AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

APPLICABILITY OF THE PROTEAN CAREER CONCEPT IN THE CONTEXT OF SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATION IN QATAR

by
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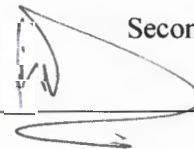Dr. Haitham Khoury, Assistant Professor   First Reader

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT FOR

By: Rony Moundalak 　　　　Master in Human Resources Management
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Major: Human Resources Management

Title: <u>Applicability of the protean career concept in the context of self-initiated expatriation in Qatar</u>

The objective of this research was to study the applicability of the protean career concept in the context of self-initiated expatriation in Qatar. Based on a qualitative research methodology that relied on semi-structured interviews with 22 Self-initiated Expatriates to collect data, the study found that a large number of SIEs in Qatar possess the protean career orientation. The study recommends that policy makers and HR professionals should be aware of the needs and motivations of this important part of the workforce and initiate strategies and policies in order to train and retain them.

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Globalization and technological innovation have contributed widely to the emergence of new career models. In the old psychological contract, employees portrayed loyalty, conformity, and commitment, and organizations in return promised continuous employment, reward packages, and career acceleration. This contract has been replaced with a new one in which employees assume added responsibilities, broader skills, and tolerance for change, and organizations, who can no longer guarantee life-long employment, offer reward on performance, high pay, and learning and development (Pate and Scullion, 2009). While the old career models are characterized by hierarchal development and low mobility, new models promote independently-guided careers and increased mobility (Willems, Janvier, and Henderickx, 2006).

Boundaryless and Protean Careers are the most prominent career models that embody this new concept. Although they are two different models, they are conceptualized by many academicians as interchangeable. The boundaryless career is mainly focused around two dimensions: Organizational Mobility Preference and Boundaryless Mindset (Briscoe, Hall, and DeMuth, 2006). Organizational mobility is defined by the interest to remain with a single or multiple employers, whereas boundaryless mindset represents the ability of the individual to work beyond organizational boundaries (Briscoe, Hall, and DeMuth, 2006). On the other hand, the protean career is driven by the individual who is in charge of his own career (Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs, 2014) and it involves two dimensions: Self-directed and Value-driven (Briscoe and Hall, 2006). Individuals with

protean career attitudes tend to guide their careers depending on their own values and not that of the organizations they work in (Hall, 2002).

Research on protean career concept has mainly focused on samples from the United States. It started to gain interest outside of this context after the introduction of Briscoe, Hall, and DeMuth (2006) measures (Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs, 2014). Self-Initiated expatriates, who travel on their own in pursuit of work, constitute a considerable part of the workforce in the Gulf Countries. Although, no statistics could be found on their exact numbers, they are highly demanded because of their flexibility and specific skills and abilities.

This study will contribute to the literature on protean career by shedding the light on the cultural transferability of the concept outside the western context. It adds to the current literature on SIE's in Qatar, which tackled their identity (Scurry, Rodriguez, & Bailouni, 2013) and career capital development (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014), by illustrating their careers orientations taking into consideration the constraints of the Qatari environment and using the refined conceptualization of the protean career concept of Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs (2014). HR Professionals will be able to address the needs and aspirations of this significant part of the workforce which will translate into increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A.   Protean Career

1. *Definition*

The word protean, defined in the Oxford Dictionary (2016) as "Tending or able to change frequently or easily", is commonly associated to changing shapes. Hall (1976) used the legend of Proteus, the Greek God who had the ability to change his shape to elude danger, to conceptualize the new career model which is a career managed by the individual and not the organization, and where individuals adapt rapidly to changing situations. Inkson (2006) argued that the term protean does not symbolize this new career concept since it focuses on adaptability which is a component of self-directness and elude the other components which he called the "total package". As per Inkson (2006), evidences were detected in the literature about protean careers whereas it was defined as per the labeled meaning "adaptability" and gave the example of Niles, Herr, and Hartung (2001, p. 11) who defined the protean career as "careers in which (people) are prepared to change with change, to be personally flexible, and able to anticipate emerging trends and transform their skills and attitudes to accommodate such changes." However, this misconception about the definition has been diminished after the operationalization of the protean career concept by Hall (2002).

The protean career is an evolution of the fit metaphor which emphasizes that careers are matched with occupational and job structures (Inkson, 2004). It was founded as an antithesis for the traditional career where the benefit of the organization prevails over that of the individual (Inkson, 2006). "The protean career is not what happens to the person in

any one organization. The protean person's own personal career choices and search for self-fulfillment are the unifying or integrative elements in his or her life" (Hall, 1976, p. 201).

The protean career is defined by two components: values driven and self-directness (Briscoe and Hall, 2002). Values driven means that the internal values of the individual are the main engine for guidance and success in the person's career. Self-directed means that the individual possesses the ability to adapt to changes in new environments in terms of performance and learning. An individual can be high or low on one or both of these components, but their presence simultaneously is what determines if a person demonstrates a protean career orientation (Briscoe and Hall, 2006). Briscoe and Hall (2006) found four categories of careers from the protean perspective: Dependent, Reactive, Rigid, and Protean. The protean career which is the characteristic of the individuals whose values define their career priorities and who are adaptable to the requirements and learning demands of their careers. The dependents are the individuals who cannot set their priorities nor manage their careers individually and usually follow the orders given to them. They are neither self-directed nor values driven. The reactive individuals are those who can self-direct their careers but are not values driven. These persons are not able to guide their careers effectively and therefore react to the situations they are confronted with. They are said to be following someone else's career instead of their own (Briscoe and Hall, 1999). Finally, the rigid individuals who are high on values and low on self-directedness. These individuals are unable to adapt to the changes in the environment and job requirements and do not to take decisions or risks. They usually end up alienated from other coworkers.

Previously, success in one's career was translated into higher salary and promotion. With the emergence of the new psychological contract, career success is now being

measured by personal fulfillment and satisfaction. Employees are aiming for psychological success, rather than objective success such as increments and ranks (Hall, 2002), which comes from aligning their career directions with their own values and not with those of the organization. The relationship between the organization and the employee is reassessed constantly throughout the individual's career in order to adapt to the changes in the working environment and the person himself (Hall and Moss, 1998). This attitude of self-driven values is a characteristic of individuals who possess the protean career orientation (Briscoe, Hall, and Frautschy DeMuth, 2006). Hall (1996, 2004) defined the individual traits needed for a successful protean career which include self-awareness, autonomy, continuous learning, and personal responsibility.

