

# INTRODUCTION TO THE 'HUMAN RESOURCES' COURSE

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# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- Understand why it is relevant to study HR in technical postgrads
- Outline the approach of this course
- Discuss some basic managerial concepts

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What's the first thing that comes to mind  
when you hear the word "Human  
Resources"?

And, what about HRM?

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Why do you think there is an increased  
focus on how to manage people?

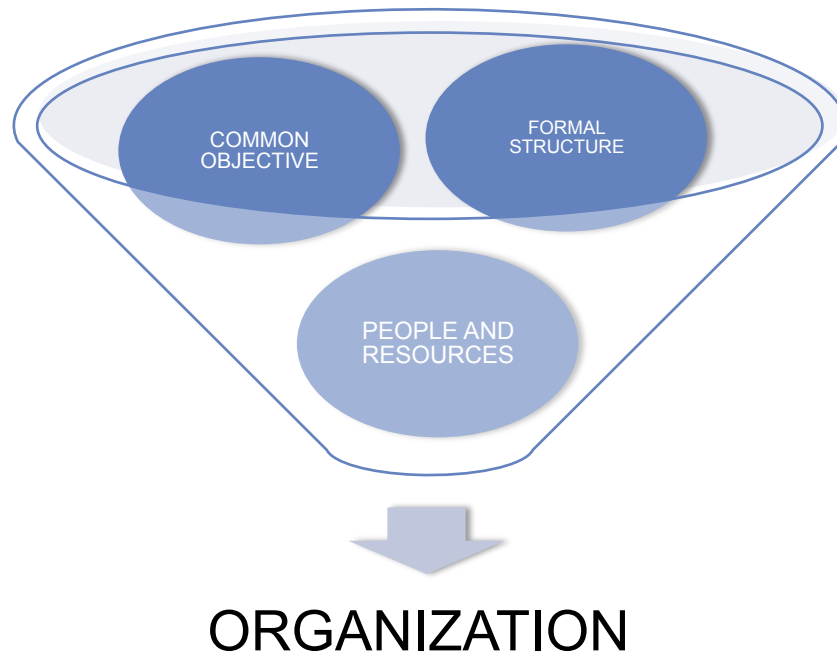
Why should I care about HR being an  
engineer?

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# Basic concepts

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## 1. What is an organization?



“a group of people working together in a structured and coordinated fashion to achieve a set of goals” (Griffin, 2012, p. 3)

# Basic concepts (I)

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## **2. Is a company an organization?**

A company is commonly defined as an organization which is profit-driven. It is an organization since it is a group of people that work together in a structured way in order to achieve a common goal.

