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Exploring Global Careers: Individual Mobility and Organizational Management

Michael Dickmann and Rodrigo Mello

Global careers, which we define as long-term careers that involve various international jobs across different locations (Suutari et al., 2012), are not a new phenomenon. Traders, missionaries, and occupying armed forces have worked abroad for centuries. Since World War II, an increasingly interdependent global economy has transformed how organizations operate across the world, creating a strong need for culturally sophisticated, agile, and globally savvy assignees (Caligiuri, 2013), who must be able to manage international operations effectively. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only made virtual forms of global work more prominent but is also leading to some replacement of physical assignments (Selmer et al., 2022). Nevertheless, it is widely expected that the movement of individuals across borders for work purposes will continue to be an important phenomenon for individuals and multinational organizations (Mello et al., 2022). Consequently, any key developments are important for career counselors to understand in order to help their clients to navigate global careers amidst substantial changes.

Undertaking several international assignments (IAs) indicates that assignees are committed to developing their global careers. Evidence suggests that 40% to 70% of long-term expatriates have experienced previous IAs (Cerdin & Le Pargneux, 2010; Jokinen et al., 2008; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004), whereas around 20% of assignees have already undertaken three or more IAs (Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2015). There are, of course, alternative ways of approaching global careers and work. In fact, some authors prefer to define global careers based on the specific global responsibilities that top-level managers within organizations hold (Cappellen & Janssens, 2005). This chapter explores individual careers that involve living and working in different countries. Such international careers are increasingly common among global professionals (Andresen et al., 2014). The management of global

careerists is a challenge for organizations and global mobility (GM) departments due to the many micro and meso elements that have an influence on the outcomes of working abroad (Mello et al., 2022).

Career counselors would benefit from understanding the key determinants of working in GM in order to refine suggested career interventions. Therefore, this chapter discusses organizational considerations, the roles of GM professionals, and their particular challenges. Moreover, the text proposes a framework for GM work (Dickmann, 2021a) and presents reflections on the impact of COVID-19 on GM, delineating recent substantial changes to global careers and their impact on those who manage GM.

GM has many forms as it includes all international work patterns, be they self-initiated or company sponsored, short (up to 1 year) or long term, or in one or several host environments (Baruch et al., 2013). GM is growing strongly and receiving substantial interest from careerists, career counselors, GM professionals, and other stakeholders in exploring its impact (McNulty & Selmer, 2017). In fact, given the increased importance of attracting global talent, GM even has the potential to influence the policies and regulations of cities and countries (Dickmann & Cerdin, 2014; Vaiman & Collings, 2014). This chapter predominantly focusses on the micro- and mesolevel perspectives and, at times, depicts the wider context. The microlevel perspective addresses differences among types of assignees (Bonache et al., 2001; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013; Suutari & Brewster, 2000) and their career outcomes. The mesolevel perspective traditionally focuses on the management of global careerists, such as the selection of expatriates (Caligiuri, 2013; Harris & Brewster, 1999), the expatriate cycle (Harris et al., 2003), global talent management (Collings et al., 2019), and performance management (Engle et al., 2008). Incorporating these insights and exploring GM strategies, structures, policies, and practices, this chapter concentrates on the roles, responsibilities, and challenges of GM professionals and departments. In-depth knowledge of both perspectives outlined here allows career counselors to develop better advice to individuals and organizations.

In addition, we provide a temporal perspective of global careers on the micro- and mesolevels. A

temporal perspective divides these analyses into three different stages during assignees' international journey: motives (before the international work experience), challenges (during the international work experience), and consequences (after the international work experience).

Recently, career theorists have reiterated the importance of context and time (Gunz & Mayrhofer, 2018). The issue of context includes the industry and geographic location. First, careers are always careers-in-context (Mayrhofer et al., 2007). Exploring context—for instance, with respect to dangers in hostile host environments, language capabilities, or cultural differences—is thus vital for GM professionals and career counselors to fully understand individuals' careers and overall organizational outcomes. Career choices by global careerists take place within the context of organizations, countries, and societies, under local institutions such as the legal, economic, cultural, and social norms (Brewster et al., 2018). The matter of time includes the career stage of global careerists. Hence, the time when scholars survey or interview assignees matters. For instance, the life stage and role that individuals experience might influence assignees' career and performance, which in turn affect the international operation of organizations (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 2002). Because context and time are dynamic, poorly timed data collection in relation to outcomes of global careers can affect findings relevant for GM professionals and international organizations. For instance, if GM departments collect data shortly after an international work experience, this can only indicate immediate adjustment issues and outcomes, ignoring the cumulative effects over time (Fuller, 2008). As a consequence, organizations might misinterpret data and then face challenges to develop international human resource management (IHRM) policies and practices tailored to the different types of assignees (Collings et al., 2007).

