specific population (Brunton et al., 2020).

Addressing these questions is essential for both literature and practice. A flawed theoretical framework of job embeddedness among IRWs presents a substantial limitation, restricting the breadth and depth of topics to be explored, hindering the application of appropriate and innovative methods (cf. Linder, 2016). In practical terms, due to inadequate insights into the formation and evolution of job embeddedness among IRWs, guidelines to customize the best practice for IRWs' embeddedness remain lacking. Implementing embedding practices for IRWs without sufficiently comprehending their effects on their enmeshment poses severe risks. This is because investing in IRWs' embeddedness is more complex and cost-intensive than that for natives (Chen & Shaffer, 2017), while the retention of IRWs appears much more challenging compared to that of the native workers (Andrijasevic & Sacchetto, 2016).

In this context, the second SLR offers significant contributions. Firstly, the findings regarding the intensified spillover and crossover effects, coupled with insights into transnationalism, enrich our understanding of job embeddedness theory as it applies to the unique circumstances of IRWs. These findings enhance the theory's applicability by providing a nuanced perspective on how IRWs develop and navigate their embeddedness in new countries. In particular, the heightened spillover and crossover effects illuminate the dynamics whereby IRWs embed in their new environments, while the concept of transnationalism broadens our understanding by introducing the role of multiple countries in shaping job embeddedness. Secondly, the refined theoretical framework serves as a cornerstone for guiding future research endeavors and employing innovative methodologies. Lastly, practical policies can be devised to better cater to the needs of this specific workforce based on the revealed characteristics of IRWs' embeddedness.

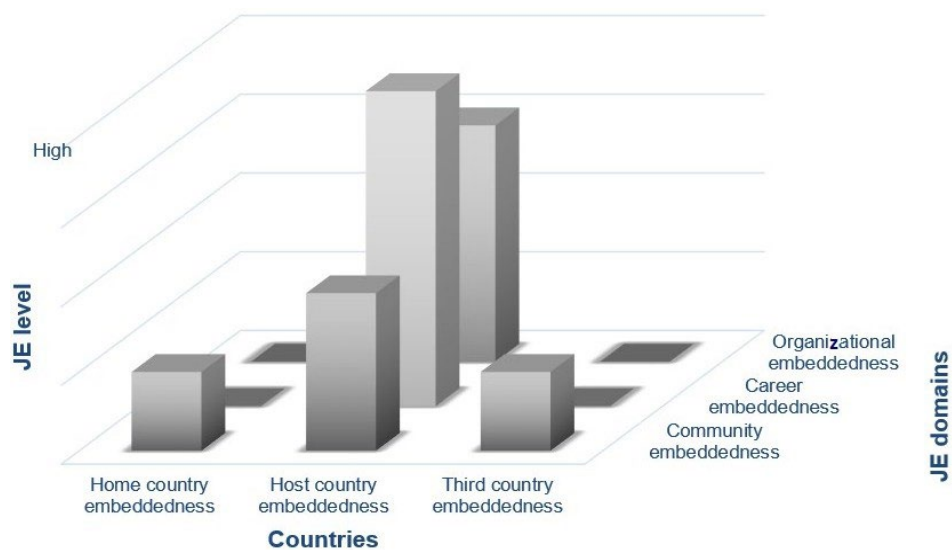
### ***1.2.3. Embedding types among the internationally relocated workers***

The refined theoretical framework of job embeddedness among IRWs results in a novel perspective on their immersion within various domains and across nations, a phenomenon commonly referred to as the spillover effects and transnationalism. As IRWs relocate abroad, regardless of diverse background in education, permanent intent or relocation mode (i.e. whether they were sent by the employers or relocate independently), they face two significant challenges in their process of becoming embedded. First, to sustain, create and develop their embeddedness in these countries, IRWs must negotiate their effort, time and resources between multiple locations (Carraher et al., 2008; Shen & Kram, 2011). Second, since IRWs immerse themselves in new destinations from scratch with limited resources, their embedding within specific domains might be compromised. Juggling between manifold domains and countries, IRWs are likely to exhibit diverse ways to structure their embeddedness, termed ‘embedding types’, which manifest themselves by the combination of embeddedness levels in multiple domains and nations, i.e. embeddedness patterns. As presented in Figure 1, the ways in which IRWs structure their embeddedness in manifold countries and inclusive domains illustrate much higher level of complexity in comparison to that of the native workers (Ramaite et al., 2022).

While literature emphasized the significance of transnational embeddedness among IRWs nearly a decade ago (Linder, 2016), studies that delve into embedding types and exploring their antecedents or consequences among IRWs remain lacking in scholarly discourse. The limitations in applied data analysis methods and sampling could be contributory factors to this gap. As previously discussed, prevailing research on IRWs’ job embeddedness primarily employs variable-centered methods, notably linear regression analysis (Linder, 2016). Typically, assuming linear relationships between these averaged embeddedness levels and outcomes like retention, these studies estimate averaged embeddedness levels within a single domain or country for the IRW



population (Linder, 2016; also see Meyer & Morin, 2016). However, this approach proves insufficient when examining the interaction of multiple indicators (Meyer & Morin, 2016), which is essential in investigating transnational embeddedness encompassing simultaneous embeddedness in diverse domains and nations. Consequently, variable-centered research on IRWs' embeddedness, sometimes yields inconsistent results by focusing solely on the effects of embeddedness in a single domain or country on retention. For instance, several studies targeting independently relocated IRWs, known as self-initiated IRWs, found a positive relationship between community embeddedness and their retention (Lehtonen et al., 2022; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010) while others have reported insignificant results (Meuer et al., 2019). In a similar vein, while studies have demonstrated that community embeddedness in the home country hampers IRWs' retention (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010), contradictory evidence exists in other research (Lo et al., 2012). These inconsistencies have yet to be effectively addressed using a variable-centered perspective.



**Figure 1.** *The ways that IRWs construct embeddedness (embedding types), represented by the combination of their organizational-, community-, and career embeddedness levels in home country, host country, and third country (exemplary pattern)*

Furthermore, the predilection to narrow down samples, focusing on those who initiated their relocation or were sponsored by their companies (cf. Froese et al., 2021; Lo et al., 2012), limits a comprehensive understanding of possible embedding types within the context of international relocation. Since assumptions about differences in embeddedness levels between self-initiated and company-sponsored IRWs are frequently challenged by contradictory evidence from existing studies, this choice is particularly contentious (Biemann & Andresen, 2010; Meuer et al., 2019).

In light of existing research gaps, adopting person-centered methods like latent class analysis (LCA) offers a promising approach to discern all embedding types prevalent among the diverse population of IRWs within the international relocation context. This methodology aims to identify sub-populations within IRWs demonstrating similar and statistically distinguishable embedding types, thus providing a complementary perspective to variable-centered research (Hom et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2014; Reichin et al., 2020). Specifically, through probing the interaction, compensation and additive effects of IRWs' embeddedness levels in different domains, the person-centered approach focuses on the non-linear and individualized effects of embeddedness on retention (Meyer & Morin, 2016; Ramaite et al., 2022).

To illustrate, the inconsistent effects of host country community embeddedness on IRWs retention may stem from variations in their types of embedding. IRWs with similar levels of embeddedness in their host community could significantly differ in their strategies for immersion into other domains or locations. Some may prioritize international careers or connections with professionals back home over local community engagement, while others concentrate solely on local connections, leading to divergent turnover intentions (cf. Cao et al., 2014; Halvorsen et al., 2015). In light of practice, current policies aimed at bolstering IRWs' embeddedness in a single domain or host nation, grounded in variable-centered insights, might prove ineffective due to

neglecting the individualized and interactive effects of embeddedness in multiple domains and locations.

A person-centered approach proves effective in exploring factors influencing how IRWs structure their embeddedness across diverse domains and nations, a valuable perspective for organizations recruiting IRWs and operating in international relocation contexts (Crowley-Henry et al., 2021; Froese et al., 2021). Such insights cannot be drawn from variable-centered methods alone. For instance, variable-centered studies suggest a positive impact of personal initiative (PI) - a trait characterized by self-starting, proactivity, and persistence in overcoming challenges to achieve goals (Frese & Fay, 2001) - on IRWs' local community and international career embeddedness (Yunlu et al., 2018). However, the role of PI in negotiating embeddedness across multiple domains and nations remains ambiguous. Given the strenuous nature of developing embeddedness in new destinations and maintaining connections with distant homelands (Carraher et al., 2008; Shen & Kram, 2011), IRWs with high PI, inclined toward dealing with complex and challenging tasks (Frese et al., 2007), are likely more efficient in negotiating embeddedness across countries and domains. Investigating the impact of PI on IRWs' embedding types thus becomes reasonable.

In the third article of this thesis (Chapter 7), we aim to address these limitations by posing two research questions: (1) *Which different embedding types do IRWs exhibit?* And (2) *how are these embedding types related to their PI, intent to stay in the host country, and intent to stay in the host organization?*

Answering these questions is pivotal for both literature and practice. Firstly, complementing variable-centered findings with person-centered insights is essential to comprehensively explain the impacts of embeddedness on IRWs' retention. Secondly, findings from the person-centered approach refine the original job embeddedness concept, which primarily

focused on linear relationships between an employee's embeddedness in a single country and retention (Mitchell et al., 2001). Transitioning from a variable-centered to a person-centered approach acknowledges and accommodates the diversity in embeddedness among IRWs, crucial for tailoring effective embedding strategies. Lastly, targeting heterogeneous IRW populations allows for a more comprehensive examination of embedding types within the international relocation context. This choice enhances the applicability of findings within organizations who often employ diverse IRWs, for instance, in terms of relocation modes, instead of a homogenous group (Kühlmann & Hutchings, 2010).

The third paper contributes significantly on multiple fronts. Introducing typologies of four embedding types, namely 'home country community-focused embedders', 'host country community-focused embedders', 'host country career-focused embedders', and 'transnational embedders', represents a notable advancement in comprehending the intricacies of embedding within the international relocation context. This study pioneers insights into the prevalence and existence of such embedding types among IRWs, offering a fresh perspective for future person-centered research endeavors. Notably, the findings challenge conventional theories by underscoring the superior impact of transnational embeddedness over embedding within a single domain or location on IRWs' retention intent. This departure from established norms opens up new avenues for exploration in the realm of person-centered research.

In practical terms, these findings offer valuable guidance on effective strategies for retaining IRWs. They advocate for prioritizing the cultivation of transnational embeddedness and fostering IRWs' embeddedness into their host country through their personal lives—such as community embeddedness—rather than solely focusing on their professional endeavors within organizations or careers. While these strategies may appear innovative, they have demonstrated suitability and high efficacy for this specific workforce.

Furthermore, the study's revelations regarding the influence of PI on embedding types carry significance in refining selection criteria and devising tailored support policies for IRWs, accounting for their individual differences. These findings furnish organizations with a practical framework to develop more targeted and effective approaches in managing job embeddedness among their internationally relocated workforce.

#### ***1.2.4. Crossover effects of humor on community embeddedness and career satisfaction among dual-earner expatriate couples***

While paper three addresses the spillover effects and transnationalism, the fourth and final article (Chapter 8) investigates the amplified crossover effects of job embeddedness within the IRW population. This study specifically scrutinizes the dyadic impacts of each partner's traits on the other's embeddedness and subsequent work outcomes. Our focus narrows down to a subset of IRW: the dual-earner expatriate couples (DEECs), encompassing partners who have moved across borders and both earn income in the host country (Harvey, 1998). Within this subset, the importance of community embeddedness emerges as a critical resource for partners to enhance mutual career satisfaction (Harvey, 1998; Kanstrén, 2021; Kierner, 2018). Career satisfaction, also known as subjective career success, reflects individuals' contentment with their career achievements (Briscoe et al., 2021; Ng et al., 2005). Cross-border relocations often present significant challenges for DEECs in pursuing fulfilling careers. Particularly, partners, especially women or those tied to the mover, face inferior career prospects, evident in underemployment and career interruptions (Kierner, 2018; Krieger, 2020; Rabe, 2011; Samper & Kreyenfeld, 2021; Taylor, 2007).

The decreased career satisfaction among DEEC partners is attributed to various challenges abroad, including unrecognized qualifications, limited networks, linguistic barriers, and labor market discrimination (Kanstrén, 2021; Mäkelä et al., 2011). Stressful work conditions, such as

long hours and unsuitable jobs, further contribute to this dissatisfaction (Fischlmayr & Kollinger, 2010; Kierner, 2018). Household responsibilities and lack of social support also hinder career aspirations, leading to job withdrawal or reduced working hours (Fischlmayr & Kollinger, 2010; Freitas Monteiro, 2022; Mäkelä et al., 2011). The depletion of resources and increased demands necessitate close coordination of career strategies among DEEC partners, often resulting in career disadvantages for at least one partner (Känsälä et al., 2015; Mäkelä et al., 2011).

While existing literature examines barriers to career satisfaction among DEECs, there is a lack of insight into resources for overcoming these hindrances and fostering career success (McNulty & Moeller, 2018). Research often focuses on company-sponsored couples within IRWs contexts, neglecting self-initiated DEECs and factors beyond organizational frameworks (Harvey, 1998; Harvey et al., 2010; McNulty, 2012; Selmer & Leung, 2003). Organizational support is found inadequate in facilitating DEECs' career satisfaction (Kupka & Cathro, 2007; McNulty, 2012; Selmer & Leung, 2003). Moreover, single-source data analysis overlooks the crossover effects of partners' characteristics on DEECs' career satisfaction (Känsälä et al., 2015).

This study employs a resource-oriented and dyadic approach, integrating Conservation of Resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018) and Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) (Kenny et al., 2006) to examine the influence of two resources, namely self-enhancing humor (SEH) and community embeddedness, on the career success of partners in DEECs. SEH refers to the inclination to find amusement in life's nuances, utilizing this perspective to manage stress and navigate challenges encountered in careers and the embedding process (Martin et al., 2003). Simultaneously, community embeddedness assumes significance for DEECs confronting career obstacles stemming from both professional and personal domains. Collectively, SEH and community embeddedness represent instrumental resources for DEECs' partners to surmount challenges and cultivate career accomplishments while living abroad.

We examine the role of SEH and community embeddedness in career satisfaction of individual partners in DEECs by asking: (1) *To what extent does SHE enhance the career satisfaction of each partner in DEECs?* (2) *How does community embeddedness impact the relationship between SEH and career satisfaction as a mediator?*

According to COR theory, resources do not exist in singularity but often in caravans, transferring between individuals, particularly when suitable conduits exist (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The intensified crossover effects suggest that through amusing expression, playful interactions, and pleasant and activating emotions, humorous partners can cultivate a humor climate at home (Robert & Wilbanks, 2012), facilitating the transfer of humor-generated resources within DEECs (Wijewardena et al., 2017; Zhang & Su, 2020). These crossover effects are likely more pronounced among women partners, who tend to notice and synchronize emotions and facial expressions (i.e. emotional contagious) with their partners (Sonnby-Borgström et al., 2008). Thus, apart from examining the dyadic effects of humor on community embeddedness and career satisfaction within DEECs' partners, we explore the gender differences in these crossover effects through asking the following questions: (3) *To what extent does SHE enhance the career satisfaction of each partner in DEECs?* And (4) *how does community embeddedness impact the relationship between SEH and career satisfaction as a mediator?*

The fourth article provides significant contributions by redirecting the focus of research on DEECs from merely highlighting problems to identifying practical resources, such as SEH and community embeddedness. Additionally, it underscores the importance of considering crossover effects in job embeddedness and DEECs' careers, advocating for dyadic data analysis in future research endeavors. Moreover, based on these insights, the article offers practical recommendations for various stakeholders, including organizations, DEECs, and policymakers, with the aim of developing more effective career management strategies tailored specifically for DEEC

populations. These strategies particularly emphasize the utilization of SEH and fostering connections with local communities.

### ***1.2.5. Summary of research questions and contributions***

Overall, this thesis aims to construct a comprehensive understanding and efficient leverage of job embeddedness among IRWs by thoroughly examining various job embeddedness aspects, including influencing factors in the key international relocation context, theorization, and specific outcomes pertinent to this group. Thus, the aggregate research question of this thesis is as follows: *“How can theory, methods, and research be further developed to depict, elucidate and leverage job embeddedness of IRWs more effectively?”* We achieve this goal through the following steps. The SLR articles delve into the factors impacting IRWs job embeddedness across various levels, shedding light on previously overlooked areas within current research. They subsequently develop a refined theoretical framework that delineates the embeddedness of IRWs. Building upon these conceptual insights, two empirical studies are conducted, concentrating on the implementation of this integrated framework. These studies investigate the precursors and consequences of IRWs' job embeddedness, considering intensified spillover effects, crossover effects, and the influence of transnationalism.

The overarching research questions guiding this thesis are delineated as follows:

- I. Which factors contribute to the embeddedness of IRWs in their host country?
- II. (1) What are the characteristics of job embeddedness among IRWs, particularly discerning its constellation and development in the host country, that have not been comprehensively addressed in the original embeddedness concept? (2) What are the theoretical, research, and practical implications of the job embeddedness characteristics among the IRWs?
- III. (1) Which different embedding types do IRWs exhibit within multiple domains and nations?



(2) How are these embedding types related to their PI, intent to stay in the host country, and intent to stay in the host organization?

IV. (1) To what extent does SHE enhance the career satisfaction of each partner in DEECs? (2) How does community embeddedness impact the relationship between SEH and career satisfaction as a mediator? (3) Providing the amplified crossover effects within IRWs, to what extent does SHE enhance the career satisfaction of each partner in DEECs? (4) How does community embeddedness impact the relationship between SEH and career satisfaction as a mediator?

In summary, this thesis contributes significantly to theory, research, and practice. The findings regarding the refined theoretical framework for understanding job embeddedness among a specific population are particularly noteworthy. This framework, along with the identification of gaps in the literature, facilitates original research and the adoption of innovative methodologies. For instance, two empirical studies utilizing the new theoretical framework and previously unexplored methods like LCA and APIM are included in the thesis. In terms of practical implications, the thesis offers fresh perspectives on strategies to enhance and leverage job embeddedness among the target population. These strategies include fostering both home and host country embeddedness, recognizing the importance of community embeddedness for work-related outcomes such as retention and career satisfaction, and strengthening personal agency. Intervention approaches span individual, couple, organizational, and national levels, aiming to effectively embed the target population.

The thesis structure is organized as follows: Chapter 2 presents the theoretical background, covering the target population, job embeddedness, and COR theories, along with complementary concepts addressed in individual empirical studies. Chapter 3 outlines the overall research model and connections between thesis articles. Chapter 4 details the methods used in SLR and empirical studies. Chapters 5 and 6 cover the first and second SLRs, identifying influencing

factors and presenting the refined theoretical framework. Subsequent chapters (7 and 8) showcase empirical studies, examining spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism with individual and dyadic data. Chapters 9 and 10 discuss the overall results, implications, and limitations, while Chapter 11 concludes by summarizing key findings.

This thesis comprises four distinct research articles, and readers are recommended to follow either the overarching research framework (Chapter 1 to 4, followed by Chapters 9 and 10) or delve into the detailed articles (Chapter 5 to 8) to avoid repetition and content overlapping.

## **Chapter 2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1. The internationally relocated workers**

Individuals who have relocated their primary residence across borders and are legally employed in their host countries are commonly referred to as IRWs (Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; McNulty & Brewster, 2017). Depending on the disciplinary context, these workers may be denoted by various terms. In sociology, economics, and political sciences literature, they are often termed 'migrant workers' (ILO, 1999; IOM, 2019; United Nations, 1990; Usher, 2004). Conversely, within business and management studies, terms such as 'migrant workers,' 'immigrant workers,' and '(business) expatriates' are utilized, encompassing similar characteristics while sometimes delineating specific criteria such as permanent intent, mode of relocation, qualifications, or nationalities (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Doherty et al., 2013; McNulty & Brewster, 2017).

The ongoing debate in the current literature regarding the divergence between terms used to describe IRWs is notable, with no consensus reached (Andresen et al., 2014; McNulty & Brewster, 2017). Frequently, the additional distinguishing criteria employed to delineate IRWs are inconsistently presented in sample descriptions within existing research (McNulty & Brewster, 2017). Given the focus of this thesis on job embeddedness in international relocation contexts, priority is given to key characteristics, namely cross-border relocation and legal employment, over specific terminologies in the initial three articles addressing individual IRWs.

IRWs constitute a diverse population characterized by various features, including individual motivations for relocating abroad, language proficiency, and personal traits such as positive framing and cultural intelligence (Linder, 2019; Ren et al., 2014; Stoermer et al., 2020) . At the organizational level, distinctions exist between company-sponsored IRWs, who receive extensive relocation packages and rely on organizational support, and self-initiated IRWs, who

experience different expectations and adaptation strategies (Dickmann, 2018). Furthermore, outcomes for IRWs post-international relocation are influenced by national factors such as immigration policies and economic conditions (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Oleškevičiūtė et al., 2022). These diverse multi-level factors potentially impact their embeddedness abroad, warranting thorough examination, particularly considering that job embeddedness encompasses dimensions in both work and non-work domains.

## **2.2. Job embeddedness in the international relocation context**

Job embeddedness was initially developed to explain employee retention, contrasting with the more traditional construct of turnover (Mitchell et al., 2001). The authors draw upon embedded figures and field theory (Lewin, 1951) to propose that individuals exist within a perceptual space where multiple facets of their lives coexist and intertwine closely (Lewin, 1951; Mitchell et al., 2001). Metaphorically, job embeddedness represents a web or net, wherein individuals become ensnared due to numerous interconnected and binding connections (Mitchell et al., 2001). The authors identify three dimensions—links, fit, and sacrifice—that constitute the forces anchoring employees in their jobs, spanning three domains: community, organization, and career pathway or occupation (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2007; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010).

Links encompass both formal and informal connections within the embedded domains, such as friendships, homeownership, relationships with colleagues, or membership in professional associations (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2007). Fit relates to the perceived affinity between individuals and their embedded domains, reflecting factors like comfort with the local climate, compatibility between personal values and organizational culture, or coherence between professional aspirations and available job prospects in specific locales (Mitchell et al., 2001; Tharenou, 2008). Sacrifice involves anticipated losses upon leaving these embedded domains,

including tangible aspects such as promotability, salary, pensions, and social security, as well as intangibles like valuable relationships, security, and respect from others (Mitchell et al., 2001).

These three dimensions—links, fit, and sacrifice—not only manifest within the on-the-job or organization domain, encapsulating work-related elements that retain individuals in their jobs, but also extend to the off-the-job or community domain where non-work factors tether individuals to their place of residence (Mitchell et al., 2001). Finally, the career domain denotes the perceived professional prospects and work conditions offered in specific locations, representing a significant pull factor attracting individuals to a country (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010).

Job embeddedness theory, initially formulated within a domestic population (Mitchell et al., 2001), lacks clear delineation regarding its applicability and accuracy, i.e., boundary conditions, within the context of IRWs. The establishment and progression of job embeddedness within international relocation scenarios possess distinct features that diverge from its evolution in domestic settings. Unlike individuals in the domestic population, who establish their embeddedness in their country of residence through ancestry, cultural values, and social norms (Pawlak & Goździak, 2020), language proficiency, educational background (Brunton & Cook, 2018), and career trajectories aligning with national norms (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020), IRWs form their connections with the host country later in life, when their personal beliefs are already established under the influence of their home country's culture, leading to challenges in embedding in a new locale due to cultural distance and novelty (Ren et al., 2014). Furthermore, disparities in language, qualifications, and professional experiences pose substantial obstacles in deepening their embeddedness within the host country's organizational and career domains (Brunton & Cook, 2018; Fernando & Patriotta, 2020). The significant challenges stemming from international relocation make the immersion of IRWs abroad significantly more demanding compared to that of

native workers. However, the process through which IRWs formulate and cultivate their job embeddedness in this uniquely challenging and novel circumstance remains nebulous.

Moreover, international relocation engenders a phenomenon referred to as 'transnationalism,' resulting in IRWs concurrently establishing connections with multiple locations (Faist, 2010). While existing research acknowledges the simultaneous embeddedness of IRWs in various locations (Froese et al., 2021; Lo et al., 2012; Wang, 2015) and asserts its lack of equivalence in domestic contexts (Linder, 2016), theoretical development and integration of this characteristic into job embeddedness, in conjunction with a systematic examination of its implications, are notably absent in current literature.

In summary, the job embeddedness of IRWs may encompass characteristics related to its origin, progression, and constellation that the original theory, based on a native population, has not fully clarified or accurately depicted.

In the exploration of the evolution and conceptualization of job embeddedness among IRWs, adopting a Conservation of Resources (COR) perspective proves advantageous. This perspective, recognized as a succinct and established theoretical framework for explaining the emergence and outcomes of job embeddedness (Kiazad et al., 2015) onstrates its utility.

### **2.3. Job embeddedness from a Conservation of Resource perspective**

The examination of job embeddedness through the Conservation of Resources (COR) framework constitutes a well-established area in contemporary literature (Chen et al., 2022a; Kiazad et al., 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2014). The COR theory, fundamentally, explicates individuals' inclination to acquire, sustain, enrich, and amass valuable resources (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Job embeddedness encapsulates a reservoir of invaluable assets, encompassing tangible

facets like income and social security benefits, as well as intangible elements such as meaningful relationships, comfort, and security (Kiazad et al., 2015).

According to the tenets of COR theory, individuals must invest resources to obtain gains and mitigate losses (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The investment of existing resources is crucial in nurturing and enhancing job embeddedness within immediate domains (Kiazad et al., 2015). Individuals deeply ingrained in one domain can reinvest resources to strengthen their embeddedness in other realms, a phenomenon often referred to as ‘spillover effects’ (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Wheeler et al., 2012). Similarly, the embeddedness of family members, particularly in communities and organizations, serves as a significant resource that employees can leverage to enhance their embeddedness in respective domains, known as ‘crossover effects’ (Kiazad et al., 2015; Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). Research on the native population typically suggests that resource transfers between domains or family members usually occur in the presence of resource abundance, leading to deepened embeddedness (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Wheeler et al., 2012), and can be deferred or prioritized based on individual goals (Feldman et al., 2012).

However, cross-border relocations present a stark contrast to domestic contexts, raising questions about the applicability of spillover and crossover effects among IRWs. International relocation often results in the depletion of fundamental resources for IRWs, including social connections, proximity to family, professional networks, cultural familiarity, and recognition of qualifications and work experiences (Mäkelä et al., 2011; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). Consequently, IRWs initially face limited resources to reinvest in the embedding process, despite the primary goal of relocation being the augmentation of their lifetime resource pool (Sjaastad, 1962). Similarly, families relocating internationally face substantial resource deficits post-relocation. Hence, the conditions dictating the occurrence and intensity of spillover and crossover effects may significantly differ between IRWs and their native counterparts.

Moreover, the COR theory offers a concise rationale for the impact of job embeddedness on various outcomes. Individuals actively utilize resources derived from heightened embeddedness to achieve desirable outcomes, such as career satisfaction (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Wheeler et al., 2012). For instance, they can leverage networks and social support from the local community, known as community links, to enhance employment prospects and pursue career aspirations (Mäkelä et al., 2011). Employees tend to remain in domains and locales where they are deeply embedded to safeguard accumulated resources, thus promoting retention (Kiazad et al., 2015).

However, given that IRWs' embeddedness spans distant locations (i.e., transnational embeddedness), their choice of residence to safeguard accumulated resources remains uncertain. The impact of maintaining embeddedness in the home country while abroad on IRWs' retention appears inconclusive, with evidence suggesting both negative and positive effects (Lo et al., 2012; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). Additionally, research elucidating the relationship between transnational embeddedness and retention among IRWs primarily examines the effects of embeddedness in distant locations separately, with limited application of a COR perspective.

From a COR perspective, establishing and enriching job embeddedness amid severe resource depletion requires IRWs to adopt suitable coping mechanisms. COR theory posits two coping mechanisms—accommodative and proactive—that individuals can employ to navigate challenges stemming from resource losses (Hobfoll, 2001). While accommodative mechanisms involve downward comparisons or goal alterations, proactive coping entails the restoration of lost resources or seeking substitutes (Hobfoll, 2001).

In a domestic context, the antecedents of job embeddedness may not necessarily align with mechanisms to cope with resource losses (Kiazad et al., 2015). However, IRWs' embeddedness likely relies on resources facilitating accommodative or proactive coping mechanisms following resource depletion from international relocation. We will now delve into



the theories of PI and SEH, representing two resources aiding the embeddedness of IRWs within the milieu of international relocation.

#### **2.4. Personal initiative as a personal resource for structuring embeddedness in the international relocation context**

PI embodies a behavioral trait marked by self-starting, proactive approaches, and persistence in surmounting obstacles to achieve goals (Frese & Fay, 2001). It is known that IRWs demonstrating this trait tend to excel in establishing and enhancing their embeddedness in various domains of host countries (Ren et al., 2014; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b; Yunlu et al., 2018). These individuals invest considerable effort in cultivating professional connections with host country nationals, overcoming cultural barriers, and ultimately advancing their career prospects or career embeddedness in the host country (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). Similarly, embracing a proactive approach fosters a keenness to learn and adapt to the host country's way of life, leading to improved business opportunities and career embeddedness (Beaverstock, 2002). Initiatives such as relationship building further facilitate IRWs' immersion into local communities and organizations (Ren et al., 2014; Yunlu et al., 2018). In summary, PI emerges as a personal resource that aids in the proactive reestablishment and development of embeddedness in a new destination.

However, the impact of PI on IRWs' simultaneous embeddedness in multiple domains and locations presents complexities. Establishing connections in a new country is demanding for IRWs, and their ties with their home countries often diminish over time, creating dual challenges (Carragher et al., 2008; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). While navigating and structuring embeddedness within multiple domains and nations may seem daunting, individuals with PI exhibit higher motivation and efficiency in dealing with these complexities and challenges (Frese et al., 2007). This suggests

that the ways IRWs structure their embeddedness in the international relocation context is determined by their PI.

## **2.5. Self-enhancing humor as a multifaceted resource for individuals and couples among internationally relocation workers**

Humor plays a pivotal role in human existence, exhibiting multifaceted functions across various contexts (Fry, 1994; Gervais & Wilson, 2005). It frequently evokes positive emotions such as joy, interest, and amusement (Cheng & Wang, 2015; Wijewardena et al., 2017), while also prompting overt, genuine, and contagious facial expressions like laughter (Herring et al., 2011; Martin, 2007). The functional approach to humor delineates individual differences using two dimensions (Martin et al., 2003). The first dimension discerns whether humor serves self-enhancement or strengthens interpersonal relationships. The second dimension distinguishes between the benevolent and hostile nature of the humor expressed (Martin et al., 2003).

SEH typifies a benign style that fosters self-acceptance and tolerance (Martin et al., 2003). Individuals characterized by this humor style often find amusement in life's incongruities, deriving hilarity even from adversities. Consequently, they possess the capacity to reframe perspectives, regulate emotions, and maintain a realistic outlook amidst stressful circumstances (Martin et al., 2003). Despite its intrinsic focus on self, SEH's benevolent nature extends its influence to interpersonal realms, such as facilitating social support (Martin et al., 2003), and fostering trust in leaders and leader-member exchange (LMX) (Rosenberg et al., 2021).

The perspective advocating for positive humor, particularly SEH, as a personal and interpersonal resource, has garnered substantial support in the literature (Cooper, 2008; Cooper et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2022). Evidence underscores SEH as a multifaceted resource for individuals, notably instrumental in scenarios involving significant resource depletion (Fritz et al.,

2017; Nguyen et al., 2022), such as international relocation. As a proactive coping mechanism, SEH serves to restore depleted career resources, encompassing psychological and physical well-being (Fritz, 2020). These resources, often diminished among IRWs, manifest in compromised self-esteem (Kierner, 2018), mental health challenges (Kupka & Cathro, 2007) and physical health deterioration (Brekke & Schøne, 2014). SEH becomes instrumental in empowering IRWs to surmount obstacles encountered in achieving strenuous goals abroad, such as immersion in new communities and advancing careers, especially within hilarious environments (cf. Cheng & Wang, 2015). Its intrapsychic function, characterized as accommodative coping, enables IRWs to alleviate stressors and adopt a humorous perspective on challenges associated with assimilating into new cultures (e.g., cultural shocks, language barriers) (Fritz et al., 2017) and career transitions (e.g., underemployment, limited professional opportunities) (van den Broeck et al., 2019). Consequently, IRWs exhibiting SEH tend to perceive greater comfort in their living experiences abroad (i.e., community fit) and adopt more positive outlooks on their career trajectories compared to those lacking this trait.

SEH also serves as an interpersonal resource, fostering social bonds and interactions (Cooper, 2008). IRWs who exhibit SEH demonstrate proficiency in regulating emotional distress, thus projecting affability in social settings (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). This characteristic attracts like-minded individuals and cultivates stronger connections within local communities (Cooper, 2008). Studies indicate that individuals with SEH possess enhanced communication skills (Fritz, 2020) and greater empathy (Hampes, 2010), which nurture their social interactions (Kuiper et al., 2010) and facilitate increased social support from local communities (Fritz, 2020; Martin et al., 2003). Essentially, SEH actively contributes to rebuilding networks and fostering meaningful relationships abroad, thereby enhancing the immersion of IRWs into their host communities. From this perspective, SEH represents personal and interpersonal resources that facilitate the

embeddedness of individual IRWs in their host community and contribute to their perceived career achievements abroad.

Humor, characterized by pleasant and highly arousing emotions such as amusement, coupled with explicit facial expressions, promotes the contagion and perpetuation of humor among individuals, creating what is termed 'the wheel of humor' when encountering mirthful individuals or events (Robert & Wilbanks, 2012). According to COR theory, this wheel serves as a conduit through which humor-elicited resources transfer between individuals, known as resource caravans within dyads or groups (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Consequently, a significant body of evidence demonstrates the impact of individual humor at both dyad and team levels, particularly on team innovation (Nguyen et al., 2022; Zhang & Su, 2020) and performance (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014). In the context of DEECs, the lively atmosphere and humor climate fostered by individual SEH promote humor-generated resource caravans for both partners (cf. Horn et al., 2019), particularly due to their high coordination and interdependence (Känsälä et al., 2015). For example, the meaningful friendships and accrued social capital of an SEH partner can enhance the network of the other, thereby strengthening their connections within the local community and improving professional opportunities. Additionally, a more relaxed and enjoyable home environment facilitated by an SEH partner (Horn et al., 2019) fosters a sense of ease and comfort while living abroad, potentially enhancing partners' fit within the community. Thus, the effects of individual SEH on community embeddedness and career satisfaction may extend reciprocally within DEECs.

Essentially, the crossover effects of SEH within DEECs, rooted in the wheel of humor, require involved individuals to perceive and synchronize with the facial expressions and emotions of SEH individuals (Robert & Wilbanks, 2012). It is well-documented that females tend to be more

susceptible to this process than males, especially in long-term interactions as in the case of DEECs (Doherty et al., 1995; Magen & Konasewich, 2011; Sonnby-Borgström et al., 2008). Literature suggests that this gender disparity may stem from masculine stereotypes involving the suppression or masking of emotional expressions among men and women's evolutionary 'tend-and-befriend' coping strategy in facing threats, which compels women to pay greater attention and exhibit more empathy toward others' emotional experiences and expressions (Sonnby-Borgström et al., 2008). Consequently, access to and utilization of humor-generated resource caravans, created by the wheel of humor, may differ between males and females within DEECs, with female partners potentially benefiting more from their humorous partners than their male counterparts do.

### **Chapter 3. Overall research framework and sub-projects**

The scenario of international relocation serves as a comprehensive framework where the complexities of job embeddedness, encompassing its inception, growth, change, constellation, and consequences, display nuanced differences that could potentially set apart the embeddedness experienced by IRWs from that of native workers. The primary objective of the four articles in this thesis is to thoroughly explore these nuances, aiming to improve theoretical precision and practical relevance, thus laying the foundation for further research endeavors and the development of more effective, customized approaches. Table 1 offers an overview of the research structure and the connections between the sub-projects.

The first area of investigation examines the formation, progression, and transformation of job embeddedness among IRWs within the context of international relocation. This examination is principally conducted through sub-projects 1 and 2, both of which involve SLRs guiding empirical inquiries. Sub-project 1 (Chapter 5) delves into factors specific to international relocation, utilizing the original job embeddedness theory. The findings illuminate the multi-level aspects influencing IRWs' embeddedness, some of which are distinct to this workforce in comparison to native workers (cf. Kiazad et al., 2015). Sub-project 2 (Chapter 6), operating at a conceptual level, integrates both job embeddedness and COR theory. It focuses on identifying characteristics that elucidate the establishment and evolution of IRWs' embeddedness, which are not fully addressed in the original job embeddedness theory, leading to the recognition of heightened spillover and crossover effects. Simultaneously, sub-project 2 addresses the second topic, namely, the constellation of job embeddedness among the specific IRW population, resulting in the portrayal of transnationalism.

**Table 1. Research framework**

Topics	Formation, development, and evolution			Constellation	Outcomes	
	Influencing factors	Spillover effects	Crossover effects	Transnationalism	Individual	Couple
Theoretical framework	Job embeddedness	Job embeddedness from a COR perspective				
Sub-project 1	x					
Sub-project 2	x	x	x	x		
Sub-project 3	x	x		x	x	
Sub-project 4	x		x			x

Building on the newly developed theoretical framework and identified gaps in existing literature, the thesis advances by applying the new findings on IRWs' embeddedness characteristics - spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism - in empirical research. Sub-projects 3 and 4, the empirical studies, aim to explore new antecedents and gain advanced insights into outcomes of IRWs' job embeddedness for individuals and dyads (i.e., couples). Sub-project 3 (Chapter 7) examines the impacts of job embeddedness on IRWs' retention and introduces the unexplored behavioral trait, PI, in the emergence of embedding types. It denotes the employment of innovative LCA method and strengthens the utility of the COR perspective in elucidating the development and outcomes of job embeddedness in the international relocation context. Sub-project 4 (Chapter 7) investigates the dyadic influences of another antecedent, SEH, on community embeddedness and career satisfaction of DEECs, a sub-population of IRWs. This sub-project employs the APIM by introducing a novel method within the literature on IRWs' embeddedness. Similar to sub-project 3, the COR perspective is utilized to explicate the effects of SEH on developing community embeddedness and its impacts on an unexplored outcome, that is, the career

satisfaction of the couples. Table 2 illustrates a summary of sub-projects included in this thesis, encompassing the research questions, methods and publications.

In the following sections, we provide an overview of the methods employed in the four sub-projects, offering a comprehensive exploration of this general research framework.



**Table 2.** *Overview of sub-projects*

	Sub-project 1	Sub-project 2	Sub-project 3	Sub-project 4
Research objectives	<p>I. Identifying multi-level factors contributing to the embeddedness of IRWs in their host country.</p> <p>II. Identifying research gaps in extant research and outlining future research directions.</p>	<p>I. Examining characteristics of job embeddedness among IRWs that have not been comprehensively addressed in the original embeddedness concept.</p> <p>II. Investigating the theoretical, research, and practical implications of the job embeddedness characteristics among the IRWs.</p>	<p>I. Identifying different embedding types IRWs exhibit within multiple domains and nations.</p> <p>II. Examining the role of PI in the emergence of embedding types.</p> <p>III. Examining the impacts of embedding types on intent to stay.</p>	<p>I. Examining the dyadic impacts of SEH on community embeddedness and career success of DEECs.</p> <p>II. Examining the mediation role of community embeddedness in the relationships between SEH and career success within partners of DEECs.</p>
Hypotheses	Not applicable	Not applicable	<p>H3-1: There are different embedding types in the IRW population.</p> <p>H3-2: IRWs with distinct embedding types differ in terms of their intention to stay in the host country and their intention to stay in the host organization.</p>	<p>H4-1: The SEH of each partner in DEECs is positively associated with their career satisfaction.</p> <p>H4-2: The positive relationship between the SEH of each partner in DEECs and their career satisfaction is mediated by each partner's community embeddedness.</p> <p>H4-3: SEH of each partner in DEECs is positively</p>

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H3-3: PI predicts the associated with the other's  
embedding types of career satisfaction.

IRWs.

H4-4: The positive  
relationship between the  
SEH of each partner in  
DEECs and the other  
partner's career satisfaction  
is mediated by the other  
partner's community  
embeddedness.

H4-5: The positive  
crossover relationships  
between one partner's SEH  
and the other partner's (a)  
community embeddedness  
and (b) career satisfaction  
are moderated by gender,  
with the relationship being  
stronger for female than for  
male partners.