Segers, Inceoglu, Vloeberghs, Bartram, and Henderickx (2008) found a relationship between industry sectors and protean career. They noticed that individuals possessing the protean orientation are attracted to industries such as consulting, marketing, health and social work, science and research. They also found surprisingly that individuals working in the public sector also possess the protean career orientation since they are motivated by new learning experiences, job content, interesting work and self-development (Buelens and Van den Broeck, 2007). In the following sections, we will discuss the interplay between protean career and other constructs and the literature on protean career in the Middle East Area to better understand the dynamics of this new concept.

2. *PCC & Age*

Age plays a significant role in the development of the protean career orientation since people tend to follow more their values while aging and become less motivated to manage their own careers (Segers, Inceoglu, Vloeberghs, Bartram, and Henderickx, 2008) which implies that age has a positive correlation with values driven metacompetency and negative correlation with self-directedness. A decrease in self- directedness may lead the individuals into becoming idealistic and can alienate them from their coworkers. They risk to become trapped with their careers, especially those who have low education levels, since they decline to take any initiative or risk to learn new things on their own (Segers, Inceoglu, Vloeberghs, Bartram, and Henderickx, 2008).

People with higher education enjoy greater self-directedness and are more prone to become managers than those with lower education due to the developmental activities they undergo during their studies (Warr and Birdi, 1998).

3. *PCC & Gender Differences*

Traditional careers are personified by the male working attitudes which require long working hours, seeking physical recognition and working for the same employer and women were expected to abide by the same standards in order to succeed and achieve their goals (MacDermid, Dean Lee, Buck and Williams, 2001). Hall (2004) emphasizes that gender is not related to the individual career orientation but there are traces in the literature which suggests that women adopt different approaches than men in order to achieve their career success. Whereas men engage in long-term career goals planning, women are focused on short term promotions (Evetts, 1990) and tend to balance between their goals

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and needs of their family members (Pascal and Cox, 1993). The emerging preferences

theory developed by Hull and Nelson (2000) suggests that men and women start their

careers with the same aspirations but these objectives start to diverge through time due to

different experiences and responsibilities. Cabrera (2009) found that women shifted to

protean careers in order to manage the balance between their families' responsibilities and

workload. Although they were getting lesser salaries, they were happier since they fulfilled

career success based on their own criteria. A study conducted by Reitman and Schneer

(2003) concluded that protean career allow women to balance between their work and

family responsibilities. The study also found that women on protean career path were paid

similar to men in contrast to women on traditional career path who were paid 20% less than

men (Reitman and Schneer, 2003). Although this body of literature suggests that women

are more advantaged and tend to engage in protean career path more than men who stick to

the traditional career path, more research is needed in order to reach a conclusion on

whether gender is a determining factor in the career orientation of individuals.

4. PCC & Leadership

In a study conducted by Briscoe, Hoobler and Byle (2010), they found that protean

employees are rated high as leaders by their subordinates whereas their peers and

supervisors do not conceive them as transformational leaders. These findings have great

implications on the war of talent since it shows that current leaders negatively perceive

protean employees because they are different and unconventional. They pose a threat to

their leadership because of their low abidance to the rules and norms and prefer employees

who are more conforming to their standards. By doing so, they risk losing these workers

instead of finding ways to accommodate them in a market where competition for talent is getting more and more ferocious (Briscoe, Hoobler and Byle, 2010).

5. PCC & Employee Commitment

Hall (2002) suggests that a combination of employee commitment and protean career orientation would result in an effective outcome for the individual and the organization. This is due to the fact that protean career path is formed of short learning experiences (Hall and Merves, 1996) which result in the accumulation of knowledge and better performance, especially that they are repeated throughout the career cycle of the protean individual.

6. PCC & Career Success

Many studies linked the protean career concept to career success. A positive relationship was found between protean career orientation and career satisfaction (Volmer and Spurk, 2010), and the same is true for protean career orientation and job satisfaction (Baruch and Quick, 2007). However, some studies only found this positive relationship to be linked to self-directed metacompetency and not to values-driven metacompetency (Enache, Sallan, Simo, and Frernandez, 2011).

7. PCC & Organizational Commitment

Interestingly, protean career orientation is positively related to organizational commitment (Baruch, Wordsworth, Wright, and Mills, 2012) which is somehow contrary to the perception of protean career paths and the self-directed component of the protean career

concept. Protean individuals are found committed to the organization as much as non-protean individuals provided that they are given learning opportunities and the ability to be self-directed in their work (Briscoe and Finkelstein, 2009). Moreover, protean career orientation was found to correlate with team learning (Park, 2008), cooperation, and openness to change (Gasteiger, 2007).

8. PCC in the Middle East Region

Few careers studies have been conducted outside the western context and specifically in the Middle East Region. Career scholars are calling for more research about careers in the non-western settings. In a study conducted by Tlaiss (2014) on the career paths of 32 women mangers in Lebanon, she found that women managers are still following the traditional career path which is based on hierarchal progression and commitment and loyalty to one employer. However, they demonstrated some aspects of the PCC by taking control of their careers through hard work, determination and personal responsibility which enabled them to acquire managerial positions. Another study conducted by Tlaiss & Kauser (2011) on the career success of Lebanese women managers, they found that women managers are dissatisfied with their objective aspect of their career success which includes salary and promotions. On the other hand, they were satisfied with their subjective aspect of their careers which drives from the progress they made in achieving their career goals and their overall job. These findings are in line with the literature on protean career whereas employees aim for psychological success rather than increased salaries and promotions. However, the scarcity of research does not allow to

generalize the findings and more studies are required in order to draw conclusions

regarding the careers orientations in the Middle East Region.

B.   Self-Initiated Expatriation

Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), unlike international assignees who are sent by their

companies on international assignments, travel by their own initiative in pursuit of work

(Jokinen, Brewster, and Suutari, 2008). Although statistics on self-initiated expatriates was

not found, this does not relinquish their importance for the literature on international

careers. In a study done by Riusala and Suutari (2000) on international assignments, 32.8%

of questionnaires were disregarded since they came from self-initiated expatriates. This

demonstrates the significance of self-initiated expatriation. For the purpose of this study,

self-initiated expatriates will be defined as follows: "(a) self-initiated international

relocation, (b) regular employment (intentions), (c) intentions of a temporary stay, and (d)

skilled/professional qualifications" (Cerdin and Selmer, 2014).