The reader should appreciate that the term "after" does not necessarily mean the assignees return to their home country when their international work experience concludes. They may keep their global career by changing host countries or return home and subsequently take up an international life, which characterizes them as global careerists. For example, a few studies indicate that many repatriates

settle down in their home environment after a period of stress, but there are also people who do not repatriate and stay on in their host country (Mello et al., 2022). Moreover, some individuals accept a job with another employer in their original host country or in another country (Suutari et al., 2018).

<H1>Exploring the Microlevel: International Workers and Their Global Careers

<H2>Before Working Abroad

Given the high demands on global careerists, it could be argued that these careers may not appeal to everyone. In this regard, substantial research has been carried out on expatriate motives, both among assigned expatriates (AEs) and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs; Doherty et al., 2011; Richardson & Mallon 2005; Selmer & Luring 2010; Suutari & Brewster, 2000; Tharenou, 2003). The findings indicate that expatriates are commonly motivated by factors such as competency development, career development, desire for adventure, and monetary rewards, as well as by other factors associated with the host country context (Doherty et al., 2011). However, AEs and SIEs may vary in their motives. For instance, the location, the host country's reputation, lifestyle, and family-related concerns play a more critical role for SIEs than AEs (Doherty et al., 2011), as SIEs have fewer company-related motives (Richardson, 2006) than AEs.

It is important to note that SIEs form a very diverse group and thus motives vary (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). Some studies among students and young graduates show that the major reasons for taking international jobs were excitement, cross-cultural experiences, growth, meeting new and different people, and future career prospects (Tharenou, 2003). Early international experiences through education increase the likelihood of seeking a job in the same location afterward (Baruch et al., 2007). Although companies rarely send inexperienced employees as AEs to international positions, young people seem keen to go abroad on their own initiative as SIEs (Andresen et al., 2020; Doherty et al., 2011). Due to their early career stage, young people are also more commonly motivated by simply finding a job, especially when the home country's job markets may offer fewer possibilities (Suutari &

Brewster, 2000). AEs also reported professional development and career progress as more important motives than SIEs in general—an insight that is useful to consider when looking generically at career counseling of people willing to work abroad

There have also been studies on the motives of SIEs working in specific sectors. For example, the internationalization of higher education has led to increasing interest among academic SIEs (Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Selmer & Luring 2010). These academics have been found to have three dominant motivations: Adventure/travel, life change and family, and financial reasons which were significant in a number of cases (Richardson & Mallon 2005). SIEs also often find work in the not-for-profit sector, where motivation is often values based (Doherty et al., 2011) and includes a dedication to a cause (Cerdin & Le Pargneux, 2010). The motives of SIEs working within international organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations have been found to differ to some extent from the average SIEs, as they regard economic benefits, personal interest toward internationalization, and new experiences as slightly more important motives (Dickmann & Cerdin, 2018; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). Sometimes the motive of the SIEs is directly linked to their family situation through a dual career situation, wherein SIEs have gone abroad due to the assignment of their spouse and then found a job for themselves in order to continue their own career. This is much easier in regions such as the European Union, where work permits are not necessary for member state citizens and active policies exist to encourage mobility (Doherty et al., 2010).

All in all, Suutari et al. (2012) sought to identify and analyze what experienced global careerists truly value in their work and careers. According to their results, global careerists place great importance on having ongoing developmental opportunities, perceiving their jobs as meaningful and substantial, and enjoying high levels of autonomy in their international jobs. Furthermore, assignment location and family-related concerns were found to be important factors when making career-related decisions.

It seems it would be beneficial for organizations to understand assigned and self-initiated

expatriates as diverse groups that are motivated by different factors to different extents and, subsequently, need different GM management approaches.

<H2>During Their Work Abroad: Working in a Host Country Embedded in a Host Organization

It is now acknowledged that global work can be described as high-density work experience. This means that expatriates are under a high degree of (a) physical mobility (i.e., their role requires that they travel or relocate internationally), (b) cognitive flexibility (i.e., the work requires role incumbents to adjust their thought patterns and scripts to effectively interact with people and adapt to situational demands across cultures), and (c) nonwork disruption (i.e., the work role requirements disrupt or interfere with the employee's normal activities and routines outside work) when compared with domestic workers (Peiperl & Jonsen, 2007; Shaffer et al., 2012). Furthermore, expatriates frequently work at a higher organizational level when they are abroad (Solomon, 1995; Suutari & Brewster, 2003), and they are usually responsible for a higher variety of tasks than in their previous jobs (Bossard & Peterson, 2005; K. Mäkelä & Suutari, 2009). Thus, their jobs as expatriates can be more challenging than at home.