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Publication	<p>Nguyen, A., (2022). Multi-level factors influencing job embeddedness among migrant employees: A systematic literature review. In: M. Andresen et al. (Eds.), <i>Wanderlust to wonderland? Exploring key issues in expatriate careers: Individual, organizational, and societal insights</i> (pp. 279-292). (M. Andresen &amp; J. Volmer, Book Series Eds., <i>Human Resource Management and Work and Organisational Psychology</i>, Vol. 2). University of Bamberg Press. <a href="https://doi.org/10.20378/irb-55776">https://doi.org/10.20378/irb-55776</a></p>	<p>Nguyen, A., &amp; Andresen, M. (2024). Job embeddedness among internationally relocated workers between spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism: A review and agenda for future research. <i>The International Journal of Human Resource Management</i>, 35(5), 868-931. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2023.2287548">https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2023.2287548</a></p>	<p>Nguyen, A., &amp; Andresen, M. (2024). “Many places to call home”: A typology of job embeddedness among internationally relocated workers and its relationship to personal initiative, intent to stay in the host country, and intent to stay in the organization. <i>The International Journal of Human Resource Management</i>, 35(7), 1370-1402. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2023.2289497">https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2023.2289497</a></p>	<p>Nguyen, A., &amp; Andresen, M. (2023). “A laugh a day keeps the failure away”: The role of self-enhancing humor and host country community embeddedness in career satisfaction of dual-earner expatriate couples. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i>, 14, 1125136. <a href="https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1125136">https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1125136</a></p>
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Journal impact factor (Year)	Not applicable	5.709 (2023)	5.709 (2023)	3.884 (2023)
Respective chapter	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8

## **Chapter 4. Overall method**

Our methodology was designed to align with the primary objective of the thesis: advancing the theory, research, and practical application of job embeddedness for IRWs. This objective necessitates a blend of conceptual and empirical investigations. In the conceptual phase, we utilized framework synthesis to refine a theoretical framework systematically, synthesizing the factors influencing job embeddedness among IRWs. The empirical studies extended these conceptual findings by employing two innovative methods: Latent Class Analysis (LCA) with covariates and distal outcomes, as well as APIM with mediation effects (APIMeM).

### **4.1. Overview of applied methods**

Framework synthesis involves using a predefined theory as a basis to test it for a relevant but different population (Brunton et al., 2020). In this thesis, the original job embeddedness theory, encompassing links, fit, and sacrifice dimensions, along with community, organization, and career domains, serves as the foundation for open and selective data coding. This coding process results in second-order categories (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013). This coding results in second-order categories (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013). For instance, 'social security in the host country' is coded as 'host country community sacrifice,' and 'investment in the home country' is assigned to the 'home country community sacrifice' category. We explore the interrelations of these second-order categories with influencing factors, synthesized into main categories: situational, individual, organizational, and institutional levels in the first SLR (chapter 6). In the second SLR (Chapter 7), we follow the coding procedure outlined by Wolfswinkel et al. (2013), constantly comparing second-order job embeddedness-related categories with original theory to identify distinctive job embeddedness characteristics for the IRWs population. Simultaneously, we examine the interrelationships within these second-order categories and their relations to relevant constructs, leading to summaries and propositions.

Insights from conceptual studies necessitate innovative empirical methods in researching job embeddedness among the IRW population. Particularly, the first empirical research (Chapter 7) on spillover effects and transnationalism applies LCA with a three-step maximum likelihood (ML) procedure (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014; Vermunt, 2010). This methodological approach is effective in examining relationships between latent classes (embedding types) and covariates explaining the emergence of the identified classes, as well as distal outcomes (Nylund-Gibson et al., 2019). In the first step, the three-step procedure involves conducting a standard LCA using class indicators such as home country community embeddedness, host country community embeddedness, host country organization embeddedness, and host country career embeddedness. The most suitable solution for classifying embedding types emerges through examining fit indices. In the second step, we create nominal variables representing the 'most likely class' or pseudo class membership derived in step 1 for each participant (for instance,  $n = 1$  means that participants most likely belong to class 1). These classes are then adjusted for misclassification errors using latent class posterior derived in the first step (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014). In the final step, we examine the associations between the adjusted classes and auxiliary variables, including covariates and distal outcomes.

While multinomial regression reveals the relationships between covariates (PI) and the error-corrected classes (i.e., embedding types), Chi-square Wald test is employed to reveal differences between these classes in the intent to stay in the host country and organization (Liao, 2004; Nylund-Gibson et al., 2019). The ultimate empirical study (Chapter 8) concentrates on crossover effects, involving dyadic data analysis through the APIM (Kenny et al., 2006). Considering factors such as SEH and community embeddedness, the fundamental APIM method is specifically crafted to control for the non-independence between partners (Kenny et al., 2006). This method separately estimates the impacts of each partner's factors on their own outcomes (i.e.,

actor effects) ( $X_1 \rightarrow Y_1; X_2 \rightarrow Y_2$ ) and the outcomes of the other partner (i.e., partner effects) ( $X_1 \rightarrow Y_2; X_2 \rightarrow Y_1$ ).

In this thesis, the research model of crossover effects further involves mediators (i.e., partners' host country community embeddedness), necessitating the use of APIMeM—an extended version of APIM with the capability to examine mediation effects using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques (Ledermann et al., 2011). APIMeM typically consists of three sets of variables, including predictors ( $X_1, X_2$ ), mediators ( $M_1, M_2$ ) and outcomes ( $Y_1, Y_2$ ). The model structures the mediation effects in various ways. In this thesis, mediators are hypothesized to mediate both actor ( $X_1 \rightarrow M_1 \rightarrow Y_1; X_2 \rightarrow M_2 \rightarrow Y_2$ ) and partner ( $X_1 \rightarrow M_2 \rightarrow Y_2; X_2 \rightarrow M_1 \rightarrow Y_1$ ) effects.

Due to our hypothesis regarding varied effects between male and female partners, we employ an analysis that distinguishes between couples rather than treating them as indistinguishable (Kenny, 2006). Additionally, we reassess gender differences in mediated partner effects using a Wald test, which assesses the equality of various logit models (Liao, 2004). This method ensures a thorough examination of the intricate dynamics between actor and partner effects, taking into account the mediating influence of host country community embeddedness and accounting for gender differences in the crossover effects within couples.

## **4.2. Data collection**

### ***4.2.1. Literature search and selection in SLR***

The data collection for the SLR involved a meticulous process based on specified criteria and search strategies.

Adhering to specific eligibility criteria data were extracted from equivalent sources in the literature to identify conceptual papers. Firstly, the empirical studies selected for inclusion in the

SLR incorporated a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Secondly, the study population was defined as individuals who had experienced cross-border relocation, changed their primary residence, and legally worked overseas. Studies focusing solely on undocumented migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers were excluded due to their distinct work-related circumstances, which set them apart from the broader population of IRWs (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2018). Thirdly, the timeframe for relevant literature was delimited from 1980, ensuring systematic coverage of topics concerning IRWs (Adler, 1981), to 2021. Finally, a comprehensive approach was adopted, encompassing both published and unpublished sources such as academic journals, conference papers, theses, dissertations, and working papers (Booth et al., 2016). The search terms derived from the inclusive and exclusive criteria were: ((embedd\*) AND (migrant\* OR expatriat\*)) NOT TI (illegal migrant\* OR undocumented migrant\* OR refugee\* OR asylum seeker\* OR entrepreneur\*).

Data were collected from EBSCOHost and Web of Science, repositories encompassing studies on IRWs across disciplines such as psychology, business, management, economics, sociology, and political sciences. The screening process followed the procedure outlined by Booth et al. (2016) involving title, abstract, and full-text screening, where non-empirical, irrelevant, and poor-quality studies were eliminated. This systematic approach resulted in the inclusion of 42 empirical studies for the first SLR and 45 for the second conceptual paper. Chapters 5 and 6 provide detailed information on the screening and selection process.

#### ***4.2.2. Empirical data collection***

Data collection commenced in July 2020 and concluded in November 2020 and June 2021 for individuals and the initial wave of DEECs, respectively. The second wave of DEEC data collection occurred one year subsequent to the first wave. Individual data were collected from



residents in three European countries: the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, while the DEEC dataset encompassed a broader range of destinations, covering 109 countries in Europe.

Eligibility criteria for both individuals and couples included: (1) residing in a country other than their primary residence during youth (referred to as the home country), and (2) being employed by an organization within their country of residence. Additional exclusive criteria included relocation to the host country before the age of 18 or working as freelancers or entrepreneurs, ensuring participants had established connections with their home country before relocation and that their organizational embeddedness adhered to the job embeddedness concept. For couples, a third eligibility criterion was added, requiring partners to cohabit in their country of residence.

Participants for both datasets were recruited from three sources: Facebook groups, a consumer panel, and Prolific (an online data collection platform). Individual surveys were accessed by 2,860 people, with 921 eligible participants completing the consent form and online questionnaires. Participants received a reward of 5 British pounds, except for those from Facebook groups who voluntarily participated without rewards. Measures such as response time, consistency in response, and outliers were assessed to ensure data quality, resulting in 707 respondents and a 24.8% response rate.

Obtaining an accurate estimation of couples joining the questionnaire was challenging due to the unknown number of eligible couples in the data sources and the design (both partners answering the online survey for a relatively extensive duration). The initial wave involved the participation of 707 eligible DEECs, where both partners provided consent and completed the questionnaire, receiving a reward of 8.40 British pounds, except for those from Facebook groups. After one year, due to disruptions in contacts with participants in Prolific and consumer panels,

only 220 couples were invited to participate in the second wave. Of these, 109 couples provided consent and completed the online surveys, resulting in a response rate of 49.5%.

Although individual and couple datasets were obtained from multiple sources and received varying rewards, the analysis indicated that data sources and rewards did not significantly differentiate the main variables between respondents.

#### **4.2. Sample description**

Table 3 provides a comprehensive overview of both secondary data and the empirical sample utilized in this thesis. It is evident that highly qualified IRWs predominantly featured in the existing literature, a trend that is mirrored in our empirical studies.

#### **4.3. Measures**

We incorporated a mix of demographic items and validated scales to measure inclusive constructs. The detailed questionnaire can be found in the Appendix. In most cases, the employed instruments utilized a Likert scale ranking from 1 to 5, unless otherwise specified.

##### *Job embeddedness*

The measurement of job embeddedness included the *host country community embeddedness* measure developed by Mitchell et al. (2001) and adapted by Tharenou and Caulfield (2010). This scale comprises 8 items assessing fit and sacrifice dimensions, such as "I really love the place where I live" and "My neighborhood is safe." Additionally, the community links measure developed by Tharenou and Caulfield (2010) was adjusted to suit the IRW population. An example of a revised item is "How many of your close friends live nearby?" and "How many children are living with you now?" The scale demonstrated desirable internal consistency for both individual (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ ) and couple (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .81$ ) samples.

*Host country organizational embeddedness* was measured based on the 6-item global scale developed by Crossley et al. (2007) and adapted by Ng and Feldman (2014). A sample item was as follows: "It would be difficult for me to leave this company." The instrument exhibited good reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ).

*Host country career embeddedness* was calculated using the scale developed by Tharenou and Caulfield (2010), demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .73$ ). The instrument comprises three items on the sacrifice dimension, such as "The career and employment opportunities I have here," and four items on fit, like "My professional growth and development fit with what is happening in this country." Additionally, career links were measured by two items, encompassing tenure and types of employment contracts.

We applied the 10-item scale adapted by Lo et al. (2012), originally developed by Terence R. Mitchell et al. (2001) to calculate *home country community embeddedness*. Examples of items included "People respect me a lot in my home country" and "The weather in my home country is suitable for me". The instrument demonstrates good reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ ).

#### *Personal initiative*

The PI of IRWs was assessed using a measurement instrument created and validated by (Frese et al., 1997). This scale consists of seven items, including statements like "I seize opportunities promptly to achieve my objectives," and exhibited satisfactory levels of internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ).

**Table 3.** *Overview of sample description*

	Conceptual articles		Empirical articles	
	SLR 1	SLR 2	Study 1	Study 2
Sample size	<i>N</i> = 42 studies	<i>N</i> = 45 studies	<i>N</i> = 707 individual IRWs	<i>N</i> = 109 DEECs
General description	- 40 peer-reviewed academic journal articles	- 44 peer-reviewed academic journal articles	- 41.3% males, 58.7% females	
	- 2 doctoral and master theses	- 1 master thesis	- 43.4% were married, 33.1% were in partnership, 21.4% were single, 2.1% were separated or divorced	
Design	- 22 cross-sectional, qualitative	- 22 cross-sectional, qualitative	- Cross-sectional, quantitative	- Longitudinal, quantitative
	- 7 longitudinal, quantitative	- 5 longitudinal, quantitative		
	- 12 cross-sectional, quantitative	- 15 cross-sectional, quantitative		
Qualification levels	- 3 on low-qualified	- 2 on low-qualified IRWs	- 8.2% completed secondary school or lower	- 0.4% completed primary education
	- 2 on low- to medium-qualified IRWs	- 2 on low- to medium-qualified IRWs	- 10.6% held post-secondary non-tertiary or short-cycle tertiary degrees	- 0.5% held lower secondary degrees
	- 3 on middle- to highly-qualified IRWs	- 3 on medium- to high-qualified IRWs	- 38% possessed bachelor's degrees	- 1.4% had upper secondary (1.4%) degrees
	- 24 on highly-qualified IRWs	- 26 on high-qualified IRWs	- 36.4% obtained master's degrees	- 11% obtained post-secondary non-tertiary or short cycle tertiary degree
	- 8 on mixed sub-samples	- 11 on mixed sub-samples	- 6.8% attained doctoral degrees	
	- 2 did not specify	- 1 did not specify		

					- 37.6% obtained bachelor's degrees
					- 40.4% attained master's degrees
					- 8.7% possessed doctoral degrees
Relocation mode	- 2 on assigned IRWs	- 4 on assigned IRWs	- 9.1% were assigned IRWs	- 9.6% were assigned IRWs	
	- 29 on self-initiated IRWs	- 20 on self-initiated IRWs	- 90.9% were self-initiated IRWs	- 90.4% were self-initiated IRWs	
	- 7 on mixed relocation modes	- 8 on mixed relocation modes			
	- 4 did not report	- 13 did not report			
Host countries	Various	Various	- The United Kingdom (62.5%)	- 14 European countries, mainly in the United Kingdom (45%), Spain (14%) and Germany (12%)	
			- Germany (25.6%)		
			- France (11.9%).		
Home countries	Various	Various	- 98 countries	- 49 countries (men)	
				- 51 countries (women)	

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### *Self-enhancing humor*

The 8-item validated scale developed by Martin et al. (2003) was employed in order to measure SEH of the partners in DEECs. Sample items were: “Even when I’m by myself, I’m often amused by the absurdities of life” and “If I am feeling sad or upset, I usually lose my sense of humor” (reversed score). The scale demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .89$  for men and  $.88$  for women).

### *Intent to stay*

The instrument developed by Price and Mueller (1986) was employed to calculate the *intent to stay in organizations* among the sample. The tool entailed the inclusion of 5 items, such as “I plan to stay in this company as long as possible,” and demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .88$ ).

Additionally, a 3-item mobility scale within the Employment Opportunity Index (Griffeth et al., 2005) was adapted to measure *intent to stay in the host country*. Instances of included items were: “I am unable to move to another country now even if a job came along” and “There are factors in my personal life (e.g., school-age children, relatives, etc.) which make it very difficult for me to leave my current country in the near future.” The instrument demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .73$ ).

### *Career satisfaction*

The scale developed and validated by Greenhaus et al. (1990) was employed to calculate career satisfaction of partners in DEECs. Sample items included: “I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income” and “I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills.” Analysis on internal consistency yielded good results for this instrument (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .94$  for both men and women).

Aside from the main variables, our survey and analysis also considered various controlled variables. These included factors like proficiency in the language of the host country, duration of stay in the host country, level of education, cultural differences (Demes & Geeraert, 2014), and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on participants' quality of life (Flanagan, 1982; Nguyen & Andresen, 2023a). Detailed information on the demographic instruments and measurement of these controlled variables can be found in the individual articles (Chapters 5-8) and the questionnaire provided in the Appendix.

Following this, the thesis delves into four comprehensive sub-projects, discussed in Chapters 5 through 8. For an overview of results and a general discussion of the thesis, readers are encouraged to proceed to Chapters 9 and 10.

## **Chapter 5. Multi-level factors influencing job embeddedness among internationally relocated workers: a systematic literature review<sup>2</sup>**

### **5.1. Abstract**

Job embeddedness has demonstrated its effectiveness in forecasting a range of work-related results among IRWs, such as their retention, job performance, and knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, the processes by which IRWs immerse themselves in their host nations lack comprehensive exploration. This chapter presents a SLR covering 42 empirical studies. Through our examination, we identify the elements influencing the job embeddedness of IRWs across various levels, including contextual, individual, organizational, and institutional factors, paving the ways for several research directions. Additionally, these findings offer valuable guidance to employers in host countries, enabling them to enhance the job embeddedness of IRWs effectively and thereby optimize the retention and productivity of this workforce.

*Keywords: job embeddedness, internationally relocated workers, systematic literature review*

### **5.2. Introduction**

According to the United Nations, the population of IRWs has exhibited a steady annual increase of 2.5 percent since 2015 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2020). In this context, certain regions and industries have demonstrated a pronounced reliance on foreign labor to sustain their economic activities and operational functions (Guellec & Cervantes, 2002; ILO, 2018). For instance, IRWs comprised up to 40.8% of the total labor force in the Arab States, while they constituted 20.6% of Northern America's workforce (ILO, 2018). Furthermore, IRWs represented 35% of the labor force within the IT, communication,

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<sup>2</sup> This chapter corresponds to the publication titled "Nguyen, A., (2022). Multi-level factors influencing job embeddedness among migrant employees: A systematic literature review. In: M. Andresen et al. (Eds.), *Wanderlust to wonderland? Exploring key issues in expatriate careers: Individual, organizational, and societal insights* (pp. 279-292). (M. Andresen & J. Volmer, Book Series Eds., *Human Resource Management and Work and Organisational Psychology*, Vol. 2). University of Bamberg Press. <https://doi.org/10.20378/irb-55776>"



and financial sectors in Australia and Canada (OECD, 2020). Consequently, organizations operating within these geographic regions and industries stand to benefit significantly by implementing effective strategies to manage and optimize the capacity, performance, and retention of IRWs, thereby fostering sustained growth and competitiveness.

Job embeddedness theory, pioneered by Mitchell et al. (2001), offers a robust conceptual framework for comprehending the factors that tie employees to their jobs, thereby reducing turnover intentions. Extending beyond its original purview, research underscores the consistent predictive power of job embeddedness in fostering employee retention across diverse contexts, including both domestic (Jiang et al., 2012) and international relocation scenarios (Meuer et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2014; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010; Yunlu et al., 2018). However, the impact of job embeddedness extends beyond mere retention outcomes. Notably, it has been linked with stimulating innovative behaviors (Ng & Feldman, 2010), nurturing organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Lee et al., 2004), and augmenting both task and contextual performance among domestic employees (Lee et al., 2004; Lev & Koslowsky, 2012). Similarly, within the realm of IRWs, job embeddedness exerts significant effects on job performance, OCBs (Andresen, 2015), knowledge sharing (Froese et al., 2021; Stoermer et al., 2020), knowledge acquisition (Reiche et al., 2011; Yin & Bao, 2006), and career prospects (Reiche et al., 2011). These findings underscore the remarkable predictive capacity of job embeddedness across a broad spectrum of behaviors and outcomes within the IRW population.

Despite the validation of job embeddedness outcomes in international relocation contexts, there remains a significant gap in systematic evidence regarding the factors contributing to the embeddedness of IRWs. IRWs arguably undergo distinct embedding processes compared to the domestic population. Unlike natives who may naturally integrate into society, leveraging established networks and familiarity with local culture (Pawlak & Goździak, 2020), IRWs traverse

borders (Andresen et al., 2014) and face unique barriers in their embedding process. Current literature suggests that the interplay of multiple levels, including national, societal, organizational, and individual factors, potentially influences the embedding of IRWs (cf. Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013). These factors encompass cultural novelty and the distance between home and host nations, immigration policies at the national level (Ren et al., 2014), host country language proficiency at the individual level (Ren et al., 2014), and organizational support at the group level (Chen & Shaffer, 2017). However, a comprehensive overview of these multi-level factors has been lacking, hindering a holistic understanding of the ways through which IRWs become integrated into the host country.

The lack of a systematic overview stems from two research gaps that currently exist in the literature. First, insights into factors contributing to job embeddedness abroad are scattered across disciplines. Management research primarily focuses on elements associated with the working environment (cf. Linder, 2016) while omitting factors related to private life. Social sciences, by contrast, view embeddedness from the socioeconomic perspective, thus primarily explaining the role of various factors existing outside the work environment (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014a). Consequently, the lack of interdisciplinary research impedes the development of a holistic understanding of job embeddedness in the context of international relocation.

The second gap in the literature lies in the examination of the levels of embeddedness among IRWs, often overlooking how they integrate into their host countries. Particularly in the relocation context, employees showcase their capacity to immerse themselves in the destination country and sustain their embeddedness through diverse strategies (Halvorsen et al., 2015). For instance, the nature of networks, rather than their sheer size, differs between IRWs sponsored by companies and those who initiate relocation independently (Agha-Alikhani, 2016; Shen & Kram, 2011).

Consequently, IRWs with comparable levels of embeddedness, like the quantity of connections, may employ differing embedding tactics to attain that level. This differentiation is crucial for understanding various behaviors and outcomes; for instance, the ethnicity of connections, reflecting the quality rather than the quantity of ties, has been revealed to impact the career satisfaction and retention of IRWs (Cao et al., 2014). Hence, it is essential to explore not only levels of embeddedness but also the mechanisms through which IRWs establish themselves in foreign environments. Our SLR addresses these two significant research gaps concerning the factors contributing to the embeddedness of IRWs, resulting in the research question: "*Which factors contribute to the embeddedness of IRWs in the host country?*"

Our SLR contributes in three significant ways. Firstly, we offer a comprehensive overview of the factors shaping the embedding process of IRWs, classifying them into four levels: situational, individual, organizational, and institutional. This categorization illuminates the diverse pathways through which job embeddedness manifests and evolves within international relocation contexts, thereby deepening our comprehension of IRWs' embeddedness and laying the foundation for adapting job embeddedness assessment tools for this demographic. Secondly, we pinpoint areas of uncertainty and underexplored themes within the literature, suggesting avenues for future research. Lastly, drawing from our insights into the determinants of IRWs' job embeddedness abroad, we present practical recommendations for organizations and practitioners to optimize the immersion of their foreign workforce. These interdisciplinary insights hold particular relevance for enhancing the effectiveness of Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies tailored to these employees, as they highlight the influence of both work-related and non-work-related factors that contemporary HRM practices may have overlooked.

We employ a three-step methodological approach. In follows, we provide a theoretical background on the concepts of "job embeddedness" and "international relocated workers", which

serve two primary theoretical frameworks for our SLR. We explain the methods used and then elucidate the results encompassing multi-level factors influencing IRWs' embeddedness. Finally, we discuss the findings, highlighting research gaps, and offering implications for theory, research, and practice. The SLR concludes with our summary of the findings.

### **5.3. Theoretical background**

#### ***5.3.1. Internationally relocated workers***

IRWs relocate across national borders, change their primary residence, and officially undertake employment abroad (Andresen et al., 2014). In social sciences literature, these individuals are categorized as migrant workers (ILO, 1999; United Nations, 1990; Usher, 2004) and as expatriates in business and management studies (Andresen et al., 2014). The group of IRWs exhibits diversity stemming from various factors, such as the original motives for relocation (e.g., career-driven or personal reasons), the relocation mode (e.g., self-initiated or company-sponsored), individual characteristics (e.g., cultural background, level of human capital), and institutional factors (e.g., work and residency permits) (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Andresen et al., 2018).

At the individual level, the original motives for international relocation and personal characteristics are likely to influence the ways in which IRWs become embedded (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Andresen et al., 2018). On the other hand, situational factors encompass the cultural distance between the home and host nations (Ren et al., 2014), while institutional factors may include residency and work permits (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013) as well as immigration policies (Stoermer et al., 2020).

On the organizational level, it is observed that company-sponsored IRWs are typically dispatched overseas by their respective employers and frequently benefit from enticing relocation packages (Dickmann et al., 2018). These individuals typically enjoy augmented access to

organizational resources (Jokinen et al., 2008) and often rely extensively on their employers for assistance throughout the relocation phase (Dickmann et al., 2018). In contrast, self-initiated IRWs, who undertake relocation abroad without organizational backing, commonly commence their employment in new environments devoid of relocation provisions and demonstrate a higher propensity for organizational mobility compared to their company-sponsored counterparts (Biemann & Andresen, 2010). This diversity underscores that the processes of embedding IRWs within their host contexts may exhibit variations in terms of motivation, tempo, and mechanisms contingent upon their multi-level characteristics.

### **5.3.2. *Job embeddedness***

Job embeddedness, as delineated by Mitchell et al. (2001), encompasses three primary dimensions—links, fit, and sacrifice—manifesting across three domains: organizational, community, and occupational or career pathway (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2007; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). Links pertain to the social, psychological, and financial connections employees establish within various spheres, including familial, collegial, social, and real estate contexts (Mitchell et al., 2001). Fit denotes the congruence between employees' attributes and pertinent domains, such as personal values aligning with organizational culture, career capital matching job requirements, or individual preferences harmonizing with host country characteristics like climate, lifestyle, and recreational activities (Mitchell et al., 2001). Sacrifice encompasses the tangible or intangible benefits relinquished by employees upon severing ties with their embedded network, including neighborhood security, job opportunities in a specific locale, or employer-provided retirement plans (Mitchell et al., 2001). It is noteworthy that job embeddedness extends beyond on-the-job domains (organizational) to encompass off-the-job domains (community embeddedness) as well as the professional environment in a country (career embeddedness) (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2007; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010).

Research on job embeddedness among domestic employees systematically elucidates the myriad strategies they deploy to immerse themselves in diverse domains within their home country (Feldman et al., 2012; Kiazad et al., 2015). For instance, Kiazad et al. (2015) identified multi-level factors contributing to employees' embeddedness, spanning from high-performance work practices to community characteristics, professional networks, and the proximity of extended family members. Similarly, Feldman et al. (2012) observed that employees' embedding strategies correlate with individual factors such as self-regulatory focus, proactive personality, career stage, and situational variables like familial structure.

In contrast, research on job embeddedness among IRWs is still in its nascent stages. Factors influencing IRWs' embeddedness diverge due to the distinctive context of international relocation, characterized by factors such as cultural distance and immigration policies (Ren et al., 2014; Stoermer et al., 2020). Studies have explored various tactics employed by IRWs to integrate into host communities and organizations (Halvorsen et al., 2015; Ren et al., 2014; Yunlu et al., 2018). The interplay and amalgamation of these diverse influencing factors shape the embeddedness of IRWs in their host environments.

## **5.4. Methods**

### ***5.4.1. Literature search***

Our SLR covers empirical studies focusing on the embeddedness of IRWs. We established four eligibility criteria to guide our selection process. Firstly, both quantitative and qualitative research studies are considered eligible. Secondly, the respondents in these studies must be legal IRWs. Thirdly, the reported period of the studies ranges from 1980 to 2021, thus aligning with the systematic study of IRWs since the seminal work of Adler in 1981. Lastly, all studies included must be reported in English. Our inclusion criteria encompass both published and unpublished

sources, such as academic journal articles, conference papers, theses, dissertations, and working papers (Booth et al., 2016).

Primary data were sourced from the EBSCOHost and Web of Science databases, covering studies across disciplines such as business, management, economics, sociology, political science, psychology, and the humanities. Free-text searches were conducted using keywords concerning migrants, expatriates, and embeddedness. Our review specifically focuses on IRWs legally employed in organizations within their host countries. Studies exclusively addressing irregular migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, or entrepreneurs were excluded using specific search terms: ((embedd\*) AND (migrant\* OR expatriat\*)) NOT TI (illegal migrant\* OR undocumented migrant\* OR refugee\* OR asylum seeker\* OR entrepreneur\*), yielding a total of 1,157 studies.

Duplicate studies were eliminated first, followed by a screening of titles and abstracts to remove papers that were not pertinent to embeddedness, non-empirical studies, or those with samples not aligning with our research question criteria (such as intra-national or rural-urban migrants). Subsequently, the full texts of the remaining 139 studies were scrutinized, leading to further exclusions of studies that were non-empirical, irrelevant to our focus, and/or did not meet our sampling criteria. Additionally, studies failing to meet quality standards (due to unclear or inappropriate methods, procedures, data analysis, or research outcomes), as well as gray literature and conference papers lacking full-text versions, were also discarded. This process culminated in a final selection of 42 eligible papers for our review.

#### ***5.4.2. Data description***

Within the literature database, we identified two gray studies, comprising doctoral and master's theses, alongside 40 peer-reviewed articles published in academic journals. Among these, 21 studies employed qualitative methodologies, while 19 adopted quantitative approaches,

including seven longitudinal studies. Additionally, mixed methods were utilized in the remaining studies, predominantly employing cross-sectional designs.

Regarding the skill levels of the sampled populations, two articles focused on low- to middle-skilled populations, three targeted middle- to highly-skilled individuals, and 24 studies exclusively examined highly-skilled workers. Three studies specifically investigated low-skilled workers, while eight studies included mixed participants, and two did not specify the skill level of the participants.

Concerning relocation mode, two studies focused on company-sponsored IRWs, 20 studies sampled self-initiated IRWs, and seven studies examined both categories. The remaining studies did not specify the relocation mode under consideration.

Overall, this delineation offers insights into the array of research methodologies, participant demographics, and relocation modes investigated within the literature on IRWs' embeddedness.

#### ***5.4.3. Data synthesis***

During the course of our data synthesis process, we adopted framework synthesis with the aim of constructing a comprehensive framework that integrates a diverse array of influencing factors and their interrelationships, as well as their relationships with embeddedness components (i.e., dimensions and domains). We initiated this process by utilizing a predefined framework, specifically job embeddedness, and iteratively incorporated additional topics discovered through an inductive approach (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). This methodological approach was driven by two primary considerations. Firstly, the included studies exhibit significant heterogeneity across various dimensions, including study designs, settings, measurements, and ontologies. This diversity presents challenges for the application of quantitative deductive methods such as meta-analysis. Secondly, framework synthesis provides a structured approach for synthesizing findings



within the framework of a conceptual model, enabling the exploration of interconnected elements as supportive evidence unfolds.

Through the utilization of framework synthesis, our objective is to construct a nuanced and cohesive framework that comprehensively captures the factors influencing embeddedness among IRWs across multiple levels, while allowing for flexibility in accommodating emerging themes and interactions among these factors.

## **5.5. Results**

The SLR points out that the embedding of IRWs is molded and evolves under the sway of diverse factors operating across various levels. These factors have been synthesized and categorized based on their hierarchical levels (situational, individual, organizational, institutional) and the domains they impact (organization, community, career), as delineated in Figure 2.

In Figure 2, we depict the four levels using circular bubbles, each containing factors corresponding to its respective level. Furthermore, factors influencing each domain of embeddedness—community, organization, and career—are represented by square bubbles situated within their respective domains. Certain factors were identified to exert influence on migrants' embeddedness across multiple domains, thereby appearing in overlapping regions.

Subsequently, detailed elaboration on these findings will be provided in the subsequent sections, delving into the multifaceted nature of factors influencing the embeddedness of IRWs across different levels and domains.

### ***5.5.1. Factors influencing host country organizational embeddedness***

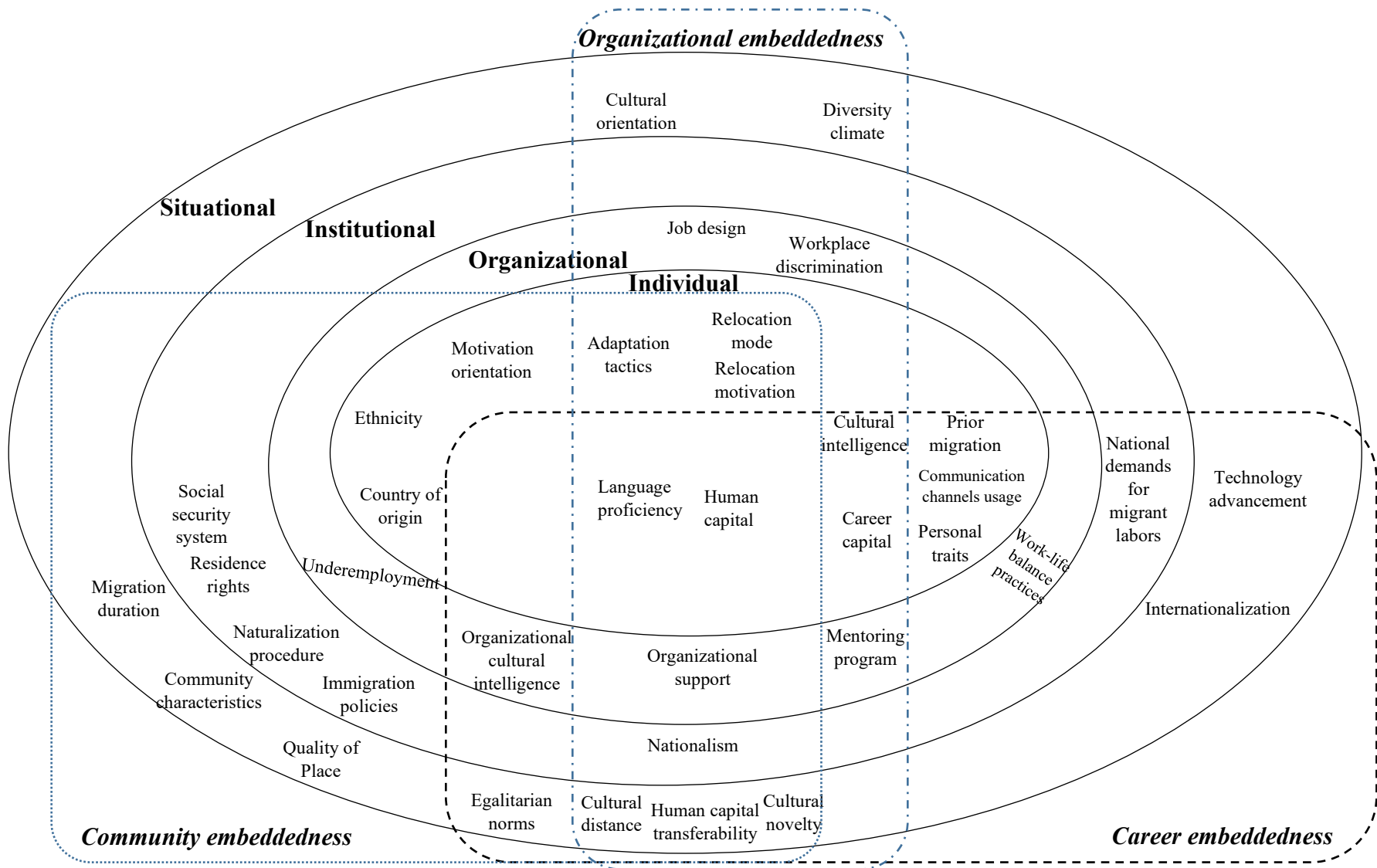
#### ***Situational factors***

IRWs encounter various intercultural barriers when moving across borders, including cultural novelty and cultural distance. Cultural novelty refers to the perceived similarities and differences between the home and host country in daily life customs and generic features, while

cultural distance captures differences in cultural value dimensions (Ren et al., 2014). These factors have been identified as significant impediments to IRWs' enmeshment into host organizations, as they impede perceived compatibility with workplace values and behavioral patterns and impact relationships with native colleagues (Brunton & Cook, 2018; Ren et al., 2014). Moreover, uncertainty stemming from cultural distance and novelty discourages IRWs from actively establishing organizational connections (Ren et al., 2014).

The cultural orientation of the host country similarly influences the embedding process of IRWs. Stoermer et al. (2020) found that cultural intelligence was particularly advantageous for IRWs' organizational embeddedness in host countries characterized by high in-group collectivism. In such environments, characterized by loyalty, pride, and cohesiveness among in-group members (House et al., 2004), there tends to be discrimination against IRWs as "the others" (Stoermer et al., 2020). In this context, cultural intelligence becomes essential for IRWs to integrate into their workplace. Cultural intelligence provides these workers with awareness of cultural influences, knowledge about host country cultural norms, values, and behavioral patterns, and equips them to adapt accordingly to fit into the local working environment (Stoermer et al., 2020).

In addition to cultural elements, the diversity climate of the host community, characterized by an appreciation of personal uniqueness and differences related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and cultural background, significantly influences the relationships of IRWs at work (organizational links) (Chen, 2012). A positive diverse climate within the host community can impact IRWs' workplace relationships in several ways. Firstly, it provides IRWs with a sense of security, inclusion, and equity, which encourages them to engage in relationship-building behaviors and enhances their efficiency at work (Ren et al., 2014; Yunlu et al., 2018). Secondly, a positive diversity climate optimizes the favorable perception of IRWs and reduces the risk of discrimination in the local community, fostering reciprocal relationships between IRWs and native worker.



**Figure 2.** Multi-level factors influencing job embeddedness of IRWs

Note: factors are placed in the domains where they influence the embeddedness. Factors influencing multiple domains are placed in the overlapping areas between these domains.

Furthermore, the transferability of human capital, such as qualifications and work experience, plays a crucial role in influencing the perceived benefits (e.g., salary) and fit between IRWs' capital and their job levels. Studies have shown that a lack of transferability between the home and host country often leads to underpayment and underemployment of IRWs, reducing their compatibility in the workplace and increasing the sacrifices they face in leaving their employers (Cederberg, 2017; Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Humphries et al., 2009). These factors highlight the role of not only cultural elements but also the diversity climate and transferability of human capital in IRWs' embeddedness in their employer organizations.

#### *Individual factors*

Scholarly research underscores a notable disparity between self-initiated and company-sponsored IRWs, distinguished by their distinct relocation modes, particularly concerning their organizational embeddedness. Studies suggest that company-sponsored IRWs tend to cultivate networks primarily within their organization, while self-initiated IRWs are inclined to establish connections beyond the workplace (Shen & Kram, 2011). Generally, the literature proposes that company-sponsored IRWs engage in deeper immersion within the host organization compared to their self-initiated counterparts (Biemann & Andresen, 2010). This contrast may stem from several factors. Company-sponsored IRWs typically enjoy greater access to organizational resources relative to self-initiated IRWs (Jokinen et al., 2008). They possess valuable organizational knowledge and forge broader networks spanning the entire corporation (Suutari et al., 2018). These resources serve as invaluable assets that bind company-sponsored IRWs to their host organizations, facilitating a more profound embedding process.

Alternatively, the discrepancy in organizational embeddedness between company-sponsored and self-initiated IRWs may be attributed to individual career orientations. Evidence suggests that these two groups pursue divergent career trajectories. Company-sponsored IRWs

often adhere to a traditional organizational career path, whereas self-initiated IRWs typically aspire to a boundaryless career (Linder, 2019). As self-initiated IRWs navigate their careers across multiple organizations, they may exhibit less inclination to attach themselves to a specific company (Linder, 2019).

Another factor influencing the embedding process of IRWs is their original motivation for relocating abroad. IRWs embark on international relocation with diverse aspirations, encompassing economic motives, career advancement, a quest for adventure, familial connections, or a desire for lifestyle change or escape (Richardson & Mallon, 2005). The literature indicates that the motivations driving these workers to move abroad have ramifications for their organizational embeddedness in the host country. For instance, economically driven IRWs prioritize maximizing financial gains from their host organizations while potentially overlooking engagement in other domains (Jun & Ha, 2015; Lo et al., 2012; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020). This mode of embedding often reinforces perceived sacrifices, such as salary offered by employing companies, thereby deepening their enmeshment into the host company.

Furthermore, scholarly literature underscores the array of adaptive strategies and socialization tactics that IRWs actively deploy to integrate into the host organization. These encompass information seeking, positive framing, relationship cultivation, and participation in social engagements and events. Information seeking entails the proactive acquisition of knowledge about organizational dynamics, tasks, and expectations to align with workplace requirements, norms, and values and foster connections with colleagues (Ren et al., 2014). Cultivating relationships is crucial for IRWs to garner social support and interpersonal resources, serving as pivotal assets that deter them from departing the host organization (Ren et al., 2014). Positive framing involves cognitive self-regulation to perceive situations as opportunities rather than setbacks in response to personal choices. This constructive outlook empowers and motivates IRWs

to embed themselves in their professional milieu despite encountered challenges (Ren et al., 2014). Lastly, IRWs nurture and reinforce their professional relationships through social gatherings, both during and after work hours, at venues such as restaurants, pubs, bars, or social events (Beaverstock, 2002; Halvorsen et al., 2015). These gatherings foster camaraderie and contribute significantly to the embedding of IRWs within their workplace.

### *Organizational factors*

The immersion of IRWs within their organizational contexts is intrinsically linked to various workplace factors. Firstly, organizational support, encompassing financial assistance, career development initiatives, adjustment aid, and occasionally spiritual guidance, has been identified as beneficial for enhancing IRWs' immersion into the organization, motivating them both intrinsically and extrinsically (Chen & Shaffer, 2017). Financial backing enhances their controlled motivation by augmenting their perception of the sacrifices involved in departing from the host company (Chen & Shaffer, 2017). Concurrently, organizational aid in career advancement and relocation facilitates these workers' autonomous motivation, invigorating and sustaining their embedding process within the company (Chen & Shaffer, 2017). In certain instances, IRWs appreciate organizational support for religious beliefs and ideologies, which fosters connections among co-workers and supervisors (Halvorsen et al., 2015).