Talent shortage in many countries has led to the increase in the demand for flexible

employees from diverse cultures that possess specific skills and abilities. This resulted in

the increase in the number of hired SIEs compared to the local workforce (Jokinen,

Brewster, and Suutari, 2008) and some governments are even escalating their demands for

skilled workers in order to reduce workforce shortages.

SIEs differ from migrants since they come from both developing and developed

countries. They usually select the country of their choice. Additionally, they often choose

to work in the selected location for a definite period of time, which is not always

predetermined. SIEs also differ from international assignees in that they do not receive prior trainings before engaging in their new assignment, and their length of stay is usually longer than that of international assignees.

Self-initiated expatriation can be linked to the new career concepts since individuals are responsible for their own careers. Research on self-initiated expatriates found that their motives for expatriation are for non-tangible and non-financial rewards such as adventure, desire for travel, and seeking new challenges, (Richardson and McKenna 2003; Thorn 2009) which overlaps with individuals who possess the protean career orientation and who look for psychological success. Cao, Hirschi, and Deller (2013) mentioned that "SIEs with a protean career attitude may proactively manage their careers, seek a career environment that fits their career values, and adapt and alter their own work methods and procedures. As a consequence, they are more likely to follow and fulfill their personally relevant career values and goals and achieve a high level of subjective career success" (p. 59). They select and interact with the environment they want to work in and portray the ability to act independently during their expatriation (Cerdin and Pargneux, 2010). They proactively network with local nationals and adapt to the living norms and standards and therefore are able to adjust to the culture of the host countries which reflects on their job performance, career advancement and wellbeing (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998). However, failing to adjust may affect their intention to stay in their host countries and would lead to transferring to other destinations. Hence, protean career attitude affects indirectly and positively the career and life satisfaction and intention to stay of SIEs through cross-cultural adjustment (Cao, Hirschi, and Deller, 2013). Cao, Hirschi, and Deller (2013) found that SIEs originated from culturally distant countries face difficulties in adjusting to the host country. This impacts

negatively their career and life satisfaction and leads to amplifying their intention to leave the country.

The protean career can affect SIEs negatively due to the fact that it becomes difficult for them to adjust to organizational goals and values if they contradict with their own goals and values. This is mainly due to their independence, high motivation and responsibility for their own career (Cao, Hirschi, and Deller, 2013).

The literature on protean career attitude and mobility preference has provided contradictory results. Some research suggest that SIEs with protean career orientation are constant movers and are not committed to an organization although they can contribute greatly to the success of any organization through the experience they bring (Briscoe, Hall, and Frautschy DeMuth, 2006) whereas others have found a negative relationship between mobility preference and protean career. Baruch, Budhwar, and Khatri (2007) concluded that 69.5% of foreign students studying in the US and UK decide to stay in their host countries and not travel back to their home countries or elsewhere. This is in line with the findings of Briscoe, Hall, and Frautschy DeMuth (2006) that this relationship is subject to the context which affect the outcome.

Knowing that protean career can positively affect the intention for stay of SIEs, organizations and hosting countries should try to adopt this career type by recognizing its unique and different values and providing the adequate development opportunities and resources to assist the individuals who possess this career orientation to achieve their career goals and to enhance their cross-cultural adjustment taking into consideration the cultural backgrounds they originate from (Cao, Hirschi, and Deller, 2013).

1 Self-Initiated Expatriation in Qatar & the Gulf

Although there are no exact figures on the numbers of SIEs in Qatar, they are considered an important constituent of the workforce in the peninsula. However, limited studies could be found on this important body of research in Qatar. In a study conducted by Scurry, Rodriguez, & Bailouni (2013) on the narratives of identity of self-initiated expatriates in Qatar, they found that SIEs reaffirm their identities by constructing self-regulations around them which enables them survive the constraints in Qatar. They mentioned that SIEs in Qatar differ from other SIEs due to mobility restrictions. They also emphasize on the importance of SIEs in Qatar and how policymakers and HR professionals need to acknowledge their dependency on this workforce and try to retain and develop their skills. Another study, conducted by Rodriguez & Scurry (2014) on career capital development of SIEs in Qatar, emphasized on the impact of the Qatari context on the careers of SIEs. They found that SIEs in Qatar, unlike other SIEs, are unable to build their career capital and increase their competencies beyond gaining international work experience, participating in international networks, and acquiring cross-cultural skills. Given these unique characteristics of SIEs in Qatar, this research will answer the assumptions on the applicability of the protean career in the highly regulated context of Qatar.

In a study by Bozionelos (2009) about SIE nurses in Saudi Arabia, he found that those who developed interpersonal relations with their superiors have experienced job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions. His findings stresses on the importance of mentoring for SIEs in order to boost job satisfaction and their intention to stay with their

employer. He also found that SIE women who work in a female dominated environment express higher job satisfaction than those who work in male dominated jobs.

C.   Qatar Context:

Qatar, a small country on the Arab Peninsula, is considered one of the world's richest countries. Ranked third in the world with a GDP per capita of US$ 96,732.4 (The World Bank, 2015), Qatar has the third largest reserves of oil and gas in the world. Qatar is a monarchy headed by the Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani and has some provisions for democracy whereas some governmental posts are appointed through general election.

Qatar's economy was primarily focused on pearl diving. However, after the discovery of oil and utilization of LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas), Qatar became the number one producer of LNG in the world. The country's wealth is being used for major infrastructure projects and the country is currently undergoing preparations for hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

Qatar's labor market, same as other Gulf countries, is characterized by a large influx of expatriates from different regions of the world. One third of public sector positions and two third of private sector positions in the region are held by expatriates (Forstenlechner and Rutledge, 2010) and part of them are SIEs. In order to cope with this challenge, GCC countries engaged in localization programs to replace expatriates with local nationals. In Qatar, the localization programs are mainly concentrated in the public sector, whereas Qataris occupy 100% of non-specialized positions in the energy and industrial sector (Kamrava, 2009).

In the last two decades, Qatar has experienced an economic growth which increased the reliance on foreign manpower due to the lack of skilled Qatari manpower and the small population (Al Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2010). Qatar's current population is constituted of 12% Qataris and 88% expatriates, hence Qataris fall third after Indians (24% of the population) and Nepalese (17% of the population) (Snoj, 2013). Moreover, 75% of the total population are men, while 25% are women (Snoj, 2013).