Considering these are the characteristics that typically describe international work experiences, it is easy to understand why, during extended global careers, the requirements for constant learning and development can prove to be very taxing for international professionals and their families (L. Mäkelä et al., 2017; McNulty & Brewster, 2017; McNulty & Vance, 2017). Forster (2000) even argued that such careers would be too challenging for most individuals and their families to cope with. In fact, global careerists can find it quite difficult to maintain a proper work–life balance, given how they face time-based conflicts caused by long working hours, 24/7 availability, traveling, and strain-based conflicts related to the unusual challenges and high levels of responsibility and autonomy involved in many expatriate jobs (Bossard & Peterson, 2005; L. Mäkelä & Suutari, 2011).

It seems the return home from an IA or the change to another IA is a stressful transition that entails many changes in assignees' personal and work lives but may also represent opportunities for

their career development that might affect their career interests. Organizations then need to track these developments in order to manage their global talent through GM departments.

<H2>After Working Abroad: Moving on and the Long-Term Effects of Global Careers

It has been reported that certain characteristics of global careers act as drivers for their boundaryless nature (Suutari et al., 2012). First, the international business environment has been described as very turbulent due to the frequent restructurings, mergers, acquisitions, and divestments experienced by global careerists (Suutari, Chistelle & Mäkelä, 2012). Combined with the cyclical nature of IAs (e.g., IA contracts typically last around 3 years; Doherty & Dickmann, 2012), this lack of stability means that global careerists have to be prepared to look for new jobs regularly. In turn, global careerists are able to leverage their extensive networks to access new job offers when they need to. Also, in cases where the global careerists want to pursue their next job back in their home country, they commonly find it challenging to find jobs offering the same level of rewards and benefits that they enjoyed abroad.

The dynamic of global careerists' career transitions supplies data to scholars identifying different kinds of global careers. First, Suutari (2003) identified two groups of global careerists: those who move from one assignment to another and those who alternate between their assignments abroad and some work periods in their home countries. Then, Andresen and Biemann (2013) identified three career types when looking at global careerists: those with an "international organizational career" (i.e., assignees working mainly for the same employer—who often initiate their global career as AEs), those with an "international boundaryless career" (i.e., assignees changing employers several times during their IAs—often initiating their global career as SIEs), and those with a "transnational career" (i.e., assignees who have had three or more IAs in two or more countries and worked for either one or several employers—and who often initiated their global careers as AEs). Finally, McNulty and Vance (2017) observed that whether a global careerist is considered an AE or an SIE is highly dependent on time. Indeed, McNulty and Vance observed that individuals engaging in multiple IAs can change from one type of IA to the

other, a phenomenon which is referred to as the AE-SIE career continuum phenomenon. Subsequently, McNulty and Vance illustrated this continuum by identifying eight types of assignees: parent-country nationals (PCNs), third-country nationals (TCNs), foreign executives in local organizations (FELOs), expatriates of host-country origin (EHCOs or “returnees”), inpatriates (or “reverse expatriates”), permanent transferees (PTs), localized expatriates (LOPATs), and expatpreneurs. In this respect, it should be noted that global careerists may fit into one or more of these types in the course of their careers.

It seems that this multiple international work experience leads people to reflect on their values, knowledge, and beliefs and hence to reconsider how they articulate and make sense of the world (Osland, 2000). An example of this would be how, after having successful international career experiences, expatriates develop a new identity, known as the global career identity (Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007) or the international employee identity (Kraimer et al., 2012). As a result of this change, expatriates may stop being interested in having domestic jobs without international mobility and/or responsibilities (Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007). In turn, the new identity that expatriates develop abroad may not fit the home country’s lifestyle, leading to a reverse cultural shock in the event of repatriation (Torrington et al., 2009). In summary, global careerists may develop a *boundaryless mindset*, referring to their willingness to initiate and pursue work-related relationships across organizational boundaries (Briscoe & Hall, 2006) and locations (Segers et al., 2008). According to this logic, global careerists would then be constantly looking for new international job opportunities and thus may not be very committed to a single employer. For instance, due to their boundaryless orientation, the identity changes that take place during expatriation (Kraimer et al., 2012; Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007) and country-related push-pull factors (Ho et al., 2016; K. Mäkelä & Suutari, 2009), global careerists tend to change employers quite commonly if they repatriate (Baruch et al., 2002; Caligiuri & Lazarova, 2001; Stahl & Cerdin, 2004; Suutari & Brewster, 2003). Furthermore, even if organizations manage the repatriation process well, the

global careerists may still look for better career opportunities in external job markets (Hyder & Lovblad, 2007) if they are unable to find jobs at home that are as interesting as the ones they had abroad.

Career counseling would benefit from understanding the general context variables of particular assignments, the organizational goals associated with working abroad, the individual's expatriation drivers and more general career plans, as well as the difficulties that global talent management and repatriation approaches may face in the firm. Such insights would give a more sophisticated understanding of the GM experience and its potential advantages, disadvantages, and trade-offs (Dickmann & Baruch, 2011). After all, GM is an area of strong interdependence of employers and their staff given the heightened risks, intensive work pressures, and high-density learning experiences (Mello et al., 2022). Having explored the microlevel perspective of global careers, we now move to discuss the mesolevel management of assignees as well as broader organizational considerations.