Secondly, scholarly inquiry emphasizes the detrimental impacts of discrimination and intergroup conflicts on the embeddedness of IRWs (Brunton & Cook, 2018). Working environments characterized by discrimination and conflict, particularly between native employees and IRWs, impede the professional connections and perceived effectiveness of foreign workers, thereby straining their embeddedness into the organization (Brunton & Cook, 2018).

Some studies propose remedies for these issues. For example, job design interventions aimed at fostering professional interdependence between local and IRWs cultivate their working

relationships (Cook et al., 2011; Fee et al., 2017). Additionally, mentoring programs within the host organization enhance migrants' teamwork and perceived sacrifices, such as promotability (Carraher et al., 2008). These findings underscore the importance of organizational support and initiatives to alleviate discrimination and intergroup conflicts in facilitating the embedding of IRWs within their workplace settings.

#### *Institutional factors*

Research suggests that nationalist state policies often lead to discrimination against IRWs in the workplace (Bajt, 2016). Especially in environments characterized by strong nationalist sentiments, IRWs frequently encounter obstacles such as lower wages, reduced benefits, and substandard working conditions imposed by their employers (Bajt, 2016). Consequently, these challenges hinder their embeddedness and sense of belonging within the host companies.

#### **5.5.2. Factors influencing host country community embeddedness**

##### *Situational factors*

Over time, IRWs tend to deepen their enmeshment in their host communities. Research indicates that the longer they reside in the host nation, the more extensive and interconnected their social networks become, leading to greater assimilation into their new environment and enhanced social connections (Koelet et al., 2017; Martinovic et al., 2015; Tsuda, 1999). Moreover, the characteristics of local communities also play a significant role in determining IRWs' sense of belonging. Neighborhoods with a high concentration of foreigners or those characterized by high levels of interaction facilitate IRWs' ability to establish and expand their social networks (Beverstock, 2002). Additionally, the quality of the environment, encompassing factors such as housing standards, healthcare accessibility, educational opportunities, transportation infrastructure, leisure facilities, and overall infrastructure, contributes to the overall livability and comfort of daily

life for IRWs. Consequently, these factors collectively contribute to a perceived fit and embeddedness of IRWs within their host communities (Kim & Cocks, 2017).

Furthermore, scholarly literature demonstrates the profound impact of cultural barriers—such as cultural novelty and distance—on IRWs' adaptation within their host communities (Halvorsen et al., 2015; Ren et al., 2014). Discrepancies between the IRWs' home country and the host nation, including variations in daily customs and cultural orientations, present challenges for IRWs aiming to acclimatize and establish a sense of belonging within the local society (Ren et al., 2014).

It is noteworthy that the community enmeshment of female migrants is significantly impacted by the presence of egalitarian norms prevailing in the host countries (Pawlak & Goździak, 2020). Gender equality provides internationally mobile women with a sense of security that enhances their comfort levels in the host society and magnifies the stakes associated with relocating from the receiving nation (Pawlak & Goździak, 2020).

At the same time, the transferability of human capital between the IRWs' home and host countries—such as qualifications and work experiences—plays a crucial role in determining the social status of IRWs in their host nation and, consequently, their level of embeddedness into the local community (Cederberg, 2017). IRWs residing in countries where their human capital remains unrecognized often encounter difficulties in attaining their desired social status and lifestyle, thereby encountering barriers in their efforts to integrate into the host society (Cederberg, 2017).

### *Individual factors*

Scholarly investigations have delineated various individual determinants contributing to the embeddedness of IRWs within their host communities. Firstly, the mode of relocation emerges as a pivotal factor, with divergent approaches observed between company-sponsored and self-initiated IRWs (Meuer et al., 2019; Shen & Kram, 2011). Self-initiated IRWs tend to cultivate



networks external to their workplaces, whereas their company-sponsored counterparts typically establish connections within organizational spheres (Agha-Alikhani, 2016; Shen & Kram, 2011). The absence of organizational support may incentivize self-initiated IRWs to seek and accrue resources, such as social and psychological assistance and information, from the host society, thereby fostering deeper entrenchment therein.

Secondly, IRWs' motivations for international relocation significantly shape their embedding strategies. Economically driven individuals, as a case in point, often prioritize maximizing financial gains, potentially emphasizing enmeshment within organizations at the expense of local community engagement (Jun & Ha, 2015; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020). Their focus on remittance may impede efforts toward language acquisition and social integration, crucial components for community embeddedness (Jun & Ha, 2015; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020). Conversely, IRWs aspiring for permanent settlement abroad exhibit greater proactivity in establishing roots within the host society, actively fostering and nurturing relationships with native inhabitants (Martinovic et al., 2015).

Lastly, IRWs possessing prior experience with international relocation demonstrate enhanced preparedness and adaptability, facilitating their immersion into the host community (Bürgelt et al., 2008). Their past encounters equip them with valuable insights and skills, enabling a smoother transition and augmenting their capacity to immerse themselves within the local community.

Moreover, ethnicity and country of origin emerge as notable determinants influencing the immersion of IRWs. Certain ethnic groups may enjoy advantages in forging connections within the host nation compared to others (Martinovic et al., 2015). This advantage often stems from shared religious beliefs and historical ties between IRWs and host country nationals (Martinovic et al., 2015). Additionally, the components of community embeddedness manifest differently

between IRWs originating from developed or industrialized nations and those hailing from less developed regions (Khoo et al., 2008). For instance, workers from developed countries may prioritize lifestyle and climatic considerations in their embedding process, whereas those from less developed areas may prioritize socio-economic opportunities offered by the destination (Khoo et al., 2008, 2011; Khoo et al., 2009). Adaption tactics and motivational orientation play crucial roles at the individual level. To immerse themselves in host communities, IRWs actively engage in various tactics including relationship building, information seeking, positive framing, and utilization of social media. Relationship building involves networking and socializing with individuals in the local community, which catalyzes the expansion of their social network and sense of belonging (Yunlu et al., 2018). In a similar vein, proactive information seeking reduces ambiguity about host society norms and rules, facilitating greater community fit (Ren et al., 2014). Maintaining positive cognition during adaptation challenges also motivates IRWs to integrate into local life (Ren et al., 2014). Social media also serves as a valuable tool for maintaining and expanding social connections in the host community, complementing conventional communication channels (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). Furthermore, studies suggest that self-motivation plays a crucial role in fostering the immersion of IRWs into their host communities. Those who are internally driven exhibit the enthusiasm to actively establish connections and assimilate into local social circles through various means (Chen & Shaffer, 2017). This proactive stance contributes significantly to their incorporation into the host society. Mastering the language of the host country emerges as a fundamental element facilitating communication with native inhabitants and enriching IRWs' understanding of societal norms and customs (Ren et al., 2014). Moreover, proficiency in the local language serves as a valuable asset in strengthening IRWs' bonds with the host community, particularly since relocation often devalues their proficiency in their native language (Martinovic et al., 2015).

Our review of studies sheds light on various human capital-related factors that influence the community embeddedness of IRWs. Qualification levels, in particular, play a significant role in shaping how these workers integrate into the host community (Roggeveen & van Meeteren, 2013). IRWs with lower qualifications often face obstacles such as temporary or precarious job conditions, which hinder their ability to establish connections with locals due to constraints such as limited time and energy (Jun & Ha, 2015; Roggeveen & van Meeteren, 2013). In contrast, highly qualified IRWs demonstrate a stronger motivation to build social capital in the host country, thereby expanding their networks with native individuals (Roggeveen & van Meeteren, 2013).

#### *Organizational factors*

Organizational support, including assistance with relocation and provision of language and cross-cultural training, makes a significant contribution to the community embeddedness of IRWs (Chen, 2012). Such support mechanisms not only facilitate adjustment to a new environment but also inspire and empower IRWs to establish meaningful connections within their host communities in an intrinsic manner (Chen, 2012). In a similar vein, organizational family support, such as promoting a family-friendly environment and offering benefits for families, plays a vital role in facilitating the embeddedness of IRWs into their community, particularly among women (David et al., 2019). By nurturing a supportive environment for families, organizations contribute to the embeddedness of IRWs by enhancing the embeddedness of their families. Consequently, whether through educational opportunities for their children or through social networks established by their partners, the embeddedness of family members serves as a conduit for IRWs to immerse themselves into the local community.

Similarly, organizational cultural intelligence, characterized by human resource management practices that are culturally sensitive and supportive, plays a crucial role in facilitating the adjustment of male IRWs and promoting their embeddedness in the community (David et al.,

2019). Conversely, underemployment often erodes the social standing of IRWs within their community (Cederberg, 2017). Underemployed IRWs frequently encounter challenges in upholding their preferred lifestyle and financial stability, which undermines their sense of belonging and diminishes their reluctance to remain part of the host community (Cederberg, 2017).

### *Institutional factors*

The literature underscores various institutional factors closely linked to the community embeddedness of IRWs in their host countries. Immigration policies, for instance, play a crucial role in facilitating IRWs' assimilation into the host society. Policies enabling chain immigration, which allows internationally relocated families to reunite with extended relatives, contribute significantly to the expansion of IRWs' social networks within the host nation (Tsuda, 1999). Additionally, naturalization procedures, involving the acquisition of host country citizenship, have a profound impact on IRWs' settlement in the host community (Humphries et al., 2009). Stringent naturalization laws may impede IRWs and their families from fully integrating into the host society, potentially leading to onward migration to more favorable destinations (Humphries et al., 2009; Kōu et al., 2017).

Moreover, nationalism at the state level often breeds discrimination against foreigners in the host country, limiting their interactions with local nationals and hindering their inclusion and sense of belonging in the host society (Bajt, 2016). Migrant residence rights serve as a critical anchor ensuring their permanent stay (Agyeman & Garcia, 2016; Ette et al., 2016). Conversely, the absence of such rights can foster detachment among IRWs and incentivize relocation elsewhere (Humphries et al., 2009).

Lastly, social security systems play a significant role in fostering IRWs' community embeddedness. Studies indicate that benefits provided by social security systems, such as pensions, incentivize IRWs to remain in the host nation (Agyeman & Garcia, 2016). These systems offer a

sense of security and stability, encouraging IRWs to invest in their immersion into the local community.

### ***5.5.3. Factors influencing host country career embeddedness***

#### *Situational factors*

Studies have illuminated that cultural unfamiliarity and geographical separation can diminish the perceived compatibility of IRWs with their career environments and impede the cultivation of their professional networks (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). This correlation may stem from the uncertainty engendered by cross-cultural barriers in the workplace, necessitating substantial efforts from IRWs to adapt and integrate effectively (Beaverstock, 2002; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b).

Furthermore, the degree of internationalization within the host country appears to affect the ease with which IRWs establish their career embeddedness (Beaverstock, 2002). In nations with high levels of internationalization, career assets such as expertise and networks are more likely to be transferable, facilitating the alignment between IRWs' skills and the requirements of the host country (Beaverstock, 2002). Additionally, these countries often offer support structures, such as business associations, that facilitate the professional assimilation of migrant workers (Beaverstock, 2002). Conversely, in countries with lower global prominence, the value of international career assets diminishes, leading to more obstacles for IRWs in realizing their international career aspirations (Bilodeau, 2010; Mendoza & Guitart, 2008).

The transferability of human capital further impacts IRWs' career trajectories and embeddedness. Individuals whose qualifications and work experiences are unrecognized in the host nation often face underemployment, lower occupational levels, and inferior remuneration (Cederberg, 2017; Fernando & Patriotta, 2020). Conversely, advanced professional technologies

in the host nation can intensify the perceived sacrifices associated with leaving one's home country among IRWs (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Poppe et al., 2016).

The career embeddedness of IRWs overseas is significantly influenced by the prevailing norms regarding gender equality within the host nation. This factor holds particular relevance for female IRWs, as emphasized by Pawlak & Goździak (2020). Environments characterized by gender equality afford women IRWs opportunities for career advancement without encountering systemic gender-based discrimination (Pawlak & Goździak, 2020; van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). Conversely, in societies adhering to traditional gender roles, particularly concerning parental responsibilities, women IRWs may find themselves compelled to prioritize family obligations over career progression (van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012).

Furthermore, the country of origin significantly shapes the career trajectories of IRWs abroad. Individuals migrating from lower-status countries are more susceptible to underemployment (Cederberg, 2017; Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Humphries et al., 2009) and may encounter discrimination in the job market (Cederberg, 2017). These challenges impede their career embeddedness in terms of job market compatibility and entail sacrifices in terms of income and job status.

### *Individual factors*

IRWs with prior relocation experience demonstrate heightened adeptness in networking with professionals and clients, as well as advancing their careers abroad (Beaverstock, 2002). These experiences likely cultivate their cultural intelligence, enabling a nuanced understanding of foreign working contexts (Beaverstock, 2002). Additionally, personal attributes such as sociability and self-efficacy imbue them with the confidence to establish and sustain professional connections in the host country (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b).

The career embeddedness of IRWs encompasses diverse communication channels, including social media and informal social gatherings. Utilizing these platforms effectively enables workers to expand and sustain their career networks (Beaverstock, 2002; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). Furthermore, individuals endowed with surplus social capital can leverage support from their social circles to advance their careers, accessing valuable insights into the host country's working culture (Beaverstock, 2002).

Moreover, IRWs' career embeddedness correlates closely with their career capital. Occupational proficiency and soft skills serve as pivotal conduits for social exchange, fostering professional relationships and career progression (Yang & Lau, 2015). Highly qualified IRWs enjoy a competitive edge in securing suitable employment in the host nation, thereby enhancing their perceived alignment with the international career landscape (Cederberg, 2017). Conversely, those lacking proficiency in the host country's language often encounter impediments in job search and relationship-building within professional circles (Brunton & Cook, 2018; Cederberg, 2017).

#### *Organizational factors*

Evidence from the literature review emphasizes the significant contribution of mentoring programs within host organizations to the enmeshment of IRWs into their international careers. Mentors play a pivotal role in furnishing these individuals with dependable guidance, thereby reducing uncertainty and bolstering their effectiveness in task execution (Carragher et al., 2008). Additionally, mentors offer social and psychological backing along with personal coaching, which enhances their productivity and overall well-being (Carragher et al., 2008). Consequently, IRWs derive benefits from their mentors in terms of enhancing their professional networks, performance, and promotability (Carragher et al., 2008; van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012).

Moreover, various organizational support mechanisms are identified in research as facilitators of career embeddedness among IRWs. Transition aids and family-oriented benefits

streamline the adjustment and settlement process, enabling these workers to concentrate on their roles and improve their career satisfaction (Cao et al., 2014; David et al., 2019). Career assistance, such as training initiatives and career progression strategies, instills a sense of alignment with the international career trajectory and motivates IRWs to remain within their roles (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020). Practices promoting work-life balance, including flexible schedules, allow them to manage professional and personal obligations, thereby reinforcing their connection to the host country in a professional capacity (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020).

Finally, organizations characterized by high levels of cultural intelligence equip IRWs with the resources to adapt more effectively to novel work environments, ultimately enhancing their career satisfaction (David et al., 2019). Overall, these organizational support mechanisms play a pivotal role in facilitating the assimilation of IRWs into their international careers.

#### *Institutional factors*

The demand for international labor, particularly in specific sectors, has spurred the expansion of professional networks among IRWs. Employers in these sectors often rely on pre-existing personal connections to recruit new workers, thus fostering diaspora within these industries (Humphries et al., 2009; Tsuda, 1999). Conversely, nationalist policies at the state level pose significant barriers, including labor market discrimination, which hinder IRWs' access to suitable employment and their ability to achieve desired job positions or income levels (Bajt, 2016).

### **5.6. Discussion**

While the results from this SLR provides insights into various factors influencing IRWs' embeddedness abroad, there remain areas requiring further investigation. In this section, we analyze the implications of our findings for theory and research by identifying gaps in existing literature and proposing potential avenues for future studies. These implications, outlined in Table 4, provide direction for advancing theoretical frameworks and research agendas. Additionally, we



offer recommendations for organizations seeking to facilitate the embeddedness of their IRWs into the host country.

**Table 4.** Study 1: Research gaps in current research on IRWs' embeddedness

Embedding domains	Research gaps	Directions for future research
Organizational embeddedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient research on organizational factors</li> <li>- Insufficient research on institutional factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More studies on antecedents at organization level (e.g. organizational and supervisor justice)</li> <li>- More research on administrative and legal barriers (e.g. visas, work permits), national economic growth, structural demands for migrant laborers, integration policies</li> </ul>
Community embeddedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of relevant factors in the measurement of community embeddedness among migrant employees</li> <li>- Insufficient research on personality traits</li> <li>- Insufficient research on organizational factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adapted scale of IRWs' community embeddedness incorporating factors such as residency permit status, residence rights, social security benefits, discriminatory or inclusiveness of social climate in the host nation, perceived openness of immigration policies</li> <li>- Further studies on personality traits (e.g. openness to experiences, personal initiative)</li> <li>- Further studies on organizational factors (e.g. work-life balance practices)</li> </ul>
Career embeddedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient research on career embeddedness</li> <li>- Insufficient research on institutional factors</li> <li>- Insufficient research on individual factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further studies on career embeddedness of IRWs (including its outcomes)</li> <li>- Further studies on institutional factors (e.g. immigration policies, economic/business climate)</li> <li>- Further studies on individual factors (e.g. relocation aspirations, relocation mode)</li> </ul>

### ***5.6.1. Discussion on factors influencing host country organizational embeddedness***

#### *Furthering research on organizational and institutional factors*

The literature examined underscores various factors influencing the organizational embeddedness of IRWs, operating across different levels. For instance, the combination of cultural intelligence and host country cultural orientation contributes to organizational embeddedness among IRWs (Stoermer et al., 2020). Contextual factors unique to international relocation, including cross-cultural barriers, language proficiency, relocation mode, aspirations, organizational support, and nationalist policies, contribute to the intricate immersion processes of IRWs. It's evident that employment isn't the sole pertinent domain; rather, a multifaceted scenario arises from a blend of multi-level factors, necessitating an interdisciplinary perspective to grasp host organizational embeddedness.

However, existing literature unveils underexplored realms at the organizational level, despite the evident proximity between these factors and organizational embeddedness. Compared to the comprehensive evidence available for the domestic population, research on the role of organizations in the embedding process among IRWs remains notably scant (Kiazad et al., 2015). This research gap suggests promising avenues for future studies. Notably, organizational and supervisor justice could emerge as critical influencers in IRWs' organizational embeddedness.

Justice, whether organizational or supervisory, encompasses perceived fairness in resource allocation and decision-making processes, respectful interactions, and transparent information dissemination (Colquitt, 2012). Inequality issues prevail where IRWs are present, manifesting in discrimination or favoritism in staffing and compensation policies (Cook et al., 2011; Oltra et al., 2013). Such injustices strain intergroup relations, leading to conflicts and undermining IRWs' relationships with coworkers (Bajt, 2016; Oltra et al., 2013), and dampen their commitment to their

employers (Bajt, 2016). Ensuring justice fosters a conducive working environment, promoting IRWs' organizational embeddedness.

Similarly, the literature has largely overlooked the impact of institutional factors on IRWs' organizational embeddedness. However, reviews suggest that various influencers on IRWs' organizational embeddedness stem from institutional conditions (Al Ariss & Sidani, 2016). Administrative and legal barriers, such as visa restrictions, may hinder access to suitable employment, resulting in underemployment or skill undervaluation (Al Ariss, 2010; Al Ariss & Sidani, 2016). Conversely, national economic growth and structural demands for migrant labor often cultivate IRWs' social capital and networks in the workplace (Cook et al., 2011). Additionally, divergent integration policies formulated by political parties may impact IRWs' opportunities for organizational immersion, affecting access to language training and job-seeking aids (Natter et al., 2020).

Further investigation is necessary to uncover the links between these institutional characteristics and the organizational embeddedness of IRWs. Understanding the interplay between institutional factors and organizational embedding can provide valuable insights into the mechanisms shaping the experiences of these workers within organizational contexts. This deeper understanding is essential for developing policies and interventions that promote their successful embeddedness and retention in host organizations.

#### *Providing supports according to multi-level conditions*

There is a plethora of strategies available to organizations aiming to enhance the embeddedness of IRWs within their workplace. Firstly, offering organizational support proves particularly beneficial for self-initiated IRWs, given their often limited access to resources compared to those sponsored by companies (Suutari et al., 2018). Such support can encompass designing appropriate job roles and assignments tailored to IRWs' skills to minimize instances of

underemployment and foster collaborative relationships between IRWs and native employees. Additionally, implementing mentoring programs can alleviate adaptation stress, provide valuable insights, and facilitate the immersion of IRWs into the workplace environment.

Secondly, organizations can proactively address discrimination against foreign workers in the host country by engaging in advocacy efforts with political entities and government bodies (Al Ariss, 2010). Collaborating closely with immigration authorities to streamline relocation processes and administrative procedures for IRWs can further support their smooth transition.

Thirdly, adopting comparative HRM practices customized to the diverse backgrounds and individual differences of IRWs is crucial for nurturing organizational embeddedness (Al Ariss & Sidani, 2016). For instance, companies should prioritize tailored support for IRWs originating from cultures vastly different from the host country, who may encounter heightened challenges in adapting to local languages and customs. Offering language training and cultural immersion programs can significantly enhance their enmeshment within the organization.

#### ***5.6.2. Discussion on factors influencing host country community embeddedness***

*Developing community embeddedness scale and call for research on personality traits, and organizational factors*

The literature analysis sheds light on various factors influencing the embeddedness of IRWs within their host communities, offering implications for both theoretical frameworks and further research endeavors. Initially, our examination underscores the necessity of customizing measures of community embeddedness to suit the IRW demographic. This tailored approach may encompass elements such as residency permit status, rights of residence, social welfare entitlements, the sociopolitical atmosphere in the host country (inclusive or discriminatory), and the perceived accessibility of immigration policies. These factors, specific to the realm of international mobility, have traditionally been omitted from assessments within domestic

populations. Future investigations could refine measurement tools by encompassing a broader spectrum of factors impacting the community embeddedness of IRWs.

Moreover, notwithstanding existing research uncovering various determinants of IRWs' community immersion, the significant influence of personality traits has often been disregarded. IRWs actively engage in the process of embedding themselves, and their individual traits invariably shape their motivation, approaches, and behaviors in molding their community enmeshment. For instance, a disposition towards openness to novel experiences might encourage IRWs to adopt local cultural norms and surmount cross-cultural barriers more adeptly, thereby enhancing their compatibility with the host community. Similarly, proactive and persistent behavioral strategies, indicative of personal initiative, could motivate migrants to assimilate into host communities despite encountering obstacles. Future studies should delve into the impact of personality traits on the strategies employed by IRWs in constructing their embeddedness within host societies.

Lastly, the dearth of evidence concerning organizational influences in current research underscores a noticeable research void. Diverse practices implemented by host companies can significantly affect the extent to which IRWs immerse themselves within the host community. For instance, organizational initiatives promoting work-life balance, such as flexible work schedules, telecommuting options, on-site childcare facilities, and compassionate leave policies, may alleviate work-life conflicts and facilitate employees in tailoring their work arrangements to their personal circumstances. Given that IRW populations often require supplementary resources during the immersion process, these practices can be particularly advantageous in enhancing their embeddedness. This becomes especially pertinent amidst the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, where remote work has become obligatory across various sectors. Research focusing on assignees has demonstrated that remote work strengthens the bonds between IRW managers and their family members, thereby reinforcing community connections. Hence, organizational conditions present a

promising avenue for future research into the community embeddedness of IRWs (Mello & Tomei, 2021; Nguyen & Andresen, 2023a), thereby reinforcing community links. Organizational conditions thus present a promising direction for future research on IRWs' community embeddedness.

#### *Strategies to aid community embeddedness of IRWs*

The implications for practices derived from the literature review results are manifold. The influence of ethnicity and country of origin on community embeddedness among IRWs necessitates more specialized approaches within organizations. Organizations could consider offering a diverse set of services tailored to the preferred ways of embedding for different IRWs. For example, workers from similarly developed or industrialized countries may benefit from activities such as sports, local trip tips, and social events. Conversely, those from less developed areas may prefer support with social security benefits and assistance with family integration.

Moreover, the presence of egalitarian norms in the host society can significantly enhance the sense of safety and inclusion for IRWs, particularly those belonging to minority and disadvantaged groups. Organizations can collaborate with authorities to support equality and inclusiveness in the workplace and broader society.

Furthermore, organizations can actively encourage their IRWs to immerse themselves in the local community by providing comprehensive support mechanisms. This may include offering language and cross-cultural training, assistance with relocation and settlement (such as accommodation and schooling) for both the IRWs and their families. By facilitating the embeddedness of these workers into the local community, organizations can foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment while also enhancing the well-being and productivity of their employees.

### ***5.6.3. Discussion on factors influencing host country career embeddedness***

#### *Notable gap in research on career embeddedness and directions for future studies*

Despite the research revealing several factors associated with the career embeddedness of IRWs in their host country, the attention to this domain has been noticeably insufficient compared to organizational or community embeddedness. This gap highlights significant limitations, considering that career embeddedness is a significant predictor of crucial outcomes such as repatriation. Therefore, further studies are necessary to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the career pathway of IRWs abroad.

Moreover, it is evident that factors contributing to career and organizational embeddedness share considerable overlap, likely due to their common domain within the job environment. However, the career embeddedness of IRWs is notably influenced by socio-economic conditions in the host nation, such as internationalization or egalitarian norms. Despite this, institutional influencers on career embeddedness among the IRW population are largely overlooked in the current literature. For instance, immigration policies in the host country, including work permits and integration programs, significantly impact these workers' access to the labor market and opportunities for suitable employment. Thus, immigration policies emerge as crucial determinants of IRWs' enmeshment into their international career pathways. Additionally, the economic and business climate also affects their career embeddedness abroad, as a thriving economy often demands migrant labor sources, prompting host national authorities to ease immigration barriers and create matching employment opportunities for IRWs. Further research is needed to explore the relationships between institutional conditions and career embeddedness among these workers.

Similarly, studies seldom identify the role of individual factors in career embeddedness among IRWs. However, various factors seem to significantly influence these workers' immersion in their career pathways abroad. For example, those who relocate for career advancement

demonstrate stronger determination to establish their international career prospects, while those driven by lifestyle changes or family considerations often invest less effort in immersing themselves in their professions in the host country. Likewise, the mode of relocation might shape how IRWs become embedded in their working environment. Self-initiated IRWs are more likely than company-sponsored counterparts to deeply immerse themselves in their career pathways abroad because they have autonomy in choosing their destination for career development, whereas company-sponsored IRWs depend on their employers' decisions. Influences from the national career context thus have a greater impact on self-initiated IRWs than on company-sponsored ones, whose careers primarily unfold within the company. Additionally, self-initiated IRWs with limited organizational resources need to garner support from external sources, such as native professionals outside the workplace, leading to wider networks with external professionals compared to their assigned counterparts. Further research is warranted to better comprehend the role of individual elements in the career embedding process among IRWs.

#### *Helping IRWs build their career embeddedness abroad*

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## **5.7. Conclusion**

Our research provides a comprehensive exploration of the diverse elements shaping job embeddedness among IRWs. The results highlight the intricate interactions of influences across situational, individual, organizational, and institutional levels. Moreover, the study advocates for enhancing the measurement of job embeddedness and suggests numerous avenues for future

research in the realm of international relocation. By integrating these multifaceted factors into assessment frameworks, researchers can construct more refined and holistic metrics. Likewise, the complexity of influencing factors in job embeddedness among IRWs underscores the need for a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to studying this phenomenon.

## **Chapter 6. Job embeddedness among internationally relocated workers between spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism: a review and agenda for future research<sup>3</sup>**

### **6.1. Abstract**

The retention of IRWs and their job embeddedness hold significant importance for employers facing labor and skill shortages. While the concept of job embeddedness has been empirically validated using national samples, there exists a paucity of examination regarding its applicability and evolution within the context of IRWs. In our systematic review of 45 empirical studies, we have discerned three distinctive characteristics of job embeddedness applicable to IRWs. These include heightened spillover and crossover effects compared to their domestic counterparts, as well as transnationalism. The spillover and crossover effects describe how IRWs establish and fortify their embeddedness within the host country, while transnationalism expands the constellation of job embeddedness by incorporating a multi-country component. We summarized relevant literature and provided propositions for each characteristic, as well as outlined its implications for theory and practice.

*Keywords: internationally relocated workers, job embeddedness, spillover effects, crossover effects, transnationalism, systematic literature review*

### **6.2. Introduction**

IRWs are individuals who have moved their center of life to another country and work there legally, a phenomenon recognized as vital to the workforce in many global organizations (European Migration Network, 2015). In regions like Europe and North America, these workers make up a substantial portion of the labor force, accounting for as much as one-fifth (ILO, 2018). On the one

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<sup>3</sup> This chapter corresponds to the publication titled “Nguyen, A., & Andresen, M. (2024). Job embeddedness among internationally relocated workers between spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism: A review and agenda for future research. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 35(5), 868-931. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2023.2287548>”

hand, highly skilled IRWs are highly valued for their contribution to knowledge transfer and innovation capacity, as well as their international experience and specialized expertise (Guellec & Cervantes, 2002). On the other hand, middle- to low-skilled IRWs play a crucial role in sectors experiencing labor shortages, such as agriculture and healthcare (Anderson et al., 2021). As a result, organizations are keen on retaining IRWs to maintain efficiency and competitiveness.

Job embeddedness, comprising links, fit, and sacrifice within the community, organization, and career, has proven to be an effective method for retaining both domestic employees (Jiang et al., 2012) and IRWs (Reiche et al., 2011; Ren et al., 2014; Yunlu et al., 2018). Among IRWs, job embeddedness has been identified as a precursor to their knowledge acquisition (Reiche et al., 2011), knowledge sharing with colleagues in both host and home organizations (Froese et al., 2021; Stoermer et al., 2020), as well as their performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (Andresen, 2015). The embeddedness of IRWs not only benefits their individual outcomes but also contributes to organizational performance, such as enhancing the transfer of tacit knowledge between partners (Yin & Bao, 2006). These findings highlight the potential of job embeddedness in explaining various behaviors and outcomes in the context of international relocations.

Despite current research applying the original concept of job embeddedness to explore its outcomes among IRWs, there has been insufficient scrutiny of the specific characteristics of job embeddedness in the IRW population. International relocation can introduce unique elements into the job embeddedness of IRWs, aspects that have not been fully addressed within the original concept.

First and foremost, the original concept, initially designed for the domestic population (Mitchell et al., 2001), does not comprehensively explain how job embeddedness is established and cultivated among IRWs. In most cases, individuals develop embeddedness within their home country progressively and naturally due to their familial connections (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020;

Pawlak & Goździak, 2020). However, the process of establishing and deepening embeddedness in a new country following international relocation, often a disruptive event, is significantly more challenging and resource-demanding (Nguyen & Andresen, 2021; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). There are fundamental hurdles in the embedding process that predominantly affect IRWs and minimally impact natives (Nguyen, 2022), including language barriers, cultural distance and novelty (Ren et al., 2014), immigration policies (Humphries et al., 2009), and discrimination (Brunton & Cook, 2018). However, to date, there has been limited exploration of how IRWs develop their embeddedness in a new country, taking into account the differing circumstances between IRWs and native workers.

In the domestic context, literature has recognized the interrelations between embeddedness in various domains, termed spillover effects, and the influence of family members on an individual's embeddedness, referred to as crossover effects, as factors in the embedding process within their native environments (Kiazad et al., 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2014). There is evidence suggesting that relocating abroad intensifies the interdependence between IRWs and their families (Sterle et al., 2018), and behaviors related to embedding in one domain significantly affect outcomes in other domains (Chen et al., 2022b). However, the literature has not thoroughly investigated the significance of these effects and how they may explain the development of embeddedness among IRWs.

Secondly, while native workers typically maintain strong ties to their home country, IRWs are often simultaneously connected to multiple locations, including their country of origin, their country of residence, and in some cases, even additional countries. When IRWs maintain these multifaceted connections, they experience a multi-country sense of belonging, giving rise to concurrent embeddedness in multiple countries, a phenomenon known as transnationalism (Faist, 2010). This characteristic presents a unique aspect that has "no equivalent in a national context"

(Linder, 2016, p. 556), signifying a clear expansion beyond the original concept (Mitchell, 2001). However, the implications of this characteristic for the theory, research, and practice of job embeddedness among IRWs have remained unclear until now. The evidence presented here indicates that the original job embeddedness theory's boundary conditions, which determine its precision and applicability in a specific context (Busse et al., 2017), are limited when applied to IRWs.

In light of the two distinct aspects of job embeddedness among IRWs highlighted above, the limitations of the original theory become particularly evident. These limitations are most pronounced in the understanding of how IRWs establish and develop their embeddedness through cross-border relocations, involving spillover and crossover effects as well as the conceptualization of the configuration of embeddedness among IRWs, encompassing the simultaneous embeddedness of community, organization, and career embeddedness in multiple countries. Therefore, we embark on an exploration of the components of job embeddedness theory that require refinement or elaboration to more accurately capture the embeddedness of IRWs. This endeavor is anticipated to lead to the identification of characteristics that differentiate the constellation and development of embeddedness among IRWs, aspects that the original theory does not fully address or elucidate. A more comprehensive theoretical framework is likely to yield valuable implications for theory, research, and practical applications in the context of IRWs.

We inquire into two research questions: (1) *What are the characteristics of job embeddedness among IRWs, particularly discerning its constellation and development in the host country, that have not been comprehensively addressed in the original embeddedness concept?* (2) *What are the theoretical, research, and practical implications of these characteristics?* To accomplish this objective, we undertake a SLR employing the framework synthesis method. This approach is notably beneficial when it comes to evaluating and enhancing a well-established theory

within a distinct population (Brunton et al., 2020b). Under this method, the extraction, coding, and analysis of data are firmly rooted in an established theory, with the enhancement of components arising from discoveries that deviate from the existing framework (Brunton et al., 2020b; Carroll et al., 2013).

The importance of the SLR is manifold. The current underdeveloped conceptualization and explication of the job embeddedness of IRWs hinder progress in research, methodologies, and practical applications. Evident in this shortfall is the notably limited array of research methods primarily relying on linear regression analysis, which consequently constrains the scope of topics that can be explored (Linder, 2016). Moreover, existing literature predominantly prioritizes the examination of outcomes related to IRWs' embeddedness, sidelining inquiries regarding its evolution within host countries or its concurrent presence in multiple nations (Lehtonen et al., 2022; Linder, 2016; Meuer et al., 2019). Consequently, organizations encounter difficulties in devising effective embedding strategies for these employees, whose embeddedness extends across distant countries rather than sole host nations where organizational support is centralized and often needs to be established from scratch in new locales. This is a disadvantage, especially considering that the provision of embedding support is typically more costly for IRWs compared to native workers (Chen & Shaffer, 2017), and the retention of IRWs is significantly more challenging to manage (Andrijasevic & Sacchetto, 2016).

As a response, this SLR makes significant contributions. It offers a more nuanced delineation of embeddedness characteristics among IRWs, encompassing intensified spillover- and crossover effects and transnationalism, thereby refining the boundary conditions of the job embeddedness theory for this specific population. Specifically, the transnational aspect provides a more precise representation of the constellation of job embeddedness by introducing new components, i.e. the countries. Simultaneously, the amplification of spillover effects (i.e.,

simultaneous embedding in different domains) and crossover effects (i.e., the reciprocal influence of embedding between family members) among IRWs provides a comprehensive account of how embeddedness evolves for IRWs abroad. These findings provide impetus for novel research avenues and innovative research methodologies. Building on this theoretical framework, we derive valuable propositions, including the conditions for the emergence and consequences of the three identified characteristics, as well as methodologies for assessing them. On a practical level, we furnish organizations with recommendations on how to enhance the embeddedness of their IRWs based on the elucidated characteristics.

The SLR is structured into the following sections. To begin, we offer an examination of the theoretical foundation of 'job embeddedness,' elucidating its links to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and its conceptualization within the context of IRWs. Next, we provide an in-depth exploration of our methodology, encompassing a comprehensive account of the framework synthesis approach, as well as insights into our data search, coding procedures, and analytical techniques. Transitioning to the third section, we present an evaluation of the current state of research concerning spillover and crossover effects, as well as the phenomenon of transnationalism. Subsequently, we outline avenues for future research, including propositions and methodologies, and delve into their theoretical and practical implications, while also acknowledging limitations and broader research implications. The paper is brought to a conclusion with a summary of our findings.

### **6.3. Theoretical background**

#### ***6.3.1. Job embeddedness***

The concept of job embeddedness was originally devised to elucidate the amalgamation of factors that deter workers from leaving their jobs, rather than focusing on the elements that promote turnover (Mitchell, 2001). Job embeddedness is characterized by three dimensions: links, fit, and



sacrifice, and these dimensions are applicable across three distinct domains: community, organization, and career or occupation (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2007; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010).

"Links" pertain to the formal and informal connections individuals maintain with embedded entities or figures, such as colleagues, friends, or social affiliations. "Fit" encompasses workers' perception of their compatibility and alignment with relevant factors, which may involve the match between their career skills and job requirements or their personal values and the cultural environment of their workplace. Lastly, "sacrifice" relates to an individual's perception of tangible or intangible losses associated with the prospect of no longer being part of the embedded network. These losses could encompass aspects like the social security provided by the host country or the retirement benefits offered by their employer (Mitchell, 2001).

Initially, the domains in which employees establish their embeddedness consisted of the community and the organization (Mitchell, 2001). In the context of international relocation, IRWs additionally engage with the career system of a different country, commonly referred to as career embeddedness (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). The community domain encompasses the immediate environment in which non-work-related factors tether employees to their place of residence (Mitchell et al., 2001). The organization domain centers on the employer and encompasses work-related factors that motivate employees to remain in their current positions (Mitchell et al., 2001). Lastly, career embeddedness is tied to the perceived professional opportunities and conditions offered by a specific nation, which serve as a significant pull factor for attracting individuals to that country (Lehtonen et al., 2022; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010).

### ***6.3.2. Job embeddedness and COR theory***

The COR theory offers a concise framework for comprehending the development and consequences of job embeddedness (Kiazad et al., 2015; Wheeler et al., 2012). Wheeler et al.

(2012) posit that job embeddedness essentially represents an accumulation of resources, where links correspond to interpersonal resources, fit serves as a psychological resource, and sacrifice represents the anticipated loss or depletion of the resource reservoir, should one decide to depart from the embedded network.

According to the COR theory, individuals endeavor to attain, safeguard, and amass valuable resources (Hobfoll, 2001). From this perspective, it becomes clear that individuals typically aim to embed themselves within their immediate domains because the resources derived from their entwinement are vital for achieving their desired objectives. For instance, a competitive salary is an essential resource for sustaining a desired standard of living.

Scholars have drawn connections between the principles of the COR theory and the concept of job embeddedness (Kiazad et al., 2015). The first principle, the primacy of resource loss, posits that the loss of resources triggers more pronounced emotional and behavioral reactions than the acquisition of resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). In the domestic context, this principle clarifies why embedded workers tend to remain in their jobs—the fear of losing the resources accumulated within their attached domains outweighs the prospect of regaining those resources elsewhere (Kiazad et al., 2015). However, in the context of international relocation, the retention tendencies of IRWs can be more unpredictable compared to those of domestic workers, primarily because their resources are distributed across multiple nations (Linder, 2016).

The second principle, known as resource investment, posits that individuals must allocate resources to secure resource gains and avert losses (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). Those with substantial resources are better equipped to further enhance their resource pool and are less susceptible to resource losses. Conversely, individuals with fewer initial resources are more likely to experience resource losses. This sets in motion a cycle of resource gain begetting further gain and loss precipitating further loss (Hobfoll, 2001). Resource investment can occur across domains, allowing

individuals to transfer surplus resources from one domain to another to acquire additional resources (Hobfoll, 2001). It is established that embeddedness in different domains is interconnected (Kiazad et al., 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2014). Scholars suggest that when employees are deeply embedded in one domain (e.g., the community), they are inclined to transfer excess resources from that domain to another (e.g., the organization) for reinvestment (Ng & Feldman, 2014). Nevertheless, there has been insufficient investigation into the circumstances under which this process unfolds. For instance, it remains unclear whether and to what extent this process occurs when an individual's initial embeddedness in one domain is minimal. This situation is particularly relevant to IRWs, who may possess fewer resources than native workers in the host country (e.g., language proficiency). The process of relocation initially deprives them of existing resources (e.g., losing established contacts and experiencing a lack of fit in a new culture). Consequently, IRWs commence their journey with inherently low embeddedness in a new country, and the process of their immersion is considerably more challenging than it typically is in a domestic setting.