1 Qatar's Employment Context

Localization programs and labor law have great implications on expatriates in Qatar. Employees who want to change employers need to secure a non-objection certificate from their current employer, which the employer is not obliged to provide. If the employer does not give the employee permission to transfer the sponsorship, the employee is obliged to leave Qatar for a period of two years. Another issue is the exit permit which is required for each expatriate prior to exiting the country. These policies impact the mobility of the expatriate who finds himself at the mercy of his employer. However, a new law was issued in December 2015 and will take effect in December 2016 under which the non-objection certificate will not be needed once the employee's contract is expired or after 5 years of service if the contract is for an unlimited period. Moreover, Qatar has been largely criticized by various organizations and medias for the abuse of foreign workers especially those who come from developing countries. Given the unique features of the Qatari context that translate into constraints facing the SIEs, and since the protean concept has been scarcely tested outside the western societies, the research would give us insights on the

careers of SIEs in a highly regulated environment where changing jobs and exiting the country is considered a privilege controlled by the employer.

D.   Refined Conceptualization of the Protean Career Concept

Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs (2014) proposed a refined conceptualization of the protean career concept. This model will be adopted in this paper since it offers a broader conceptualization of the protean career concept. It enhances the model suggested by Briscoe and Hall (2006) which is founded on two competencies, values-driven and self-directed, by addressing the identity and adaptability meta-competencies which were missing from previous models. This refined conceptualization will assess the applicability of the protean career concept in the context of self-initiated expatriates in Qatar. The new conceptualization comprises two dimensions, with two components each (See Table 1).

Table1. Refined Conceptualization of the Protean Career Concept (Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs, 2014)

Concept	Dimension	Component	Core Aspect
Protean Career Concept	Values-driven	1. Being clear on one's needs, motivation, abilities, values and interests	Identity
		2. Having personal values that are both the guidance and the measure of success in one's career	Being Values-driven
	Self-directed	3. Being both competent and motivated to learn and to adapt to a changing environment	Adaptability
		4. Having a feeling of independence and of being in charge of one's career	Being self-directed

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Component 1: Based on the description of the metacompentency "identity" of Hall (2002) who describes that "a strong sense of identity is a prerequisite for pursuing a successful protean career. Furthermore, he states that "if the person is not clear on his or her needs and motivation, abilities, values, interests, and other important personal elements of self-definition, it would be very difficult to know where to head in life".

Component 2: Following one's values and not someone else's whether it is in line with an organization's values or not (Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs, 2014).

Component 3: Based on the description of "adaptability", the second metacompentency of Hall (2002). Although it is core to protean career concept, it does not cover wholly the self-directed dimension (Briscoe and Hall, 2006).

Component 4: The aspect of being self-directed was found to be relevant to the protean career concept by the literature (Arnold and Cohen, 2008; Inkson, 2006) and is considered by Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs (2014,) as an "original key aspect of the PCC".

E.   Research Questions

This study aimed to examine the applicability of the protean career concept in the context of self-initiated expatriation in Qatar, given the unique constraints of this environment and using the refined conceptualization of the protean career concept of Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs (2014) to answer the following research questions:

RQ1:   To what extent are SIEs in Qatar aware of their needs, motivation, abilities, values and interests?

RQ2:   To what extent are the personal values of SIEs in Qatar the guidance and the measure of success in their careers?

RQ3: To what extent are SIEs in Qatar competent and motivated to learn and to adapt to a changing environment?

RQ4: To what extent do SIEs in Qatar have a feeling of independence and of being in charge of their careers?

III. METHODOLOGY

A.   Research Strategy

The research strategy refers to how the researcher will attempt to gather data to fulfill the purpose of the study (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The qualitative strategy is adopted in this research since the aim is to explore and probe if the SIEs in Qatar possess the protean career orientation and not to measure changes related to specific variables over time. The advantage in using this strategy is that it provides the researcher freedom during data collection but on the other hand suffers from weak reliability since the participants might not be a good representation of the studied population.

B.   Research Approach

The deductive approach is used in the analysis of the interviews data. In the deductive approach, the researcher initiates the study by addressing the broad theoretical frameworks to draw conclusions that are then verified by the data collected during the study (Qu and Dumay, 2011). The use of the deductive approach is justifiable due to the fact that the protean career concept is not new and the aim of the study is to induce narrow conclusions that are specific in nature and pertain to a specific context.

C.   Data Collecting Instruments

Given the deductive approach and qualitative strategy of this study, two types of data were collected:

1- The semi-structured interview is the method used for the purpose of this study, since it allows the interviewer to expand or narrow the scope of the interview depending on the knowledge, background and expertise of the interviewee (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Semi-structured interviews are considered one of the most effective qualitative data collection methods since it permits more exploration, attaining deeper insights and getting into a variety of individuals views who have different experiences and backgrounds (Whiting, 2008). The interviewees were asked to respond to 8 questions (See Appendix 1) and to elaborate on these questions based on their current and previous professional and personal experiences.

2- The second type of data was collected from peer-reviewed publications from various journals and was accessed through the online AUB Libraries databases.

D.   Sampling

In line with the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the American University of Beirut, the aim was to recruit a sample of 20 to 25 SIEs from Qatar and to ensure the full privacy for the participants as well as for any involved third parties. Several recruiting methods were used, including LinkedIn and business directories. In total, around 65 individual were contacted and only 22 accepted to participate in this study. The sample consisted of 14 males and 8 females, with a mean age of 36.27. 13 candidates were married and 9 single. Only 3 individuals were not university graduates. The sample consisted of nine nationalities working in different sectors in Qatar (See Table 2). All participants were employed on a full-time basis.

The interviews were conducted during the months of January and February 2016. Interviews generally lasted between 20 and 25 minutes. They were conducted in a place chosen by the participant. The same questions were asked to the interviewees although not necessarily in the same order.

Table 2: Sample Characteristics

Nationalities	Banking	Construction	Consultancy	Design & Trading	Healthcare	Hospitality	Oil and Gas	Real Estate	Retail	Grand Total
Bulgarian		1								1
Canadian					1					1
Egyptian		1								1
Filipino	1	1		1		2	1	1	1	8
Indian		2			1					3
Jordanian		1								1
Lebanese		3	1							4
Nepali						1				1
Tunisian			1		1					2
Grand Total	**1**	**9**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**22**

E.   Data Analysis

The interviews were all taped and then transcribed. The data was analyzed using the content analysis method which involves categorizing and classifying data according to keywords or thematic concepts before applying critical analysis to the content. This method is suitable since the researcher is trying to identify new insights by analyzing the data provided by different participants (Adams, 2010).