<H1>Roles and Capabilities of Global Mobility Departments to Manage Global Workers

This chapter has explored the expatriation journey of global careerists abroad. In many cases, these individuals are embedded in an organizational context, especially if these are AEs, for whom more research insights exist (Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013; Suutari & Brewster, 2000). Although some work has explored the career management of SIEs (Andresen et al., 2013; Tharenou, 2013), more attention has been on the psychometric assessment and success factors of globally mobile people (Caligiuri, 2013), the sourcing of AEs (Harris & Brewster, 1999), their talent management (Collings et al., 2019), insights and management of their adjustment to the host culture (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Haslberger et al., 2013), management of their career journey (Dickmann et al., 2018), marketability options (Suutari et al., 2018), performance management (Dowling et al., 2013), and repatriation patterns (Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007). Some of the literature has clear time perspectives, such as when authors use the expatriate cycle (Harris et al., 2003) to distinguish periods before, during, and after working abroad. Most writers either concentrate on individuals' experiences (as described previously) or on organizational activities and

interfaces in relation to a highly focused GM area or in terms of a broad array of GM policies and processes (Dickmann, 2021b; Dickmann et al., 2018; Dowling et al., 2013). Although the predominant focus is useful, this chapter now shifts the approach to a less used perspective, outlining the role of GM departments and the needed competencies of GM professionals. Our attention allows an in-depth understanding of the organizational perspective, starting with global business objectives and GM management considerations that balance the strong focus historically attributed to global careerists. The need to present a balanced perspective has arisen due to the scarcity of insights into the roles of GM departments and professionals. A knowledge of their roles may allow career counselors to develop international work-specific insights when advising international organizations and GM professionals or those who want to move into the field.

The ways that the function, roles, and the internal organization of human resources (HR) are structured is key to the competitive stance of companies (Becker et al., 1997; Wright et al., 2001). COVID-19 has reiterated that the competitive environment of firms is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). Human capital (and within this, global talent) is important to create a competitive advantage through fostering valuable, rare resources that are difficult to substitute or to copy (Barney & Clark, 2007; Sparrow et al., 2010). Ulrich's (1998) call to refocus HRM's operating model to incorporate business partnering and his focus on strategic contribution has resulted in HR professionals aiming to increase their strategic insights, importance, and value to their organizations. HR managers have been presented with stark choices—either to wither in importance and relevance over time or to understand the essential competitive HR requirements of the organization and to strengthen their own competencies in order to support their firms more effectively (Brockbank & Ulrich, 2009; Caldwell, 2008). These arguments can be extended to an HR subsection, GM departments.

Ulrich's (1998) model incorporates four areas: strategic and operational issues as well as people and process dimensions. Dickmann (2021a) took these areas to suggest a SAFE model of GM. SAFE

describes four major roles of GM professionals. *Smart global talent managers* (S) aim to devise high-quality talent management approaches and conduct career and succession planning predominantly before assignments. Smart global talent management could hone in on the intersection of individual and organizational interests, with positive outcomes for global careerists (Jokinen et al., 2008; L. Mäkelä et al., 2016) and their employers (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). During the time that assignees live abroad, GM departments could work toward high employee engagement and encourage experiences that individuals appreciate. To prepare assignees and their families for repatriation, long-term planning is important (Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007). *Agile strategic advisory* (A) is linked to the key objectives that firms pursue with their GM (Edström & Galbraith, 1977; Harzing, 2001). HR professionals will strive to align their GM approaches with the business and HR strategies of their organizations. They pursue value creation through assignments, for instance, when aiming at position filling, especially for companies that compete through innovation and seek knowledge transfer and application through international mobility. Where firms concentrate on a high degree of integration, control and coordination goals may be prevalent. These manifold objectives are not mutually exclusive, and in terms of timings they apply throughout the whole expatriate cycle. The *flawless GM program designer* (F) is highly operationally focused, and its systems and approaches are predominantly geared toward the time when assignees live abroad. Error-free compliance avoids severe risks, such as a withdrawal of operating permits or high penalties imposed on firms that may result from noncompliance to local regulations (Sartori, 2010). Key roles in this quadrant incorporate the management of vendors, the use of GM risk and data analytics, working toward error-free compliance, and the planning and deployment of efficient moves as well as an effective reaction to crises. Especially at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, many firms struggled to live up to their compliance and duty of care obligations (Dickmann & Bader, 2020). Lastly, the *efficient global people effectiveness expert* (E) designs an attractive employee GM value proposition to attract global talent, selects the right individuals for specific assignment types, and

implements effective performance management coupled with designing global reward approaches (Dowling et al., 2013; Festing & Perkins, 2008; Point & Dickmann, 2012). These SAFE GM roles (described in more detail in Dickmann, 2021a) are obviously not standalone or one size fits all. They are influenced by the HR strategy, operational model, and business strategy of the firm and will have to take account of the wider external environment, including hostile threats (Bader et al., 2021).