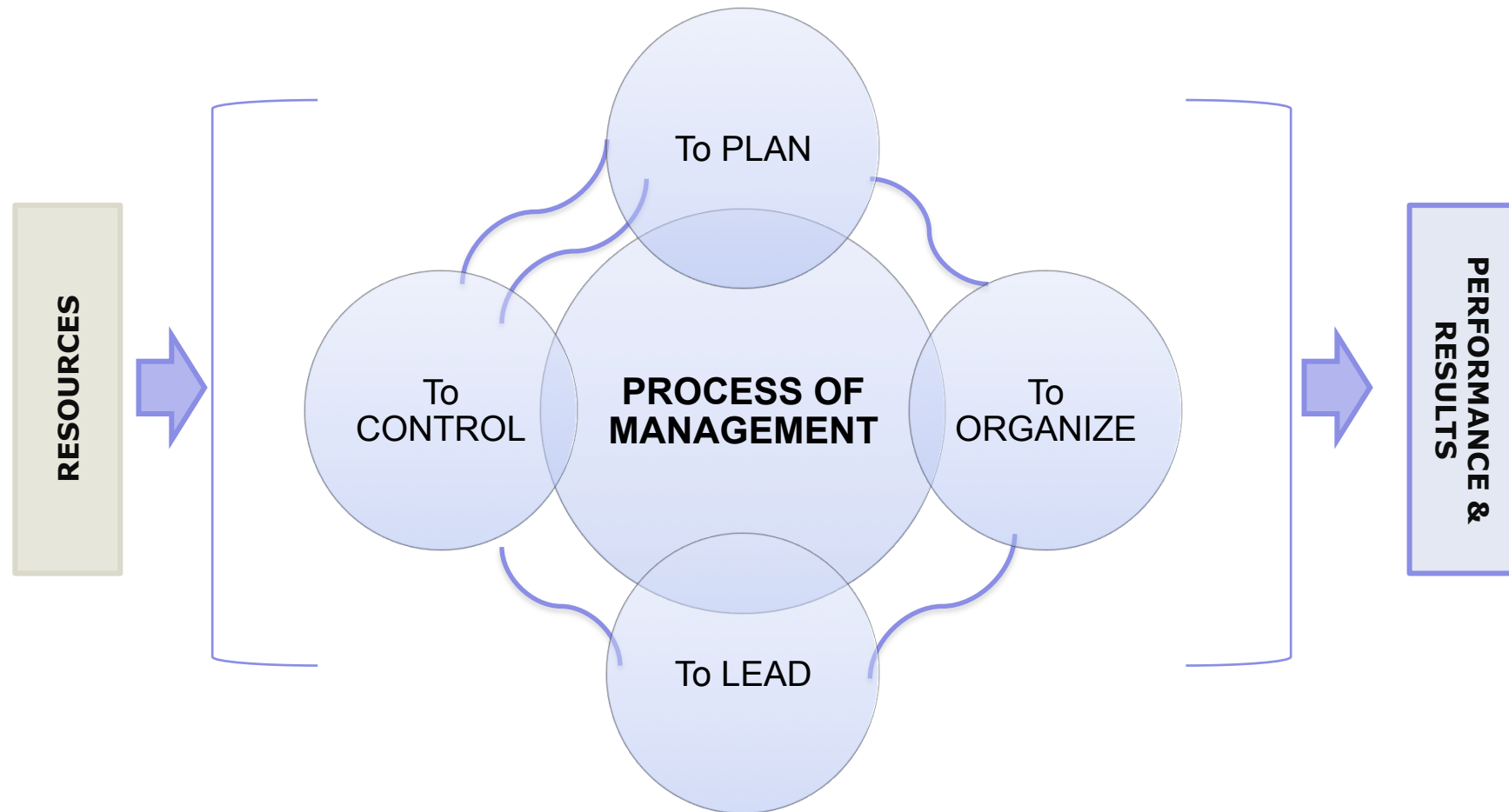
## Basic concepts (II)

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### **3. What is meant by management?**

The concept “management” refers to the process of getting things done efficiently and with efficacy both through leading people and working alongside them. (Adapted from Robbins y De Cenzo, 2009, p. 6).

# Basic concepts (II-cont.)





## Basic concepts (III)

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### 4. How do you define a manager?



A manager is somebody who is in charge of other people.

# Basic concepts (III-cont.)

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Not every manager performs the same tasks. There are different levels of managers. The most common ones are:

- *Top managers*
- *Middle managers*
- Line managers (or supervisors)

Normally, we can find managers within each functional area of the firm (i.e., Marketing managers, HR managers, etc.)

# Basic concepts (IV)

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## 5. HR responsibilities of managers

*"At a start-up company, the first supervisors are the company's founders. Not all founders recognize their HR responsibilities, but those who do have a powerful advantage." (Noe et al., 2011, p. 16).*

"... supervisors typically have responsibilities related to all the HR functions. (...) Organizations depend on supervisors to help them determine what kinds of work need to be done (job analysis and design) and how many employees are needed (HR planning). Supervisors typically interview job candidates and participate in the decisions about which candidates to hire. Many organizations expect supervisors to train employees in some or all aspects of the employees' jobs. Supervisors conduct performance appraisals and may recommend pay increases. And, of course, supervisors play a key role in employee relations (...) Understanding the principles of communication, motivation, and other elements of human behavior can help supervisors inspire the best from the organizations' human resources." (Noe et al., 2011, pp. 16-17).