### ***6.3.3. Internationally relocated workers***

IRWs refer to individuals who have relocated from their primary residence to another country where they execute legal employment (Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; McNulty & Brewster, 2017). Within research, these individuals are referred to by various terms, including "migrant workers" in the realms of economics and sociology (ILO, 1999; IOM, 2019; United Nations, 1990; Usher, 2004). In the business and management literature, multiple terms such as "migrant workers," "immigrant workers," or "business expatriates" encompass these characteristics, which involve cross-border relocation with a focus on legal employment in the host country, along with additional distinguishing criteria (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Doherty et al., 2013; McNulty & Brewster, 2017).

It is crucial to note that the distinctions between these terms are a subject of extensive debate among scholars (Andresen et al., 2014; McNulty & Brewster, 2017) and are not always readily apparent in the definitions or descriptions in empirical studies (McNulty & Brewster, 2017). Given our emphasis on the context of international relocation and job embeddedness, we have relied on key characteristics—namely, international relocation and legal employment—rather than specific terminology to delineate our target population. This approach allows us to achieve a comprehensive understanding of our subject matter and circumvent potential ambiguities arising from the current diversity in definitions (cf. McNulty & Brewster, 2017).

The group of IRWs naturally exhibits diversity resulting from various factors, including their initial motives for relocation (e.g., career-related or personal), the manner of relocation (e.g., with or without company sponsorship), personal variations and attitudes (e.g., cultural factors, level of human capital, intentions regarding permanence), and institutional features (e.g., work and residence permits) (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Andresen et al., 2018; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014). At the individual level, these characteristics can influence the process of embedding for IRWs, impacting their willingness to become enmeshed in a foreign environment (Nguyen, 2022). On an organizational level, IRWs sponsored by their employers, often benefiting from generous relocation packages (Dickmann et al., 2018), generally gain more extensive access to organizational resources (Jokinen et al., 2008) and frequently rely heavily on their employers during the relocation process (Dickmann et al., 2018). Conversely, self-initiated IRWs who relocate independently, without organizational support, usually commence their employment in new locations without the advantages of attractive relocation packages and tend to be more organizationally mobile than their company-sponsored counterparts (Biemann & Andresen, 2010). These distinctive characteristics imply that the processes of embedding in host contexts may differ among IRWs with varying relocation modes in terms of motivation, pace, and developmental

pathways. Lastly, at a national level, it has been demonstrated that factors such as the culture of the host country play a role in how IRWs establish their connections with the employing organization in the host nation (Stoermer et al., 2020). Therefore, contextual elements also contribute significantly to the embeddedness of IRWs.

## **6.4. Methods**

### ***6.4.1. Overview of framework synthesis method***

This SLR applies the framework synthesis method to amalgamate data, as outlined by G. Brunton et al. (2020). Considering that our research inquiries are exploratory in nature, with the aim of revealing and pinpointing components necessitating refinement from the original theory of embeddedness, we have embraced a configurative approach. The ultimate objective of this approach is to formulate a more comprehensive theoretical framework of embeddedness specifically tailored to the unique population of IRWs, in accordance with the insights presented by Brunton et al. (2020).

The synthesis process was initiated by employing the foundational concept of job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010) as the primary framework. We meticulously adhered to the coding procedures delineated by Wolfswinkel et al. (2013), encompassing both open coding and selective coding phases. During the open coding phase, for each selected study, we meticulously extracted data pertaining to job embeddedness (i.e., first-order categories) and categorized them within the domains and dimensions of the original concept (second-order categories). Concurrently, we inductively introduced first-order categories related to components that deviated from the original theory, such as investments in the home country, lifestyles in the former host country, and the education of children in the current host country. We synthesized these diverse components into new second-order categories, specifically termed as 'home and third-country community embeddedness' and 'the embeddedness of family members.'

Subsequently, in the selective coding phase (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013), we diligently scrutinized the relationships and interdependencies among all second-order categories and consistently compared them with the original theory. This meticulous examination led to the emergence of three primary categories: 'transnationalism,' 'spillover effects,' and 'crossover effects.' We systematically assessed the evidence within the encompassed literature relating to these characteristics, resulting in a condensed summary of the available evidence. Additionally, by scrutinizing the underdeveloped areas related to these three characteristics, we identified areas that warrant further investigation, thus formulating propositions.

#### **6.4.2. Literature search**

Our SLR focused on empirical studies investigating the job embeddedness of IRWs. To ensure a comprehensive and targeted approach, we established four key eligibility criteria. First, we considered both quantitative and qualitative research for inclusion in the review.

The second criterion centered on the study population. We included research that featured individuals who had undergone cross-border relocations, changed their primary country of residence, and engaged in independent and legally recognized employment abroad. These individuals are often referred to as legal migrant workers or expatriates in various fields. However, we explicitly excluded research that exclusively focused on forced or illegal migrants, entrepreneurs, refugees, and asylum seekers. This exclusion was based on the distinct work-related circumstances of these groups, including prolonged labor market inactivity, limited working hours, and unfavorable salaries, which set them apart from other IRWs in terms of employment-related aspects. Furthermore, we excluded studies that focused on seasonal workers who temporarily crossed borders for short-term placements without changing their primary residence. This exclusion was driven by the observation that the embeddedness of seasonal workers abroad is

generally minimal and not a primary focus of their employment, nor a significant concern for the organizations employing them (Ainsworth & Purss, 2009).

The third eligibility criterion pertained to the reporting period of the included studies, which was limited to the years 1980 through 2021. This specific time frame was chosen to coincide with the period when systematic research on the international mobility of workers began to gain prominence (Adler, 1981).

Finally, we restricted our review to studies conducted in the English language, encompassing published sources and gray literature, such as academic journal articles, conference papers, theses, dissertations, and working papers, to ensure a comprehensive coverage of relevant research (Booth et al., 2016).

For data collection, we utilized the EBSCOHost and Web of Science databases, focusing on studies related to IRWs in various academic disciplines, including business, management, economics, sociology, political science, psychology, and humanities. Our search queries employed free-text search terms associated with legal migrants, expatriates, and embeddedness. This approach resulted in the identification of 1,349 studies.

To streamline the dataset, we meticulously removed 337 duplicate studies by importing and organizing the articles based on authors' names using Citavi 6, a reference management software. When authors had multiple versions of a paper, we retained the most recent iteration. Subsequently, we conducted a title and abstract screening to eliminate papers that were irrelevant to the concept of embeddedness, non-empirical in nature, or based on samples that did not align with the specific research question. This step left us with a set of 141 studies, which were then subjected to full-text screening. During the full-text screening process, we further excluded studies that did not meet the eligibility criteria, including those that were non-empirical or irrelevant, and studies that did not adhere to the specified quality standards. Additionally, gray literature and conference papers for

which full-text versions were unavailable were excluded. After this meticulous selection process, we retained 45 eligible papers for our SLR.

#### **6.4.3. Data description**

The literature database compiled 45 peer-reviewed articles from academic journals and one gray study, which was a master's thesis. Among these, 22 studies utilized qualitative research methods, 20 employed quantitative approaches (including five longitudinal studies), and the remaining three studies utilized mixed methods with cross-sectional designs. In terms of the characteristics of the study populations, two articles focused on low- to medium-qualified individuals, three centered on medium- to high-qualified workers, 26 exclusively examined high-qualified workers, and two addressed low-qualified individuals. The rest of the studies either featured mixed participant profiles (11) or did not specify the qualifications of their participants (1). Consequently, the existing literature on the job embeddedness of IRWs predominantly concentrates on highly skilled populations.

Within the subset of studies that designated their participants as expatriates, four studies pertained to company-sponsored IRWs, 20 studies sampled self-initiated IRWs, and eight studies investigated both categories. To achieve a more refined segmentation between these groups, we sought to consider factors such as the intended duration of stay, repatriation intentions, and citizenship status, which are often used to distinguish expatriates and migrants in the literature (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Doherty et al., 2013; McNulty & Brewster, 2017). However, it is noteworthy that none of the reviewed studies provided information regarding these aspects. This lack of data made it challenging to categorize the study participants based on these criteria, aligning with the definitional approaches prevalent in the expatriate and (im)migrant literature (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; Doherty et al., 2013; McNulty & Brewster, 2017).



## 6.5. Results

### 6.5.1. *Characteristics of job embeddedness among internationally relocated workers*

The framework synthesis conducted in this review revealed three distinct characteristics that collectively shape the job embeddedness IRWs. Notably, these characteristics, namely the intensified spillover- and crossover effects and transnationalism, were identified as aspects that were not comprehensively addressed in the original job embeddedness theory, thus providing a more refined depiction of IRWs' embeddedness.

To begin, the intensified spillover and crossover effects constitute the first and second characteristics, respectively. Spillover effects signify the simultaneous embeddedness of IRWs into the community, organization, and career in their host country. This dynamic process involves the intensive transfer of resources as IRWs strive to enhance their embeddedness in these different domains. Crossover effects, on the other hand, highlight the highly interdependent nature of IRWs' embeddedness. These effects result from the interconnectedness between IRWs and their family members in both the local community and their respective workplaces and careers. The presence of crossover effects further underscores the significance of family dynamics in shaping the embeddedness of IRWs. While the spillover and crossover effects were acknowledged in the literature on IRWs, the original embeddedness theory did not provide a comprehensive elaboration on these aspects. Notably, these effects take on a distinct character among IRWs due to the specific challenges they face, such as limited resources following international relocation. This context underscores the importance of resource recovery and the establishment of a resource pool in the host country, both for IRWs and their families.

Moreover, transnationalism stands out as a key feature in the embeddedness of IRWs. It refers to their unique connectedness to multiple countries, introducing an additional component to the embeddedness framework, which is the "country" itself. Transnationalism underscores the

**Table 5.** *Study 2: Summary of the second SLR results and implications*

Characteristics	Definition	Summaries of evidence among IRWs	Theoretical implications	Research implications	Practical implications
Spillover effects	The interrelation between IRWs' community, organization, and career embeddedness abroad	<p>Summary 1a: Changes in IRWs' host community, organization, and career embeddedness are positively interrelated. The interrelation is more profound among IRWs than among natives due to the major resource loss upon relocation and the resulting urgent necessity to accumulate resources in host country domains.</p> <p>Summary 1b: Company-sponsored IRWs are more likely to spill over their organization embeddedness into the community domain, whereas self-initiated IRWs are more likely to spill over their community embeddedness into the organization domain.</p> <p>Summary 1c: The spillover effect between host community, organization, and career embeddedness is intensified by career aspirations and dampened by economic remittance goals.</p>	<p>- Elucidation on how IRWs create and develop embeddedness in new countries.</p> <p>- The spillover effects are intensified in the international relocation context due to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Resource loss following relocation</li> <li>● Relocation goal: maximizing resources in the host country.</li> </ul>	<p>- Proposition 1a: IRWs who are simultaneously embedded in the host country community, organization, and career achieve higher levels of work outcomes, such as retention intent, performance, and career success, compared to those primarily embedded in a single domain within the host country.</p> <p>- Proposition 1b: The length of stay in the host country negatively moderates the positive interrelationships between changes in community, organization, and career embeddedness among IRWs. Specifically, the interrelations weaken as IRWs stay longer in the host country.</p> <p>- Proposition 1c: Regulatory focus moderates the positive interrelationship between changes in community, organization, and career embeddedness. Specifically, the interrelations are stronger for IRWs with a promotion focus and weaker for those with a prevention focus.</p> <p>- Research methods: Apply latent growth modeling (LGM), latent class analysis (LCA), and qualitative comparative analysis (QCA).</p>	<p>- Multi-domain embeddedness aids:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strategic embedding program</li> <li>● Security measures in hostile environments</li> <li>● Organizational career management (e.g., long-term career opportunities, development plans)</li> </ul>

Crossover effects	The interrelation between IRWs' embeddedness abroad and their family members' enmeshment in the local community, their own workplaces, careers, and/or education institutions	<p>Summary 2a: Family embeddedness in the host country is positively related to IRWs' host community, organization, and career embeddedness. The interrelationship between family embeddedness and workers' community, organization, and career embeddedness is more profound among IRWs than among native workers due to the increased co-dependence between IRWs and their family members.</p> <p>Summary 2b: Family embeddedness in the host country is positively related to IRWs' intention to stay in the host country.</p>	<p>- Elucidation on how IRWs create and develop embeddedness in new countries.</p> <p>- The crossover effects are intensified in the international relocation context due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource loss following relocation</li> <li>• Relocation goal: maximizing resources for all family members in the host country.</li> </ul>	<p>- Proposition 2a: The positive relationship between family embeddedness and IRWs' who are the main drivers of the relocation decision.</p> <p>- Proposition 2b: The positive relationships between family embeddedness and IRWs' embeddedness are moderated by the partner's self-efficacy, sociability, and nativity. Specifically, the relationships become stronger as the partners have higher levels of self-efficacy and sociability, and are natives as opposed to foreigners in the host countries.</p> <p>- Proposition 2c: Family embeddedness is positively related to IRWs' home-career interference.</p> <p>- Research methods: Apply actor-partner interdependence model (APIM), dyadic polynomial regression.</p>	<p>- Family embeddedness aids:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with immigration offices (e.g., easing the conditions for family reunification)</li> <li>• Career support for the partners (e.g., job agencies cooperation, in-house job opportunities, professional training)</li> </ul>
Transnationalism	IRWs' concurrent embeddedness in home, host, and/or third	Summary 3a: IRWs sustain their embeddedness in multiple countries, including home, host, and/or third nations while abroad.	- Extends the constellation of job embeddedness framework, i.e.,	- Proposition 3a: The degree to which IRWs' career capital can be transferred between countries is positively related to their transnational embeddedness.	<p>- Transnational embeddedness aids:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home and host country</li> </ul>

countries (where they had previously relocated to)	<p>Summary 3b: Host country community embeddedness negatively relates to the home community embeddedness and/or third country community embeddedness.</p> <p>Summary 3c: IRWs following an upward trajectory, as measured by the countries' level of economic development, are embedded in the host community mainly by links with families, fit in terms of amenities and high quality of life, and sacrifice relating to safety, social security, and stability. IRWs who move to a less economically developed country are embedded in the host community mainly by links with families and friends, fit resulting from a fascination with the host country's culture, climate, and lifestyle, without any discernible sacrifice.</p> <p>Summary 3d: Company-sponsored IRWs with dual organization embeddedness in the home and host country have better work outcomes than company-sponsored IRWs embedded solely in the home- or host organization.</p> <p>Summary 3e: IRWs' mobility decisions result from their comparisons of embeddedness in different countries rather than sole host country embeddedness. IRWs tend to stay in or move to the location where they are comparatively more embedded.</p>	<p>multiple locations</p> <p>- Transnational embeddedness is more effective than single-country embeddedness in predicting IRWs' outcomes (e.g., retention).</p>	<p>- Proposition 3b: IRWs who are highly embedded in their host country, home country, and, if applicable, other countries at the same time tend to experience higher levels of career success and well-being and lower levels of stress than those who are primarily embedded in a single country.</p> <p>- Research methods: Apply latent class analysis (LCA), qualitative comparative analysis (QCA)</p>	<p>mentors (for company-sponsored IRWs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Involvement in home organization's activities (for company-sponsored IRWs)</li> <li>● Business trips back home</li> <li>● Recruitment via existing workers' transnational networks.</li> </ul>
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intricate relationship IRWs maintain with various nations, extending beyond the confines of a single country.

In the subsequent sections, we provide a detailed description of these identified characteristics, summarize the supporting evidence, propose avenues for future research through propositions, and outline potential methodologies. For a concise overview of our findings, please refer to Table 5.

#### ***6.5.2. Spillover effects between internationally relocated workers' community, organization, and career embeddedness abroad***

##### *Description and summary of related literature*

According to the COR theory, individuals are inherently driven to enhance and safeguard their resource reservoir by engaging in an ongoing cycle of resource investment (Hobfoll, 2001). This principle is equally applicable to both domestic workers and IRWs, elucidating their common inclination to transfer surplus resources from one domain to another, thus augmenting their overall embeddedness across different areas (Kiazad et al., 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Wheeler et al., 2012). Nonetheless, IRWs exhibit a distinct level of intensity and necessity when it comes to their immersion in the host country. Specifically, IRWs tend to demonstrate a notably higher degree of enthusiasm and vigor in their embedding process (Pawlak & Goździak, 2020; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b).

This heightened commitment to embeddedness among IRWs stems from the critical role of embeddedness as a resource pool for their effective functioning in a foreign nation and the realization of their relocation objectives (Beaverstock, 2002). These objectives often revolve around maximizing their lifetime resources (Sjaastad, 1962). Immersion across multiple domains becomes paramount in achieving such goals. For instance, executing a foreign work assignment necessitates not only an intra-firm network (organizational links) but also trust-infused

relationships with local colleagues and clients (career links), comprehension and assimilation of the local culture (community fit), and the embeddedness of their families into the community (community links) (Beaverstock, 2002). Additionally, career advancement is fortified as IRWs' professional connections evolve into personal friendships (Shen & Kram, 2011). For those relocating for non-work-related reasons, such as family or adventure, an increase in career status and income results in deeper enmeshment in local life, encompassing leisure activities and social networks, ultimately enhancing overall life satisfaction (Mendoza & Guitart, 2008; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020).

However, a pivotal distinction between IRWs and native workers emerges in their initial resource endowment upon relocation. Native workers often possess essential resources, such as fluency in the local language, a robust support system, and recognized qualifications, whereas IRWs frequently experience a pronounced loss of resources, starting with depleted assets. As a result, IRWs are compelled to seek a rapid and efficient means of resource investment and recovery within their embedding process.

Drawing from the reviewed literature, we propose that the process of IRWs' immersion in various domains abroad occurs concurrently, displaying greater intensity compared to their domestic counterparts, even when their initial embeddedness in one or more domains is minimal. In this context, IRWs judiciously allocate their limited resources within each domain to facilitate their embedding not only within that domain but also across others, optimizing their embeddedness (i.e., resources) across all host country domains. For instance, international managers in Singapore exemplify the use of cultural knowledge and active networking in the host community to cultivate organizational links, such as relationships with colleagues in the workplace (Beaverstock, 2002). Others bolster their rapport with co-workers by deepening their community embeddedness, achieved through assimilation into the local culture and informal interactions outside the work

environment (Brunton & Cook, 2018; Fee et al., 2017; Halvorsen et al., 2015). IRWs' community embeddedness thrives as they cultivate personal connections within both the organizational and professional circles. Over time, colleagues often transition into close friendships (Louise Ryan, 2018; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b; Shen & Kram, 2011), and these friends actively support IRWs in their quest to learn about the local culture, language, and way of life, thus augmenting their community embeddedness (Agha-Alikhani, 2016; Shen & Kram, 2011).

The influence of spillover effects extends beyond the development of IRWs' embeddedness; it also plays a significant role in diminishing their embeddedness. Those who lack a firm foothold in one domain tend to experience erosion in other areas as well. Moreover, given that resource loss typically exerts a more potent impact than resource gain (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), a decline in one domain often precipitates a substantial decline in another. A clear illustration of this can be seen in the findings of Brunton and Cook (2018), who noted that a perceived cultural misfit with the host country could hinder interactions with colleagues, potentially affecting the person-job fit and subsequently impeding organization embeddedness. Additionally, IRWs engaged in low-income and precarious jobs, indicative of insufficient organization sacrifice, were often unable to partake in leisure activities and engage in local social life, which could result in a detachment from the host country's community (Cederberg, 2017; Jun & Ha, 2015; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020).

The transfer of resources across domains initiates trilateral spillover effects that reverberate across the host community, organization, and career embeddedness levels. This interrelation between embeddedness levels emerges as a cumulative outcome of changes in embeddedness within these domains and signifies the consequences of IRWs' ongoing embedding process. Substantiating this connection, there exists quantitative evidence supporting the spillover of embeddedness levels from the host community to the organization domain (Andresen, 2015; Kraimer et al., 2012; Meuer et al., 2019). Furthermore, the entrenchment of workers in their

international career relates to their community embeddedness abroad (Mendoza & Guitart, 2008; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). The interplay between career and organization embeddedness is bolstered by insights gleaned from qualitative studies. For instance, the presence of highly autonomous career prospects in a particular host country was found to foster a sense of fit within the host organization (Bilodeau, 2010) and was also linked to the perception of loss resulting from leaving the host country (Mendoza & Guitart, 2008).

Put succinctly, evidence from the literature shows that IRWs have a more notable tendency to transfer resources across embeddedness domains. Similarly, when they encounter resource scarcity in one domain, it is likely that their resource pool in another domain is severely affected. Changes in each of their host community, organization, and career embeddedness tend to result in changes in the others. The co-evolution of embeddedness across domains is more pronounced among IRWs than among natives due to their motivation to regain resources after relocation, as well as to maximize their total resources in the host country.

*Summary 1a: Changes in IRWs' host community, organization, and career embeddedness are positively interrelated. The interrelation is more profound among IRWs than among natives due to the major resource loss upon relocation and the resulting urgent necessity to accumulate resources in host country domains.*

The phenomenon of spillover occurs in a specific manner, where IRWs employ excess resources from one domain to invest them in other domains where acquiring resources is more difficult. The choice of relocation mode has a notable impact on the direction of these spillover effects. Self-initiated IRWs tend to demonstrate a greater propensity than company-sponsored IRWs to shift resources from the host community to the organizational domain. Conversely, company-sponsored IRWs often direct resources in the opposite direction. This divergence in resource allocation can be attributed to the fact that company-sponsored IRWs are typically more



deeply integrated within their organization than within their community (Biemann & Andresen, 2010; Shen & Kram, 2011); hence, they have more substantial resources in their organization than in their community. By contrast, self-initiated IRWs possess greater resources in their host community in comparison to their organization (Meuer et al., 2019; Shen & Kram, 2011), and transfers in the direction from community to organization embeddedness tend to be more prevalent. According to the literature, company-sponsored IRWs are prone to using their connections with colleagues in the host location to expand their local networks and become deeply involved in the social life of the host community (Agha-Alikhani, 2016). In contrast, IRWs who relocate independently exhibit a lesser reliance on the host organization to become part of the host community. Instead, they are more inclined than their company-sponsored counterparts to make use of community resources to support their workplace behaviors, including behaviors like organizational citizenship (Andresen, 2015). This contrast in how resources are utilized underscores the differences in spillover patterns between company-sponsored and self-initiated IRWs.

*Summary 1b: Company-sponsored IRWs are more likely to spill over their organization embeddedness into the community domain, whereas self-initiated IRWs are more likely to spill over their community embeddedness into the organization domain.*

The likelihood of spillover effects among IRWs is predicated on their relocation goals. Specifically, individuals primarily motivated by economic interests tend to prioritize saving money for remittances rather than immersing themselves in the local culture or community (Jun & Ha, 2015; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020). This economic focus often results in a lack of motivation and resources, such as language proficiency and cultural awareness, for active embedding in the host community and their career (Jun & Ha, 2015; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020). They are less likely to invest their income and time in leisure activities or building social networks in the host country,

thus limiting the potential for spillover effects. Conversely, IRWs relocating for career advancement are driven to succeed in the host country. They recognize the importance of leveraging their resources for enhanced international career prospects. As a case in point, Ryan and Mulholland (2014b) discovered that company-sponsored IRWs transformed their professional networks into personal social circles, actively integrating host country cultural knowledge to strengthen connections with colleagues and clients, resulting in greater career success in the host country (Beaverstock, 2002; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). As a result, economic and career-oriented IRWs exhibit different motivations that influence their level of embeddedness in the host country and, consequently, the likelihood of experiencing spillover effects.

*Summary 1c: The spillover effect between host community, organization, and career embeddedness is intensified by career aspirations and dampened by economic remittance goals.*

#### *Directions for future research and propositions*

Despite the existing empirical support for the heightened spillover effects experienced by IRWs, there remains a need for further investigation using a wider array of research methods. Therefore, it is a promising avenue to emphasize the significance of spillover effects and incorporate them into future research on IRWs.

The concurrent embeddedness of IRWs into various aspects of the host country, including the community, organization, and career, signifies the accumulation of resources in the host nation. This suggests that being embedded in multiple domains may serve as a more robust predictor of their professional outcomes compared to being embedded in a single domain. For example, research has demonstrated that being embedded in multiple domains within the host country is more effective than being solely enmeshed in a single domain in predicting IRWs' intentions to remain in both the host country and their organization (Nguyen & Andresen, 2021). In a similar

vein, existing literature suggests that IRWs' performance and career success are more effectively fostered by the surplus resources accumulated from enmeshment in multiple domains within the host country, rather than relying on a single domain (Beaverstock, 2002).

As IRWs successfully transfer and accumulate resources across multiple domains, they benefit from a positive feedback loop where more resources become accessible to them (Hobfoll, 2001). This ample resource pool is crucial for IRWs in achieving their professional objectives, mitigating the systemic challenges they face, such as a lack of network and social support, which hinder the realization of their career aspirations (Beaverstock, 2002). Therefore, the initial step in further research should focus on examining the impact of being embedded in multiple domains on work-related outcomes, including retention, performance, and career success.

*Proposition 1a: IRWs who are simultaneously embedded in the host country community, organization, and career achieve higher levels of work outcomes, such as retention intent, performance, and career success, compared to those primarily embedded in a single domain within the host country.*

In this context, it is advisable to employ innovative methods to investigate the impacts of being embedded in multiple domains, as previous SLRs on the embeddedness of IRWs have highlighted limitations in the reliance on linear regression analysis (Linder, 2016) for such research (Meyer & Morin, 2016). To effectively examine the simultaneous embedding of IRWs in different domains, a person-centered approach should be adopted, utilizing methods such as latent class analysis (LCA) (Lazarsfeld & Henry, 1968) or set theory-based approaches like qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) (Ragin, 2014) and necessary condition analysis (NCA) (Dul, 2020).

LCA aims to identify subpopulations among IRWs with distinct embedding patterns encompassing their levels of embeddedness across multiple domains. Subsequently, researchers can compare the outcomes across these identified subpopulations. Meanwhile, QCA and NCA

focus on the configurations formed by various combinations of embeddedness in multiple domains, enabling researchers to assess these configurations in terms of their effects (Roig-Tierno et al., 2017).

Another promising avenue for research could be the exploration of moderators affecting spillover effects. While existing literature indicates that these effects are heightened among IRWs due to their rapid resource losses following international relocation, it remains unclear whether the intensity of these effects remains constant over time. Current evidence suggests that spillover effects may peak in the early phase of relocation and decline thereafter (Brunton & Cook, 2018). For example, in the early stages of relocation, IRWs perceive the negative impact of incongruent cultural norms on their work interactions to be most severe (Brunton & Cook, 2018). However, over time, the influence of cultural misfits on their organizational relationships may diminish as they adapt more acculturated communication practices for work purposes without necessarily achieving full cultural congruence in their daily life interactions (Brunton & Cook, 2018).

This evolution over time may be because resource loss is most acute in the immediate aftermath of relocation (Brunton & Cook, 2018; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b), driving IRWs to quickly acquire resources from multiple domains to recover and achieve their relocation goals. As they accumulate greater resources in the host nation, this process becomes less acute (Ryan, 2018). At this stage, they can utilize various sources of support (for example, social support) and prioritize their embeddedness in specific domains, similar to the domestic population, to pursue their personal objectives (Ryan, 2018).

*Proposition 1b: The length of stay in the host country negatively moderates the positive interrelationships between changes in community, organization, and career embeddedness among IRWs. Specifically, the interrelations weaken as IRWs stay longer in the host country.*

In a similar vein, existing research has delved into the influence of relocation mode and aspirations on the occurrence of spillover effects among IRWs, yet it has notably overlooked the role of individual traits that differentiate IRWs' motivations to deepen their embeddedness in various domains. Spillover effects, stemming from the process of embedding in multiple domains, necessitate the deliberate transfer of resources within these domains. However, IRWs may exhibit variations in their motivations for these resource transfers based on their orientations toward avoiding resource losses or optimizing resource gains, a concept referred to as regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997).

Current literature indicates that a promotion-focused orientation, characterized by an emphasis on success and accomplishment, tends to drive IRWs to concurrently build embeddedness in different domains (Beaverstock, 2002; Halvorsen et al., 2015). For instance, they foster connections with colleagues by forming friendships with the purpose of advancing their professional objectives (Halvorsen et al., 2015). In contrast, IRWs who adopt a prevention-focused approach, with a primary focus on avoiding further losses and failures, may primarily strive to safeguard limited resources (e.g., income) rather than reinvesting them. This limited reinvestment reduces their inclination to actively transfer resources between multiple domains, thereby decreasing the likelihood of experiencing spillover effects (Jun & Ha, 2015; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020).

*Proposition 1c: Regulatory focus moderates the positive interrelationship between changes in community, organization, and career embeddedness. Specifically, the interrelations are stronger for IRWs with a promotion focus and weaker for those with a prevention focus.*

Given that spillover effects primarily entail the connections between alterations in embeddedness within each domain, we advocate for the use of latent growth modeling (LGM) over the prevalent cross-sectional approach. LGM allows for the examination of the covariance between

slope factors, such as changes in community embeddedness and changes in organizational embeddedness, rather than solely focusing on intercept factors, such as the initial levels of community embeddedness and organizational embeddedness. Consequently, LGM provides a more effective means of capturing spillover effects and their associated outcomes, precursors, and factors that moderate them (see Ng & Feldman, 2014).

### ***6.5.3. Crossover effects between the embeddedness of family members and internationally relocated workers***

#### *Description and summary of related literature*

In the realm of the domestic setting, the embeddedness of family into the community has been recognized as a significant contributor to workers' community embeddedness, that is, embedding by proxy, as highlighted in studies by Feldman et al. (2012), Kiazad et al. (2015), and Mitchell et al. (2001). Furthermore, the family can also engage with the worker's organization, as observed in the research conducted by Ramesh and Gelfand (2010). In this context, family embeddedness is defined as the interconnectedness between a worker's family and their organization, resulting from family connections (the family's ties to the organization), family alignment (the family's perception of the worker's compatibility within the organization), and family sacrifices (the family's losses associated with the worker's income from the job). It has been demonstrated that family embeddedness significantly influences worker retention, extending beyond the worker's enmeshment in their organization and the community, as found in the study by Ramesh and Gelfand (2010).

Despite these findings, research on family embeddedness remains relatively limited, even within the domestic context, as observed in previous studies (Feldman et al., 2012; Kiazad et al., 2015). Within this SLR, family members' embeddedness pertains to the host community, career, and, where relevant, the organization's embeddedness of IRWs partners. Additionally, it

encompasses the embeddedness of their children into the host community and local educational institutions. Evidently, the interdependence between family members and IRWs tends to be notably stronger than that of native workers (Sterle et al., 2018). This heightened interdependence can be attributed to two main factors.

Firstly, the decision to relocate abroad is often not an individual choice but rather a collective decision made by the entire household, aimed at optimizing the resources of the entire family, as detailed in Massey et al. (1993). In essence, IRWs aim to maximize not only their personal resources but also those of the entire family through international relocation, encompassing resources not only within the host community but also spanning other domains, including the careers of family members, organizations, and local educational institutions.

The second factor contributing to this increased interdependence is the challenging circumstances faced by the family. Specifically, relocating abroad can initially result in significant resource losses for the family, such as disruptions in children's education or a partner's unemployment (Humphries et al., 2009). Internationally relocated families often have limited access to external resources that are readily available to domestic households, such as nearby extended family members who can assist in the family's embeddedness process (Kōu et al., 2017).

On one hand, the urgent need for internationally relocated families to recover from these resource losses and ensure the embeddedness of all family members is intensified due to the challenges posed by relocation losses. On the other hand, this situation triggers intensive resource exchange within the household, serving as the most viable resource reservoir to achieve this objective. We posit that the spillover effects, specifically embeddedness by proxy, are intensified among IRWs due to their unique relocation circumstances.

Empirical evidence strongly illustrates the presence of reciprocal effects between the embeddedness of IRWs and their families. To illustrate, the embeddedness of IRWs' children

within local schools and communities creates opportunities for parents to expand their community networks by participating in various social events (Beaverstock, 2002; Bürgelt et al., 2008; Ryan, 2018). The acculturation of younger family members, which acts as a form of community fit, plays a crucial role in facilitating the social enmeshment of parents, primarily through improved language proficiency and cultural assimilation (Ryan, 2018; Tsuda, 1999). Similarly, the perceived sense of community sacrifice is heightened from the perspective of IRWs, as valuable benefits for their children, such as healthcare and educational continuity, may be forfeited if they leave the host country (Humphries et al., 2009; Khoo et al., 2008, 2011).

A similar interdependence is evident between IRWs and their partners. IRWs leverage the networks cultivated by their partners in the host country to expand their own social and professional connections (Beaverstock, 2002; Koelet et al., 2017; Martinovic et al., 2015). The career embeddedness of partners, including employment opportunities, career prospects, and income, contributes to the anticipated losses that IRWs may face when leaving the host nation (Harvey, 2009; McCarthy, 2019; Sapeha, 2017; Wickramaarachchi & Butt, 2014). To ensure family stability in the host country, IRWs enhance the value of benefits offered by their host organization, thus strengthening their commitment to the organization (Humphries et al., 2009). Their career embeddedness abroad benefits from their families' connection to the host community, providing a sense of stability and support, which enables them to pursue international career paths (Beaverstock, 2002; van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012).

In summary, the job embeddedness of IRWs in their host country operates within an ecological system where their professional and community embeddedness strongly and positively interacts with that of their families. IRWs appear to rely extensively on the embeddedness of their families to establish, sustain, and deepen their connections to the host nation.



*Summary 2a: Family embeddedness in the host country is positively related to IRWs' host community, organization, and career embeddedness. The interrelationship between family embeddedness and workers' community, organization, and career embeddedness is more profound among IRWs than among native workers due to the increased co-dependence between IRWs and their family members.*

In this context, resources accumulated within the family's embeddedness are likely to extend to specific behaviors and outcomes among IRWs. Illustrative outcomes of these crossover effects encompass Family-to-Work Facilitation (FWF) and Work-to-Family Facilitation (WFF). FWF and WFF denote the concept where individuals' embeddedness in one domain (either family or work) furnishes resources that enhance their performance in the other domain (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Wayne et al., 2007). FWF pertains to the use of family resources to improve work performance, while WFF describes the opposite direction. Resource exchanges between the family and work environments include developmental gains in terms of skills, knowledge, and expanded perspectives, affective benefits such as positive attitudes and emotional equilibrium, efficacy in task execution, and access to resources like social and career success (Carlson et al., 2006). Wayne et al. (2007) postulated that the likelihood of FWF and WFF increases when resources are abundant.

Our review of the literature unveiled that well-embedded family members serve as instrumental resources for IRWs in their work environment. For example, IRWs acquire developmental gains, including societal knowledge and language skills, from family members who are integrated into the host society (Ryan, 2018). Having family members established in the host country provides emotional support, allowing IRWs to focus on their work (Mendoza & Guitart, 2008). Similarly, their proficiency in professional networking benefits from their partner's expanded local networks, often through social events (Beaverstock, 2002). The deeper the family's immersion in the host country, the more resources become available in the family environment that

can be transferred from the family to the IRW's workplace. IRWs with affluent family resources typically perceive favorable work outcomes (Beaverstock, 2002; Ryan, 2018). These enriched resources, such as positive affectivity, confidence, and income, can subsequently be utilized to enhance family life (Tsuda, 1999). Therefore, family embeddedness both represents and generates substantial resources that foster reciprocal facilitation between work and home life.

In summary, family embeddedness within the host country correlates positively with family-to-work facilitation and work-to-family facilitation among IRWs. The embeddedness of internationally relocated families in their host countries is indicative of the extent to which they succeed in achieving their relocation objectives. In essence, family embeddedness signifies whether the entire household has effectively optimized its family resources abroad (Massey et al., 1993). As a result, the connectedness of family members in host countries plays a significant role in IRWs' mobility decisions, influencing their choice to either remain in the host country or relocate. Children's embeddedness in the host country, encompassing well-being, social security, education, and naturalization (i.e., the process of acquiring host-country citizenship), motivates IRWs' decisions to remain in the host country (Bürgelt et al., 2008). This motivation extends beyond their personal preferences for onward movement or repatriation (Agyeman & Garcia, 2016; Harvey, 2009; Kōu et al., 2017; Poppe et al., 2016). Similar effects have been observed concerning partners' career sacrifices, such as business opportunities (Ette et al., 2016), and families' community sacrifices, such as household income (McCarthy, 2019). Conversely, IRWs' decisions to move onward are likely followed by obstacles that affect family resources, such as partner unemployment (Humphries et al., 2009; Sapeha, 2017) or a lack of permanent residence rights or opportunities for family reunification (Humphries et al., 2009). The influence of family embeddedness is especially critical in situations where families play a significant role in IRWs'

relocation motivations, such as when cross-border relocation is intended to create a better life for family members (Humphries et al., 2009; Poppe et al., 2016).

*Summary 2b: Family embeddedness in the host country is positively related to IRWs' intention to stay in the host country.*

#### *Directions for future research and propositions*

The findings on crossover effects provide several implications for future research. One aspect to consider is the influence of family characteristics on the occurrence and magnitude of crossover effects. Current evidence on this matter is somewhat limited. Nevertheless, it is apparent that crossover effects tend to exhibit variability based on several factors. For instance, the role of IRWs in their family's decision to relocate appears to be a crucial determinant. More precisely, the primary decision-makers within a household, responsible for shaping the relocation choices, tend to display a stronger inclination towards utilizing crossover effects (Beaverstock, 2002; Kõu et al., 2017). These decision-makers possess a keen interest in accumulating resources abroad, and as a result, they are more inclined to transfer resources from the family to various domains in the host country (Beaverstock, 2002; Kõu et al., 2017). To illustrate, those instigating the relocation decision may underscore the importance of ensuring the settlement and success of their entire families, believing that this is conducive to advancing their careers overseas (Kõu et al., 2017).

*Proposition 2a: The positive relationship between family embeddedness and IRWs' embeddedness is strengthened among IRWs who are the main drivers of the relocation decision.*

Likewise, while crossover effects illustrate the mutual influences of partners on their embedding, there is limited evidence regarding the influence of a partner's resources on these effects. Our review of the literature suggests that attributes of partners, such as self-efficacy and sociability, appear to foster crossover effects by creating an excess of family resources that IRWs

can channel into their own embeddedness (Beaverstock, 2002). Additionally, a native partner tends to contribute more resources, such as access to a family network, compared to a foreign spouse, thereby facilitating the occurrence of crossover effects (Koelet et al., 2017). For instance, they can acquire insights into local social norms and are more motivated to establish social networks with the assistance of native partners (Pawlak & Goździak, 2020).

*Proposition 2b: The positive relationships between family embeddedness and IRWs' embeddedness are moderated by the partner's self-efficacy, sociability, and nativity. Specifically, the relationships become stronger as the partners have higher levels of self-efficacy and sociability, and are natives as opposed to foreigners in the host countries.*

The interdependence between partners in their embedding process holds the potential for both advantages and disadvantages. The close interconnectedness of families with the host nation can promote not only facilitation but also conflict between career and family obligations. This is because deeply embedded families may introduce additional household demands, such as active involvement in children's educational activities, which can potentially disrupt the career pursuits of IRWs (Mendoza & Guitart, 2008; van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). In some cases, one partner's strong focus on an international career may lead the other partner to scale back their career efforts to handle family responsibilities (Mendoza & Guitart, 2008), resulting in a phenomenon known as home-career interference (Schooreel et al., 2017). Future studies involving dual-career couples who have been internationally relocated may shed further light on the mechanisms underpinning crossover effects and uncover the connections between embeddedness and the outcomes of each partner, including aspects such as home-career interference.

*Proposition 2c: Family embeddedness is positively related to IRWs' home-career interference.*

When it comes to investigating crossover effects, the existing literature reveals a significant methodological shortfall. This limitation becomes evident due to the scarcity of research that has utilized dyadic data and analyses to explore the embeddedness of IRWs, even concerning matters related to their couples or families. The directions for examining crossover effects, including the investigation of moderators and outcomes as proposed, necessitate the application of dyadic data and analysis. Dyadic data prove ideal for uncovering the reciprocal effects between partners rather than relying solely on data from one partner. Several specialized analyses are tailored for dyadic data. Among them, the actor–partner interdependence model (APIM) stands out, as it enables the detection and measurement of the interdependence between partners' embeddedness and related factors (Kenny, 2006). For instance, APIM can be applied to assess the impact of each partner's embeddedness on the other partner's experiences of home–career interference. It can further facilitate family unit-level analyses, such as examining the relationship between family embeddedness and the outcomes of IRWs at the group level, such as the average level of home–career interference experiences within the couple (common fate model) (Ledermann & Macho, 2014). Alternatively, dyadic polynomial regression can be employed to examine the consequences of (dis)similarity in enmeshment levels between partners (see Schönbrodt et al., 2018). For example, home–career interference may be more pronounced for IRWs when their partner's level of embeddedness surpasses their own.