[INSERT FIGURE 21.1 HERE]

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Figure 21.1. SAFE Model of Global Mobility

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An updated approach to Ulrich's ideas regarding HR roles and competencies was published in 2017. In it, Ulrich (2017) emphasized a move from strategic partner toward strategic positioner who participates and shapes strategic discussions in order to influence both organizational and HR strategies. In addition, culture and change champion activities are stressed so that organizational culture can respond to changing business demands in an agile way. Ulrich originally suggested the administrative expert role that has now evolved into the roles of the compliance manager; analytics designer, who interprets data to shape decisions and technology; and media integrator, who uses new technologies in order to improve workforce productivity while shaping public and internal perceptions through social media.

Two decades ago, Ulrich (1998) suggested the role of employee champion. This role has now been clarified to include a credible activist who earns trust by achieving good results. In addition, he suggested the role of human capital curator, who supports talent performance improvement. The employee champion also designs reward approaches that are effective in order to augment business performance. Finally, Ulrich identified the core role of paradox navigator for leading-edge HR departments. Given the dynamic environment and diverging time frames and the interests of the many

stakeholders in an organization, HR professionals are increasingly seen to have to manage tensions. Consequently, HR experts must be capable to successfully managing emerging paradoxes in organizations.

Given the recent literature on HR roles and the tasks and responsibilities of GM departments (Dickmann, 2018), this chapter proposes to draw up a characterization of GM professional roles and required competencies. As ever, with drawing up a framework, the reality and complex context of organizations, HR and GM departments, and their diverse organizational gestalts are simplified. This allows the reader to gain a picture of the GM world predominantly from the perspective of HR practitioners rather than individual global careerists. Nevertheless, AEs will be affected by how the GM department is structured in their organization.

<H2>Agile Strategic Advisor

Within the SAFE GM framework, the strategic planning components that link directly to the HR and business strategy are perhaps the most important elements to connect GM work with business objectives. The agile strategic advisor, in relation to GM, would entail two subroles. As a *strategic positioner* of the overall approach, GM experts have to handle the tensions of the diverging expectations of senior management and global workers. As a *global integrator*, GM professionals balance the interests of talent management colleagues and line managers in the global center and in local operating units. Their roles and associated capabilities are described here:

- Strategic positioner
 - Global business expert: develop in-depth insight into how to align GM with global business and HR strategic objectives.
 - Visionary: envisage the future of global work integrating the mobility of work, people and hybrid approaches.
 - Decoder: understand purpose and expectations of assignees, business travelers, and talent

working across borders.

- Global integrator
 - Connector: liaise effectively between talent management and emerging global work patterns.
 - Coach: advise line managers and global workers on specific challenges and support mechanisms to increase the chances of effective global work and well-being.
 - Coordinator: aid trustful cross-border collaboration between global and local talent management.

<H2>Smart Global Talent Manager

The smart global talent manager quadrant does not only refer to a clever approach to developing international talent but also to attempt to set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) objectives for the variety of relevant tasks. As a *global work and talent steward*, GM professionals should understand talent and career systems and connect these to their global staffing plans. In relation to their *experience champion* role, these HR professionals should be familiar with local environments, understand assignee roles and experiences (including those of their families) in depth, and be able to design attractive GM propositions. This includes an understanding of the quality of broader host environments (e.g., the degree of danger; Bader et al., 2021; Fee et al., 2019) and that of host teams (Toh & DeNisi, 2005). A more detailed description of the specific roles and needed competencies follows:

- Global work and talent steward
 - Talent development codesigner: advise and coordinate global talent development activities with talent management specialists.
 - Constructor: shape intelligent global careers within the new post-COVID-19 normal. Help to plan the location of work and people, understand working patterns, and give input into the development of effective international career and succession systems.

- Planner: devise the impact of physical relocations and identity shifts connected to global work.
Sensitize individuals and teams to operational implications.
- Experience champion
 - Experience assessor: understand the implications of global work for the health and well-being of staff. Evaluate which experiences are valued by assignees and other global workers and how the organization can extend more support.
 - International team advisor: raise ideas and create support policies and practices that aid global workers in feeling welcome and appreciated by their coworkers and host teams in order to help them thrive.
 - Family supporter: be sensitive to the needs of families, partners, and significant others of global workers, whether they work in a host location, travel to it, or simply interact across borders.

