

# **Expatriates in Emerging & Developing Countries: The Role of Terrorism and Institutional Discrimination against Women**

**- Executive Summary -**

# Executive Summary

## Expatriates in Developing and Emerging Countries — The Role of Terrorism and Discrimination

The number of expatriates is steadily increasing. Because of the need to adjust to a new working and living environment, expatriation is a challenging experience. However, living in some countries is even more stressful, because the host context presents particular difficulties. In this project, we investigated two characteristics of the host country and their effects: 1) terrorism and 2) institutional discrimination against women. Therefore, we have conducted a survey among expatriates in various developing and emerging countries in Asia and Africa with varying levels of terrorism and institutional discrimination against females.

In the survey, we were interested in the experiences of expatriates such as perceptions of particular constraints in the work and private domain (e.g. travelling constraints) and experiences of discrimination at work and in everyday life, and their effects on the withdrawal cognitions of the expatriates.

This summary is intended to outline the setting and the core findings. Further information about the particular statistical procedure as well as the academic backing of each study can be obtained from the authors of the study.

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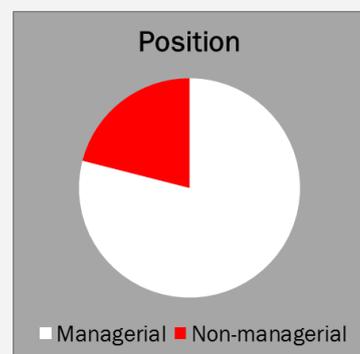
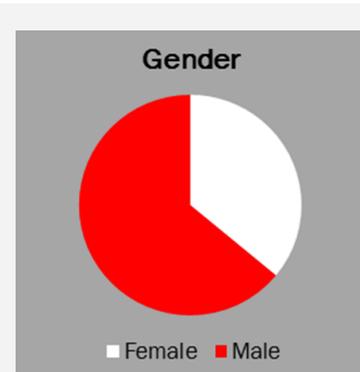
# Sample Description

Initially, we contacted 1450 expatriates in a purposeful sampling process. Since we were interested in countries with different degrees of terrorism and institutional discrimination against women, we used the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) and the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) in order to create a balanced sample of host countries. The GTI assesses and weighs the impact of terrorism in terms of the total number of terrorist incidents, total number of fatalities caused, total number of injuries, and the total property damage from terrorist incidents in a given year. Values of the GTI range from 0 to 10 and the mean value in our sample was 4.7. The SIGI evaluates laws, social norms, and practices that hinder women and limit their access to rights, justice, and resources. Values range from 0 (e.g. Belgium) up to 0.56 (Yemen). The mean in our sample was 0.2.

We received 160 usable responses (11% response rate). The expatriates are working in various host countries. The highest number of responses are from Cambodia, Thailand, and Nigeria.

Almost 50% of the sample are of German origin. The average respondent is 43 years of age. Furthermore, nearly 36 percent of the respondents are female. 73% are in a relationship and 59% are accompanied by their families.

In terms of work experience, the expatriates in our study have 63 months of expatriation experience and on average 11 months in high risk countries. 90% have a long-term or permanent position abroad and 79% are assigned to work in a managerial position, many of them as senior executives.



Country	Frequency	Country	Frequency
Azerbaijan	1	Morocco	5
Bangladesh	4	Nigeria	17
Botswana	1	Oman	1
Cambodia	23	Pakistan	4
Egypt	1	Rwanda	2
India	16	Saudi Arabia	5
Israel & Palestine	4	Sierra Leone	4
Jordan	2	Somalia	1
Kazakhstan	14	South Africa	3
Kenya	4	Tanzania	8
Kuwait	1	Thailand	19
Lebanon	5	Turkey	12
Malaysia	3	Total	160

# Study 1: The Effects of Terrorism

## Research Model

Study 1 focused on the effects of terrorism on expatriates' withdrawal cognition, i.e. job turnover and country leave intentions. In order to relate terrorism to withdrawal cognitions, we asked respondents about their personal perception of becoming a victim of terrorism in their host country and about perceptions of constraints at work (e.g. a lack of supplies or safety at the workplace) and in private life (e.g. constraints in terms of travel or interactions with host country nationals) that might come along with terrorism. As an outcome, we were interested in the wish to leave the host country as well as the current job.

Building on stress theory, we hypothesized that the objective level of terrorism relates to a perceived subjective risk. Because of this fear, some expatriates might also perceive more constraints at work as well as in private life which in turn lead to higher country and job turnover intentions.