#### ***6.5.4. The transnational character of job embeddedness among internationally relocated workers***

##### *Description and summary of related literature*

Unlike native workers, who typically establish their roots solely in their country of residence, IRWs tend to forge connections across multiple geographical locations, including their

home country, host country, and potentially even third countries. This phenomenon aligns with the concept of transnationalism, where IRWs maintain enduring connections and a sense of belonging in various places simultaneously (Faist, 2010). Transnational embeddedness is exemplified by their community, organizational, and career ties with family, friends, and colleagues across their home, host, and/or third countries. These connections can be a result of their current or prior employment or residency in these diverse nations (Carragher et al., 2008; Ette et al., 2016; Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Harvey, 2009; Koelet et al., 2017; Toma et al., 2015). IRWs exhibit a persistent commitment to preserving their community embeddedness in their host countries, often involving aspects like residence rights or social security. Simultaneously, they may invest in businesses or properties in their home country and maintain their social status within their home community (Constant & Massey, 2002; de Arce & Mahia, 2012; Gashi & Adnett, 2015; Lo et al., 2012). They possess the unique ability to assimilate into their host societies while cherishing the familiar aspects of their homeland, including weather, leisure activities, and emotional attachment, all of which underscore their enduring community fit (Lo et al., 2012).

*Summary 3a: IRWs sustain their embeddedness in multiple countries, including home, host, and/or third nations while abroad.*

Research findings indicate that there are inherent trade-offs in the process of developing embeddedness within a host community while simultaneously maintaining connections within one's home community. It has been observed that IRWs tend to experience a gradual fading of non-kin ties at home, such as friendships, as they invest in building ties in the host country (Koelet et al., 2017; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). This shift is often influenced by the workers' perceptions of their home community's circumstances. For instance, when IRWs perceive adverse conditions in their home community, including factors like war, crime, or unfavorable political systems, they tend to place a higher value on the security and stability offered by host societies (Harvey, 2009;

Poppe et al., 2016). Similarly, those who have faced unfavorable economic conditions in their home country are inclined to appreciate the greater wealth or affordability in the host nation (McGhee et al., 2012).

Moreover, connections to a third country can significantly impact IRWs' embeddedness in their current host nation, particularly among highly mobile workers. Previous relocation experiences play a crucial role in shaping their current host country enmeshment (Bürgelt et al., 2008). For instance, if they had a hectic lifestyle in a previous host country, they may value a more relaxed environment in their current host community (Humphries et al., 2009). Additionally, open immigration policies in a third country can negatively affect their perceptions of fit and connections in the current host community, particularly when faced with stricter immigration conditions (Humphries et al., 2009; Kōu et al., 2017).

The negative relationships observed between IRWs' embeddedness in different locations can be attributed to resource competitiveness. These individuals have limited personal resources at their disposal, including time, effort, and mental capacity, to invest in building their network (community links), adapting to the culture and social norms (community fit), and accumulating financial or social benefits (community sacrifice) in a particular location. As they allocate more resources to build connections within the host country community, they naturally have fewer resources available to maintain connections with their homeland or other international destinations. Conversely, when they direct their resources toward their home or third-country communities, such as through remittances, it hinders their ability to immerse themselves in the host nation's community (Jun & Ha, 2015; Pawlak & Goździak, 2020).

*Summary 3b: Host country community embeddedness negatively relates to the home country community embeddedness and/or third country community embeddedness.*

Transnationalism encompasses not only the embeddedness of IRWs but also the comparison of external resources in their home and host countries, which IRWs utilize to establish their connections in these locations. Economic disparities between their home and host countries play a crucial role in shaping the primary factors constituting their embeddedness within the host community. Those experiencing an upward trajectory, meaning they have relocated from a less developed homeland to a more developed destination, appear to become immersed in the new host community more seamlessly than those who experience a downtrend, especially in terms of links such as family, fit pertaining to amenities and high quality of life, and sacrifices such as safety and economic stability (Bilodeau, 2010; McGhee et al., 2012). The upward trajectory provides IRWs with practical facilitators, including a sense of safety, social security, and economic stability in the host country (McGhee et al., 2012; Ryan, 2018).

Conversely, those experiencing a downward trajectory face more significant challenges when immersing themselves in the host community, especially when moving from a more developed homeland to a less developed destination (Bilodeau, 2010; Mendoza & Guitart, 2008). Their immersion is primarily shaped by factors involving their partner, children, or friends (Bilodeau, 2010; Khoo et al., 2008; Mendoza & Guitart, 2008). Their ability to fit into the host country's culture, climate, and lifestyle is a key driver of their immersion but is not typically accompanied by noticeable community sacrifices (Khoo et al., 2008, 2011).

*Summary 3c: IRWs following an upward trajectory, as measured by the countries' level of economic development, are embedded in the host community mainly by links with families, fit in terms of amenities and high quality of life, and sacrifice relating to safety, social security, and stability. IRWs who move to a less economically developed country are embedded in the host community mainly by links with families and friends, fit resulting from a fascination with the host country's culture, climate, and lifestyle, without any discernible sacrifice.*



The transnational nature of company-sponsored IRWs is closely associated with their concurrent affiliations with both their home and host organizations, especially in the context of intra-organizational mobility. Unlike their connections within the community domains, the resources within their home and host organizations are intricately linked.

This interconnection is exemplified by the sharing of organizational knowledge and internal networks, which are pertinent to both their home and host entities (Carragher et al., 2008; Shen & Kram, 2011). This unique dynamic enables company-sponsored IRWs to effectively utilize the resources they acquire from both their home and host companies to attain their specific objectives. For instance, their embeddedness in the home organization, such as having access to a mentor within the home entity, can also enhance their embeddedness in the host organization by facilitating a better fit through access to organizational knowledge and by recognizing potential sacrifices, such as the opportunity for career advancement (Carragher et al., 2008). Contacts within the home subsidiary serve the dual purpose of keeping company-sponsored IRWs informed about developments at the home office, providing them with a comprehensive understanding of the entire Multinational Corporation (MNC), and offering professional and personal support during their assignments abroad (Carragher et al., 2008; Shen & Kram, 2011). Simultaneously, company-sponsored IRWs can leverage their embeddedness in the host organization to gain valuable knowledge and enhance their career prospects within the company (Carragher et al., 2008; Froese et al., 2021; Yin & Bao, 2006). Consequently, it is evident that company-sponsored IRWs with dual organizational connections possess an additional resource beyond their host organization's embeddedness, which they can reinvest to optimize their work-related outcomes.

*Summary 3d: Company-sponsored IRWs with dual organization embeddedness in the home and host country have better work outcomes than company-sponsored IRWs embedded solely in the home- or host organization.*

Adopting a COR perspective, the embeddedness of IRWs in their home, host, and/or third countries, encompassing their community, organization, and career connections in these multiple locations, is indicative of the resources they accumulate in each place. In their decision-making process regarding mobility, IRWs do not base their choices solely on their embeddedness into the host country but rather on a comparison of their enmeshment across multiple locations.

Existing literature indicates that IRWs are more likely to consider relocation when they find themselves less embedded in the host country compared to their home country (or other nations), as opposed to being completely detached from the host country (Abarcar, 2017; Cliff et al., 2015; Khoo et al., 2008; McGhee et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2014). This implies that an IRW may continue to reside in the host country even when their embeddedness there has decreased, as long as their degree of enmeshment in the host country exceeds that in other nations. For example, fluctuations in currency exchange rates between a less-developed home country and a more advanced host country can influence IRWs to prolong their stay in the host country despite initial repatriation plans (Abarcar, 2017). In such cases, the improved economic prospects in the host country outweigh the financial situation in their home country during an economic crisis, thus leading to an extended stay in the host nation.

Similarly, IRWs may opt to remain abroad due to their preference for the culture in the host country over that of their home country (Cliff et al., 2015). Their choice to stay or return home hinges on their preferences concerning indicators like social and economic stability, as well as wealth in the host community compared to their home community (Bilodeau, 2010; McGhee et al., 2012; Ryan, 2018). Furthermore, they are more likely to settle in the host country when their international career offers additional benefits, such as autonomy and compensation, compared to their home professional environment (Harvey, 2009; Mendoza & Guitart, 2008; Tharenou &

Caulfield, 2010). Conversely, they tend to return home when the career prospects in the host country appear inferior in comparison to their home country (Bilodeau, 2010).

*Summary 3e: IRWs' mobility decisions result from their comparisons of embeddedness in different countries rather than sole host country embeddedness. IRWs tend to stay in or move to the location where they are comparatively more embedded.*

#### *Directions for future research and propositions*

Recognizing the concept of transnational embeddedness provides a foundation for exploring various avenues of future research. While there is robust evidence of the existence of transnational embeddedness, there remains a need for the development of research on the factors associated with it. Particularly, the precursors or antecedents of transnational embeddedness warrant further investigation. Given that being enmeshed in multiple countries results in the accumulation of valuable resources, it is reasonable to expect that IRWs strive to deepen their immersion in various countries. However, achieving a truly transnational state is a challenging endeavor. IRWs encounter several obstacles when attempting to maintain their pre-existing connections with their home country and/or other nations while simultaneously immersing themselves in the host country. Factors such as geographic distance, the absence of face-to-face communication, and diminishing shared interests can hinder their relationships with individuals from their home country (Carraher et al., 2008; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b; Shen & Kram, 2011).

In this context, transnational embeddedness demands additional resources, whether they are personal or external in nature, to sustain it. Among these resources, career capital, which encompasses career-related motivations, identification, skills, expertise, and networks, holds significant value. A highly transferable career capital that can be effectively applied and utilized across various national contexts is a valuable asset. Research suggests that IRWs with transferable expertise, such as global finance and managerial skills, can enhance their international career

prospects across geographic borders (Beaverstock, 2002). Similarly, expertise that is highly valued in several nations, such as IT or biotechnology, opens doors for IRWs to enrich their careers in different locations (Harvey, 2009).

*Proposition 3a: The degree to which IRWs' career capital can be transferred between countries is positively related to their transnational embeddedness.*

One more promising avenue for future research pertains to the outcomes of transnational embeddedness, particularly within the realm of careers. Transnational career embeddedness appears to offer distinct advantages, especially for company-sponsored IRWs who are anticipated to progress in their careers across multiple countries (Beaverstock, 2002; Froese et al., 2021; Shen & Kram, 2011). The concept of transnational career embeddedness may be closely linked to employability, knowledge sharing, or retention after repatriation, as simultaneous connections with colleagues in their home country prepare IRWs for challenges and opportunities upon returning home (Andresen, 2021; Froese et al., 2021; Oleškevičiūtė et al., 2022; Shen & Kram, 2011).

Moreover, maintaining connections to the home country can provide IRWs with additional resources, such as emotional support from family (Agha-Alikhani, 2016; Shen & Kram, 2011). This additional support is likely to help reduce stress and enhance their overall well-being. Having family members in a secure home environment offers IRWs emotional security, shielding them from the potential necessity of returning home to care for family members during unexpected and often disruptive events (Hussain & Deery, 2018). As a result, being embedded in both their home and host countries equips IRWs with ample resources to pursue and achieve their career objectives across nations, mitigates stress, and fosters life satisfaction, which is synonymous with subjective well-being among IRWs (Agha-Alikhani, 2016; Oleškevičiūtė et al., 2022; Shen & Kram, 2011).

*Proposition 3b: IRWs who are highly embedded in their host country, home country, and, if applicable, other countries at the same time tend to experience higher levels of career success*

*and well-being and lower levels of stress than those who are primarily embedded in a single country.*

Much like the research on embeddedness in multiple domains, the literature on transnational embeddedness faces limitations in terms of methodology, primarily due to its historical reliance on linear regression analysis (Linder, 2016). This approach falls short of accurately capturing the true state of transnational embeddedness and the interactive or comparative effects of embeddedness in multiple countries. To incorporate transnational embeddedness into future studies, methods such as LCA and QCA offer valuable tools.

LCA, for instance, has been utilized to identify transnational embedders among IRWs (Nguyen & Andresen, 2021). In this approach, researchers initiate a standard LCA to pinpoint embeddedness patterns among IRWs. They employ indicators such as the levels of embeddedness in the home, host, and third countries. Subsequently, transnational embeddedness is identified through patterns characterized by high levels of embeddedness in at least two of the included countries (Nguyen & Andresen, 2021). The use of LCA with covariates can further delve into the antecedents and outcomes of transnational embeddedness, aligning with propositions 3a and 3b (Nylund-Gibson et al., 2019). Additionally, QCA can be employed to assess whether a configuration involving high levels of embeddedness in the home, host, and third-country embeddedness is sufficient to achieve the outcomes outlined in proposition 3b. These advanced methodologies offer a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of transnational embeddedness, addressing the limitations of traditional linear regression analysis.

## **6.6. Discussion**

### ***6.6.1. Theoretical implications***

The findings from this SLR present an enhanced framework for comprehending the concept of job embeddedness among IRWs, encompassing aspects that were previously omitted or not fully explained in the original theory.

Firstly, in comparison to the original concept, recent studies on domestic workers have highlighted the notion of resource investments across various domains, which are the foundation for spillover effects (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Singh et al., 2021). Nevertheless, in the context of domestic workers, these spillover effects are primarily observed when resources are abundant (Ng & Feldman, 2014; Singh et al., 2021). In contrast, IRWs experience spillover effects even in situations of resource scarcity. This distinction arises because, in the domestic context, the imperative for comprehensive embeddedness across multiple domains is not as pronounced as in international relocation scenarios. For instance, domestic workers who are newly hired might strategically limit their community embeddedness to bolster their organizational embeddedness, leading to unique embedding processes across domains (Feldman et al., 2012). In contrast, for IRWs, deepening their organizational immersion is less feasible without concurrently establishing connections with the local community (e.g., cultural awareness) (Beaverstock, 2002) and their professional environment (e.g., alignment between aspirations and opportunities in the host country) (Bilodeau, 2010). Moreover, the loss of resources during the relocation phase intensifies the need for resource restoration in all domains of the host country. As a result, spillover effects are more pronounced and evident among IRWs.

Secondly, although the original concept of embeddedness acknowledges the existence of crossover effects, their applicability in the context of international relocation appears to differ. In the original concept, family embeddedness (e.g., a partner's employment) is considered a

component of an individual's community ties and sacrifices (Clinton et al., 2012; Feldman et al., 2012; Mitchell et al., 2001). However, this approach does not account for the interdependence (i.e., mutual development) of family members in their embedding processes. This discrepancy may be attributed to the fact that family members in the domestic context exhibit less interdependence in their immersion compared to those who relocate internationally. Limited access to external resources (e.g., familiarity with the host country's rules and norms) heightens IRWs' reliance on resources within the family. For example, the settlement of children in the host country is a prerequisite for IRWs to establish their sense of belonging to the host society. This requirement does not necessarily apply to domestic workers whose roots are established beforehand, possibly since their childhood. International relocation amplifies crossover effects, as IRWs vigorously exchange resources within the family to enhance their family's resource pool under challenging circumstances.

Lastly, the transnational characteristic broadens the scope of job embeddedness among IRWs, encompassing not only three dimensions (i.e., links, fit, and sacrifice) and three domains (i.e., community, organization, career) but also multiple nations (i.e., home, host, and/or third countries). The most significant theoretical implication arising from this characteristic is the nuanced relationship between job embeddedness and IRWs' retention and potentially other outcomes. In the original concept, job embeddedness signifies an accumulated resource tied to a specific location, which incentivizes workers to stay there in order to safeguard their resources (Kiazad et al., 2015; Mitchell et al., 2001). Transnational embeddedness signifies that IRWs' resources are distributed across multiple nations. Consequently, embeddedness in the host country is no longer the sole predictor of IRWs' retention. Instead, the comparison between embeddedness in different countries appears to exert a more substantial influence on IRWs' mobility. Consequently, transnational embeddedness represents a more substantial resource reservoir

compared to resources derived from a single country. IRWs who are deeply immersed in both home and host nations (i.e., true transnational embedders) exhibit a stronger inclination to safeguard their accumulated resources, resulting in a more pronounced propensity for retention compared to those primarily rooted in a single location (Nguyen & Andresen, 2021). In this context, transnational embeddedness offers a more accurate predictor of outcomes among IRWs compared to single-country embeddedness.

### **6.6.2. *Practical implications***

The results of a SLR reveal a variety of strategies to enhance the embeddedness of IRWs into host countries. Consistent with the insights on the ripple effects of these strategies, it is recommended that organizations not only focus on embedding IRWs within their own structure but also on connecting them with the local community and advancing their career prospects. For instance, companies can develop a strategic embedding program, as suggested by van Bakel et al. (2011), which involves introducing IRWs to local hosts. These hosts can subsequently assist IRWs in establishing connections with relevant social networks and engage them in company-sponsored social activities like sports. In cases where the safety of IRWs is jeopardized due to a hostile environment marked by high levels of terrorism, insecurity, and risk, organizations can implement a range of security measures to support their embeddedness into the community, as proposed by Faeth and Kittler (2017). In terms of career embeddedness, employers in host countries should actively involve IRWs in their organizational career management, thus offering them long-term career prospects and developmental plans.

Additionally, insights into the crossover effects emphasize the significance of family embeddedness in these embedding strategies. To facilitate the immersion of IRWs' family members, organizations can collaborate closely with civil society organizations or immigration offices to create favorable conditions for IRWs and their families. This might involve simplifying



the process of family reunification. Furthermore, companies can extend career support to IRWs' partners, such as partnering with job agencies, providing in-house job opportunities, and offering professional training when necessary.

Lastly, organizations can implement various measures to encourage transnational embeddedness among their IRWs. For example, they can establish long-term mentoring programs that involve mentors from both the home and host countries. These programs can facilitate collaborative work and interactions between IRWs and their colleagues back home and actively engage IRWs in social activities and events organized by the home organization, as recommended by Carraher et al. (2008). For IRWs who relocate by themselves, the Human Resources department can offer business trips back home when feasible and recruit new hires through the existing transnational network of their employees, as suggested by Crowley-Henry et al. (2021).

### ***6.7. Limitations and general research implications***

Several limitations may impact the findings of our research. The diversity of the samples in the original studies enabled us to identify job embeddedness characteristics within the IRW population and examine the limits of job embeddedness theory. This SLR suggests that the spillover, crossover, and transnational effects identified are generally applicable across a range of diverse IRW groups. Recent research, for instance, has demonstrated the applicability of transnational and crossover effects to IRWs with different qualification levels (Nguyen & Andresen, 2021, 2023b).

However, despite the diversity of the samples, our observations, as outlined in the data description, reveal that existing literature on this subject has primarily focused on more privileged groups of IRWs. As a result, it is necessary to verify the applicability of the three embeddedness characteristics to IRWs facing precarious situations, including low-status IRWs (Haak-Saheem et al., 2019), refugees, homosexual couples, single parents, and divorced/separated families.

Similarly, while we have examined some significant factors influencing job embeddedness among IRWs, it is important to acknowledge that not all demographic factors have been covered. Further research is needed to determine if these identified characteristics vary based on the IRW population's ethnic background, social and economic status, family status, and career orientation, such as traditional versus protean careers.

Many other important aspects of IRWs' embeddedness are beyond the scope of this paper. For example, scholars could explore how significant others, like friends and members of their social networks, support IRWs in developing their embeddedness in a foreign country. Research has indicated that individuals are more likely to move abroad if their friends are already residing in the host country (Toma et al., 2015). Once in the host location, these friends may serve as role models and provide guidance to IRWs on effectively adapting to the new environment. This dynamic could potentially contribute to a crossover effect that extends beyond the family and further enhances the immersion of IRWs. Finally, further studies are needed to investigate the boundary conditions of the identified characteristics in similar contexts, such as domestic relocations within a country with highly dispersed and segregated regions, as seen in countries like China or the United States.

## **6.8. Conclusion**

Our SLR introduces three key characteristics that provide insight into the job embeddedness of IRWs, particularly in the context of their embeddedness development and constellation in new countries. These characteristics encompass spillover and crossover effects, which are notably more pronounced among IRWs when compared to domestic workers, as well as transnationalism, which expands the scope of job embeddedness among IRWs. These intensified spillover and crossover effects help elucidate how IRWs establish and nurture their connections with their new host countries. Furthermore, transnationalism underscores the fact that IRWs are simultaneously integrated into multiple nations. The findings regarding these aspects of IRWs' job embeddedness

carry several implications, including the potential for a new theoretical framework, recommendations for future research employing appropriate research methodologies, and practical suggestions for organizations and policymakers.

## **Chapter 7. “Many places to call home”: A typology of job embeddedness among internationally relocated workers and its relationship to personal initiative, intent to stay in the host country, and intent to stay in the organization<sup>4</sup>**

### **7.1. Abstract**

In recent years, the literature on job embeddedness among IRWs, i.e. diverse individuals who relocated and execute employment abroad, has developed significantly. However, these studies have predominantly relied on a variable-centered approach, which has major shortcomings that have led to inconsistent and potentially misleading results. In this research, we employed a person-centered approach along with Latent Class Analysis (LCA) to discern various types of embedders among IRWs. We also delved into the relationships between these embedding types and the desire to remain in their current employer organizations and countries, and the influence of personal initiative on the emergence of these embedding types. Our data was gathered from a sample of 707 IRWs residing in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. The findings from the LCA revealed the presence of four distinct embedding types: ‘home country-focused embedders’, ‘host country community-focused embedders’, ‘host country career-focused embedders’, and ‘transnational embedders’. Among them, ‘transnational embedders’ exhibited the strongest intent to stay in both host countries and organizations. Of the two groups embedded in the host country, those whose embeddedness was private life-oriented were more likely to stay than those whose embeddedness was work-focused. Personal initiative significantly predicted embedding types. On the basis of these findings, we derived implications for theory, research, and practice.

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<sup>4</sup> This chapter corresponds to the publication titled “Nguyen, A., & Andresen, M. (2024). “Many places to call home”: A typology of job embeddedness among internationally relocated workers and its relationship to personal initiative, intent to stay in the host country, and intent to stay in the organization. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 35(7), 1370-1402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2023.2289497>”

Keywords: *job embeddedness, intent to stay, personal initiative, latent class analysis, internationally relocated workers*

## **7.2. Introduction**

A recent report shows that labor shortages pose a serious challenge in several countries (EURES, 2023). Internationally relocated workers (IRWs), referring to a diverse group of individuals who have relocated across borders and executed employment therein, have alleviated the situations in several countries and sectors (EURES, 2023). Thus, an increasing number of host nations and organizations are interested in maintaining these workers. However, retaining them is an onerous task since IRWs are known for their highly distinctive mobility propensity (Andrijasevic & Sacchetto, 2016). It is for this reason that a comprehensive understanding of IRWs' job embeddedness, which is central to their staying intent and behaviors (Chen et al., 2022b; Lehtonen et al., 2022; Meuer et al., 2019), is essential to effectively manage their retention.

The embeddedness of IRWs, which refers to their connectedness with their organization, community, and career, possesses distinctive features that set it apart from that of native individuals. Notably, IRWs' embeddedness inherently involves a simultaneous connection with multiple countries (referred to as transnationalism) and encompasses a broad range of domains, including the organization, community, and career, as outlined by Linder (2016). Despite differences in factors such as the relocation mode (whether they were relocated by their employers or initiated the move themselves) and their intentions regarding permanence, IRWs encounter common challenges when it comes to negotiating their embeddedness, as highlighted in studies by Carraher and colleagues (2008); Ryan and Mulholland (2014b); and Shen and Kram (2011). The first challenge arises from the need to strike a balance between being embedded in multiple nations, with a particular focus on their host countries and their home countries. The second challenge, which arises due to their embedding in a new destination without pre-existing ties such as family,

involves the delicate task of compromise between domains of their embeddedness within the host country. Given these intricate circumstances, IRWs are likely to adopt diverse strategies to structure their embeddedness, leading to the emergence of multiple embedding types (as depicted in Figure 1). Regrettably, the existing body of literature lacks a comprehensive exploration of these embedding types.

Extant research relies considerably on the variable-centered approach, which estimates averaged levels of embeddedness and assumes linear effects of such levels on retention across IRW population (cf. Meyer & Morin, 2016). Findings from this approach are inconsistent and potentially misleading. Examples of contradictory results include the effects of a single domain or country on retention.

While several studies have found that host community embeddedness significantly predicts the intention to stay among IRWs who relocated independently (Lehtonen et al., 2022; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010), others have yielded non-significant results (Meuer et al., 2019). Similarly, when it comes to the impact of home country embeddedness on retention among IRWs who initiated their own relocation, one study reported a negative relationship (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010), while another study did not find the same effect (Lo et al., 2012). These inconsistencies in findings have yet to be adequately explained from a variable-centered perspective. However, from a person-centered viewpoint, it is plausible to argue that IRWs with similar levels of host community embeddedness may exhibit varying intentions to stay due to their different embedding types. Even when they share the same degree of host community embeddedness, IRWs may differ in their levels of embeddedness in other domains. For instance, some individuals might prioritize their connections to their home country or international career prospects over their ties to the local community, which can influence their intention to remain in their current jobs and host country (cf. Cao et al., 2014; Halvorsen et al., 2015). Considering this perspective, relying solely on variable-

centered results might lead to inadequate practices. For example, organizations could overlook the importance of IRWs' embeddedness in their home country or their connections within host communities due to conflicting evidence. They might omit the interactive effects of embeddedness in multiple domains and locations on retention, which are individualized.

Thus, the person-centered approach is needed for both research and practical advantages (Lee et al., 2014). For instance, this approach sheds light on how various domains and countries interact within individual IRWs, revealing the compensatory and additive effects at play. It highlights the non-linear and personalized impact of IRW embeddedness on their intention to stay, offering an additional layer of understanding to complement variable-centered findings (Hom et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2014; Reichin et al., 2020).

The person-centered approach is particularly valuable for investigating the determinants of embedding types that cannot be effectively examined through variable-centered research methods. These insights are highly relevant in the context of recruiting and selecting IRWs (Crowley-Henry et al., 2021; Froese et al., 2021). Personal initiative (PI), defined as a trait characterized by self-initiation, proactive problem-solving, and persistence in overcoming challenges to achieve goals (Frese & Fay, 2001), has been found to predict the levels of embeddedness in host countries among IRWs (Yunlu et al., 2018). Given that embedding oneself in multiple domains and locations necessitates the allocation of resources and considerable personal effort, particularly when simultaneously establishing connections in a distant home country and a new destination (Carraher et al., 2008; Froese et al., 2021), it is reasonable to expect that individuals with high levels of PI, who are inclined to tackle such complexities, are better equipped to navigate these challenges effectively (Frese et al., 2007). Consequently, it is likely that the strategies employed by IRWs to negotiate their embeddedness in multiple domains and nations are associated with their PI.

Building on this rationale, we employ a person-centered approach and ask the following

questions: (1) Which different embedding types do IRWs exhibit? And (2) how are these embedding types related to their PI, intent to stay in the host country, and intent to stay in the host organization? The answers are essential for several reasons. First, existing research has revealed inconsistencies that suggest the existence of different embedding types among IRWs. These embedding types, in addition to the levels of embedding, can provide valuable explanations for retention within this population. This approach expands and refines the original concept in the context of IRWs. Second, the person-centered approach shifts the focus from analyzing variables representing embedding indicators (such as domains and countries) to examining individual IRWs as the unit of analysis. By doing so, it acknowledges and accommodates the inherent diversity in IRWs' embeddedness experiences, while also identifying representative embedding types within this population. This nuanced understanding can facilitate the adoption of more accurate and tailored retention strategies. Lastly, exploring a heterogeneous IRW population offers a fresh and comprehensive perspective on embedding types in the context of international relocation. It also provides additional insights that can help reconcile conflicting evidence pertaining to different subpopulations of IRWs. These findings are particularly valuable for organizations that frequently employ diverse subpopulations of IRWs rather than a homogeneous group (Kühlmann & Hutchings, 2010).

This paper thus provides significant contributions. Based on a sample of 707 employed IRWs residing in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, we identified embedding types. The identification of embedding types among IRWs and their relationships to retention complements and partly explains inconsistencies in extant variable-centered results. It illustrates the optimal predictive effects of transnational and multi-domain embeddedness over embeddedness in a single domain or nation on retention among IRWs. These findings significantly challenge and extend the original concept, paving the ways for future person-centered research. Practically, recognizing the



most productive embedding types is compelling since IRWs' embeddedness is generally more costly for organizations compared to that of the natives. Efforts aimed at enhancing embeddedness levels in specific domains and countries may prove unproductive if the individual effects of these practices are not fully recognized. This study, for instance, highlights the importance of embedding in one's private life (i.e., community) as being more effective for IRWs' intention to stay compared to focusing solely on work-related embedding (i.e., career and organization). This unconventional approach can be highly effective for retaining this particular group of workers. Furthermore, the findings regarding the role of PI in shaping embedding types offer valuable insights for the development of selection criteria and the customization of support mechanisms based on individual differences.

The paper is structured into five sections that unfold the study's content. The subsequent section outlines the theoretical foundation and presents the hypotheses of the study. Following that, the methods section provides details on the sample, measurement instruments, and the latent class analysis (LCA) technique used. The results section presents the empirical evidence and includes post-hoc analyses. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings for both theory and practice, along with a consideration of the study's limitations.

## **7.2. Theoretical background and hypotheses**

### ***7.2.1. Job embeddedness from conservation of resource (COR) perspective***

Job embeddedness encompasses the combination of factors that retain employees within their employing organization (Mitchell et al., 2001). These factors are categorized into three dimensions: links, fit, and sacrifice, and they apply across the organization, community, and career domains (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2007; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). "Links" refer to the formal and informal connections employees establish with people and institutions like colleagues, friends, and family members (Mitchell et al., 2001). "Fit" pertains to the perceived

alignment between individuals and domain characteristics, which could include an employee's career aspirations or their comfort with aspects like the climate in the host country (Mitchell et al., 2001; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). The "sacrifice" dimension involves the anticipated losses associated with leaving interconnected domains, which could range from missed career opportunities to pension plans and personal safety (Mitchell et al., 2001).

The first domain, "organization," refers to the work environment where factors such as team dynamics and union affiliations contribute to employee attachment (Mitchell et al., 2001). The "community" domain involves non-work-related influences like familial responsibilities and ties to the local community (Mitchell et al., 2001). Lastly, the "career" domain encompasses country-specific professional prospects, benefits, and networks (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). Researchers in the field of embeddedness have introduced the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as an auxiliary framework to explain the connection between job embeddedness and work-related outcomes like employee retention (Chen et al., 2022b; Kiazad et al., 2015; Wheeler et al., 2012). COR theory posits that individuals are driven to acquire, safeguard, and retain valuable resources—be they tangible or intangible—because these resources help them fulfill external demands, achieve their goals, or protect against resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989). Embeddedness, as defined by Wheeler, Harris, and Sablinski (2012), can be viewed as a cumulative resource. Individuals become embedded by leveraging fit and links as resources with instrumental value, as they aid in obtaining desired resources. Additionally, they become embedded through sacrifices, which have intrinsic value within a specific context, ultimately enhancing their connectedness to immediate domains (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

From the COR theory perspective, individuals are inclined to become embedded when opportunities arise to gain resources or when they want to avoid resource losses (Kiazad et al., 2015). To achieve these goals, embedded individuals invest their instrumental resources to build

additional ones. Consequently, IRWs are likely to endeavor to embed themselves in a new country by leveraging their existing resources. However, the value of these resources is contingent upon their suitability for the new context and their ability to meet specific demands (Hobfoll, 2001). While resources derived from embedding are transferable across domains (Kiazad et al., 2015), this transferability can be particularly challenging in the international context, where there may not be a perfect fit (e.g., proficiency in Danish may be an asset in Denmark but not in Vietnam). Given that IRWs prefer to allocate their limited and valuable resources where their utility and purpose are evident (Hobfoll, 2001), the motivation to invest in a new country may vary among individuals, as we will argue in the subsequent sections.

### ***7.2.2. Job embeddedness in the international relocation context***

As IRWs relocate across borders and execute their employment in the host country (Andresen et al., 2014) their embeddedness pertains to multiple countries (i.e., transnationalism) and inclusive domains (Froese et al., 2021; Linder, 2016; Lo et al., 2012). Transnationalism is a unique characteristic that applies to the IRW population and was omitted in the original concept (Linder, 2016).

Numerous studies have provided evidence of transnational embeddedness among IRWs, demonstrating their connections in the form of family, friendships, and professional networks spanning across nations (Carraher et al., 2008; Froese et al., 2021). This transnational embeddedness often involves preferences for maintaining ties to their home culture while integrating into the host society (Lo et al., 2012), as well as practices such as sending remittances and investing in properties back in their home countries (Agyeman & Garcia, 2016). However, limited research has explored the impact of individual transnationalism on work-related outcomes. Some studies, such as those on dual-organization embeddedness among IRWs sent to work abroad (Carraher et al., 2008; Froese et al., 2021), have investigated the influence of mentoring in both

home and host organizations (organizational links) on IRWs' organizational behavior. These studies revealed that having mentors in both home and host entities benefited IRWs in terms of corporate knowledge, performance, and promotability (Carraher et al., 2008). Similarly, Froese and colleagues (2021) demonstrated that IRWs' immersion in the host unit while abroad positively affected their embeddedness into home entities upon repatriation, and sustained communication with the host unit in the later phase facilitated knowledge sharing.

In the context of IRWs who initiate their own relocations, research has often focused on concurrent embeddedness in community or career domains across nations (Cao et al., 2014; Lo et al., 2012; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). However, the impact of transnational career or community embeddedness on IRWs' outcomes has received relatively less attention. From a person-centered perspective, IRWs employ various strategies to become embedded in host country domains while maintaining their connections with their home nation. Some manage to enrich their community and career embeddedness in both home and host nations (Agyeman & Garcia, 2016; Cao et al., 2014), while others prioritize their immersion into the host society and may compromise their embeddedness in their home community (Shen & Kram, 2011). The latter group may face increased competition for resources, such as time and personal effort, to establish and maintain embeddedness in two geographically distant locations. For instance, relationships with friends back home may wane over time as IRWs focus their efforts on building relationships in the host community (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). Additionally, in the host country, the emphasis on embedding in specific domains or across all domains is likely to be a matter of personal choice. Some IRWs may transfer resources between the organization and the community to simultaneously establish their embeddedness in each domain (Andresen, 2015; Andresen et al., 2021) while others may prioritize networks outside the organization over those within their employing organization (Shen & Kram, 2011).

In summary, existing literature suggests the presence of multiple ways in which IRWs become embedded, leading to the formulation of our first hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1: There are different embedding types in the IRW population.*

### **7.2.3. Embedding types and intent to stay in the host country and organization**

Current studies on transnational embeddedness have predominantly employed a variable-centered approach, focusing on, at most, two domains in both home and host countries. This approach has left the impact of transnational embeddedness encompassing multiple domains on the retention of IRWs unclear, given the intricate nature of their interactions and combinations.

From a Conservation of Resources (COR) theoretical perspective, job embeddedness is representative of the resources that employees amass across different domains and locations (Kiazad et al., 2015). Consequently, the likelihood that embedded workers will choose to stay is driven by their desire to safeguard these accumulated resources (Kiazad et al., 2015). The variable-centered approach primarily examines the levels of IRWs' resources within a single domain and/or location, explaining their retention as a means of resource protection (Kiazad et al., 2015).

Conversely, the person-centered approach provides insights into resource allocation, such as whether resources are predominantly accumulated in the home or host nation and whether they are focused on work or private life. Depending on the characteristics of this resource allocation, IRWs are likely to exhibit varying levels of willingness to remain in their organization and country. For instance, using the variable-centered approach, one might conclude that IRWs deeply embedded in their employing organization are more likely to stay (Meuer et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2014). However, the person-centered approach could suggest that high levels of organizational embeddedness become less influential on retention when combined with lower levels of community embeddedness or limited career prospects in the host country (Halvorsen et al., 2015). Home community embeddedness has been associated with IRWs' decisions to leave the host

country (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010) or accept unsolicited job offers (Lo et al., 2012). However, IRWs with strong home community embeddedness, such as through remittances, may express a strong intent to stay as long as they equally or more actively invest in host community embeddedness, which could involve pension contributions or settling their families (Agyeman & Garcia, 2016).

Consequently, multiple embedding types may play a crucial role in determining IRWs' intentions to stay, leading to the formulation of our next hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2: IRWs with distinct embedding types differ in terms of their intention to stay in the host country and their intention to stay in the host organization.*

#### **7.2.4. Personal initiative and embedding types**

Personal initiative (PI) is a behavioral trait characterized by a proactive and self-initiating approach, coupled with a persistent commitment to overcoming challenges to attain goals (Frese & Fay, 2001). Within the context of international relocation, PI plays a pivotal role as a means by which IRWs establish their embeddedness in the host country. Proactive IRWs, for instance, tend to invest significant time and effort in networking to navigate cultural barriers and achieve career success (referred to as host country career embeddedness) (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014b). Their initiatives, including relationship building, contribute to their embeddedness within the host organization and community (Ren et al., 2014; Yunlu et al., 2018). These findings suggest that the proactivity and persistence encapsulated by PI often promote IRWs' embeddedness in various domains within the new host country.

However, when examining the impact of PI on different embedding types, the dynamics may become more intricate. IRWs' embeddedness encompasses geographically distant locations and novel domains, introducing additional complexities. It is well-established that individuals with high PI tend to exhibit a greater willingness and capacity to undertake complex tasks (Frese et al.,

2007). Consequently, IRWs with high PI are more likely to succeed in simultaneously embedding themselves in multiple locations and domains. Conversely, those with lower levels of PI may find it necessary to compromise their embeddedness in some domains or locations in order to focus on others. This leads us to our next hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 3: PI predicts the embedding types of IRWs.*

Since this study is the first attempt to employ a person-centered approach to discern embedding types among IRWs and subsequently explore their predictors and outcomes, the hypotheses put forth are preliminary in nature. Therefore, it would be unfeasible to outline specific hypotheses concerning the relationships between these types and the covariates.

### **7.3. Methods**

#### ***7.3.1. Data collection and sample***

Between July and November 2020, data for this study were gathered from various sources, including Facebook groups, a consumer panel, and Prolific. The sample primarily comprised individuals residing in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, as these countries have a substantial number of IRWs and face labor shortages that necessitate their presence (EURES, 2023; Eurostat, 2020). The recruitment of participants adhered to two main eligibility criteria: First, they were currently residing in a country other than the one where they spent the majority of their youth (referred to as their home country). Second, they were employed by organizations within their country of residence. IRWs who had relocated to the host country before turning 18 and those who were self-employed or working as freelancers were excluded from the study. These criteria ensured that participants had spent a considerable amount of time in their home country, allowing them to establish home country embeddedness before relocating abroad. Specific conditions such as mode of relocation, educational background, or intent to stay permanently were not applied for sampling, as the study aimed to encompass the general IRW population rather than specific subpopulations

within it.

The invitation link for participation was shared across these sources from July to November 2020 and was accessed by a total of 2,860 members. Out of these, 921 eligible participants provided informed consent, completed the online surveys, and received a small compensation of five British pounds, with the exception of Facebook group members who participated voluntarily without compensation. Notably, participants who received compensation and those who did not exhibit significant differences in terms of their intent to stay, job embeddedness, and PI. To ensure data quality, a thorough evaluation was conducted, considering factors like response time, consistency in responses, and the identification of outliers (Meade & Craig, 2012). This assessment resulted in the removal of 214 careless responses, leaving a final sample of 707 participants and a response rate of 24.8%.

The composition of this sample ( $N = 707$ ) was diverse, including 292 males (41.3%) and 415 females (58.7%), with ages ranging from 18 to 60 (average age = 34). Participants originated from a wide array of home countries (98 countries) and resided predominantly in the United Kingdom (62.5%), followed by Germany (25.6%) and France (11.9%). Marital status varied, with a substantial portion being married (43.4%) or in a partnership (33.1%), while 21.4% were single, and 2.1% were separated or divorced. The sample exhibited a relatively high level of education, with 8.2% having completed secondary school or lower, 10.6% holding post-secondary non-tertiary or short-cycle tertiary degrees, 38% possessing bachelor's degrees, 36.4% holding master's degrees, and 6.8% having attained doctoral degrees. On average, participants had lived in their host country for 6.8 years (standard deviation [ $SD$ ] = 6.91) and had been employed by their host organizations for 4.2 years ( $SD = 4.52$ ). Regarding the mode of relocation, 66 participants (9.1%) were sent abroad by their employers, while the remaining individuals initiated their relocation independently.



### 7.3.2. Measures

#### *Host country embeddedness*

*Host country organization embeddedness* was measured using a 6-item global scale developed by Crossley et al. (2007) and adapted by Ng and Fieldman (2014). Sample items include “I feel attached to this company” and “It would be difficult for me to leave this company”. All items were rated on a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). The scale obtained satisfactory reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .91$ ).

*Host country career embeddedness* was measured using an instrument originally developed by Tharenou and Caulfield (2010). This instrument comprises three items designed to identify sacrifices or losses in the event that participants were to leave their current country. A sample item reads “The career and employment opportunities I have here”. These items were rated from 1 (“not at all”) to 5 (“to a very great extent”). Additionally, host country career fit was measured by four items such as “My professional growth and development fits with what is happening in this country” on a scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Host country career link was calculated using tenure in the host country organization and types of employment contracts. The internal consistency of the scale was acceptable (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .73$ ).