[INSERT FIGURE 21.2 HERE]

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Figure 21.2. SAFE Global Mobility Navigator

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<H2>Flawless GM Program Designer

The third element in the interlinked figure is flawless GM program design. Again, it consists of two subcategories that each have three elements to describe the roles and associated capabilities. Although each of the four quadrants incorporates elements in relation to strategic planning, predeparture activities, management during the assignment in situ, and some return planning and assessment of the overall success, the GM program design quadrant is potentially most focused on risks and experiences during the assignment abroad. The *compliance architect* has a strong external element when they strive to manage individual and organizational compliance to local regulations, including visa, work permit, tax,

and social security issues, and to shape the business relationship to GM service providers. Although such GM vendors often provide services in relation to compliance insights or household goods shipping as well as finding accommodation, schools, and health provisions for assignee families, they also sell GM technology that might be usefully acquired and interfaced with existing company systems. The *GM risk and data analytics expert* role includes a number of essential tasks to track where (and for how long) employees are located (e.g., in order to not fall foul of local business regulations), gaining valuable GM insights to be able to monitor, assess and refine their GM programs, and developing plans and mechanisms in relation to potential crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a stark light on a number of companies that did not have good crisis modeling or business continuity planning (Dickmann & Bader, 2020). The roles and required capabilities are briefly described here:

- Compliance architect
 - International compliance professional: understand local and international regulatory requirements and ensure business and individual compliance.
 - Vendor manager: evaluate business needs, select, cooperate, monitor, and assess appropriate global service providers.
 - GM technology integrator: develop insights into existing GM technology and how it can serve the company's interest as well as how it can be combined with existing organizational technology.
- GM risk and data analytics expert
 - Analytics and risk assessor: identify analytics that can improve the GM management process and that can augment GM and business objective achievement. Assess and manage risks associated with global work.
 - Tracking specialist: monitor where work is taking place and where staff are located in order to give flawless data to compliance.

- Crisis response planner: draw up contingency plans for a variety of physical, psychological, and institutional dangers to ensure individual duty of care and organizational business continuity.

<H2>Efficient Global People Effectiveness Expert

Ulrich (2017) emphasized the important role of managing an organization's culture, and a number of writers have stressed how crucial the employee value proposition is to attract, motivate, and retain individuals (Goswami, 2015). This is why the two subcategories of the last quadrant in the SAFE framework are highly important. As a *GM culture activist*, HR professionals are charged with developing and implementing an attractive GM employee value proposition that manages a good fit between organizational and individual interests and destination culture. Highly interlinked is the role of *GM rewards manager*, which combines reward and performance considerations in order to provide a good basis for engagement. The competencies needed for the role of global people effectiveness expert are outlined here:

- GM culture activist
 - Influencer: shape the GM culture so that global work is an attractive proposition even in the potentially more demanding new normal.
 - Designer: configure the selection for global work so that there is a good talent, job demands, and cultural fit.
 - Matchmaker: choose the right match between talent interests, global job demands, and work climate in the post-COVID-19 world.
- GM rewards manager
 - Global rewards steward: create efficient GM reward approaches that distinguish and incentivize different forms of global work.
 - Global performance assessor: develop performance management ideas and approaches that

lead to increased fulfillment of global objectives.

- Engagement facilitator: draw up flexible reward approaches that take account of the shifting risk landscape and personal threats in a post-COVID-19 world.

Whereas Figure 21.1 shows an overview of GM roles indicating that the interfaces can be fluid as strategic and operational aspects as well as people and processes elements might overlap, Figure 21.2 depicts the many capabilities associated with a variety of more fine-grained activities and is, clearly, an ideal state framework. This framework can serve psychologists and career counselors to understand the many challenges that GM professionals face. It also allows career professionals to grasp the needed capabilities that may make GM experts successful in order to give superior advice. Of course, given that Figure 21.2 shows an idealized picture, organizations might not pursue some of the depicted activities. Their internal politics or resource constraints might effectively hinder GM professionals from undertaking some of the indicated roles. This is why the SAFE GM navigator is at the center of the framework, with the duty of steering an organization's function through a rapidly changing environment. COVID-19 and its many changes in relation to the world of international work is making this abundantly clear (Caligiuri et al., 2020).

<H1>Reflections on COVID-19 and Technology: the Future of Global Work, Moving Work to People Rather Than People to Work

Overnight, COVID-19 challenged the status quo of individuals, cities, economies, countries, and continents. Whereas the global economic recession of a decade ago fundamentally placed chief finance officers (CFOs) at the core of the crisis, the human nature of the current crisis highlights the role of chief human resource officers (CHROs; Caligiuri et al., 2020; Collings et al., 2021; Economist, 2020; Reimer & Bryant, 2020). Leaders have had to make many fast decisions that fundamentally affect people's lives, such as who should stay at work and who should go home, how and where people could work digitally, when international assignees could go home, what the priorities are, and how those priorities can best

be communicated to employees. At the organizational level, decision makers have had to undertake various actions to alleviate the impact of the pandemic. In most cases, these actions relate to managing distance and rethinking boundaries. However, a number of key questions remain. Will the pandemic's effect lead to a major retrenchment of international mobility, or will it gradually be reestablished? Will companies take the opportunity to reduce numbers (and costs), or were they right to believe that international mobility was the best way to ensure their businesses' efficient running? What is the role of technology in managing uncertainty in pandemic times? What are the shortcomings of the current approaches, and how can successful strategies be developed?