After completing all the interviews, the researcher created categories and sub-categories according to the responses without any alteration. The statements of all interviewees were then compared and contrasted before they were all listed under the final categories and sub-categories in a thematic template table.

F.   Ethical Considerations

There were a variety of ethical considerations that had to be addressed in the course of carrying this study out. In line with the IRB standards and requirements, the researcher addressed this issue proactively and provided all the necessary assurances to the interviewees. Participants were asked to sign an Informed Consent Form for their participation in the study that included: the purpose of the study, disclosure of risks if any, benefits of the research, privacy/confidentiality, who will access the data, who has access to the identity of the participants, their rights to withdraw at any point, and the consequences of withdrawal. The paper maintained the confidentiality of all interviewees by changing the names when reporting data from their accounts.

IV. FINDINGS

The data is organized around four major themes as identified in the Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs (2014) refined conceptualization of the protean career concept: Identity, Being Values-Driven, Adaptability, and Being Self-Directed (See Table 3).

A. Identity

We received different responses regarding the motivation to work from the interviewees. They were categorized around the following subjects: Career Growth, Job Characteristics, Benefits, and family. Two groups immerged from the findings with minor differences detected between them. The first group answers were mainly focused on job characteristics, career growth and family.

Whereas the other group cited that their motivation to work was fueled by job characteristics, career growth, family and benefits. The difference was that the interviewees in the second group cited benefits received from performing the job as a motivator to them.

Family plays an important role in the motivation of all interviewees although the degree of influence differs based on their marital status. Those who were married had more emphasize on this subject than those who were single.

When asked about their job expectations, the same differences immerged in the responses between the two groups of interviewees. The first group stated career growth and promotion. The other group stated, in addition, the benefits received from performing the job.

Table 3: Thematic Analysis

Theme	Broad Code	Specific Code	Sample Answers	Participant
Identity	Motivation to Work	Career Growth	You need to work in an environment where you see yourself that you are going to reach somewhere and reach your goals	BMM43
			There is some expectations from my job is a continuous progress and learning and consequently more getting more experience	LMM34
		Job Characteristics	Well in sales and marketing like we go everyday out on the sales calling, so we meet new people, new companies, which leads to the new prospects, assignments, and new projects which gives more motivations. Each different project or companies spends on different challenges and it gives us new ideas and strength to tackle life with fresh perspective	NFM34
			I have always been motivated by the desire to meet a deadline. Setting and reaching deadlines gives me such a sense of accomplishment. I love creating an organized schedule for completing a task, and achieving my deadlines	IMM35
		Benefits	What motivates me to work, a steady proper job and a proper benefits from the job that you're in with and accomplishment of the work that you are doing, the sense of enjoying the work	FMS36
			Also the financial security, which comes with the salary and the stability in the company	LMS35
		Family	Well, Number 1 is my family especially my kids. So they are my motivation, that's the reason why I'm here working and of course. That's the main thing.. My kids. That's it	FMM33
			Motivation comes from being on the right track and achieving my career goals and at the same time being able to provide financial stability for my family	BMM43
	Job Expectations	Benefits	What I'm expecting is a, I accomplish the job properly plus I get balance of steady benefits from the job that they are offering me	FMS36
			My foremost plan is to earn, that is my primary purpose	FMM49
		Promotion	I like to reach, I mean to be higher position in order of my ordinance I give importance to growth of in organization to reach a maximum higher position	IMM62
			The current expectations is to do extremely good in sales and marketing job and to hold some higher corporate positions in this industry	NFM34

Table 3: Thematic Analysis (Continued)

Theme	Broad Code	Specific Code	Sample Answers	Participant
Identity	Job Expectations	Career Development	For me right now, I am expecting to learn more and to improve my skills in all sides of the box, so in all aspects, let's say for example, if there's an opportunity for me to be in the other department in this bank, well I am very much open for whatever kind of positions, if I got opportunity to be transferred in whatever fields.	FMM33
			of course career growth , I am also like into the reputation of the company that I am in because this effects my career	FFS40
	Career Goals	Setting clear career goals	Career goals, we can say to reach high level in management field and specifically in contracts and commercial disciplines and learn more about the international construction company	EMM37
			Reaching to CFO level of a reputed group and leading to that group to a remarkable next stage is my career goal and thereafter to go for the society as a teacher and mentor to the next generation.	IMM35
		No clear career goals	I don't really plan for it, yeah, it just as it goes on, I mean, whatever comes in my life, I'll take it as ok this is I have achieved ok	IMM34
			To be able to earn more than a million dollar per year	LMS35
	Career Success	Gaining Experience	I think I find myself successful in career if I have been given more opportunity to enhance what I experienced and what I loved in that experience	FMS36
			I only the thing that I expected from my job is the experience. I need to get more experience, professional experience since my age is still young so I'm not looking for money or anything else I'm only aim for the experience.	TMS25
		Self-Satisfaction	Self-satisfaction in terms of what I do and for what purpose am I doing it	TFS24
			if you have the satisfaction of what you've done, you are success on it, so in everything that you do at work or in your life, if you are happy with the result of it, and you are satisfied, you can call it a success	FFS27

Table 3: Thematic Analysis (Continued)

Theme	Broad Code	Specific Code	Sample Answers	Participant
Identity	Career Success	Enjoying the work you are doing	when they give you all the options that you can do anything and then your love and enjoyment for doing that type, you're jumping in and you're given that opportunity, that's how I define my success, as simple as like that	FMS36
			Motivate me for working, is, I'm still enjoying it, as a matter of fact, all my children now are doctors and lawyers, money wise, I'm already established, however, I still enjoy working and I will continue working until such time that they need me	FMM62
		Recognition from the organization they are working in	Career success is of course based only in the organization that you are working and the cooperation and the support from the subordinates and from senior employees.	IMM62
			career success is the fact when you are well recognized by your employer to what you have achieved	LMM34
		Financial rewards	Career success, Career success it's a transition of one position to another position and the change of salary package	FFS33
			Every career should be related to the money, if in your career, you are doing more than a million dollar per year, in my opinion, you are doing very well, even if you are working as an actor, or as an engineer, or as a manager or as a nurse. It doesn't matter what you are doing. If you have this stability and this much money, you can throw around so you don't have to be. This is by itself is success.	LMS35
		Work-Life Balance	In simple words career success is positive work life balance which means attaining a career level which should help to take care our present life and future at the same time to build our family satisfactorily and peaceful.	IMM35
			Career success is really something which is personal issue, everyone defines differently but to me to fulfill his goal at in early age and be able to continue working at your own terms with enough time to enjoy life	BMM43