*Host country community embeddedness* was measured by the original scale developed by Mitchell and colleagues (2001) ( $\alpha = .83$ ). Items were rated from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). In order to measure host community links, we adapted scales developed by Mitchell and colleagues (2001) and Tharenou and Caulfield (2010) to fit the context of international relocation. Revised items, for example, included “Do you and your partner currently live together in a country where you now live?” and “How many children are living with you now?”.

#### *Home country embeddedness*

Although home country embeddedness typically encompasses organizational, community,

and career aspects, it is essential to note that organizational and career embeddedness mainly pertain to a specific subset of IRWs. This subset comprises individuals sent abroad by their companies or those who had well-established careers in their home countries before relocating. It does not encompass those who moved primarily for educational purposes or recent graduates. Consequently, among these diverse groups of IRWs, community embeddedness in their home country emerges as the most pertinent aspect. Therefore, we used community embeddedness as a substitute measure to gauge IRWs' home country embeddedness. To measure home country community embeddedness, we applied the original scale by Mitchell and colleagues (2001) and adapted by Lo and colleagues (2012), which consists of ten items ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ ). Sample items included "People respect me a lot in my home country" and "The weather in my home country is suitable for me".

#### *Intent to stay*

We employed the 5- item scale developed by Price and Mueller (1986) (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ ) to measure *intent to stay in the host organization*. Responses were rated on a Likert-scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Sample items included "I plan to stay in this company as long as possible" and "I would be reluctant to leave this company".

We adapted the mobility scale within the Employment Opportunity Index (Griffeth et al., 2005) to measure *intent to stay in the host country*. Akin to the approach in job embeddedness theory, the mobility scale captures the likelihood that employees will move using factors forming their 'stuckness' in their place of residence, such as family responsibility (Griffeth et al., 2005). The scale entailed three items: "I am unable to move to another country now even if a job came along", "My spouse's career makes it very difficult for me to leave my current country", and "There are factors in my personal life (e.g., school age children, relatives, etc.) which make it very difficult for me to leave my current country in the near future". All items were rated from 1 ("strongly

disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”) and obtained satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .73$ ).

#### *Personal initiative*

We utilized a tool developed by Frese and colleagues (1997) to assess PI. This measurement instrument comprised seven items that respondents rated on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (“hardly ever or never”) to 5 (“very often or always”). An example item from the scale is as follows: “I use opportunities quickly in order to attain my goals.” The instrument demonstrated the desired level of reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .84$ ).

#### *Control variables*

In our analysis, we incorporated controls for several variables, including the duration of an individual's stay in the host country (measured in years), the specific host countries, cultural distance, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the quality of life for IRWs. Previous empirical research has shown that both the duration of an IRW's stay in the host country and the degree of cultural difference play a role in influencing their embeddedness (Ren et al., 2014; Yunlu et al., 2018). We employed and adapted the 12-item scale developed by Demes and Geeraert (2014) (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .84$ ) to measure perceived cultural distance. The instruction was “In your opinion, what is your preference between your home country and your current host country?” All items (e.g., “Practicalities”, “Social norms”) were rated from 1 (“totally prefer home country”) to 5 (“totally prefer host country”), with the middle point of 3 indicating “neutral”. Since national contexts may influence IRWs’ embeddedness, we controlled for host country by creating dummy variables for each country (Andresen et al., 2020; Peltokorpi & Froese, 2014; Stoermer et al., 2020). Lastly, data collection during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic may influence IRWs’ reported embeddedness in their home and host countries. We controlled for this exogenous variable by adapting the quality of life scale (Flanagan, 1982) (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .91$ ). Participants rated the

impact of the pandemic on 15 aspects (e.g., “Close relationship with a husband/wife/a life partner.”) from 1 ("highly negative") to 7 ("highly positive"), with a mid-point of 4 ("neither negative nor positive").

### **7.3.3. Data analysis**

Our analyses were carried out using the three-step maximum likelihood (ML) procedure in Mplus, following the methodology outlined by Asparouhov and Muthén (2014) and Vermunt (2010). It is worth noting that prior research has underscored the robustness of the ML three-step procedure when dealing with models that encompass latent classes along with both covariates and distal outcomes, as demonstrated by Nylund-Gibson and colleagues (2019). The three-step procedure comprises the following stages: (1) In the initial step, we conducted a standard latent class analysis utilizing class indicators, namely home community embeddedness, host organization embeddedness, host community embeddedness, and host career embeddedness, along with fit indices. This allowed us to identify the most appropriate solution for the latent class model. (2) Next, we created nominal variables representing the ‘most likely class’ or pseudo class memberships derived in step one (e.g.,  $n = 1$  means that participants most likely belong to class 1) for each and every participants. These nominal variables were then adjusted in Mplus using the latent class posterior distribution generated in step 1 to fix misclassification errors (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014). (3) In the final step, we examined the associations between these error-corrected latent classes and auxiliary variables, which included covariates and distal outcomes. Within this step, we employed a multinomial regression analysis to investigate the relationship between PI and the error-adjusted nominal variables representing the various embedding types (Nylund-Gibson et al., 2019). Control variables were introduced into the regression equation to account for potential confounding factors. Additionally, the Chi-square Wald test was utilized to assess the mean differences between these error-corrected latent classes concerning intent to stay in both the host

organization and the host country (Liao, 2004).

## **7.4. Results**

### ***7.4.1. Latent class analysis and embedding types***

Table 6 provides a summary of the means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables in this study.

In Table 7, we present the fit indices for four different models: the two-class, three-class, four-class, and five-class models. We evaluated these models using several criteria, including Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) (Akaike, 1987), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) (Schwarz, 1978), sample size adjusted BIC (SABIC) (Sclove, 1987), entropy values, the Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test (LMR-LRT), and the Bootstrap likelihood ratio test (BLRT) to determine the best-fit model.

Our analysis revealed that the two-class model produced significant results for both LMR-LRT and BLRT, suggesting the presence of more than one distinct embedding type within the IRW population, thus supporting Hypothesis 1. Among the four models considered, the three-class model displayed favorable values in terms of BIC and LMR-LRT. However, the five-class model performed better according to AIC and entropy value. Notably, the four-class model exhibited the best-fit criteria when considering SABIC and BLRT. Additionally, it had comparable AIC and entropy values to the five-class model, thereby indicating that it represents the most suitable solution. The entropy value for the four-class model stood at .70, proving an acceptable level of distinction between latent classes (Clark & Muthén, 2009).

The four-class solution resulted in the following membership breakdown: 307 individuals were assigned to class one (43%), 359 to class two (51%), 14 to class three (2%), and the remaining

27 members were placed in class four (4%). Classes three and four represented a relatively small portion of the IRW population. It is important to note that interpreting these small-sized classes is

**Table 6.** Study 3: Means, standard deviations, and correlations of variables

	M	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Host organization embeddedness (1)	2.82	1.02									
Host community embeddedness (2)	2.35	0.55	.36**								
Host career embeddedness (3)	3.49	0.79	.37**	.29**							
Home community embeddedness (4)	3.45	0.76	.07	-.00	.01						
Intent to stay in host organization (5)	3.24	1.10	.69**	.30**	.27**	.02					
Intent to stay in host country (6)	2.65	1.13	.19**	.22**	.15**	.02	.12**				
Personal initiative (7)	3.72	0.64	.23**	.28**	.28**	.20**	.19**	.10**			
Cultural distance (8)	3.12	0.64	.25**	.37**	.17**	-.48**	.16**	.11**	.06		
Time staying in host country (9)	6.87	6.91	.18**	.21**	.41**	-.06	.17**	.13**	.08*	.06	
Pandemic impact on quality of life (10)	4.03	0.98	.22**	.30**	.15**	.06	.12**	.14**	.19**	.27**	.03

Notes: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

**Table 7.** *Study 3: Fit indices of two-class, three-class, four-class, and five-class models*

Fit indices	1-class Model	2-class Model	3-class Model	4-class Model	5-class Model
BIC	6560.671	6387.927	6355.631	6363.042	6385.363
SABIC	6535.269	6346.649	6298.477	6290.011	6296.456
AIC	6524.183	6387.927	6273.533	6258.138	6257.654
Entropy values		0.716	0.632	0.700	0.724
LMR-LRT		$p < .01$	$p < .05$	$p = .30$	$p = .43$
BLRT		$p < .0001$	$p < .0001$	$p < .0001$	$p = .50$

Notes: The values in bold indicate the best fit of model based on respective fit indices. AIC (Akaike's information criterion); BIC (Bayesian information criterion), SABIC (sample size adjusted BIC), LMR-LRT (Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test), BLRT (Bootstrap likelihood ratio test)

crucial for understanding their retention (Geiser, 2011; O'Donnell et al., 2017). Classes three and four exhibited meaningful and distinct characteristics, which justified our decision to retain them for further analysis.

The estimated means of the indicators, as reported in Table 8, provide insight into the interpretation of these latent classes. Each class reflects a unique way of structuring embeddedness across various domains and locations, representing a distinct embedding type.

The first class is characterized by relatively strong embeddedness in the host community (with the second-highest mean), while showing lower levels of enmeshment in the other two host country domains (i.e., organization and career) as well as the home community (with the second-lowest mean). This class signifies a unique orientation towards the host country community, making them the 'host country community-focused embedders.' In contrast, individuals in the second class, known as the 'home country community-focused embedders,' are primarily deeply embedded in their home community (as evidenced by the highest mean), while showing clear detachment from the host country across all three domains of organization, community, and career (indicated by the lowest means). The third class exemplifies an embedding type primarily influenced by work life, characterized by notable host organization (second-highest mean) and host



career embeddedness (highest mean). Members of this third class are notably disconnected from both their home and host communities, with the lowest and second-lowest means in these domains, respectively. Hence, we have labeled this embedding type as the 'host country career-focused embedders.' Lastly, the fourth class comprises IRWs who have effectively embedded themselves in both the host country (as reflected by the highest mean across organization and community domains, and the second-highest mean in careers) and their home community (second-highest mean). These individuals can be aptly described as 'transnational embedders.'

**Table 8.** *Study 3: Estimate means of class indicators*

Class indicators	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
	Host country community- focused embedders	Home country community- focused embedders	Host country career- focused embedders	Transnational embedders
Host organization embeddedness	3.34	2.19 <sup>-</sup>	3.53 <sup>+</sup>	4.46 <sup>++</sup>
Host career embeddedness	3.64	3.14 <sup>-</sup>	5.49 <sup>++</sup>	4.88 <sup>+</sup>
Host community embeddedness	2.53 <sup>+</sup>	2.09 <sup>-</sup>	2.50	3.37 <sup>++</sup>
Home community embeddedness	3.40	3.46 <sup>+</sup>	3.02 <sup>-</sup>	4.19 <sup>++</sup>

Notes: ++= the highest mean among classes in respective indicator; += the second highest mean among classes in respective indicator; - = the lowest mean among classes in respective indicator; value with no symbol indicate the second lowest mean among classes in respective indicator.

#### **7.4.2. Relationships between embedding types and intent to stay in host country and organization**

Table 9 and Figure 3 illustrate the mean differences in intent to stay in host country and organization between classes, i.e., embedding types.

‘Transnational embedders’ show the strongest tendency to stay in their organization compared to ‘host country community-focused embedders’ ( $p < .001$ ), ‘host country career-focused embedders’ ( $p < .001$ ), and ‘home country community-focused embedders’ ( $p < .001$ ). Moreover,

‘home country community-focused embedders’ are less likely to stay with their host employers than ‘host country community-focused embedders’ ( $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, the latter group shows a stronger tendency to stay with their employing organization than the ‘host country career-focused embedders’ ( $p < .05$ ). Lastly, ‘home country community-focused embedders’ are not significantly different from ‘host country career-focused embedders’ in terms of intent to stay in the host organization ( $p = .46$ ).

**Table 9.** Study 3: Mean differences as to intent to stay in host country and organization between embedding types

Reference Class	Intent to stay in host organization			Intent to stay in host country		
	Host country community-focused embedders	Home country community-focused embedders	Host country career-focused embedders	Host country community-focused embedders	Home country community-focused embedders	Host country career-focused embedders
Home country community-focused embedders	.72***			.47***		
Host country career-focused embedders	.96*	.25		.29	-.18	
Transnational embedders	-0.95***	-1.67***	-1.91***	-.75*	-1.22***	-1.04**

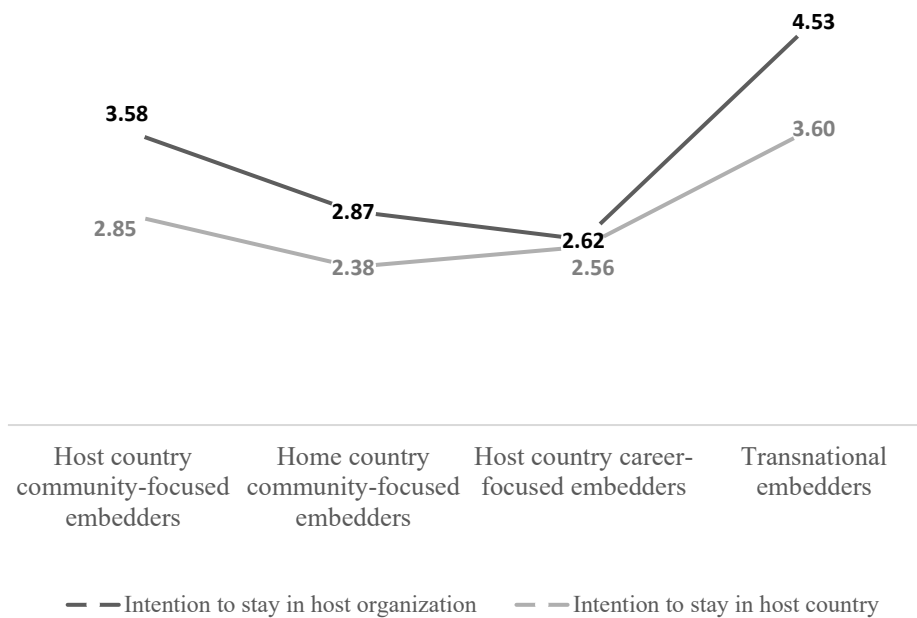
*Note: Mean differences were calculated by column class mean minus row class mean.*

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

As to the intent to stay in the host country, ‘transnational embedders’ demonstrate the greatest likelihood of settling abroad compared to ‘host country community-focused embedders’ ( $p < .05$ ), ‘host country career-focused embedders’ ( $p < .01$ ), and those whose embeddedness was home community-focused ( $p < .001$ ). When comparing ‘host country community-focused embedders’ and ‘home country community-focused embedders’, the former group is more likely to stay in their receiving nation ( $p < .001$ ). IRWs who are primarily embedded in the host country career pathway do not differ significantly from ‘host country community-focused embedders’ with

respect to their intent to stay in the host country, although the latter seems to express a stronger tendency to settle compared to the former group ( $p = .30$ ). Lastly, there is no significant difference between ‘host country career-focused embedders’ and ‘home country community-focused embedders’ in terms of the intent to stay in the country of residence ( $p = .52$ ). These results partially support our Hypothesis 2.

**Figure 3.** Means of intent to stay in the host country and organization across embedding types



*Note: Means were adjusted for misclassification error.*

#### 7.4.3. Relationships between personal initiative and embedding types

The results of the relationships between PI and the four embedding types are displayed in Table 9. As PI increases by one unit, the odds of IRWs becoming ‘transnational embedders’ increase by 7.59 times compared to falling into the ‘host country community-focused embedders’ type (Odds Ratio [OR] = 7.59, 95% Confidence Interval [CI] (2.23, 25.91),  $p < .01$ ), 23.88 times compared to ‘home country community-focused embedders’ (OR = 23.88, 95% CI (6.54, 87.21),  $p < .001$ ), and 12.03 times compared to ‘host country career-focused embedders’ (OR = 12.03, 95%

**Table 10.** *Study 3: Multinomial logistic regression results regarding the relationships between personal initiative and embedding types.*

Reference class	Home country community-focused embedders			Host country career-focused embedders			Transnational embedders		
	Logit	OR	CI 95%	Logit	OR	CI 95%	Logit	OR	CI 95%
Host country community-focused embedders	-1.15***	0.31	[0.22, 0.47]	-0.46	0.63	[0.27, 1.48]	2.03**	7.59	[2.23, 25.91]
Home country community-focused embedders				0.69	1.99	[0.86, 4.61]	3.17***	23.88	[6.54, 87.21]
Host country career- focused embedders							2.49**	12.03	[2.69, 53.87]

Note: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*\*  $p < .001$

CI (2.69, 53.87),  $p < .01$ ). Similarly, one unit increase in PI leads to a 3.15 times greater likelihood of IRWs belonging to the ‘host country community-focused’ embedding type than to the ‘home country community-focused’ embedding type (OR = 3.15, 95% CI (2.13, 4.66),  $p < .001$ ). However, the level of PI does not significantly predict the odds of becoming ‘host country community-focused embedders’ relative to ‘host country career-focused embedders’ (OR = 0.63, 95% CI (0.27, 1.48),  $p = .29$ ), nor the odds of becoming ‘home country community-focused embedders’ versus ‘host country career-focused embedders’ (OR = 1.99, 95% CI (0.86, 4.61),  $p = .11$ ). These results partially support our Hypothesis 3.

#### **7.4.4. Post-hoc analysis**

In the post-hoc analysis, which is detailed in the Appendix, we investigated the prevalence of embedding types within various subgroups of IRWs. A significant portion of variable-centered research has traditionally focused on specific subsets of IRWs rather than the broader population. For instance, scholars have explored potential variations in embeddedness levels attributed to distinct relocation modes, as evidenced in studies by Biemann and Andresen (2010) and Meuer and colleagues (2019).

While some studies have posited that IRWs sent abroad by their employers tend to exhibit higher levels of organizational embeddedness compared to those who initiate their relocation independently (Biemann & Andresen, 2010), contrasting evidence has suggested that these two groups may actually manifest equivalent levels of organizational embeddedness (Meuer et al., 2019). However, our findings indicate that the likelihood of belonging to any of the four identified embedding types was consistent between IRWs who relocated independently and those who were sent abroad by their employers.

Moreover, we also examined the potential influence of qualification levels (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014; McNulty & Brewster, 2017) on the probabilities of individuals belonging to specific

embedding types. Our analysis revealed that highly qualified and lower qualified IRWs displayed similar probabilities of falling into one of the four embedding types. Therefore, our classification of embedding types appears to be applicable to the general IRW population, irrespective of distinct relocation modes and varying qualification levels.

## **7.5. Discussion**

Our findings shed light on four distinct embedding types observed among IRWs, and their associations with PI and intent to stay. These results underscore the diversity in embedding orientations within our sample of workers. While the majority of IRWs tend to align more with either their home or host country communities, a subset exhibits concurrent embeddedness in both their home and host nations, while a smaller group appears detached from both home and host communities but deeply immersed in the work domain within the host country.

Taking a person-centered perspective, our study further highlights the significant role of PI in shaping how IRWs establish their embeddedness across multiple domains and nations. Specifically, individuals with higher levels of PI are more likely to fall into the category of 'transnational embedders' compared to those who primarily anchor themselves in either home or host country domains. Additionally, IRWs with elevated PI tend to prioritize their embedding efforts towards the host country community rather than their homeland community. Regarding intent to stay, 'transnational embedders' exhibit the highest likelihood of remaining both in the host country and with their current employer, followed by 'host country community-focused embedders'. Interestingly, IRWs belonging to the 'host country career-focused' and 'home country community-focused' embedding types display the lowest inclination to stay within the organization and host country, with no significant difference between these two groups. It is worth noting that despite their emphasis on work domains, 'host country career-focused embedders' express less intent to stay within the organization compared to those whose host country embeddedness is

primarily driven by their private life, namely 'home country community-focused embedders'.

### ***7.5.1. Theoretical and research implications***

Our study yields several noteworthy implications for the context of job embeddedness theory in the realm of international relocation. A particularly striking finding is the exceptional commitment to staying of 'transnational embedders' among IRWs, even when compared to those predominantly anchored in their host country. Drawing from the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), each embedding type clearly reflects distinct reservoirs of resources encompassing the home community, as well as the host organization, career, and community domains.

For instance, the 'host country community-focused' embedding type predominantly relies on resources within the host community context, whereas resources available to 'host country career-focused embedders' are centered on host organizational and career domains. Conversely, 'home country community-focused embedders' seem to draw upon resources primarily from their home country. On the other hand, 'transnational embedders' appear to amass their resources across borders, boasting the most affluent resource pool among all embedding types, which could explain their strong determination to stay in order to safeguard these valuable assets.

This result aligns with Neoclassic Economic Theory (Sjaastad, 1962), suggesting that IRWs' mobility is motivated by the desire to maximize lifetime resources rather than focusing solely on resources in one specific location. In this light, our study potentially elucidates the conflicting claims regarding the influence of home country embeddedness on IRWs' retention (cf. Lo et al., 2012; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). We have demonstrated that, among the 'transnational embedders', a strong connection with the home country can facilitate IRWs' retention when coupled with deep ties to host country domains. Whereas literature has neglected the role IRWs' home community embeddedness, various resources existing in communities back home (e.g., family)

provides crucial emotional support even for those who relocated with their partners (Agha-Alikhani, 2016). Conversely, a predominance of home country embeddedness without significant enmeshment in the local community can be detrimental to their intent to stay. Thus, we advocate for the incorporation of a person-centered approach in researching transnational embeddedness, especially in the community and career domains, and their associated outcomes.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that 'host country career-focused embedders' exhibit significantly lower intent to stay within the host organization compared to 'host country community-focused embedders', and a similar (low) level of intent to stay as 'home country community-focused embedders'. This finding deviates from research on domestic populations (Jiang et al., 2012) but aligns with recent studies on IRWs (Lehtonen et al., 2022). The process of integrating into a foreign society is notably more challenging than in a domestic context, which could explain IRWs' heightened eagerness, compared to natives, to protect the intangible resource accumulation within the resident community.

Moreover, resources derived from the community, such as familiarity with the host country's way of life, are crucial for IRWs' overall functioning, even in a work-related context (Andresen, 2015; Yunlu et al., 2018). Conversely, resources from the career context may have a relatively lower impact on non-work outcomes, such as mental health (Biswas et al., 2022). Consequently, when deciding whether to stay or leave, IRWs may place greater emphasis on their community embeddedness than on career-related resources. This insight could help elucidate the inconsistent findings regarding the effects of host community embeddedness on retention (Lehtonen et al., 2022; Meuer et al., 2019; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). At an equivalent level of host community embeddedness, IRWs whose overall embeddedness is predominantly driven by their career pathways abroad are less likely to stay than those who prioritize their connection to local communities. It would be intriguing to explore how embeddedness in multiple domains



affects other organizational behaviors and overall outcomes among IRWs, making it a promising avenue for future research employing a person-centered approach and embedding types.

Subsequently, our study shed light on how the personality trait PI influenced the way in which IRWs navigated their job embeddedness across various domains and locations, with the most formidable challenge being the attainment of transnational embeddedness. In the pursuit of transnational embeddedness, IRWs must surmount obstacles in both their home and host country domains. They need to adapt to and assimilate into new cultures, establish and sustain social networks despite social and cultural barriers, all while striving to achieve benefits such as career success, financial stability, social status, and security. This task becomes even more daunting when their personal investments span both their home and host countries. Scholars such as Shen and Kram (2011) and Carraher and colleagues (2008) have indicated that not many IRWs succeed in maintaining their transnational embeddedness, even those who were assigned abroad by their companies with a strong desire to do so. Geographical distance, lack of continuous communication, and emotional detachment inevitably pose obstacles to maintaining a connection with their homeland while embedding themselves abroad.

In such a context, individuals with high PI possess a valuable personal resource - their self-starting, proactive, and persistent approach - which aids them in acquiring resources in a new environment like the host country and further enhances their resource pool by maintaining their connections at home despite various setbacks. Conversely, those with lower levels of PI may be more hesitant to confront the constraints of the host country (e.g., cultural novelty, language barriers). They tend to stay within their 'comfort zone' and lean toward places with pre-existing resources, namely their home country.

These findings offer initial evidence regarding the role of personality in facilitating transnational embeddedness among IRWs. In light of these findings, we propose further research

exploring personality antecedents of job embeddedness using a person-centered approach. For instance, traits like cultural intelligence and positive affectivity might potentially facilitate the inclination to become 'host country community-focused embedders' and 'transnational embedders' (Stoermer et al., 2020; Stoermer et al., 2021). Additionally, the influence of PI on a particular embedding type may vary based on contextual characteristics, such as cultural factors or the economic development of both the host and home countries. For example, in economically less developed, culturally less preferred, or hostile host countries, PI might assume greater importance for IRWs aiming to primarily immerse themselves in the host community or become 'transnational embedders'. In such cases, external conditions, such as hostility, may hinder the embedding process for foreign employees (Jackson & Horwitz, 2018), compelling them to rely on their PI to immerse themselves in host country domains and achieve embeddedness across both home and host nations. Lastly, other personal factors (e.g., emotions) or contextual factors (e.g., political climate) may also play a role in the emergence of embedding types among IRWs.

### ***7.5.2. Practical implications***

The findings concerning the impact of PI on embedding types suggest that organizations should tailor their embedding support and retention programs for IRWs based on their individual levels of PI. IRWs with high PI require fewer external resources to become embedded in the host country community or to achieve transnational embeddedness. Conversely, those with lower levels of initiative and persistence may particularly benefit from external facilitators, such as organizational support and immigrant rights assistance, to attain the same objectives. As such, global mobility practitioners should consider assessing the PI of potential candidates before sending them on international assignments, especially in potentially unstable destinations, such as those threatened by terrorism, characterized as hostile, or economically and socially less developed, or highly culturally distant host countries. For IRWs with low PI, intensive support is crucial to

reinforce their embeddedness and retention. Employers can provide them with mentors in both their home and host entities and create opportunities for IRWs to maintain connections with their colleagues in both locations (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Froese et al., 2021).

Given that host community embeddedness demonstrated a stronger association with IRWs' intent to stay, employers should prioritize the immersion of IRWs into the host society and their connections with local residents over a predominant focus on enmeshment in work domains. Embedding programs can encompass cultural, language, and professional training (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Ren et al., 2014), as well as informal and formal social events that facilitate interactions between IRWs and both locals and other international workers (Halvorsen et al., 2015). Organizing cultural tours can also enhance acculturation among IRWs. At the national level, employers can collaborate with governments to advocate for legislation that promotes a national diversity climate aimed at reducing discrimination between IRWs and native workers in the labor market (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020). Additionally, supporting immigration-friendly policies that facilitate family reunification and the immersion of international workers can be beneficial (Humphries et al., 2009). Furthermore, transnational embeddedness should be a focal point in embedding support and retention programs. Several measures can facilitate IRWs' concurrent connections with their home country while abroad. Organizations can, for instance, recruit new hires through IRWs' existing home country networks (Crowley-Henry et al., 2021). They can also permit IRWs to make business and personal trips to their home country as needed (Crowley-Henry et al., 2021). These practices may involve offering remote work options, flexible schedules, and time off during significant events in the home country, such as traditional New Year celebrations or Liberation Day. Moreover, organizations can address diversity and inclusion by creating positions for ethnic minorities and organizing events that allow IRWs to celebrate their original cultures or religions at work, such as cultural exchange events (Halvorsen et al., 2015) Lastly,

organizations can encourage transnational expression in everyday work, such as promoting IRWs' traditional clothing and languages.

#### **7.6. Limitations and directions for future research**

Our study focused on the IRW population in three European countries, which may restrict the generalizability of our findings to samples in other regions. Previous research has indicated that IRWs may exhibit different embedding types depending on whether they relocate to economically and socially less developed destinations or equally or more developed host countries (Khoo et al., 2008). Future studies could explore the embedding types of IRWs in various continents, such as Asia, the Americas, and Africa. This effort should provide insights into potential variations in embedding types by considering macro-level factors.

Another limitation pertains to the representation of IRWs sent abroad by their employers in our sample, which accounted for about 9%. Since the detection of classes in latent class analysis relies on sample size (Marsh et al., 2009), an increased number of IRW participants sponsored by their companies could lead to a higher proportion of 'host country career-focused embedders' and a greater likelihood of identifying this class, as career-related motivations are prevalent in this subpopulation (Brewster et al., 2021). Future research seeking to replicate this study should strive for a more balanced sample to explore potential variations in the distribution of embedding types.

In our study, we utilized home community embeddedness as a measure of home country embeddedness. While this approach allowed us to examine embedding types within the largest group of IRWs, it limited our ability to provide insights into the role of home organizations and career in shaping embedding types. Research has suggested that concurrent embeddedness in work domains (i.e., organization and career) in one's home country can significantly influence IRWs' intent to stay (Cao et al., 2014; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010). Therefore, including home organization and career in our analysis would offer a more comprehensive understanding of

embedding types in the context of international relocation.

Finally, our study relied on cross-sectional data, which constrains our ability to establish causality from our findings. Consequently, further investigation is needed to explore the causal relationships between embedding types and intent to stay, as well as the influence of PI. Longitudinal data would be particularly valuable in this regard, allowing for a more in-depth examination of how embedding types develop over time and are influenced by temporal, contextual, and individual factors.

## **7.7. Conclusion**

This study examined the various embedding types observed among IRWs and their associations with PI, the intent to stay in the host country, and the intent to stay in the organization. Through the utilization of a person-centered approach, we unearthed four distinct embedding types that aptly represent the broader IRW population. These were classified as 'host country community-focused embedders,' 'host country career-focused embedders,' 'home country community-focused embedders,' and 'transnational embedders.' Notably, our findings revealed significant links between embedding type and the intentions to remain both in the host country and within the organization. Furthermore, PI emerged as a predictive factor influencing the specific embedding type that IRWs were inclined to adopt. In light of these results, we advocate for the incorporation of a person-centered approach in future investigations of embeddedness among IRWs. Additionally, we stress the importance of prioritizing transnational and host country community embeddedness when devising optimal embedding strategies.

## **Chapter 8. “A laugh a day keeps the failure away”: The role of self-enhancing humor and host country community embeddedness in career satisfaction of dual-earner expatriate couples<sup>5</sup>**

### **8.1. Abstract**

For dual-earner expatriate couples (DEECs), achieving career satisfaction amidst the challenges of relocation and career transitions presents a notable hurdle. While existing studies have delved into the demanding career trajectories experienced by individuals within DEECs, there remains a significant gap in identifying and empirically analyzing the resources that could contribute to attaining career satisfaction. Drawing on data collected from 109 DEECs in Europe and employing the Actor-Partner Interdependent Model (APIM), our findings reveal that a partner's embeddedness community serves as a mediating factor in the relationship between their humor and career satisfaction. Additionally, our study sheds light on the direct crossover effects of humor within DEEC couples, as well as men's humor positively influences their female partners' community embeddedness, which, in turn, enhances women's career satisfaction. Building on the findings, we derive fruitful implications for future research on DEECs and practical recommendations for relevant stakeholders to facilitate the careers of these couples.

*Keywords: career satisfaction, expatriate couples, humor, job embeddedness, actor-partner interdependence model (APIM)*

### **8.2. Introduction**

Relocating abroad presents significant career challenges, particularly for couples, compared to domestic dual-earner pairs. Dual-earner expatriate couples (DEECs) form a subset of the IRW population, consisting of couples moving across borders who both earn in the host

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<sup>5</sup> This chapter corresponds to the publication titled “Nguyen, A., & Andresen, M. (2023). “A laugh a day keeps the failure away”: The role of self-enhancing humor and host country community embeddedness in career satisfaction of dual-earner expatriate couples. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1125136. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1125136>”

country. DEECs encounter hurdles such as unacknowledged qualifications, limited networks, work permit constraints, language barriers, and biases from host country employers (Kierner, 2018; Mäkelä et al., 2011). Studies reveal that post-relocation, one partner often faces career interruptions, status declines, or even career abandonment (Ballarino & Panichella, 2018; Kanstrén, 2021; Krieger, 2020; McNulty & Moeller, 2018; Rabe, 2011; Samper & Kreyenfeld, 2021). DEEC partners cope with significant work-related stressors, adapting to new cultural norms, demanding schedules, frequent trips, and unsuitable jobs (Fischlmayr & Kollinger, 2010; Kierner, 2018; Mäkelä et al., 2011). Besides career obstacles, DEECs grapple with personal challenges like childcare, housework, and family settlement due to relocation (Khokher & Beauregard, 2014; Mäkelä et al., 2011). Consequently, to balance work and home responsibilities, DEEC partners must closely align their career strategies and decisions, influencing each other's career satisfaction (Känsälä et al., 2015; Rabe, 2011).

The current body of literature concerning the career satisfaction of DEECs is marked by several deficiencies. Firstly, there is a noticeable absence of research that adopts a dyadic approach to understanding DEECs' career satisfaction. Instead, the majority of studies on DEECs' career satisfaction tend to focus on enhancing the career fulfillment of one partner, typically either individuals sent abroad by their employers (i.e., company-sponsored IRWs) or their accompanying spouse (cf. Harvey, 1998; Mäkelä et al., 2011; McNulty, 2012; McNulty & Moeller, 2018; Selmer & Leung, 2003). This approach overlooks the mutual influences each partner exerts on the other's career satisfaction (Mancini-Vonlanthen, 2021; Mayrhofer et al., 2021). Additionally, there is a dearth of evidence regarding different types of expatriate couples with diverse resource endowments, including those who relocate independently without organizational support (i.e., self-initiated DEECs) (Mayrhofer et al., 2021).

Secondly, existing research tends to adopt a predominantly negative perspective, focusing primarily on the adverse effects such as resource depletion and stress that impede DEECs' career satisfaction. Conversely, there is a scarcity of insights into the resources that facilitate DEECs in achieving career success, at least from a subjective standpoint (Kupka & Cathro, 2007; McNulty & Moeller, 2018). Consequently, there exists insufficient evidence to formulate appropriate practices and strategies for effective career management among DEECs.

Thirdly, previous research on career satisfaction has predominantly concentrated on proximal antecedents within the organizational context (cf. Ho et al., 2022), overlooking the significance of broader contextual conditions, such as those within couples and their immediate environments, including local communities. However, there are compelling reasons to suggest that factors within these distal contexts may exert influence on career outcomes. This includes the heightened interdependence in career trajectories within couples (Känsälä et al., 2015; Rabe, 2011), as well as the intensified intertwining of personal and work life within the international relocation context (refer to Chapter 6).

To fill these identified gaps, our study adopts a positive stance and examines external factors affecting the career satisfaction of DEECs. Specifically, we investigate two types of resources potentially impacting DEECs' career satisfaction post-relocation: self-enhancing humor (SEH) and community embeddedness.

SEH denotes a personality trait where individuals tend to find humor in life's absurdities, using it as a coping mechanism for stress and challenges (Martin et al., 2003). Community embeddedness refers to the extent of connection with the local environment in the host country (Mitchell et al., 2001). We propose that SEH enhances DEECs' career satisfaction by providing individuals with diverse resources to pursue career goals and alleviate resource depletions encountered during career transitions (Cooper et al., 2018), based on the coping mechanisms



framework within the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, encompassing proactive and accommodative strategies (Hobfoll, 2001). Additionally, SEH facilitates career satisfaction by enhancing community embeddedness, encompassing vital resources like networks, cultural fit, and a sense of security necessary for establishing a career abroad (Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021).

To explore SEH's role in DEECs' career satisfaction, we pose the following research questions: *To what extent does SEH enhance each partner's career satisfaction in DEECs? How does community embeddedness influence the relationship between SEH and career satisfaction as a mediator?*

According to the COR theory, resources usually exist in clusters or caravans, crossing over from one individual to another, particularly when suitable passageways are available (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The wheel model of humor suggests that partners with SEH are likely to foster a home environment conducive to humor, characterized by positive emotions, playful interactions, and an atmosphere of lightheartedness (Robert & Wilbanks, 2012). This creates an ideal conduit for humor-induced resources – such as improved emotions and work engagement – to transfer within DEECs and enhance career satisfaction for both partners (Wijewardena et al., 2017; Zhang & Su, 2020). Gender dynamics also play a significant role, with women potentially influencing the transfer of humor-induced resources within DEECs due to their greater adeptness at perceiving and synchronizing emotions (Sonnby-Borgström et al., 2008).

This leads to the following inquiries: *How does each partner's SEH affect the other's career satisfaction and community embeddedness as a mediator? How do these effects differ between women and men?*

The contributions of this study are threefold. First, while existing literature has underscored the predictive value of pleasant emotions (e.g., happiness) and positive traits (e.g., proactivity) in domestic populations for career satisfaction (Ng et al., 2005; Walsh et al., 2018),

there has been a notable absence of a positive approach in studying the careers of DEECs. Instead, the predominant focus of DEEC studies has been on negative emotions (e.g., frustration, anger, hopelessness) and social isolation (Brown, 2008; Kierner, 2018; McNulty & Moeller, 2018). This study reframes the discourse from problem-focused to resource-focused by adopting a positive approach, thereby identifying pathways to enhance DEECs' career satisfaction.

Secondly, this study quantifies the influence of each partner's resources on the other's achievements by leveraging a dyadic research and analytical model. By examining career satisfaction as a dyadic outcome among expatriate couples, this article paves the way for future research in this direction.

Lastly, this study offers practical recommendations for organizations and expatriate couples seeking to manage their dual careers more effectively. These recommendations are grounded in the empirical findings of the study and aim to provide actionable strategies for enhancing career satisfaction within DEECs.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: The subsequent section presents an overview of the relationships between SEH, community embeddedness, and career satisfaction, as well as the crossover effects between partners that underpin our hypotheses. Following this, we outline the methodology employed, including the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM), and present the research findings. Subsequently, we engage in a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of our findings, acknowledge the limitations of the study, and suggest avenues for future research.

## **8.2. Theoretical background and hypotheses**

### ***8.2.1. Humor and community embeddedness in the context of conservation of resources theory***

According to the COR theory, individuals possess an inherent drive to seek, accumulate, and maintain valuable resources, which are crucial for achieving important goals (Hobfoll, 2001;

Hobfoll et al., 2018). Career satisfaction, being a desirable outcome, relies on a rich array of resources such as social support, confidence, and networking (Hirschi et al., 2018). However, during career transitions, these resources often become depleted (Mäkelä et al., 2011; McNulty & Moeller, 2018). In such circumstances, individuals typically adopt two coping strategies: accommodative coping, involving reframing cognitions through downward comparisons or adjusting goals, and proactive restoration and maintenance of resource reservoirs by replenishing lost resources or acquiring substitutes (Hobfoll, 2001). On one hand, SEH plays a significant role in both approaches. Scholars suggest that SEH serves as an intrapsychic resource, enabling individuals to adopt alternative perspectives during adversity (Martin et al., 2003), while also functioning as a multifaceted and instrumental resource that facilitates goal achievement while mitigating resource depletion (Cooper, 2008; Cooper et al., 2018). On the other hand, community embeddedness primarily represents instrumental resources (Kiazad et al., 2015) that improve the career situation in the host nation through proactive coping mechanism (cf. Akkaya et al., 2022).

In the following, we will elaborate on the potential pathways through which humor may promote the career satisfaction of partners in DEECs, either directly or indirectly through community embeddedness, by applying principles of COR theory.

### ***8.2.2. Self-enhancing humor as multifaceted resources for career satisfaction of partners in dual-earner expatriate couples***

Humor holds a central place in human experience (Fry, 1994; Gervais & Wilson, 2005), evoking a spectrum of pleasant emotions such as amusement, joy, and interest (Cheng & Wang, 2015; Wijewardena et al., 2017). Moreover, it elicits genuine and contagious facial expressions like laughter (Herring et al., 2011; Martin, 2007), and is associated with favorable behaviors such as innovation (Zhang & Su, 2020; Zheng et al., 2022) and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Yang & Zhang, 2022). Indeed, mirthful behavior is a pervasive aspect of daily life, with

research indicates that, on average, a person encounters a dozen laughter incidents per day at home and jokes every 3–5 min per meeting at work (Holmes & Marra, 2002; Martin & Kuiper, 1999).

Martin et al. (2003) define humor styles according to two facets: (1) whether the humor is benign and tolerant or detrimental and destructive, and (2) whether the humor is used to enhance oneself or to enhance relationships with others. Accordingly, the model recognizes four types of humor and finds that SEH has an internal function. It helps people handle difficulties and stress through regulating emotions and changing perspectives (Martin et al., 2003). Additionally, it fosters social bonds by advancing support from others (Martin et al., 2003). In essence, SEH serves as a multifaceted resource that not only mitigates resource loss through mindset adjustment (i.e., accommodative coping) but also aids in resource replenishment (i.e., proactive coping) by alleviating negative affect and generating instrumental resources, facilitating action-oriented and persistent behaviors (Cheng & Wang, 2015).