## Major Findings

We found most of our hypotheses supported. The objective level of terrorism was related to the fear of being personally affected which in turn increased the perceptions of constraints in the private life. In other words, those feeling more affected by terrorism felt also more constrained in their private life. Interestingly, this perceived fear was not related to experience of constraints at work. We interpret that since terrorist activities are more frequently targeted at public areas, individuals feel more strongly affected outside work. Furthermore, many organizations have implemented extensive safety measures which further increase the feeling of security at work.

Regarding the outcomes, we found perceived constraints at work related to job turnover intentions. Furthermore, perceived constraints in the private life also increased job turnover intentions. This relationship was influenced by country leave intentions. Thus, those expatriates who perceive high constraints in the private life are more likely to think about leaving their current host country which eventually increases the willingness to leave the current job.

## Practical Implications

Organizations and individuals can consider different types of assistance before and during stays in terrorism-endangered countries in order to reduce turnover among expatriates. Based on our findings, we want to highlight two aspects:

First, preparation (e.g. training/consulting) before expatriation is crucial in order to develop realistic expectations toward living in those countries. Since our data shows that the private life is particularly affected, these preparatory measures should not only address the work domain, but in particular address the challenges related to the private life.

Second, organizational support is of high importance during expatriation. In particular, support is needed in the private life of expatriates. It seems that the fear of becoming a victim more strongly influences the experience of expatriates in their private lives and increases the feeling of insecurity. Thus, providing special assistance such as personal protection and increased safety measures as well as frequent information on current news might help expatriates develop a stronger sense of security.

## Major Facts

The objective risk of terrorism leads to a higher perceived personal risk of becoming a victim of terrorism.

This perception of risk relates to the experience of constraints in the private life, but not in the work domain in our study.

Perceptions of constraints in the work and non-work domain increase job turnover intentions either directly or through country leave intentions.

Supporting expatriates in the non-work domain is particularly important in order to reduce turnover stemming from the risk of terrorism.

# Study 2: The Effects of Institutional Discrimination

## Research Model

In this study we investigated the meaning of the host context regarding gender discrimination. In particular, we examined the influence of expatriates' gender on the experience of discrimination at work depending on the environment in the host country. Building on status characteristics theory, we hypothesized that females experience more discrimination than males. In particular, we took account of the host country context arguing that females working in countries with higher institutional discrimination against females also experience more discrimination at work and that this is an explanatory factor relating gender to job turnover intentions. Furthermore, we assumed that those females who are highly adjusted to the host context suffer less from discrimination.

## Major Findings

We found most of our hypotheses supported. Females experience discrimination at work more frequently than men. This is particularly evident in countries with high institutional discrimination against women. In other words, living in countries with high institutional discrimination also comes along with a more frequent individual experience of discrimination by females. Interestingly, we found that adjustment does not buffer this effect. On the contrary, females who were highly adjusted to their host countries felt even more discriminated against. We interpret that because of their efforts to adjust to the environment they might take over some of the behaviors and attitudes of local women and in consequence also experience the inferior role that women play in these countries. Taking account of this experience of

discrimination is particularly important not only from a personal but also from a business perspective because our study showed that discrimination relates to higher turnover intentions.

## Practical Implications

Based on our results, we highlight the following aspects:

First, before expatriation females should become aware that they might face discrimination at work. In order to better understand the challenges associated with the particular host context, meeting and exchanging with females who have experienced living in the respective country might be of great help.

Second, during expatriation, females should be able to report any incidents right away. Organizations should investigate these incidents and ensure that offenders will face disciplinary measures. Further, females should receive special support (e.g. consulting) in order to better cope in case of discrimination.

Third, creating awareness about discrimination among staff is crucial in order to provide guidance on what are acceptable or unacceptable behaviors toward women; particularly in countries where the role of females is still inferior.

Lastly, since in our study females who were better adjusted experienced more discrimination, women should consider retaining their home country behavior as far as possible in order to not be affected by the inferior role of women in the host country.

## Major Facts

Females suffer more frequently from gender discrimination at work.

Gender discrimination at work is particularly high in countries with high institutional discrimination.

Female expatriates who are better adjusted experience even more discrimination at work.

The experience of discrimination at work eventually leads to higher turnover intentions.

Particular preparation and support before and during expatriation for females is necessary in order to reduce the risk of turnover among females.