Table 3: Thematic Analysis (Continued)

Theme	Broad Code	Specific Code	Sample Answers	Participant
Being Values-Driven	Follow my own values	Refuse to follow instructions	It' always better to leave the organization, working does not only mean working for the money it actually even, working means its experience and to have our never ending learning process which builds our experience level and if we are not interested in our work, it means that we are not happy and we are not learning to	NFM34
			Oh no of course not. If it's violate my beliefs I can never be in that career so I don't think I'll be. I choose to leave if it's or I'll choose to you always have an option in everything you do I always believe in it	FFS40
	Try to Find common Grounds but stick to Company decision	Search for a solution	When there is contradiction of interest, I try to understand the root cause of the same and any changes required from my part I try to change it. I approach the issues in a Group corporate level policies and try to achieve it at the same time in an amicable way	IMM35
			Since the values and lots of employees co-related and has to be highlighted by his employer for a better output. If this does not work I will seek the help of my superiors to find out a solution. I will continue, If the superior cannot find (a solution) then I have to. My reaction is why should I react because it will go against my purpose.	IMM62
	Follow instructions	Stay in the Company and do whatever required from me	since we are nowhere permanent so I feel that whatever company needs we need to do that. So I just work on whatever they needed for that time and just on my personal opinion, I have something different opinion, I'll just forget for that time and do whatever the company needs for me	IMM34
			I will try to change something in my values to match their interest and satisfactions. I will try to change if it's related to the work I will try to change myself	JMS32

Table 3: Thematic Analysis (Continued)

Theme	Broad Code	Specific Code	Sample Answers	Participant
Adaptability	Coping with laws and regulations	Abidance by the rules and regulations	Regulations in Qatar and the work environment that are not much different than any other country, every country has its own special regulations and its own laws that you have to abide by. So I can say cope with this pretty well. I adapted with all the regulations and are being able to follow all the laws that Qatar or the organization which is following the Qatari laws is abiding with	BMM43
			Basically, I'm fine and happy in my life in Qatar. Its good place for families. The work environment I'm used to it now since 10 years and I have built many important serious relationships. I know many, where is companies, persons, many people in the market.	LMM34
	Adapt career goals based on the current context	Adjusting to the work requirements	I adapt. I adjust. This is I think for me it's very important because if you are not able to adapt, to adjust, to co-exist with your with the environment, you won't be able to succeed in the career that you have chosen or in the environment that you are in so I'll make sure that this is the first thing I do when I joined the, one community. I, Yes, I learned, I adapt myself, I adjust to them, I learned to co-exist. I did respect other people perception maybe.	FFS40
			You are living in market where you have established a certain communication with the surrounding that you are there and certain knowledge of the environment of the industry and then you are being taken out in a new start so you have to adapt as quick as possible and try to move on from your acquired knowledge that is there and continue from there on	BMM43
		Adjusting career goals	The adjustment is more or less related to time that means delay or small adjustment but not major adjustment as changing the goal itself. Goals so far has been the same	NFM34
			I have a coping mechanism, so if I cannot do it now, I know I can do it a bit later, maybe things change, conditions change, your relationships change, if your relationships with your boss, the owner, whatever change, if your relations, public relations change as well it will empower you, so fine there are laws and regulations, but sometimes you can get through them, sometimes	CFS31
	Learning & Development	Develop oneself	I'm trying to develop myself to get higher level in the same company actually my new rules in the cost control management and I'm planning to stay in this place and get high level on this company. I'm trying to develop myself taking new certificates in this field and I'm doing by my own	JMS32
			it's a private company, so trainings are up to me, if I want to go for a training, I need to ask. you have to take care of it on your own, I know that if I was in other company that are national, its obligatory, it's part of their healthcare scheme, but in my case, I would need to go for it and pay for it and all these things. I do it on my own	CFS31

Table 3: Thematic Analysis (Continued)

Theme	Broad Code	Specific Code	Sample Answers	Participant
Being Self-Directed	Hindering Career Progress	Supervisor	if you are newly joined in the company you always have this fresh outlook in the company. And you always tend to like know suggest new things and it is never accepted in the here in Qatar like they are always ah the comparison on what others do you know what this what we are used to do already so this what you do. This is one of the like hinders	FFS40
			The misunderstanding between opinion between the employees with his senior level sometimes you have an idea or like you will bring the new forms or documentations for the company or develop something in the company but they will tell you No we have our own forms or own procedures	JMS32
		Family	Sometimes it happens, that if me and my wife is having problem back in my home country of course, I am so affected with that one, because it is for me, it is very important to be focus especially if you are aiming for something. For me the one that hinders my work, my focus in my work right now is sometimes family issues.	FMM33
			married life, it stops us doing from somethings which we have to do at that stage of our career so yeah	IMM34
		NOC	the company will not have give NOC, they will not give NOC, but here I can find a new better job, which I can	FMM49
			In Qatar there is too much opportunity I think I'm certain that there is nothing that can block me from reaching my goal unless that law of NOC issues. Here in Qatar we can found too much opportunities for the workers anyone can get a good job with a good salary. For myself I found, I think that I can reach a good job in Qatar here just if I had of chance.	TMS25

Table 3: Thematic Analysis (Continued)

Theme	Broad Code	Specific Code	Sample Answers	Participant
Being Self-Directed	Career Planning	Planned Career	I divided my career life into blocks of four years and set some targets. Closely monitoring the same and changes are being made as and when required.	IMM35
			Planning does not happen in a day so it takes years of hard work and right vision. So I have a vision target and goal and I am already in the right path. So reaching to the sales manager career in this organization, so reaching here means definitely I have to pass all the levels you know, executive officer, then assistant manager	NFM34
		Career is set by the Company	my career driven by the company where I am working and I'm making my career here now maybe it's not my own career maybe the career of the company, is related to my company success	LMM34
			Never did – My career path was drawn and driven by the company I work for	LMM32
	Career Satisfaction	Satisfied with one's career	Its ok, I am very happy with my life, and things on go as you planned most of the time, so its ok but it's going a little slow, I mean, it's not fast the way I have thought in the previous	IMM34
			Considering the circumstances and uncontrollable environment I should say yes except for the time factor as we said other than that yes I can say I am satisfied but you know with time	FMM49
		Not Satisfied with one's career	I am not yet satisfied, not so enough, but I always carry to myself that I have to worked on it, every day, each and every day that I work	FFS27
			I can say that at least at some point I have been given importance but I guess it's a slow move from the company. I mean if ever given the chance from other companies I'll be better off.	FFS33

Another difference was noted regarding promotion. Part of the interviewees mentioned the promotion in the traditional way which is to be promoted within their current companies.