#### *Career satisfaction of partners in dual-earner expatriate couples as an outcome of self-enhancing humor*

In the literature, career success is commonly categorized into objective and subjective dimensions (Briscoe et al., 2006). Objective career success encompasses externally observable measures such as salary, promotion, and job level, typically benchmarked against societal norms (Spurk et al., 2019). However, there is a paucity of research focusing on the career success of DEECs. Existing evidence suggests that in DEECs, particularly the woman partner, experiences a decline in job level, often termed as an "occupational penalty" (Ballarino & Panichella, 2018). On the other hand, career satisfaction, reflecting subjective career success, pertains to one's perceived fulfilment with their career accomplishments, a deeply personal assessment (Briscoe et al., 2021; Eby et al., 2003; Ng et al., 2005). Notably, for partners in DEECs, career satisfaction holds greater importance than objective career success, particularly among those facing greater

disadvantages (e.g., women, accompanying partners) (Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021; Kierner, 2018; McNulty & Moeller, 2018). Their recurrent dissatisfaction primarily stems from their inability to pursue their desired profession and develop their career capital, rather than from issues related to salary or promotional opportunities (Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021; Kierner, 2018; McNulty & Moeller, 2018).

In academic literature, career success is commonly categorized into two dimensions: objective and subjective (Briscoe et al., 2006). Objective career success pertains to quantifiable indicators such as salary, promotion, and job level, often measured against societal standards (Spurk et al., 2019). However, there remains a noticeable gap in research regarding the career success of DEECs. Available evidence suggests that in DEECs, typically the female partner, undergoes a decline in job level, termed as an "occupational penalty" (Ballarino & Panichella, 2018). On the other hand, career satisfaction, denoting subjective career success, reflects an individual's perceived contentment with their career accomplishments, which is inherently personal (Briscoe et al., 2021; Eby et al., 2003; Ng et al., 2005).

Particularly for partners in DEECs, career satisfaction appears to hold greater significance than objective career success, especially among those who are more disadvantaged (e.g., women, accompanying partners) (Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021; Kierner, 2018; McNulty & Moeller, 2018). Their frequent disappointments are primarily ascribed to their inability to pursue their desired profession and cultivate their career capital, rather than to salary or promotion opportunities (Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021; Kierner, 2018; McNulty & Moeller, 2018).

Evidence shows that one partner's career dissatisfaction often stems from their sacrifices to support the other's work (Känsälä et al., 2015; Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021). When one partner devotes most of their time and effort to work, their presence and contribution at home decreases, thus impelling the other to compensate, thereby hindering their own career progress (Känsälä et

al., 2015; Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021; Mäkelä et al., 2011). Notably, this situation is more prevalent and detrimental in the context of international relocation, although domestic working couples may face the same problem (Ballarino & Panichella, 2018; Sánchez-Domínguez & Guirola, 2021). As a case in point, the lack of access to childcare systems and support from nearby family members often forces the partners to sacrifice their career trajectories for caregiving responsibilities (e.g., opting for part-time or temporary jobs, declining business travel) (Fischlmayr & Kollinger, 2010; Kanstrén, 2021; Sánchez-Domínguez & Guirola, 2021). Difficulties in career advancement are caused by both external factors (e.g., limited networks, lack of language skills), intra-couple factors (e.g., lack of partner support in career choices and household responsibilities), and personal factors (e.g., external locus of control, negative attitudes and emotions) for those whose caregiving responsibilities are less burdensome (e.g., couples with older children/no children) (Känsälä et al., 2015; Mäkelä et al., 2011; McNulty & Moeller, 2018). Put differently, DEECs' career situations are typically associated with resource losses that dampen the achievement of desired career goals.

Against this backdrop, SEH is likely to help partners in DEECs overcome their resource deprivation and thrive in their careers in two ways. First, an internal and perceptual outcome, namely, career satisfaction, is likely to stem from the coping functions of SEH, whereby the partners can maintain an optimistic view of career situations by transforming challenges into hilarious stimuli (Martin et al., 2003; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012; Scheel et al., 2016). This mechanism serves a “passive” way to increase feelings of satisfaction in careers (i.e., accommodative coping), given that individuals merely reshape their perceptions of it as opposed to acting to restoring their resource reservoir (Hobfoll, 2001).

Second, SEH functions as an adaptive coping mechanism by mitigating negative emotions and mental health issues when confronted with career challenges (Cooper et al., 2018). This resilience enables expatriates to persist in pursuing their career goals and accumulating resources

necessary for success (Cheng & Wang, 2015). Then, SEH aids in the restoration of lost career resources such as self-esteem (Martin et al., 2003) and occupational self-efficacy (Scheel et al., 2016), or the generation of alternative resources such as social bonds and support in the host country (Cooper, 2008; Martin et al., 2003). For instance, through self-efficacy, they are able to engage in successful entrepreneurship when working in the previous profession is not feasible (McNulty & Moeller, 2018). The benefits of SEH further lie in the pleasant emotions (e.g., joy, happiness, amusement) (Cheng & Wang, 2015; Wijewardena et al., 2017), which are proposed to enhance cognitive functions (e.g., creativity) and personal development (e.g., language) (Chen et al., 2019; Gonot-Schoupinsky et al., 2020). These resources promote perceived career fulfilment by facilitating the adoption of new career pathways (Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021; McNulty & Moeller, 2018). Moreover, SEH fosters a sense of self-confidence, self-sufficiency, and self-control (Martin et al., 2003), which bolsters individuals' perceived confidence in pursuing career satisfaction (Hirschi et al., 2018). Given these mechanisms, it is reasonable to expect SEH to serve as an antecedent of career satisfaction among partners in DEECs

*Hypothesis 1: The SEH of each partner in DEECs is positively associated with their career satisfaction.*

#### *Using humor to create and deepen community embeddedness*

In addition to career accomplishment, host community embeddedness is another essential resource that contributes to the partners' effectiveness in the host country (Horak & Yang, 2016). Community embeddedness represents the off-the-job dimension of job embeddedness, the accumulated forces that keep individuals in their jobs (Mitchell et al., 2001). The immersion of individuals in their community is inclusive of three elements: links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell et al., 2001). Links refer to employees' connections to their community, including social networks, friends, association memberships, and home ownership (Mitchell et al., 2001). Community fit

describes their perceived comfort and affinity with the culture, climate, and way of life of the host society (Mitchell et al., 2001). Lastly, their expected loss for leaving the embedded community signifies the sacrifices, which may be intangible (e.g., perceived security, safety, and respect) or tangible (e.g., social security benefits, and pension) (Mitchell et al., 2001). In general, community embeddedness denotes a pool of resources acquired and maintained by individuals within the locality (Kiazad et al., 2015), which can be reinvested to enhance the work functions of expatriates (e.g., performance and OCBs) (Andresen, 2015).

Regarding career situations, resources available in the home country community (e.g., social support) are often lost after an international relocation (Agha-Alikhani, 2016). This requires the reservoir's reestablishment in the host country. While individuals can change their viewpoint to meet career desires (i.e., accommodative coping), immersion in a new host society and community requires proactive coping and investment of instrumental resources (i.e., proactive coping). SEH acts as a resource in myriad ways to foster expatriates' interpersonal relationships, and group cohesion in the community (Cooper, 2008).

Partners with SEH possess the ability to alleviate stressors and view adversities, such as culture shock, discrimination, and hostility, through a humorous lens (Martin et al., 2003). This comedic perspective fosters pleasurable affectivity in social interactions, nurturing their friendships (Jones et al., 2021), enhancing their likability and social attractiveness (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). Additionally, individuals with SEH are often perceived as pleasant company, attracting like-minded individuals (i.e. community fit) and cultivating social networks within the host community (i.e. community links) (Cooper, 2008). Similarly, SEH is often associated with benevolence such as empathy (Hampes, 2010), partners in DEECs are likely to tolerate their local social groups, thereby increasing fit in the local society. Lastly, expatriates could confront a higher risk of discrimination and hostility, thus impeding their immersion in the host community (Bajt, 2016).



SEH is a tool used to eliminate the social barriers between themselves and the locals (Cooper, 2008), for instance, by turning hostile incidents into comic stimuli. In this manner, SEH can enrich their links with the locals and their perceived safety and respect in the host country (i.e., sacrifice). In summary, SEH acts as an instrumental resource to deepen partners in DEECs' community embeddedness.

*Community embeddedness as a mediator between self-enhancing humor and career satisfaction*

Given the array of challenges that expatriate couples face, including non-recognition of qualifications, language barriers, discrimination, and limited social support (Kil et al., 2018; Mäkelä et al., 2011), the proactive cultivation of community embeddedness emerges as a crucial strategy to mitigate these threats and enhance career satisfaction. To illustrate, although a relocation often deprives partners of the support of the wider family, friends in the host community can help with administrative tasks (e.g., taxes and insurance), language, emotional strains, and child rearing (Agha-Alikhani, 2016). These resources allow expatriates in DEECs to devote their energy, effort, and mentality to developing their careers. In addition, social relationships and acculturation enable partners to develop their career capital, including their professional network, soft skills, and international competencies (Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021), which are essential for career satisfaction (Hirschi et al., 2018). Thus, community embeddedness is likely to augment the career satisfaction of partners in DEECs.

In light of these arguments, SEH is poised to exert a dual influence on career satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through its role in fostering community embeddedness. For instance, The social support and networking opportunities stemming from individuals' humorous characteristics can facilitate access to employment opportunities and the development of career capital (Beaverstock, 2002; Kanstrén & Suutari, 2021). Based on these premises, we propose the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2: The positive relationship between the SEH of each partner in DEECs and their career satisfaction is mediated by each partner's community embeddedness.*

### **8.2.3. Crossover effects of self-enhancing humor on the partner's community embeddedness and career satisfaction**

Crossover effects explicate the process whereby characteristics, resources, or strains are transferred between individuals in shared environments or close relationships (Demerouti, 2012). Within the COR theory framework, resources are seen as existing in caravans rather than individually, and crossover refers to the transfer of resources within these resource caravans. This transfer occurs through appropriate channels or passageways (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

The wheel of humor model provides a conceptual framework to understand how one partner's SEH can influence not only their own community embeddedness and career satisfaction but also that of their partner. This model suggests that individuals experiencing humorous events can foster a humor-supportive environment, leading to pleasant emotions at the group level, subsequent humorous interactions, and a sustained humorous climate. Importantly, this climate influences the behavior of individuals within it, even if they did not initiate the humor (Robert & Wilbanks, 2012). Empirical evidence strongly supports the wheel of humor model. As a case in point, research demonstrates that humor occurring within team interactions triggers subsequent mirthful events, creates humor patterns at the team level, and eventually promotes team performance (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014). Similarly, leader humor increases subordinates' innovative behavior by increasing their work engagement (Zhang & Su, 2020) or through psychological empowerment (Zheng et al., 2022). In the home context, studies have shown that a person's sense of humor can have a positive impact on their partner's emotions, creating a cheerful atmosphere in the families (Horn et al., 2019).

In this context, we anticipate that resources triggered by SEH will cross over from one

partner to another within DEECs. Partners of humorous people are likely to benefit from a hilarious home environment (i.e., resource caravan passageways), where they can employ resources such as positive affectivity (Horn et al., 2019), optimism, self-efficacy (Scheel et al., 2016) and persistence (Cheng & Wang, 2015). Consequently, the SEH of one partner is expected to have a similar impact on the other partner's career satisfaction as it does on the humorous partner themselves (cf. Hypothesis 1).

*Hypothesis 3: SEH of each partner in DEECs is positively associated with the other's career satisfaction.*

In a similar vein, a humor-supportive environment tends to promote hilarious experiences, well-being, and pleasant emotions of partners in DEECs (Horn et al., 2019; Robert & Wilbanks, 2012), paving the way for their social bonding and relationships (i.e. community links) (Cooper, 2008). Feelings of amusement are known to further increase persistence (Cheng & Wang, 2015) and cognitive functions (Gonot-Schoupinsky et al., 2020), which are instrumental in achieving goals such as language acquisition and cultural adaptation in the host country, enhancing their fit with the host societies. Thus, we expect a partner's SEH facilitates the other partner's community embeddedness in the same way that it increases mirthful partner's connectedness with local communities themselves, thereby indirectly enhancing the other partner's career satisfaction (cf. Hypothesis 2).

*Hypothesis 4: The positive relationship between the SEH of each partner in DEECs and the other partner's career satisfaction is mediated by the other partner's community embeddedness.*

#### ***8.2.4. Gender as a moderator of the crossover effects on self-enhancing humor on the partner's community embeddedness and career satisfaction***

The wheel of humor model typically involves the contagion of humor-induced affect (e.g.,

amusement) and expressions (e.g., laughter) between individuals (Robert & Wilbanks, 2012). While humor tends to elicit intense, distinctive, and lucid emotions and displays (e.g., laughter) (Herring et al., 2011), it is possible for the propensity to “catch” and harmonize with these responses differ by gender. According to the extant literature, women are more likely than men to pay attention to others’ emotions, to interpret facial and vocal expressions more accurately, and to engage in more mimicry of emotional expressions, particularly when it comes to long-term interactions (Doherty et al., 1995; Magen & Konasewich, 2011; Sonnbly-Borgström et al., 2008). Sonnbly-Borgström et al. (2008) propound that gender differences in contagious susceptibility stem from the predilection to regulate emotions. Men are more likely than women to suppress or mask their emotional expressiveness due to gender stereotypes of masculinity (Sonnbly-Borgström et al., 2008). Additionally, women’s sensitivity to the emotions of others may be related to their primary survival strategy of relying on social support and cooperation in the face of threat (i.e., “tend-and-be- friend”) (Sonnbly-Borgström et al., 2008). This distinguishes them from men’s tendency to “fight-or-flight” (Sonnbly-Borgström et al., 2008). Therefore, female partners in DEECs are more likely than men to notice their partner’s humor experiences and reactions, thus accelerating the shared humor patterns and environment. We expect women’s contagious tendency to strengthen the effects of their partner’s humor on their community embeddedness and career satisfaction as compared to those of men.

*Hypothesis 5: The positive crossover relationships between one partner’s SEH and the other partner’s (a) community embeddedness and (b) career satisfaction are moderated by gender, with the relationship being stronger for female than for male partners.*

Hypothesis 5 explores the impact of gender on the relationship between SEH and career satisfaction (as outlined in Hypothesis 3) as well as on the initial stage of the mediating process that links the two (as described in Hypothesis 4). Our hypothesis holds that the mediation outlined

in Hypothesis 4 and the moderation described in Hypothesis 5 will occur simultaneously. Consequently, we propose a moderated mediation hypothesis. Based on the possibility that SEH's association with the partner's community embeddedness might vary based on gender (Hypothesis 5), we anticipate a similar result for its relationship with career satisfaction, that is:

*Hypothesis 6: Gender moderates the positive indirect crossover relationship of one partner's SEH with the other's career satisfaction through community embeddedness, with the relationships being stronger for female than for male partners.*

### **8.3. Methods**

#### **8.3.1. Data collection and sample**

Our longitudinal dyadic data include 109 cohabiting and heterosexual DEECs in Europe. Eligibility criteria include: (1) both partners reside in a country other than their country of upbringing, (2) the partners live together, and (3) both partners are employed in their country of residence. Participants were recruited through Facebook groups, a consumer panel, and Prolific (i.e., an online data collection platform). Since the call was published to the different audiences on these platforms, it is not possible to obtain any information on how many eligible participants accessed the online survey. The couples in the study completed the questionnaire one after the other. We asked them to keep their answers confidential from the others until the survey's completion. After the couples concluded their questionnaire, they received our thanks and a monetary reward (8.40 €), except for those on Facebook who volunteered to be our participants without monetary gifts. The first wave of data collection occurred between July 2020 and June 2021. In this wave, 770 couples participated in the survey, of which 220 were eligible and met the quality standards (e.g., response time, and consistency between responses) (cf. Meade & Craig, 2012). To answer the second questionnaire, the second wave of data collection took place by sending invitations to the 220 couples after 1 year. Notably, 109 couples returned completed

questionnaires, giving an overall response rate of 49.5%. In terms of data sources, the response rate was 100% for Facebook, 49.8% for Prolific, and 28.6% for the consumer panel. These differences could be ascribed to external issues rather than participants' interest in our research, given that many eligible participants from the first wave were not available on Prolific and the consumer panel when we conducted the second wave. Nevertheless, our analysis does not reveal any differences between the data sources for the variables included in this study.

The study's participants resided in 14 European countries, mainly in the United Kingdom (45%), Spain (14%), and Germany (12%). They came from various countries around the world (49 for men, and 51 for women). Within the sample, 80.7% of the men and 70.6% of the women were employed full-time, 11% of the men and 22.9% of the women were employed part-time, and the rest (8.3% of the men, 6.4% of the women) were self-employed in the host nations. In addition, 86.7% of the participants were highly educated (37.6% bachelor, 40.4% master, and 8.7% doctorate). The remainder had completed post-secondary non-tertiary or short-cycle tertiary (11%), upper secondary (1.4%), lower secondary (0.5%), and primary education (0.4%). A total of 90.4% of the participants were self-initiated expatriates, 7.8% were assigned expatriates, and the rest (1.8%) did not specify their expatriation mode. Most participants met their partners before relocating to the host country (68.8%). Around half of these stated that the woman was the main driver in their decision to relocate (46.7% of men and 51.4% of women), around a sixth stated that the man played this role (13.3% of men and 17.6% of women) whereas about a third pointed out that they both influenced the decision equally (40% of men and 31.1% of women).

### **8.3.2. Measures**

Participants rated each item on the following scales using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strong disagreement) to 5 (strong agreement) unless otherwise specified. The levels of all variables were analyzed for the data.

### *Main variables*

*SEH* was measured by the 8-item validated scale developed by Martin et al. (2003) and collected in the second wave. Sample items include “Even when I’m by myself, I’m often amused by the absurdities of life” and “If I am feeling sad or upset, I usually lose my sense of humor” (reversed score). The scale obtained satisfactory reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.89$  for men and 0.88 for women).

*Host country community embeddedness* was measured by the scale developed and validated by Mitchell et al. (2001), as adapted to the expatriation context by Tharenou and Caulfield (2010), and collected in the first wave. The scale comprised eight items, of which the items related to the fit and sacrifice dimensions were rated on a Likert-scale. An example is “I really love the place where I live.” In addition, participants were asked to provide information about their community links, such as “How many children are living with you now?” and “How many of your close friends live nearby?” As recommended by Mitchell et al. (2001), we standardized the latter item for further analysis. The scale yielded good internal consistency (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.81$  for both men and women).

*Career satisfaction* was conducted during the second wave and assessed using a 5-item career satisfaction scale established by Greenhaus et al. (1990). Sample items include “I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income” and “I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills.” The scale obtained satisfactory reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.94$  for both men and women).

### *Control variables*

The literature suggests that education and personal initiative influence individual career satisfaction (Ng et al., 2005), whereas language proficiency, length of stay in the host country, and

personal initiative affect international workers' community embeddedness (Ren et al., 2014; Yunlu et al., 2018). Thus, we controlled for these variables in our analysis. Host country language proficiency was rated from 1 ("poor") to 4 ("excellent"). To measure personal initiative, we used the 7-item scale developed by Frese et al. (1997). Example item: "I actively attack problems." (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.87$  for men and 0.84 for women). Data for these variables were collected at wave 1.

### **8.3.3. Data analysis**

We used the APIM (Kenny, 2006) and Mplus version 8.7 to analyze our data. In addition to controlling for the non-independence between partners, the APIM allows us to simultaneously examine the influences of each partner's factors on their own outcomes ( $X_1 \rightarrow Y_1; X_2 \rightarrow Y_2$ ) (actor effects) and on the partner's outcomes ( $X_1 \rightarrow Y_2; X_2 \rightarrow Y_1$ ) (partner or crossover effects) (Kenny et al., 2006). In our study, H1 and H2 describe the actor effects of SEH on career satisfaction and the mediation by community embeddedness. At the same time, H3 and H4 indicate the partner effects with the same predictors and outcomes. The extended version of APIM—the APIMeM—makes it possible to test mediation effects in the dyadic model using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques (Ledermann et al., 2011). The main components of APIMeM include three pairs of measured variables (i.e., predictors ( $X_1; X_2$ ), mediators ( $M_1; M_2$ ), outcomes ( $Y_1; Y_2$ )), and two pairs of residual terms of mediators ( $E_1; E_2$ ), and outcomes ( $E_3; E_4$ ) (Ledermann et al., 2011).  $M_1$  and  $M_2$  mediate relationships between predictors and outcomes in a dyadic model in several ways. In our model, the mediators (community embeddedness) are proposed to mediate both actor effects ( $X_1 \rightarrow M_1 \rightarrow Y_1; X_2 \rightarrow M_2 \rightarrow Y_2$ ), and partner effects ( $X_1 \rightarrow M_2 \rightarrow Y_2; X_2 \rightarrow M_1 \rightarrow Y_1$ ). The correlations within each couple indicate the non-independence between the variables in that couple. If the correlation is significant (e.g., between  $X_1$  and  $X_2$ ), APIM ensures that the regression equation is done involving either variable



(e.g.,  $X_1 \rightarrow M_1$ ) while controlling for the other variable (e.g.,  $X_2$ ) (Kenny et al., 2006). It is important to ascertain whether the dyads are distinguishable or indistinguishable in order to analyze using APIM (Kenny et al., 2006). We applied the model for distinguishable members according to their sex since our aim is to test the difference between men and women in their partner effects ( $X_1 \rightarrow Y_2$ ;  $X_2 \rightarrow Y_1$ ;  $X_1 \rightarrow M_2 \rightarrow Y_2$ ;  $X_2 \rightarrow M_1 \rightarrow Y_1$ ). Lastly, we examined the moderation of gender on partner effects (H5 and H6) by applying the Wald test, which detects the equality of multiple logit models (Liao, 2004).

#### 8.4. Results

Table 11 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables analyzed in our study, while Table 12 showcases the comparisons of various alternative models. In the initial model, all paths were allowed to be estimated without constraints. Interestingly, the model fit remained consistent even after imposing constraints on actor paths across gender, indicating that actor effects were not significantly different between male and female partners. However, constraining partner paths significantly worsened the model fit: Changes in the  $\chi^2$  value and degrees of freedom produced a significant result ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the partner effects were likely to vary between men and women. Subsequently, we examined the model where the partner effects of SEH on community embeddedness were freely estimated. This significantly improved the model fit ( $\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df = 0.03, p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that only the partner effects of SEH on community embeddedness varied by gender, leading to our final model. As recommended by Kenny et al. (2006), we examined the model fit using the Chi-Square Test, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Steiger & Lind, 1980), as well as Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hu & Bentler, 1998). The goodness of fit criteria included a non-significant Chi-Square Test, RMSEA less than or equal to 0.6, and CFI of at least 0.95 (Hu & Bentler, 1998; Kenny, 2006). Our model demonstrated an excellent fit to the data:  $\chi^2 (52) = 51.4, p = 0.50$ ; RMSEA = 0.00; CFI = 1.00. Figure 4 presents a

summary of our research model's results. Overall, our model explained 25.8% of the variance in men's career satisfaction, 22.1% in women's career satisfaction, 21.6% in men's community embeddedness, and 25.3% in women's community embeddedness.

#### **8.4.1. Actor effects**

The relationship between SEH and career satisfaction was found to be insignificant for both men ( $\beta = .14$ , 95% CI [-0.01, 0.28],  $p = .07$ ), and women ( $\beta = .13$ , 95% CI [-0.01, 0.27],  $p = .06$ ). The results, therefore, rejected H1. In contrast, community embeddedness significantly predicted career satisfaction for both women ( $\beta = .23$ , 95% CI [0.07, 0.40],  $p < .01$ ) and men ( $\beta = .24$ , 95% CI [0.07, 0.40],  $p < .01$ ). According to the findings, SEH was positively associated with community embeddedness for both men ( $\beta = .17$ , 95% CI [0.06, 0.28],  $p < .01$ ) and women ( $\beta = .17$ , 95% CI [0.06, 0.27],  $p < .01$ ). We used 10,000 bootstrapping estimates to test the mediating effect of community embeddedness on the relationship between SEH and career satisfaction. The 95% confidence intervals did not contain 0 ( $\beta = .04$ , 95% CI [0.01, 0.10],  $p = .05$ ), supporting H2.

#### **8.4.2. Partner effects**

Women's SEH was found to be significantly associated with men's career satisfaction ( $\beta = .14$ , 95% CI [0.00, 0.27],  $p < .05$ ). Similarly, the relationship between men's SEH and women's career satisfaction was significant ( $\beta = .13$ , 95% CI [0.00, 0.25],  $p < .05$ ), thus supporting H3. Men's SEH turned out to be a strong predictor of women's community embeddedness ( $\beta = .35$ , 95% CI [0.22, 0.46],  $p < .001$ ), and women's SEH significantly predicted men's immersion in the community ( $\beta = .17$ , 95% CI [0.02, 0.31],  $p < .05$ ). The results from the 10,000 bootstrapping confidence interval tests showed that through women's level of community embeddedness ( $\beta = .09$ , 95% CI [0.02, 0.18],  $p < .05$ ), men's SEH had a significant impact on women's career satisfaction. However, men's community embeddedness did not mediate the relationship between women's

SEH and men's career satisfaction ( $\beta = .04$ , 95% CI [0.00, 0.11],  $p = .12$ ). The results partially supported H4.

**Table 11.** *Study 4: Means, standard deviations, and correlations of variables.*

Variables	Mean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
1. Education (M) (T1)	6.42	1.04													
2. Education (W) (T1)	6.39	.82	.32**												
3. Personal initiative (M) (T1)	3.92	.72	.07	-.21*											
4. Personal initiative (W) (T1)	3.85	.68	.08	.19	.19										
5. Language (M) (T2)	3.28	.95	-.09	.09	-.06	-.09									
6. Language (W) (T2)	3.33	.85	-.13	.10	-.13	-.00	.52**								
7. Duration in the host country (years) (M) (T2)	7.89	7.54	-.05	-.01	.05	.09	.29**	.15							
8. Duration in the host country (years) (W) (T2)	6.88	6.39	.02	-.03	.01	.03	.14	.20*	.77**						
9. Self-enhancing humor (M) (T2)	3.15	.87	-.21*	-.15	.19	.08	.06	-.05	-.01	-.10					
10. Self-enhancing humor (W) (T2)	2.99	.89	-.05	-.19	.19	.24*	-.01	.07	.01	.07	.21*				
11. Host community embeddedness (M) (T1)	2.43	.59	.02	-.15	.32*	.16	.03	-.06	.28**	.26**	.26**	.22*			
12. Host community embeddedness (W) (T1)	2.44	.60	-.02	-.17	.23*	.16	-.07	-.01	.14	.25**	.38**	.24*	.71**		
13. Career satisfaction(M) (T2)	3.66	.98	.09	-.20*	.38*	-.04	.07	-.03	.21*	.07	.30**	.29**	.33**	.26**	
14. Career satisfaction (W) (T2)	3.40	1.02	.07	.11	.03	.29**	-.06	-.03	.01	.00	.20*	.19	.18	.36**	.18

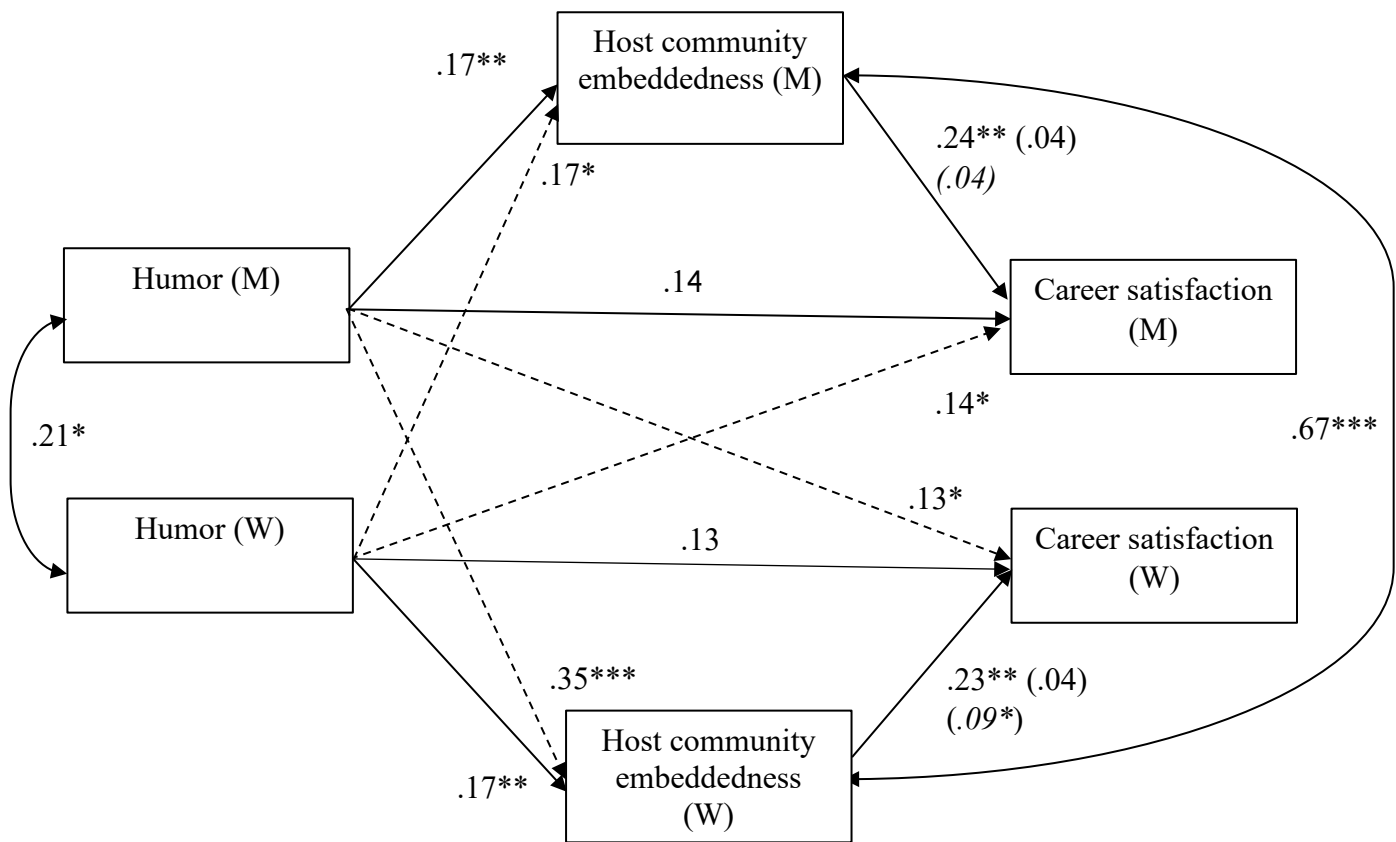
Notes: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

**Table 12.** *Study 4: Model comparison*

Model	$\chi^2$	Degrees of freedom	p- value	RMSEA	CFI	AIC	$\Delta\chi^2$ p- value
1. All Paths Freely Estimated	48.752	48	0.44	0.012	0.996	2481.80	
2. Actor Paths Constrained Across Gender	50.968	51	0.47	0.000	1.000	2478.02	0.53
3. All Partner Paths Constrained	56.159	53	0.36	0.023	0.981	2479.21	0.02
4. Final Model* (partner path: SEH → community embeddedness was freely estimated)	51.424	52	0.50	0.000	1.000	2476.48	0.03

We employed the Wald test to examine the moderation effect of gender on partner paths. Results showed that gender had a significant moderation effect on the linkage between SEH and community embeddedness ( $\beta = .17$  vs.  $\beta = .35$ , Wald  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ) = 4.779,  $p < .05$ ), supporting H5a. However, gender was not found to moderate the direct path from SEH to career satisfaction ( $\beta = .14$  vs.  $\beta = .13$ , Wald  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ) = .457,  $p = .49$ ), thus rejecting H5b. The one-tailed Wald test reveals that the mediation effects of community embeddedness on the relationship between SEH and career satisfaction were stronger for women than men ( $\beta = .04$  vs.  $\beta = .09$ , Wald  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ) = 3.384,  $p < .05$ ), thereby supporting H6. Figure 4 illustrates the results of the research model.

**Figure 4.** *The effects of SEH on community embeddedness and career satisfaction among DEECs*



\_\_\_\_\_ : Actor effects

----- : Partner effects

Notes: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Estimates of partner's mediation effects are marked in italics in brackets. The actor paths was controlled for education, personal initiative, language proficiency, and duration in the host country.

## 8.5. Discussion

In congruence with the results of this study, social and multifaceted resources emerged as pivotal factors influencing the career satisfaction of partners within DEECs. It was evident that partners predominantly leveraged their own SEH to augment their embeddedness within the community, consequently leading to heightened levels of career satisfaction. However, the utilization of humor did not yield a significant enhancement in the perception of career success. Conversely, the humor exhibited by one partner exerted a direct and positive influence on the community embeddedness and career satisfaction of the other partner. Moreover, gender disparities

were observed in the utilization of partner's humor to deepen community enmeshment: Women derived greater benefits compared to men from the indirect effects of their partner's humor on career satisfaction through enhanced community embeddedness. Subsequent sections delve into further ramifications stemming from the outcomes of this study.

#### ***8.5.1. Theoretical and research implications***

The principle of the resource caravan passageway posits that crossover effects occur via empathy, the transmission of experiences, and shared stressors (Hobfoll, 2001). Typically, these pathways involve individual awareness and some level of control over the process. By integrating COR theory with the wheel model of humor, Robert and Wilbanks (2012) demonstrate that resource transmission can occur unintentionally, reinforcing the passageways of resource caravans. This suggests potential for exploring the influence of humor in collective and duo contexts.

This study emphasizes the importance of taking a positive approach to understanding career satisfaction among DEECs and highlights the significance of identifying and utilizing potential resources. While previous research often portrayed DEECs' career satisfaction as suffering (Kupka & Cathro, 2007), this study reveals the value of playful, entertaining, and endearing feelings at home in resolving career struggles. By focusing on overlooked factors like humor and community embeddedness, the study illuminates the role of non-work-related resources in DEECs' career satisfaction.

Marginal findings regarding the relationship between expatriates' SEH and career satisfaction suggest that altering perceptions of career circumstances with SEH could have some positive impact. However, enhancing career satisfaction primarily relies on fostering connections with the local community and acquiring tangible resources (McNulty & Moeller, 2018). This helps explain why gender did not differentiate the direct effect of humor on career satisfaction, as it primarily occurs through perceptual change, an intrapersonal process (Ng et al., 2005).

Nonetheless, further research is needed to validate these findings, considering the relatively small sample size of the study, which might limit the detection of existing effects. Future studies could replicate the model with a larger sample size to examine the validity of these findings.

The study also discovered that resources stemming from SEH extend within DEECs and enhance career satisfaction for both partners, regardless of which partner possesses this attribute. This underscores the significance of nurturing positive traits such as humor within relationships and illustrates how a partner's SEH can positively impact the career satisfaction of expatriate couples as a unit. Our findings suggest that the resources and functions generated by a humorous partner may sufficiently confer benefits to both partners, such as improvements in health, cognitive functions, persistence, and social bonds, ultimately enhancing feelings of career fulfillment and immersion into the community.

Moreover, men and women utilize resources from their partner's SEH for community embeddedness in distinct ways, thus influencing the effect of their partner's humor on their career satisfaction differently. Specifically, women's partners' humor tends to foster women's community embeddedness more than men's. This could be attributed to women's heightened sensitivity to their partner's humorous expressions and emotions, leading to a convergence with positive and lively sentiments. Additionally, research suggests that community immersion is more demanding for female partners compared to male partners, particularly concerning local social networks. This could be due to women's more prominent domestic roles, such as child-rearing, as well as the challenges they face in establishing community connections, which may elevate the importance of the humor atmosphere created by their SEH partners. Further investigation is necessary to explore gender disparities in the utilization of partner resources among expatriate couples and the implications of these differences.



The findings offer valuable insights into research on the dual career satisfaction of expatriate couples. Initially, they suggest that their career success is a result of the interaction between partners, wherein each partner affects the other's career satisfaction in distinct manners. By identifying the mechanisms of crossover and their outcomes, we can enhance our understanding and develop appropriate interventions for managing their careers effectively. This underscores the need for dyadic approaches, such as the APIM, in studying couples' careers within the expatriate community. Currently, the utilization of dyadic analysis in research on the careers of expatriate couples is rare or nonexistent.

### ***8.5.2. Practical implications***

The study delineates several strategies through which organizations can bolster the career satisfaction of DEECs. Firstly, employers can facilitate DEECs' immersion into the host community. This could entail organizing language proficiency training, informal social gatherings, cultural excursions, and disseminating information regarding the host country's socio-political landscape and available support systems, encompassing psychological counseling, mentoring, and support groups. Collaborations with youth and family services may further extend to offering guidance on familial adjustment, interpersonal dynamics, administrative procedures, parental entitlements, and childcare practices.

Secondly, to bolster the professional success of expatriates in committed relationships, organizations can capitalize on the presence of self-enhancing humorous partners. This factor could be factored into the selection process for international assignments. Moreover, organizations can proactively implement humor enhancement programs tailored for expatriate couples, featuring engaging and comedic activities aimed at fostering a jovial atmosphere within expatriate communities. For instance, the "7 Humor Habits Program" has demonstrated efficacy in augmenting humor levels and engendering enduring benefits among participants (Crawford &

Caltabiano, 2011; McGhee, 2010). Integration of such interventions into career management initiatives for expatriate couples can potentially expedite their career advancement trajectories.

## **8.6. Limitations and directions for future research**

No study is impervious to limitations, and our study is no exception. First, the independent variable SEH was measured in the second wave. The justification is that self-enhancing comic style is a stable trait that generally does not change over time (Hunter et al., 2016; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012), with a few exceptions, such as those who receive systematic intervention in clinical settings (Kugler et al., 2021). SEH reinforced the results of our analysis despite the unusual order of measurement. Nevertheless, conducting measurements across multiple waves could offer a more robust understanding of its impact on DEECs' career satisfaction over time.

Second, the sample composition predominantly comprised DEECs residing in Europe, with a majority being self-initiated couples. This could lead to a bias in our results, as self-initiated couples experience are likely to rely more on personal resources because they have less organizational support. Including only DEECs residing in Europe may also limit the generalizability of our findings to a broader range of populations. Scholars can replicate our study in other contexts and with different samples to examine whether contextual factors (e.g., childcare system, gender norms) and individual factors (e.g., relocation mode) moderate our research model.

Third, due to the predetermined testing of gender differences, we did not include homosexual couples in the sample of this study. Given their increasingly prominent role in the international talent pool (McPhail et al., 2016), it would be insightful to look at their careers from a dyadic career lens and explore the within-couple factors that influence their dual satisfaction. Finally, the influence of children on the career satisfaction of expatriate partners was beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, expatriate parents' career outcomes are likely to cross over to their

children's conditions and vice versa (see van der Zee et al., 2007). Thus, the influences of children's humor on expatriate parents' careers may be another promising avenue of research.

### **8.7. Conclusion**

Our research indicates that humor has a positive impact on the career satisfaction of partners in DEECs through connectedness with the local community. Additionally, one partner's SEH positively has a positive impact on the other's career satisfaction. Men's careers were largely impacted by their own SEH, with some additional benefits from their partner's humor. For women, their immersion into the community was primarily influenced by their partner's SEH, resulting in improved career satisfaction.

## Chapter 9. Overall results

The complex dynamics of various factors at multiple levels, including situational, individual, organizational, and institutional dimensions, significantly impact the job embeddedness of IRWs in host countries. Elements such as cultural barriers, human capital transferability, language proficiency, organizational support, and nationalist policies consistently influence IRWs' embeddedness across community, organizational, and career domains (Bajt, 2016; Cederberg, 2017; Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Ren et al., 2014) (refer to Figure 2). The current research gap primarily focuses on individual and situational factors, with limited attention given to organizational and institutional aspects. Moreover, there is a conspicuous absence of research concerning career embeddedness among IRWs.

As we examine the factors shaping IRWs' embeddedness into local communities, numerous influential variables come to light. These include individuals' relocation modes (Meuer et al., 2019), motivation (Jun & Ha, 2015), adaptation strategies (Yunlu et al., 2018), ethnicity, countries of origin (Martinovic et al., 2015), underemployment issues (Cederberg, 2017), organizational cultural intelligence (David et al., 2019), host nation's social security systems (Agyeman & Garcia, 2016), immigrant policies (Tsuda, 1999), quality of place (Kim & Cocks, 2017), and egalitarian norms (Pawlak & Goździak, 2020). This diversity underscores the influence of various stakeholders and contextual conditions on IRWs' embeddedness in their non-work environments. However, SLR reveals notable research gaps. For instance, the absence of a standardized measurement for community embeddedness among IRWs poses a significant challenge. Studies often employ disparate items, which may not align with evidence synthesized from the SLR. Furthermore, there is a noticeable lack of emphasis on personal traits in research regarding IRWs' community embeddedness. This discovery serves as a crucial groundwork for our empirical exploration into the roles of two personal traits, namely, PI and SEH, in shaping

embedding types and fostering community connectedness within the host nation. Empirical findings indicate that while PI significantly predicts embedding types, SEH emerges as a multifaceted resource facilitating the establishment of community embeddedness among IRWs in DEECs, ultimately enhancing career satisfaction.