The initial speed and scale at which the COVID-19 crisis evolved placed pressure on GM and HR departments. The human impact of the crisis resulted in significant prolonged anxiety and stress for employees. Established organizational routines were disrupted, and some were rendered obsolete overnight. These and other factors meant that the crisis was hugely disruptive, complex, and fraught with ambiguity for leaders. At strategic and operational levels, the decision-making process has been highly challenging as leaders try to reconcile contradictions and manage the complex interrelationships emerging from the crisis. Consequently, policy makers and business leaders feel anxious as they struggle to marshal and mobilize their talent pool through this crisis. Unlike other global crises, this exogenous shock has sped up the adoption of social and physical distance and remote working—maybe this points the way to the future of global talent management. As a response to the current pandemic, organizations increased IT capacity and moved away from traditional work arrangements. This scenario increased uncertainty about where the talents are, which means cities and businesses compete for the best employees globally.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop and leverage more innovative and flexible forms of GM to support organizations to adapt to the volatility, complexity, and uncertainty of the global environment (Collings & Isichei, 2018; Reiche et al., 2019). However, there is a distinct lack of strategic

linkages of GM and/or HR functions (Jooss et al., 2020). Based on our previous discussion, the SAFE model of global mobility adapted from Dickmann (2018) seems to support organizations in reestablishing strategic linkages disrupted by the pandemic, such as global leadership development, knowledge transfer and acquisition, competency gap filling, and control and coordination. The quadrants of the SAFE model may support the implementation of virtual assignments through remote working as a flexible global working arrangement mechanism to manage the disruption created by the COVID-19 crisis. Hence, it is important to observe that the term “remote working” describes a wide range of possible work arrangements, both temporal, from 1 day per week to full time, and geographic. Choudhury et al. (2021) distinguished between work from home and work from anywhere, arguing that the latter promises greater benefits to employees by offering both temporal and geographic flexibility. GM leaders might need to adapt their strategic and operational decisions to the new norm of GM: moving work to people rather than people to work.

First, smart global talent managers manage the possible trade-off between individual and organizational GM outcomes. They focus on the intersection of individuals and organizations before, during, and after assignees’ international work experiences by planning assignees’ expatriation and repatriation. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to travel restrictions globally and has seen organizations turn toward virtual substitutes. Even with travel bans being lifted gradually, perceptions toward flexible global working arrangements may change among mobile employees and organizations (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Smart global talent managers may support decisions regarding flexible global working arrangements, such as remote working and the management of virtual teams. Decisions regarding reducing global assignee numbers compensated by a higher number of virtual assignments through remote working might have implications for both individuals and organizations. Physical, psychological, and social aspects reported in the literature (Collings et al., 2021) invite GM managers to reflect on the value creation realized at an organizational level and the impact at the individual level. Therefore,

remote work might present a double-edged sword with substantial concern that such work is not being captured as a valuable asset (Reiche et al., 2019). For instance, Mabey and Zhao (2017) highlighted that particularly tacit knowledge is difficult to grasp through virtual means, which might affect knowledge transfer between headquarters and subsidiaries. Also, virtual assignments are related to inconvenient working hours (Suutari et al., 2013). A hybrid system might be relevant as “virtual and physical work complement rather than substitute for one another” (Jones et al., 2018, p. 257).

Then, agile strategic advisory focused on organizational outcomes links the key objectives that firms pursue with their GM (Edström & Galbraith, 1977; Harzing, 2001). Smart global talent managers may interact with agile strategic advisory when planning expatriation and repatriation of assignees. However, agile strategic advisors do not focus on a specific temporal phase of the expatriation cycle. They have the strategic role of ensuring the goal of the assignments (e.g., knowledge transfer and acquisition, competency gap filling) will be accomplished, and aligned to the organizational objectives. Given the significant disruption created by the COVID-19 crisis, flexible global working arrangements, such as remote work and virtual platform structures, represent crucial mechanisms that GM uses to respond to globally complex and disruptive conditions (Caligiuri et al., 2020). In fact, COVID-19 triggered a higher degree of virtual collaboration and global remote working (Caligiuri et al., 2020). A key question is whether remote work represents a legitimate value creation or whether there are more destructive elements in its use that multinational enterprises need to account for (e.g., knowledge transfer vs. individual career development vs. health and well-being matters). Adopting flexible global working arrangements during the current pandemic may support organizations in continuing their objectives (e.g., relationship building, knowledge transfer, and leadership development). However, these options, such as virtual assignments through remote work, should not compromise the strategic linkages of the organizations (Jooss et al., 2020). In fact, there is limited evidence on the interaction between individuals’ experiences of flexible global work, other stakeholders, and the HR system (Jooss et al.,

2020). The lack of evidence of strategic considerations of the pandemic's impact on the organizational level (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Jooss et al., 2020) increases uncertainty about investments in remote working and virtual platforms. Therefore, agile strategic advisory should support the organization to pursue organizational linkages, providing more agile structures when facing the disruption created by COVID-19.