Others stated promotion in the broader term as in the industry and the position and were not limited to hierarchal promotion within the company

The majority of interviewees had set career goals for themselves. Only two interviewees did not have any career goals.

When asked about career success, part of the interviewees mentioned gaining experience, work-life balance, and subjective career success such as self-satisfaction and enjoying the work they are doing as measures of career success.

Other interviewees mentioned gaining experience, recognition from the organization they are working in, and financial rewards as measures for career success.

It is worth mentioning that the majority of the interviewees were found to be clear on their needs, motivation, abilities, values, and interests whereas only two candidates, namely IMM34 and LMS35, were not able to substantiate their identity.

B. **Being Values Driven**

When asked about their decision if their values contradict with those of the organization they work for, the interviewees' answers were distributed between doing what the organization is requesting, trying to reach common ground but will eventually concede to the company if no room for change, and following their own values even if it contradicts with that of the company they work in. Those who chose to follow their own values

mentioned that they would start looking for new opportunities in organizations where their values would be respected.

Based on the answers from the interviewees, thirteen out of twenty two were found to be values-driven since they chose their personal values over that of the organization they work in. These 13 were also found having a clear identity which allows them to satisfy the two core aspects of the values driven metacompetency of the protean career concept.

C.   **Adaptability**

The majority of interviewees were found to be adapted to the laws and regulations of Qatar although some mentioned their resentment from the NOC and exit permit laws imposed by the Qatari government on expatriates working in the country.

The majority also mentioned that they adapt their career goals based on the context they are in and work exigencies.

This same majority also mentioned that they emphasize a lot on developing themselves apart from what the company is offering in terms of training and development.

The majority of the interviewees were found to be competent and motivated to adapt to a changing environment and willing to work on their own development in order to progress their careers.

D.   **Being Self-Directed**

The interviewees were concentrated on three factors that hinder their careers in Qatar. The first factor was the issue of the NOC which refrain the individual from benefiting from better opportunities within Qatar.

The second factor that hinders career progress is the direct supervisor. This was brought up by the majority of interviewees who stated that the direct supervisor can play a destabilizing role in their career.

The third factor that can hinder career progress, as per the interviewees, is family. This factor was mentioned in the answers of the married interviewees who emphasized on the fact that family can sometimes deter someone from fulfilling his career goals.

The majority of the interviewees had done some planning for their career at least once.

However, two interviewees mentioned that their careers are driven by the company they work in which is typical from the employees who follow the traditional career path.

The majority of the interviewees were somehow satisfied with their careers although the degree of satisfaction differed between the individuals.

Three interviewees were not satisfied and this is mainly due to the fact that they cannot change their employer due to the NOC law.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the applicability of the protean career concept in the context of self-initiated expatriates in Qatar using the refined conceptualization of the protean career concept of Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs (2014). The results showed that 10 out of 22 respondents possessed the protean career orientation as shown in table 4. Six out of the ten are women and four are men. These findings imply that a considerable number (around 45%) of SIEs in Qatar possess the protean career orientation.

From the twelve remaining respondents, six were found to be reactive i.e. they can self-direct their careers but are not values driven. These persons are not able to guide their careers effectively and therefore react to the situations they are confronted with (Briscoe and Hall, 2006). Three were found to be dependents i.e. they are neither values-driven nor self-directed. The dependents cannot set their priorities nor manage their careers individually and usually follow the orders given to them (Briscoe and Hall, 2006). Three were found to be rigid i.e. are high on values and low on self-directedness. These individuals are unable to adapt to the changes in the environment and job requirements and do not take decisions or risks (Briscoe and Hall, 2006).

The two core aspects "Being Values-Driven" and "Being Self-Directed" played the most significant role, compared to the other two core aspects, in determining the protean candidates since the majority of respondents were clear on their needs and motivation and are able to adapt to changing environments. This is mainly due to the fact that SIEs either adapt to the context they are in or choose to leave the country and therefore those who remained and we interviewed are definitely able to adapt to the environment in Qatar.

Table 4: Results

Participant	Gender	Age	Identity	Being Values-Driven	Adaptability	Being Self-Directed
BMM43	Male	43	yes	yes	yes	yes
CFS31	Female	31	yes	yes	yes	yes
EMM37	Male	37	yes	no	yes	yes
FFM26	Female	26	yes	yes	yes	yes
FFS27	Female	27	yes	no	yes	yes
FFS33	Female	33	yes	no	yes	yes
FFS40	Female	40	yes	yes	yes	yes
FMM33	Male	33	yes	no	yes	yes
FMM49	Male	49	yes	no	yes	yes
FMM62	Male	62	yes	yes	yes	yes
FMS36	Male	36	yes	yes	no	no
IMM34	Male	34	no	no	yes	no
IMM35	Male	35	yes	yes	yes	yes
IMM62	Male	62	yes	no	no	no
JMS32	Male	32	yes	no	yes	yes
LFM34	Female	34	yes	yes	yes	yes
LMM32	Male	32	yes	yes	yes	no
LMM34	Male	34	yes	yes	yes	no
LMS35	Male	35	no	no	no	no
NFM34	Female	34	yes	yes	yes	yes
TFS24	Female	24	yes	yes	yes	yes
TMS25	Male	25	yes	yes	yes	yes

The majority of the protean respondents were women (6 out of 10) and the majority of the women had protean career orientation (6 out of 8). These findings contradict with Hall (2004) suggestions that gender is not related to the individual career orientation and are in line with Reitman and Schneer (2003) findings that women tend to engage in protean career path more than men. Women are attracted to protean career since it allows them to manage the balance between their families' responsibilities and workload (Cabrera, 2009).

