

Internationalization of managerial careers: three research articles

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation examines the career of managers in an international context. Specifically, this research focuses on careers patterns in a changing environment using the case of international managers (i.e. managers with a career that develops globally). More broadly, the research looks at the evolving nature of managerial careers, the organizational and global environments in which careers develop, and the reciprocal relationship between changing careers and changing environments, specifically in the context of those with global careers. All these aspects are explored in this doctoral dissertation with three research articles that use three different sets of empirical data.

The first article analyzes the career profiles of top European managers in the context of increased internationalization. Data on profiles and careers of more than 900 top managers in four countries has been collected and analyzed. The purpose is to verify the hypothesis of stability in national career models and identify new elements related to internationalization.

The second article focuses on the profiles of top managers at the biggest Swiss companies. We focused on the evolution of profiles and careers of about 600 top managers over a 30-years period (1980–2010). This article highlights the development of an international community of foreign top managers in Switzerland and analyzes the changes in their profiles and careers.

The third article focuses on the cross-cultural adjustment of a population of 152 foreign employees (traditionally-assigned expatriates, self-initiated expatriates, skilled migrants) and 126 spouses. This article studies different aspects of adjustment, focusing on local language proficiency and relocation support practices.

Keywords: top management profiles; international careers; managerial elites; skilled migrants; expatriation; Switzerland