Third, technology seems strategic in the role of the flawless GM program designer. They are highly operationally focused on the time when assignees live abroad. They work toward error-free compliance, planning and deployment of efficient moves, and an adequate reaction to crises. COVID-19 brought challenges for firms to live up to their compliance and duty of care obligations (Dickmann & Bader, 2020), such as the new norm of moving work to people rather than people to work. In order to mitigate the challenges of a hybrid system between physical mobility and remote work, the flawless GM program designer can support the development of a more sophisticated virtual architecture that acts as a complement to how individuals sustain the amount of flexible global work they carry out. This may require organizations to enhance their technological infrastructure and upskill workers who need training and development to utilize these forms of communication and compliance agreements (Selmer et al., 2021). Although much work has been carried out on the challenges and effectiveness of global virtual teams (Kramer et al., 2017), more empirical research is needed on how virtual platforms and remote working can be leveraged to create a more sustainable scenario and support the organizational responsiveness to crises like the current pandemic (Caligiuri et al., 2020).

Finally, the efficient global people effectiveness expert designs an attractive employee GM value proposition to attract global talent, selects the right individual(s) for specific assignment types, and implements effective performance management coupled with designing global reward approaches (Dowling et al., 2013; Festing & Perkins, 2008; Point & Dickmann, 2012). Therefore, they focus on the time before and during the assignees' international working experience. In the context of the current

crisis, when virtual assignments are being implemented and assignees are working from home, the evidence concerning the impact of remote working on employee productivity and well-being suggests a complex relationship (Bloom et al., 2015; Martin & MacDonnell, 2012). As a virtual assignee does not need to relocate to a different country, it can be expected that it would take less effort to recruit people for virtual assignments than other forms of IAs (Baruch et al., 2013; Holtbrügge & Schillo, 2011). However, there is a danger of underestimating the risk of cross-cultural miscommunication in virtual assignments (Holtbrügge & Schillo, 2011) and also the risk of higher work pressure related to inconvenient working hours (Suutari et al., 2013). It is expected that the need for specific HR support is not recognized. Also, little is known about the performance appraisal of virtual assignees. According to Hertel et al. (2005), teams that communicate mostly virtually often need more time to establish reliable work processes than conventional teams. This may have implications for the performance evaluation of those virtual teams where one or more individuals are placed in one subsidiary (or the headquarters) and the other team members are located in a diverse range of other subsidiaries. Besides, working from home might trigger professional isolation. Professional isolation has been shown to negatively affect job performance, and the negative effects increased as time spent working remotely increased (Golden et al., 2008). More face-to-face interaction and access to communication-enhancing technology have been shown to reduce such negative performance effects (Golden et al., 2008). Therefore, the interaction between the efficient global people effectiveness expert and the flawless GM program designer is important to develop virtual architecture to provide strategic and sustainable pathways to conducting global work during the COVID-19 crisis.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the career journey of globally mobile workers and has developed an overview of the roles of GM professionals and the responsibilities of GM departments. It has presented current academic insights and explored some pertinent organizational approaches and GM structures. The

COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges and opportunities. Many globally mobile staff have returned to their home countries, have stopped international travel, and/or are working from home, which may change the face of GM (Selmer et al., 2021).

Rethinking how multinational enterprises use global teams, virtual collaboration, and IAs could motivate important elements in a reconfiguration of the IHRM function. There is an opportunity for IHRM research to collect relevant and useful evidence to facilitate global work in the future by examining the role of the IHRM function during and after the pandemic. Even large organizations with sophisticated prepandemic IHRM policies are likely to rewrite the rules. As we write this chapter, there is an energetic debate happening in many GM departments regarding changing their traditional approach of moving people to their international work and, instead, moving international work to people. As travel restrictions ease, employers and individuals will make decisions about whether, when, and where they feel safe to travel. IHRM scholarship can offer an evidence base to assess the many impending changes to careers that globally mobile individuals are likely to experience and to develop insights into how their organizations can select, develop, support, and manage these individuals. The substantial changes to the experience of working abroad and its career effects as well as to the role of GM professionals are important for career counselors to understand. These might mean that any career interventions aimed at individuals or organizational approaches need to acknowledge the changing playing field of GM in a highly volatile, uncertain, and sometimes hostile world.

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