The result of this study contradicts with that of Tlaiss (2014) that women in Middle Eastern context follow the traditional career path. 6 out of 8 women were found having the protean career orientation. This is perhaps due to the nature of the sample being studied. While Tlais (2014) sample was constituted of local nationals (Lebanese Women Working in Lebanon), the sample in this study was formed of self-initiated expatriates from different nationalities. Further research is needed in order to study the career orientations and choices of the different constituents of the workforce.

Only four men out of the fourteen (28.6%) possess the protean career orientation which enforce the literature about men's career that they tend to stick to the traditional career attitudes which require long working hours, seeking physical recognition and working for the same employer (MacDermid, Dean Lee, Buck and Williams, 2001).

The candidates with protean career attitude were motivated to work by the job characteristics, career growth and family. The benefits received on the job were not cited as a motivator for them which is in line with the literature on the protean career individuals who aim for psychological success rather than objective success (Hall, 2002). They expect their job to provide them with career growth and promotion in the broader term as in the industry and the position and are not limited to hierarchal promotion within the company.

For them, Career success is measured through Gaining Experience, Work-Life Balance, and Subjective career success the like of enjoying the work they are doing and self-satisfaction. These findings are mainly due to the changes in the working environment whereas life-long employment and long working hours are not appealing anymore to employees who prefer to manage their work-life balance and develop their careers capital. Moreover, the findings are in line with the findings of Tlaiss & Kauser (2011) on Lebanese women managers who are satisfied with the subjective aspect of their careers.

The majority of the candidates, protean and non-protean, were found to have a clear identity which is in line with the findings of Scurry, Rodriguez, & Bailouni (2013) about SIEs in Qatar who reaffirm their identities to enable them survive the constraints posed by the environment.

Protean candidates chose to leave the company whenever their values contradicts with that of the company they work for which is line with the literature on protean career that suggests that protean individuals aim to align their career directions with their own values and not with those of the organization (Hall, 2002).

Protean candidates adapt to the environment they work in and try to adjust their career goals to the context they are currently in. These findings reinforce the literature on SIEs that they adapt to the living norms and standards and therefore are able to adjust to the culture of the host countries which reflects on their job performance, career advancement and wellbeing (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998). They are also in line with the findings of Scurry, Rodriguez, & Bailouni (2013) that Qatari SIEs construct self-regulations around them to enable them adapt to the Qatari environment.

The major factor that is hindering their careers in Qatar is the non-objection certificate law which requires from each expatriate the approval of his current employer in order to shift from one company to another and is given at the discretion of the employer. This law limits the opportunities for the expatriates to search for better jobs in Qatar. In addition to that, they cited that the direct supervisor and family commitments can also hinder their careers. Nevertheless, they are satisfied with what they achieved till now since they are fulfilling their career plans. These findings stresses on the importance of mentoring for SIEs who were found to have job satisfaction and positive intentions for stay with their employer whenever they had a good relationship with their superiors (Bozionelos, 2009).

The perception that career development is the sole responsibility of the individual has been reinforced in this research. All interviewees emphasized that they are pursuing development on their own without the intervention of their companies. Even those who expressed their career dependence on their companies were not receiving any trainings or development opportunities. This reinforce the perception that organizations are benefiting more than the employees from the shift to the new career by moving away from formal training and letting the employee take charge of it. These findings align with those of Rodriguez & Scurry (2014) who found that Qatari SIEs are unable to build their career capital and increase their competencies beyond gaining international work experience.

All interviewees showed certain aspects of protean career orientation such as self-awareness and adapting to work exigencies and environment. However, traces of the old career concept are evident in the data the like of internal promotion and objective rewards. Protean interviewees were found in pursuit of personal values and subjective success instead of intrinsic success.

Although married expatriates are considered to be better adjusted than unmarried ones to their lives as foreign workers (Selmer, 2001), this study could not establish a relationship between marital status and protean career since the protean sample was consisted from both ends. This can be due to the fact that SIEs choose to adapt to their host country or leave if they could not adjust (Cao, Hirschi, and Deller, 2013) and this applies for both married and unmarried individuals.

Age and business sectors were not found to be affecting the career orientation of the candidates although the literature implies that age plays a significant role in the development of the protean career orientation since people tend to follow more their values while aging and become less motivated to manage their own careers (Segers, Inceoglu, Vloeberghs, Bartram, and Henderickx, 2008), and that protean individuals are attracted to certain industries more than others (Segers, Inceoglu, Vloeberghs, Bartram, and Henderickx, 2008). This is mainly due to the fact that the studied sample is relatively young and is dominated by individuals from the construction sector which is the largest sector in Qatar.

These findings align with the arguments in the career fields regarding the demise of the old career concept. It argues that not all self-initiated expatriates possess the protean career orientation and that a large number of them are still following the traditional career path which is founded on objective success and hierarchal advancement. Human resource professionals and policy makers in Qatar should be aware of the tendencies of this considerable chunk of the workforce, which is increasing in demand, in order to adopt and develop the appropriate strategies and policies to develop and retain them.

VI. LIMITATIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the main limitations facing this study is related to the size of the sample and the nature of information provided by interviewees. Semi-structured interviews are meant to probe deeper in search for new insights, but the problem with qualitative methods is that the sample might not be representative of the targeted population (Qu and Dumay, 2011).

The new law on NOC and exit permits will take effect by December 2016. With the new law, employees can transfer their jobs after the expiry of their contracts and will no longer need the approval of the employer to exit the country. It would be beneficial to run this study one year after the implementation of the new law in order to study its effects on the protean individuals.

Moreover, taking into consideration that SIEs can be linked to the new career concepts since they are responsible for their own careers, it would be beneficial to study the careers of other expatriates, especially those transferred by their companies, and how they navigate specific contextual constraints in order to gain insights about their careers orientation in a highly regulated environment.

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VIII. APPENDIX 1:

Q1: What motivates you to work? What are your expectations of your job?

Q2: What are your career goals?

Q3: How would you define career success?

Q4: What would you do if your values and interests contradicted with those of the organization you worked for?

Q5: How did you cope with the laws and regulations in Qatar and the work environment you are in?

Q6: What hinders the progress of your career?

Q7: How much career planning have you done up to this point?

Q8: Are you satisfied with where you have reached in your career so far? Are you in control of your decisions regarding your career?