Comparing to the wide set of diverse factors contributing to the embeddedness of IRWs in their communities, literature exploring their organizational embeddedness sheds light on a narrower spectrum of factors contributing to their enmeshment within organizations. This body of work primarily accentuates situational and individual elements, such as individuals' cultural intelligence (Meuer et al., 2019), career capital (Yang & Lau, 2015), adaptation tactics (Halvorsen et al., 2015), as well as the cultural barriers (Ren et al., 2014), the transferability of human capital (Cederberg, 2017) and the diversity climate within countries (Chen, 2012). However, there persists a notable gap in comprehending organizational and institutional influences, with limited attention directed towards factors beyond mentoring program (Carraher et al., 2008) and nationalism (Bajt, 2016). This shortfall in research investigating organizational factors, considering the context's proximity, is indeed unexpected.

Following the findings on factors shaping IRWs' organizational embeddedness are those contributing to their immersion in their international careers. Interestingly, there appears to be a considerable overlap between the factors influencing their embeddedness within organizations and their careers, which is reasonable given the work-related nature of these domains. Nevertheless, career embeddedness among IRWs extends beyond organizational realms to encompass broader and distinct macro and situational conditions, such as technological advancements (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020) and the internationalization efforts of host nations (Beaverstock, 2002). Despite this, institutional influences remain underrepresented in the relevant literature, with only migrant

labor demands (Humphries et al., 2009) and nationalist policies (Bajt, 2016) being acknowledged as factors shaping IRWs' immersion in their international careers.

Across sub-projects, it became evident that job embeddedness among IRWs is not only shaped by distinctive factors in the international relocation context but also characterized by three particularities which are not depicted and sufficiently elucidated in the original theory for the domestic population. The three characteristics of job embeddedness among IRWs, encompassing heightened spillover effects, crossover effects and transnationalism (see Table 4), enlighten how these workers build and deepen their embeddedness within the international relocation and extend the constellation of their embeddedness by introducing another component, that is, the 'country'.

The spillover effects illustrate the heightened interconnections between embeddedness in the host country community, organization, and careers among IRWs. While these effects have been recognized within the domestic population (Feldman et al., 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2014), IRWs are known to exhibit a more pronounced eagerness to simultaneously deepen their embeddedness across these domains in host countries and to efficiently transfer resources from one domain to another to achieve this goal. Examples of these spillover effects include professional connections evolving into friendships (Shen & Kram, 2011) and the enhancement of workplace relationships through increased cultural awareness (Beaverstock, 2002).

Furthermore, the SLR demonstrates that the mode of relocation influences the direction of spillover effects. Company-sponsored IRWs, whose resources are more abundant within organizational domains, often demonstrate a spillover of organizational embeddedness to the community (Agha-Alikhani, 2016), while self-initiated IRWs demonstrate the opposite direction (Andresen, 2015). Similarly, relocation aspiration influences the likelihood of these effects, as IRWs with career-related motivations are more inclined to maximize their resources abroad to enhance career outcomes (Beaverstock, 2002). Conversely, those relocated for economic

remittance often refrain from immersing themselves in the community domain due to their sole priority being monetary benefits in the organizational domain (Jun & Ha, 2015).

The spillover effects serve as the premise for our first empirical study examining the embedding types, representing how IRWs structure their embeddedness between multiple domains and locations, utilizing the innovative LCA method. The empirical findings confirm the beneficial impact of spillover effects, wherein IRWs who exhibit simultaneous embeddedness across various domains demonstrate higher levels of retention. However, achieving this objective proves to be challenging, with only 4% of the population, referred to as "transnational embedders," successfully managing it, largely due to their high levels of PI. Apart from individuals primarily root in their home country, the majority of IRWs establish their embeddedness within the host nation through their private lives, termed as "host country community-focused embedders," which accounts for 43% of the sampled population. Conversely, only 2% of the IRWs establish their connectedness with the receiving nations primarily in work domains, classified as "host country career-focused embedders," Despite distinctive nuance in their embedding types, the "host country community-focused embedders" exhibit a strikingly stronger intent to remain within their employer organization than that of the "host country career-focused embedders", a finding that contradicts conventional assumptions.

The second characteristic, known as crossover effects, depicts the attenuated interrelations between embeddedness across domains, including the local community, employer organizations, career pathways, and educational institutions (if applicable), between IRWs and their family members such as partners and children. Similar to spillover effects, crossover effects have been addressed in a limited number of studies among the domestic population, referring to as 'embedding by proxy' (Feldman et al., 2012; Kiazad et al., 2015), where the embeddedness of family members is primarily considered a contributor to the embeddedness of employees and their

retention (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). However, within the IRW population, crossover effects additionally and intensively demonstrate the reciprocity and interdependence between these workers and their families in the embedding process. The heightened crossover effects emerge prominently within the IRW community as a result of the shared goal to optimize the resource pool for the family, which is an imperative objective of international relocation among IRW families (Massey et al., 1993). This emphasis on resource optimization is compounded by the scarcity of external resources available to invest in the embedding process among family members. Examples of crossover effects encompass the interconnection between the acculturation of children and their IRW parents' perceived fit in their host societies (Ryan, 2018). Similarly, a partner's community embeddedness in terms of social network positively correlates with the other partner's career prospects abroad (Beaverstock, 2002). Existing literature demonstrates that the embeddedness of families in host country domains influences IRWs' intent to stay in the receiving nations beyond the impacts of their own embeddedness (Agyeman & Garcia, 2016).

Building upon the crossover effects, the second empirical study examines the dyadic influences of humor, considered as an individual trait, on host country community embeddedness and career satisfaction within partners in DEECs, utilizing the APIM. The results illustrate the crossover effects of partner characteristics on community embeddedness. Specifically, a partner's SEH directly promotes the other partner's community embeddedness and subjective career success regardless of gender, while also indirectly fostering partners' career satisfaction through deepening community embeddedness among female IRWs in DEECs.

Finally, this thesis delves into the notion of transnationalism, the third characteristic that underscores the concurrent embeddedness of IRWs in multiple countries, encompassing their home, host, and previously relocated third countries. Transnationalism emerges as a pivotal component within the construct of job embeddedness for the IRWs demographic, extending beyond



the confines of a singular nation. Expanding upon this characteristic, IRWs exhibit distinctive embeddedness features. Existing literature highlights the nuanced interplay between their enmeshment in their home, host, and other third countries, revealing often negative correlations attributed to the inherent limitations of resources, such as time and effort, required to cultivate and sustain connections across multiple, geographically distant nations simultaneously (Carraher et al., 2008; Koelet et al., 2017). However, it is observed that company-sponsored IRWs tend to achieve more favorable outcomes when they effectively maintain connections with their corporate entities spanning various national borders (Froese et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the disparity in economic development levels between home and host countries significantly influences the modalities through which IRWs assimilate into their respective host environments. Those relocated to more developed destinations often establish their embeddedness through familial ties, a high quality of life, safety, social security, and stability, or, in other words, advanced links, fit and sacrifice (Ryan, 2018; Tsuda, 1999). Conversely, individuals relocated to less developed countries primarily foster community embeddedness through familial and friendship networks, alongside an intrinsic fascination with the host country's culture, climate, and lifestyle, often without apparent sacrifice (Bilodeau, 2010; Khoo et al., 2011).

Ultimately, retention among IRWs appears to hinge upon their assessment of embeddedness across diverse locations (Abarcar, 2017), diverging from the conventional emphasis on a singular country of residence posited in the original theory, which predominantly applies to domestic populations. The second empirical research, grounded in the transnational characteristic of job embeddedness, corroborates these findings through a person-centered approach and LCA. The results demonstrate that, akin to the spillover effects, the ways IRWs structure their connectedness with multiple nations are determined by their PI. Transnational embedders, distinguished by the highest levels of PI among all embedder types, exhibit profound immersion

across various domains in both their home and host nations. Consequently, they consistently demonstrate a heightened propensity to remain with their employing organizations and to settle in the host countries. On the contrary, the majority of the IRW population (51%), characterized as 'home country community-focused embedders', predominantly maintain their connectedness with their country of origin, while disengaging from the receiving nations. This group displays the lowest inclination to remain in the latter locations and with their respective employers. However, an intriguing observation emerges where IRWs primarily immersing themselves in the host country do not necessarily exhibit a greater willingness to stay than their 'home country community-focused embedder' counterparts, particularly if their embeddedness abroad is primarily confined to work-related domains, as evidenced among the 'host country career-focused embedders'.

To summarize, the job embeddedness of IRWs presents unique characteristics and complexities due to their distinct international relocation circumstances. Factors contributing to job embeddedness in this context, such as language proficiency, relocation mode and motivation, nationalist policies, and cultural distance, differ significantly from those applicable to domestic employees (Kiazad et al., 2015). Furthermore, heightened spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism further differentiate the embeddedness of IRWs from that of employees without international relocation experiences. This results in intriguing and sometimes counterintuitive empirical findings regarding how to leverage job embeddedness for work outcomes among IRWs. These findings include the superior effects of embeddedness across multiple domains and locations on retention compared to immersion in a single domain and nation, the heightened influence of immersion in private life (i.e., community) on work outcomes such as retention and career satisfaction, the impacts of personal traits including PI and SEH on the structures and levels of embeddedness, and the dyadic effects of partners' SEH on community embeddedness among DEECs.

The subsequent section will provide an in-depth discussion of how the findings of this thesis refine and advance job embeddedness theory, laying the groundwork for novel research endeavors and the formulation of tailored embedding and retention strategies for IRWs. Additionally, we will elaborate on the limitations identified in the thesis, offering valuable insights and recommendations for future research initiatives aimed at exploring job embeddedness among IRWs.

## **Chapter 10. Overall discussion**

### **10.1. Overall theoretical implications**

The thesis makes a significant contribution by refining the theoretical framework of job embeddedness specifically tailored for the IRW population. This framework, as illustrated in Table 4, provides a more intricate and distinct understanding of the formation, evolution, and outcomes of job embeddedness among IRWs, which has been inadequately elucidated in the original theory.

Initially, the traditional assumption regarding the optimal predictive effects of employee embeddedness within a single domain and location on retention, as proposed by Jiang et al. (2012) and Mitchell et al. (2001), is challenged within the context of IRWs. Existing literature on IRWs has presented inconsistent and sometimes contradictory evidence regarding the impact of single domain and location on IRWs' retention, as exemplified by studies such as Lo et al. (2012), Meuer et al. (2019), and Tharenou and Caulfield (2010). However, this aspect has not been systematically elucidated from a theoretical perspective. In this thesis, we unravel the intricacies underlying the relationship between job embeddedness and retention among IRWs, which arise from their concurrent connections with multiple domains across various countries. Specifically, we find that embeddedness in multiple domains (referred to as spillover effects) and across nations (referred to as transnationalism) emerge as more effective predictors of retention among these workers, surpassing the effects of connectedness within a single domain or country, including the country of residence.

Secondly, comprehensive studies further validate the COR perspective on job embeddedness (Kiazad et al., 2015), extending its applicability to the IRW population. Specifically, the COR theory sheds light on the emergence and outcomes of three fundamental characteristics of job embeddedness within this population, encompassing spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism. The inclusive tenet of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) elucidates the underlying

motivations behind these particularities, aligning with the primary objective of international relocation, which is to optimize individual and family resources (Massey et al., 1993; Sjaastad, 1962). Additionally, it becomes evident that investing resources across domains and within couples is crucial for IRWs to deepen their immersion (Hobfoll, 1989), which becomes intensive and urgent due to the challenging circumstances of international relocation. The findings on spillover and crossover effects provide an intriguing and distinguishable insight into the condition of the resource investment principle, where initial resource shortage among IRWs might accelerate their resource investment instead of inhibiting it, as suggested in the COR principle of the 'resource loss spiral' (i.e., individuals with fewer resources are more vulnerable to resource losses) (Hobfoll, 2001; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Consistent with this notion, resources for building embeddedness in this context, which encompass unique strains, are effectively explored and identified through the lens of coping mechanisms (Hobfoll, 2001) and resource caravans (Hobfoll et al., 2018) principles, as demonstrated by findings on PI and SEH. This insight lays the groundwork for further investigation into the boundary conditions of COR tenets and principles, particularly in their application to the job embeddedness theory for the IRW population.

Third, while literature on job embeddedness among domestic employees generally emphasizes the influential role of organizational embeddedness over connectedness with the local community in employees' work outcomes, such as intent to stay in the employer organizations (Jiang et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2021), our results illustrate the superior impacts of embedding types rooted in the host country community compared to those entrenched solely in work domains on IRWs' retention. Additionally, our findings highlight the direct influences of host country community embeddedness levels on career satisfaction. Such insights are further supported by more recent studies (Chen et al., 2024; Lehtonen et al., 2022). Thus, the effects that job embeddedness in different domains impose on work outcomes can be divergent for IRWs

compared to native workers. The heightened impacts of community embeddedness on work outcomes among IRWs suggest a distinct relevance of non-work resources for work outcomes among this population, a phenomenon necessitating further scientific inquiries.

The final theoretical implication underscores the necessity for a more precisely adapted and validated measurement of community embeddedness among the IRW population. Drawing from the findings of the initial SLR, it becomes evident that the instruments utilized to assess community embeddedness among these specific workers display inconsistencies across studies (Meuer et al., 2019; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010) and may not comprehensively capture the primary contributing factors within the context of international relocation. To date, a conspicuous absence of dedicated studies exists aimed at developing and validating a community embeddedness scale tailored specifically for IRWs. Consequently, several studies have navigated this challenge by adapting the global organizational embeddedness scale (Crossley et al., 2007) to measure community embeddedness for IRWs (Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Yunlu et al., 2018). Nonetheless, in the absence of dedicated validation studies, a dependable measurement of community embeddedness for these workers remains a significant gap in the current literature.

## **10.2. Overall research implications**

While the initial SLR sheds light on the complex interplay of multi-level factors influencing the job embeddedness of internationally relocated workers (IRWs) (refer to Table 4), there remains a dearth of studies directly investigating the interactive effects of factors across multiple levels on the job embeddedness of IRWs, with only a limited number of studies, such as Stoermer et al. (2020), exploring such interactions. For instance, Stoermer et al. (2020) found that the impact of individual cultural intelligence on IRWs' organizational enmeshment is contingent upon the national cultural orientation of the host countries. In this thesis, we also uncover a potentially beneficial resource, namely, SEH, which can serve as a buffer against institutional barriers

hindering gender equality in host countries, consequently affecting the embeddedness of IRWs, especially females, into their host nations (van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). However, there is a pressing need to further explore the direct roles that organizations play in the embeddedness of IRWs across various domains and under specific conditions. It is well-documented that nationalism and discrimination pose significant challenges to the embeddedness of IRWs across multiple domains within the host country (Bajt, 2016; Brunton & Cook, 2018; Oltra et al., 2013), presenting profound obstacles for these workers in establishing connections with their destinations. Given their vulnerability to inequality and bigotry, IRWs could particularly benefit from organizational and supervisor justice (Colquitt, 2012), which is formed by perceptions of fairness in resource allocations, procedures, interactions, and information dissemination within the workplace (Colquitt, 2012). In this context, future empirical research would benefit from adopting a multi-level approach to study the influencing factors of job embeddedness in the context of international relocation, with a specific focus on organizational and institutional conditions.

While the concept of embeddedness in international careers holds particular relevance for the IRW population (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010) as well as domestic employees with international relocation experiences (Andresen, 2021), there remains a dearth of research on this construct. The multitude of influencing factors and potential outcomes of career embeddedness among IRWs suggests a promising avenue for future investigation.

The refined theoretical framework of job embeddedness for IRWs presents enhanced implications for future research, encapsulated in the propositions delineated in Table 4. These propositions primarily explore the potential predictors, moderators, and outcomes of intensified spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism in job embeddedness among IRWs. While our empirical findings shed light on outcomes such as retention and career satisfaction, the circumstances under which the characteristics of IRWs' embeddedness occur remain largely

unexplored. The derived propositions consider the potential roles of factors such as length of stay and regulatory focus (i.e., individual orientations toward preventing resource losses or optimizing resource gains) (Higgins, 1997) in influencing spillover effects. Similarly, various characteristics of partners, including self-efficacy, sociability, and nativity, are expected to shape the magnitude of crossover effects, while transnationalism is likely to relate to the transferability of career capital across countries. However, it is important to note that the predictors of spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism may extend beyond the factors proposed in our study. For instance, although our research highlights the impact of PI on the development of transnational embeddedness, further exploration of organizational and institutional factors is warranted. Similarly, while crossover effects serve to enhance resource accumulation for IRWs, we propose that negative consequences may arise under specific circumstances. For example, increased interdependence between family members' embeddedness implies that the immersion of family members, such as children's embeddedness in local social activities, may create conflicts between home and career among IRWs (Schooreel et al., 2017).

Against this backdrop, the limited range of methods presents a challenge to studying the three identified characteristics. The application of innovative methods becomes crucial and necessary, where a diverse range of approaches, such as latent growth modelling (LGM) (Ng & Feldman, 2014), person-centered approach (e.g., LCA) (Lazarsfeld & Henry, 1968), set theory-based methods (e.g., Necessary Condition Analysis or Qualitative Comparative Analysis) (Dul, 2020; Ragin, 2014), APIM (Kenny, 2006), and dyadic polynomial regression (Schönbrodt et al., 2018), are deemed suitable and beneficial. In this thesis, we have elucidated novel insights stemming from the application of LCA and APIM, which underscore the importance of further research endeavors that prioritize methodological innovation in the study of embeddedness among IRWs.



### **10.3. Overall practical implications**

The complexities inherent in managing and capitalizing on job embeddedness among IRWs are underscored by the findings elucidated in this thesis. Given the myriad factors contributing to employees' entrenchment within the context of international relocation, alongside unique characteristics and salient considerations such as familial dynamics, the necessity arises for embedding policies specifically tailored to IRWs. The prevalence of 'home country community-focused embedders' among the IRW cohort, a type of embedding associated with less favorable work outcomes as discussed in Chapter 7, accentuates significant challenges for organizations and policymakers in effectively navigating and leveraging the embeddedness of IRWs. In light of the insights derived from the thesis findings, three pragmatic recommendations are proposed.

Primarily, stakeholders are encouraged to facilitate the simultaneous cultivation of IRWs' connections with both their host nations and home countries, thereby fostering their transnational embeddedness. Nonetheless, this objective poses challenges, given the relatively small proportion (4%) of IRWs currently exhibiting a transnational embedding type, at least within the European context. On a macro level, enhancements to immigration and integration policies can be pursued by nurturing diversity and fostering inclusive environments. This may entail initiatives such as organizing festivals celebrating minority cultural events, promoting linguistic diversity, and allocating spaces for the preservation of minority cultures (e.g. Dong Xuan center, a Vietnamese quarter, in Berlin, Germany; Leavenworth, a Bavarian town in Washington, United States). Furthermore, transnational embeddedness can be nurtured through the active promotion of commercial partnerships between home and host nations, alongside strategic involvement of transnational companies in local labor markets for IRWs.

At the organizational level, several practices have demonstrated effectiveness in fostering transnational embeddedness among these workers. These encompass providing opportunities for

both business and personal trips back to their home countries, harnessing recruitment through existing transnational networks of IRWs, establishing mentorship programs spanning both home and host organizations, and fostering diversity and inclusive climates within the workplace. For IRWs sponsored by companies, incorporating PI as a selection criterion proves advantageous in promoting transnational embeddedness, thereby enhancing long-term work outcomes such as retention and knowledge sharing.

The second priority for organizations and policymakers lies in ensuring the immersion of IRWs in their host country, with a particular emphasis on fostering their connectedness with the local community (Chapter 7). Based on comprehensive research findings, it is crucial to effectively provide and promote educational, training, and mentorship initiatives tailored to enhancing the human capital of IRWs, encompassing their knowledge, skills, and language proficiency. Tackling issues of nationalism and discrimination against foreign individuals is essential for the successful immersion of IRWs into their host nations, necessitating action across diverse realms, including workplaces, societal contexts, and national policies.

A key aspect involves ensuring the embeddedness of female IRWs in both their communities and professional spheres, which relies heavily on the implementation of gender equality policies and structural support systems for women across various domains, including the labor market, workplace environments, and national governance frameworks. Immigration and naturalization procedures should not only consider demographic factors like qualifications but also recognize intrinsic qualities such as PI, indicating individuals' determination to overcome challenges, as highlighted in Chapter 7, and SEH, reflecting their ability to adopt a humorous perspective towards life's adversities, as explicated in Chapter 8.

To optimize the embedding of IRWs across different domains within the host country, policymakers should also facilitate their engagement in international careers by expediting the

process of digitalization, such as promoting the development of smart countries, and enhancing the nation's internationalization levels. Simultaneously, organizational assistance for IRW families' settlement, including support with governmental administrative tasks, provision of childcare facilities, and educational assistance for spouses and children, plays a crucial role in fostering their immersion across multiple spheres. Moreover, organizations can contribute to this endeavor by implementing job designs that offer adequate challenges to mitigate issues of underemployment and by fostering collaboration between IRWs and native workers. Such collaborative efforts not only enhance the embedding of IRWs but also cultivate a more inclusive work environment, as elucidated by Fee et al. (2017).

Finally, our discussion turns to the strategic utilization of job embeddedness to attain the most favorable outcomes for IRWs. It is noteworthy that the degree of embeddedness within the local community potentially exerts a more significant impact on IRWs' work outcomes, such as retention and career satisfaction, as delineated in Chapters 7 and 8, compared to organizational embeddedness, as discussed in Chapter 7 and Chen et al. (2024). Therefore, instead of solely focusing on embedding IRWs within their workplaces, strategies that prioritize community embeddedness may prove to be more effective for this specific workforce.

Moreover, it is essential to design policies not only for individual IRWs but also for their entire families, particularly with the aim of enhancing career outcomes for couples within this population. For policymakers and relevant stakeholders, such as job centers, career counseling for IRWs should extend to their partners, with advice ideally tailored to the characteristics and dynamics within couples. For instance, IRWs whose partners are also foreigners or who exhibit low levels of self-efficacy and SEH may require closer guidance and access to external resources, such as information provision and psychological counseling, to facilitate their career development abroad.

Additionally, organizational career management for IRWs should ideally encompass coaching for couples rather than individuals. This approach should incorporate various measures aimed at fostering community embeddedness and enhancing interpersonal agency, including training in humor habits (McGhee, 2010). Organizations and policymakers can better support their career advancement in challenging circumstance of international relocation by adopting a holistic approach that addresses both individual IRWs and their families.

#### **10.4. Overall limitations and suggestions for future research**

This thesis encompasses several limitations that potentially affect the validity of the results. The first notable shortcoming lies in the samples across studies. Due to the predominant focus of existing literature on highly qualified IRWs, our SLR findings may be biased towards a more privileged population. Similarly, they were not included in the SLR due to the distinctive working conditions of sub-groups such as refugees (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2018). However, the job embeddedness of this workgroup is equally important for employer organizations and host countries. Future research on these workers is necessary to examine the boundary conditions of our findings, including contributing factors and characteristics of embeddedness for this population.

Additionally, the samples of empirical research were solely derived from Europe, posing challenges to the generalization of our results to a broader range of IRWs residing outside this continent. We recommend conducting replicated studies on IRWs in other regions of the world to enhance the robustness of findings. Our empirical sample was disproportionately distributed, with self-initiated IRWs accounting for approximately 90%, while the involvement of company-sponsored IRWs was notably limited. While this distribution can partly be attributed to the data collection phase during the pandemic, when organizations significantly suspended international assignments, the results from this thesis would benefit from replication studies with a more balanced sample.

The absence of homosexual couples in the last empirical study may impede a comprehensive understanding of the crossover effects of humor on community embeddedness and career success within the diverse settings of families and couples. Given the increasing prevalence of diverse family types among IRWs, exploring these crossover effects is both promising and necessary, as highlighted by McPhail et al. (2016).

A second limitation concerns the cross-sectional design employed in the first empirical study, which inherently limits the ability to draw causal inferences. Future research endeavors could replicate our model using a longitudinal approach, thereby enabling a more nuanced examination of the evolution of embedding types over time.

Finally, it is essential to acknowledge the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the empirical research conducted. This situation, particularly pertinent to IRWs' embeddedness due to mobility restrictions and social distancing measures, may have influenced the results of our studies. While efforts were made to control for the impacts of this exogenous factor in the analysis, it's plausible that the data collected during the pandemic may differ from that obtained under normal circumstances. For instance, IRWs may exhibit lower levels of job embeddedness in both their home and host nations, and the influence of SEH on perceptual outcomes (e.g., career satisfaction) may be heightened within such a stressful environment. Conducting similar studies under normal circumstances would be advisable to strengthen the robustness of our findings.

## Chapter 11. Conclusion

Job embeddedness denotes a crucial predictor of various work outcomes, particularly retention, among IRWs. However, existing literature reveals significant limitations in comprehensively examining the formation, development, constellation, and outcomes of job embeddedness within this specific population. Through both conceptual and empirical investigations, we identify several distinctive factors contributing to IRWs' embeddedness abroad, arising from the interaction of multi-level conditions. Furthermore, the enmeshment of IRWs is characterized by three distinguishable particularities inadequately addressed by the original theory: intensified spillover effects, crossover effects, and transnationalism. These characteristics collectively form the refined theoretical framework of job embeddedness for IRWs, yielding fundamental implications for theory, research, and practices, which are empirically scrutinized in two empirical studies.

In empirical research, building on spillover effects and transnationalism and applying LCA, we identify four embedding types among the IRW population, predicted by their PI. These types include 'home country community-focused embedders,' 'host country community-focused embedders,' 'host country career-focused embedders,' and 'transnational embedders.' Among them, transnational embedders exhibit the strongest tendency to stay in both host countries and organizations, followed by those primarily entrenched in the host country community. Simultaneously, a study drawing upon crossover effects and APIM reveals the significant impact of SEH on host country community embeddedness and subsequent career satisfaction among partners in DEECs, a sub-population among IRWs. The research sheds light on the direct crossover effects of a SEH on the career satisfaction of both genders, along with the indirect impact of partners' SEH on female career satisfaction through community embeddedness.

These findings have significant implications for advancing theoretical frameworks, conducting further research, and implementing tailored practices to better understand and leverage job embeddedness among IRWs.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I. Informed consent for individual IRWs

#### **A research project about international workers' life and career abroad**

Nice to meet you and welcome to our survey! We are a team of researchers working in the international research project GLOMO – Global Mobility of Employees - funded by the European Commission. Led by experienced scholars in the field of expatriation/migration, and with the participation of various international corporations, consultancy firms, and governmental institutions, GLOMO generates knowledge about the global mobility of international workforce and their careers.

This is the first survey of our long-term study project. Our study comprises data collection during a span of eight months (May 2020 – December 2020). The participants are international workers employed by an organization. Through participating in this survey, we would like to ask you to share with us information on some aspects of your experiences as an international worker. These insights will help us understand the influence of family on your life abroad, and the outcomes of your career pathway.

Your data is strictly collected, stored, and protected as follows:

- This is the first survey in our project. It will be done online and take approximately 20 - 25 minutes. The next two online surveys will be distributed to suitable participants and will take approximately 5 - 10 minutes per survey. There will be no right or wrong answers in all three surveys.
- Your participation in this survey and the further two surveys (if applicable) is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw without any consequences at any time during our study.
- Your answers are voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Your data is stored on password-protected computers known only by this study's researchers. Your identifiable data will be anonymized in the research report and publications.
- Your data will be retained within ten years and will be disposed of securely after this period.

As a participant in our project, you may choose to receive our regular newsletters about global mobility-related topics and appropriate updates on our research.

If you have any question, please do not be hesitate to contact us:

- Prof. Dr. Maike Andresen, Full Professor, Chair of Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour, University of Bamberg, Germany/ GLOMO Project Coordinator
- Anh Nguyen, Early Stage Researcher, GLOMO Project

#### **Informed Consent**

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

- ☐ I have read and understood the information about the survey, as provided in the Information Sheet dated \_\_\_\_\_.

- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the survey and my participation.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this survey.
- I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalized for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.
- The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymization of data, etc.) to me.
- The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.
- I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.

I agree to participate in this survey. ➔ Start the survey

## **Appendix II. Informed consent for dual-earner expatriate couples**

### **A research project about expatriate couple's life and career abroad**

Nice to meet you and welcome to our survey! We are a team of researchers working in the international research project GLOMO – Global Mobility of Employees - funded by the European Commission. Led by experienced scholars in the field of expatriation/migration, and with the participation of various international corporations, consultancy firms, and governmental institutions, GLOMO generates knowledge about the global mobility of international workforce and their careers.

Why do we collect and use your data?

The participants of our study are expatriate or dual-earner expatriate couples who are employed in their host country. You must also live together at the moment in order to be eligible. By participating in this survey, we would like to ask you to share with us information on some aspects of your experiences as an international worker. These insights will help us understand the influence of family on international employees' life abroad, and the outcomes of their career pathway.

Your data is strictly collected, stored, and protected as follows:

- The survey will be done online and take approximately 35 minutes for a couple, i.e. approximately 15 -20 minutes per participant. You will take turns answering the questionnaire, one after each other. You will not be able to see the answers from each other. We request you to keep your answers confidential from each other until the questionnaire is finished.
- Your attendance in this survey is voluntary and there are no right or wrong answers. You have the right to withdraw without any consequences at any time during our study.
- Your answers are anonymous and confidential. Your data is stored on password-protected computers known only by this study's researchers. Your identifiable data will be anonymized in the research report and publications.
- Your data will be retained within ten years and will be disposed of securely after this period.

If you have any question, please do not be hesitate to contact us:

- Prof. Dr. Maike Andresen, Full Professor, Chair of Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour, University of Bamberg, Germany/ GLOMO Project Coordinator
- Anh Nguyen, M.Sc., Early Stage Researcher, GLOMO Project

☐ We understand the terms and conditions of our participation as the information provided herein.

### **Appendix III. Online questionnaire for individual IRWs and DEECs**

#### *Eligibility*

1. You currently live in a country other than your home country (country where you spent most of youth before turning 18). Yes/ No
2. What is your employment status now?
  - ☐ Employed full-time
  - ☐ Employed part-time
  - ☐ Self-employed/ Entrepreneur
  - ☐ Unemployed / Not working

#### *Eligibility (only for DEECs)*

1. I and my partner are living together. Yes/ No
2. I and my partner are currently residing in a country aside from our country of upbringing (country where we spent most of youth before turning 18). Yes/ No
3. I and my partner are both employees (employed by organizations) in the current country of residence. Yes/ No

#### *Host country community embeddedness*

1. Do you have any relatives living in the country where you now live? Yes/No
2. How many of your close friends live nearby? \_\_\_\_\_

Think about the community where you now live in the current country. To what extent you agree with the following statements? (1- Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree)

3. I really love the place where I live.
4. Leaving this community would be very hard.
5. This community is a good match for me.
6. My neighborhood is safe.
7. My area offers the non-work activities that I like (e.g., cultural, sports, etc.).
8. The weather where I live is suitable for me.
9. People respect me a lot in my community.
10. I think of the community where I live as home.
11. Do you own the home you live in? Yes/ No
12. How many children are currently living together with you?
13. Is your partner currently living together with you (only individual IRWs)? Yes/ No

#### *Host country organizational embeddedness*

Thinking about the company in host country (host unit) where you now work. To which extent do you agree to the following statement? (1- Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree)

1. I feel attached to this company.

2. It would be difficult for me to leave this company.
3. I'm too caught up in this company to leave.
4. I feel tied to this company.
5. I simply could not leave this company.
6. I am tightly connected to this company.

#### *Host country career embeddedness*

Please think about your career in the **current host country** and answer the following question.

To what extent would these be sacrifices or losses for you if you left the host country? (1 – Not at all to 5 – To a very great extent) (sacrifice)

1. The career and employment opportunities I have here.
2. The money I earn or can earn here.
3. The business opportunities I have here.

How much do you disagree/agree with these statements with respect to your career in the host country? (1- Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree) (fit)

4. My career needs a fit with the opportunities available in this country.
5. My professional growth and development fits with what is happening in this country.
6. My career plans do not fit with what is available back home.
7. I have needs for international experience met by the opportunities in this country.
8. Is your contract for employment abroad: (1) Temporary; (2) Definite contract; (3) Indefinite contract (link)
9. How long have you worked for the host organization in this country? (link)

#### *Home country community embeddedness*

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about *your home country*.

1. I think of my home country as my real home.
2. I have missed my neighborhood since leaving my home country.
3. My neighborhood in my home country was safe.
4. The weather in my home country was suitable for me.
5. The community where I used to live offered the leisure activities that I like.
6. I really love my home country.
7. Since leaving my home country, I have missed my non-work friends.
8. Leaving my home country was very hard.
9. People respect me a lot in my home country.
10. The community in my home country was suitable for me.

#### *Personal initiative*

In the following questions, please rate how frequently you behave in the following ways, rating from 1 (hardly ever or never) to 5 (very often or always)?

1. I am particularly good at realizing ideas.
2. Whenever something goes wrong, I search for a solution immediately.
3. Whenever there is a chance to get actively involved, I take it.
4. I take initiative immediately even when others don't.
5. I use opportunities quickly in order to attain my goals.
6. Usually, I do more than I am asked to do.
7. I actively attack problems.

### *Self-enhancing humor*

People experience and express humor in many different ways.

Below is a list of statements describing different ways in which humor might be experienced.

Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it. (1- Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree). Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can.

1. If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humor.
2. Even when I'm by myself, I'm often amused by the absurdities of life.
3. If I am feeling upset or unhappy I usually try to think of something funny about the situation to make myself feel better.
4. My humorous outlook on life keeps me from getting overly upset or depressed about things.
5. If I'm by myself and I'm feeling unhappy, I make an effort to think of something funny to cheer myself up.
6. If I am feeling sad or upset, I usually lose my sense of humor.
7. It is my experience that thinking about some amusing aspect of a situation is often a very effective way of coping with problems.
8. I don't need to be with other people to feel amused - I can usually find things to laugh about even when I'm by myself.

### *Intent to stay in the host organization*

To which extent do you agree with the following statement about your employment in your host company? (1- Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree)

1. I plan to stay in this company as long as possible.
2. I would be reluctant to leave this company.
3. I would like to stay at this company for a long time.
4. It is unlikely that I will be searching for a new job this year.
5. I plan to leave this company as soon as possible.

### *Intent to stay in the host country*

To what extent do you agree with the following statement about your stay in the host country? (1- Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree)

1. I am unable to move to another country now even if a job came along.



2. My spouse's career makes it very difficult for me to leave my current country.
3. There are factors in my personal life (e.g., school age children, relatives, etc.) which make it very difficult for me to leave my current country in the near future.

### *Career satisfaction*

How much do you disagree/agree with these statements? (1- Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree)

1. I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career.
2. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals.
3. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income.
4. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement.
5. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills.

### *Language proficiency*

How do you rate your command of host country language?

- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Excellent

### *Pandemic's impacts on quality of life*

How do you rate the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the following aspects of your life at the moment? (1 – Greatly negative, 2 – Moderately negative, 3 – Slightly negative, 4 – Neither negative nor positive, 5 – Slightly positive, 6 – Moderately positive, 7 - Greatly positive)

- A. Material comforts — things like a desirable home, good food, possessions, conveniences, an increasing income, and security for the future.
- B. Health and personal safety — to be physically fit and vigorous, to be free from anxiety and distress, and to avoid bodily harm.
- C. Relationships with your parents, brothers, sisters, and other relatives — things like communicating, visiting, understanding, doing things, and helping and being helped by them.
- D. Having and raising children — this involves being a parent and helping, teaching, and caring for your children.
- E. Close relationship with a husband/wife/a life partner.
- F. Close friends — sharing activities, interests, and views; being accepted, visiting, giving and receiving help, love, trust, support, guidance.
- G. Helping and encouraging others — this includes adults or children other than relatives or close friends. These can be your own efforts or efforts as a member of some church, club, or volunteer group.
- H. Participation in activities relating to local and national government and public affairs.

- I. Learning, attending school, improving your understanding, or getting additional knowledge.
- J. Understanding yourself and knowing your assets and limitations, knowing what life is all about and making decisions on major life activities. For some people, this includes religious or spiritual experiences. For others, it is an attitude toward life.
- K. Work in a job or at home that is interesting, rewarding, and worthwhile.
- L. Expressing yourself in a creative manner in music, art, writing, photography, practical activities, or in leisure time activities.
- M. Socializing — meeting other people, doing things with them, and giving or attending parties.
- N. Reading, listening to music, or observing sporting events or entertainment.
- O. Participation in active recreation — such as sports, traveling and sightseeing, playing games or cards, singing, dancing, playing an instrument, acting, and other such activities.

#### *Perceived cultural distance*

In your opinion, what is your preference between *your home country* and *your current host country* before and after relocation in terms of (1 - Totally prefer home country, 2 - Somewhat prefer home country, 3 – Neutral, 4 - Somewhat prefer host country, 5 - Totally prefer host country):

1. Climate (temperature, rainfall, humidity) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
2. Climate (temperature, rainfall, humidity) (What is your preference now?)
3. Natural environment (plants and animals, pollution, scenery) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)a
4. Natural environment (plants and animals, pollution, scenery) (What is your preference now?)
5. Social environment (size of the community, pace of life, noise) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
6. Social environment (size of the community, pace of life, noise) (What is your preference now?)
7. Living (hygiene, sleeping practices, how safe you feel) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
8. Living (hygiene, sleeping practices, how safe you feel) (What is your preference now?)
9. Practicalities (getting around, using public transport, shopping) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
10. Practicalities (getting around, using public transport, shopping) (What is your preference now?)
11. Food and eating (what food is eaten, how food is eaten, time of meals) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
12. Food and eating (what food is eaten, how food is eaten, time of meals) (What is your preference now?)

13. Family life (how close family members are, how much time family spend together) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
14. Family life (how close family members are, how much time family spend together) (What is your preference now?)
15. Social norms (how to behave in public, style of clothes, what people think is funny) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
16. Social norms (how to behave in public, style of clothes, what people think is funny) (What is your preference now?)
17. Values and beliefs (what people think about religion and politics, what people think is right or wrong) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
18. Values and beliefs (what people think about religion and politics, what people think is right or wrong) (What is your preference now?)
19. People (how friendly people are, how stressed or relaxed people are, attitudes toward foreigners) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
20. People (how friendly people are, how stressed or relaxed people are, attitudes toward foreigners) (What is your preference now?)
21. Friends (making friends, amount of social interaction, what people do to have fun and relax) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
22. Friends (making friends, amount of social interaction, what people do to have fun and relax) (What is your preference now?)
23. Language (learning the language, understanding people, making yourself understood) (What was your expectation before moving to this country?)
24. Language (learning the language, understanding people, making yourself understood) (What is your preference now?)
25. During the COVID-19 pandemic: Perceived personal safety
26. During the COVID-19 pandemic: Government's management of COVID-19 situation

#### *Relocation mode*

Were you sent by your employer to work abroad? Yes/ No

#### *Length of stay in the host country*

In total, how many years have you lived outside your home country? *If you cannot remember exactly, please give an estimate.*

#### *Education*

What is your highest educational qualification?

- ☐ Primary Education
- ☐ Lower Secondary
- ☐ Upper Secondary
- ☐ Post-secondary non-tertiary or short-cycle tertiary
- ☐ Bachelor or equivalent

- ☐ Master or equivalent
- ☐ Doctorate or equivalent

*Host country*

In which country do you currently live?

*Gender*

You are:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Diverse
- ☐ Prefer to not answer

## Appendix IV. Study 3: Post hoc analysis

**Table 13.** *Study 3: Multinomial logistic regression results regarding the relationships between relocation mode, qualification, and embedding types.*

Reference class	Home country community-focused embedders				Host country career-focused embedders				Transnational embedders			
	Logit	OR	CI 95%	<i>p</i>	Logit	OR	CI 95%	<i>p</i>	Logit	OR	CI 95%	<i>p</i>
Host country community- focused embedders	-.11	0.90	[0.46, 1.76]	.76	-1.21	0.30	[0.09, 1.00]	.05	0.76	2.14	[0.21, 21.87]	.52
	<i>-.00</i>	<i>0.99</i>	<i>[0.83, 1.20]</i>	<i>.99</i>	<i>-.12</i>	<i>0.88</i>	<i>[0.57, 1.16]</i>	<i>.36</i>	<i>-.34</i>	<i>.71</i>	<i>[0.45, 1.12]</i>	<i>.14</i>
Home country community- focused embedders					-1.10	0.33	[0.11, 1.00]	.05	0.87	2.38	[0.25, 22.88]	.45
					<i>-.13</i>	<i>0.88</i>	<i>[0.69, 1.13]</i>	<i>.36</i>	<i>-.34</i>	<i>0.71</i>	<i>[0.46, 1.09]</i>	<i>.12</i>
Host country career-focused embedders									1.97	7.16	[0.62, 82.19]	.11
									<i>-.22</i>	<i>0.81</i>	<i>[0.51, 1.28]</i>	<i>.36</i>

*Note:* Results for relocation mode are in the first row, results for education levels are in the second rows and marked in *italics*.