## Basic concepts (V)

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# 6. What skills should a manager have?

# Basic concepts (IV-cont.)

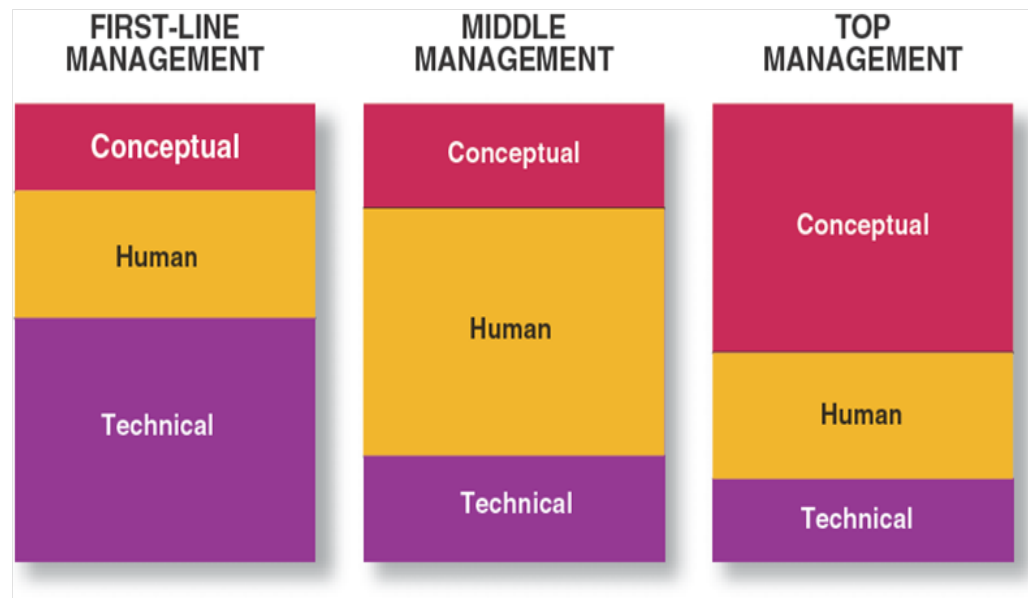
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There are three basic managerial skills:

- 1. Conceptual skills:** the ability to analyze complex information. It enables managers to think abstractly. They can be defined as the ability to analyze and diagnose complex situations, and to understand the organization in a holistic way. This allows managers to see the *big picture* of the organization and take decisions.
- 2. Interpersonal (or human) skills:** the ability to communicate and work effectively with other people. It involves motivating, leading, communicating, team building, providing feedback and instructing employees.
- 3. Technical skills:** They refer to the necessary abilities to use tools, techniques and procedures that are specific to a particular field and allow a person to do their job. They refer to the specific knowledge of a field.

# Basic concepts (IV-cont.)

Although the three skills are essential for a manager, each of them has a different degree of importance depending on the level of the manager. However, the interpersonal (or human) skills are very important in each of the managerial levels.



Source: <http://mgmtzone101.blogspot.com.es/2012/03/tutorial-1-managerial-roles-and.html>

**“There is an increasing awareness that technical skills, even for technical positions, are insufficient for subsequent success beyond an entry-level position, let alone for professional fields. Subsequent success beyond these initial levels usually requires proficiency in soft-skill areas: leadership, self-management, conflict resolution, communication, emotional intelligence, and so on”**

**Laker & Powell (2011, p. 113)**

**“Teams are now, and will continue to be, a key feature of organizations.  
(...) In this kind of an environment, workers are acting more like managers,  
and managers more like workers. The managerial roles of “controllers”,  
“planners” and “inspectors” are being replaced by “coaches”,  
“facilitators” and “mentors” (Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006; Wellins,  
Byham, & Wilson, 1991). This doesn’t just happen – it requires good  
interpersonal skills, continuous learning, and an organizational culture that  
supports and encourages both. ”**

**Cascio & Aguinis (2014, p. 8)**



## JOB SECURITY VS. EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

Job security: the belief that one will retain employment with the same organization until retirement

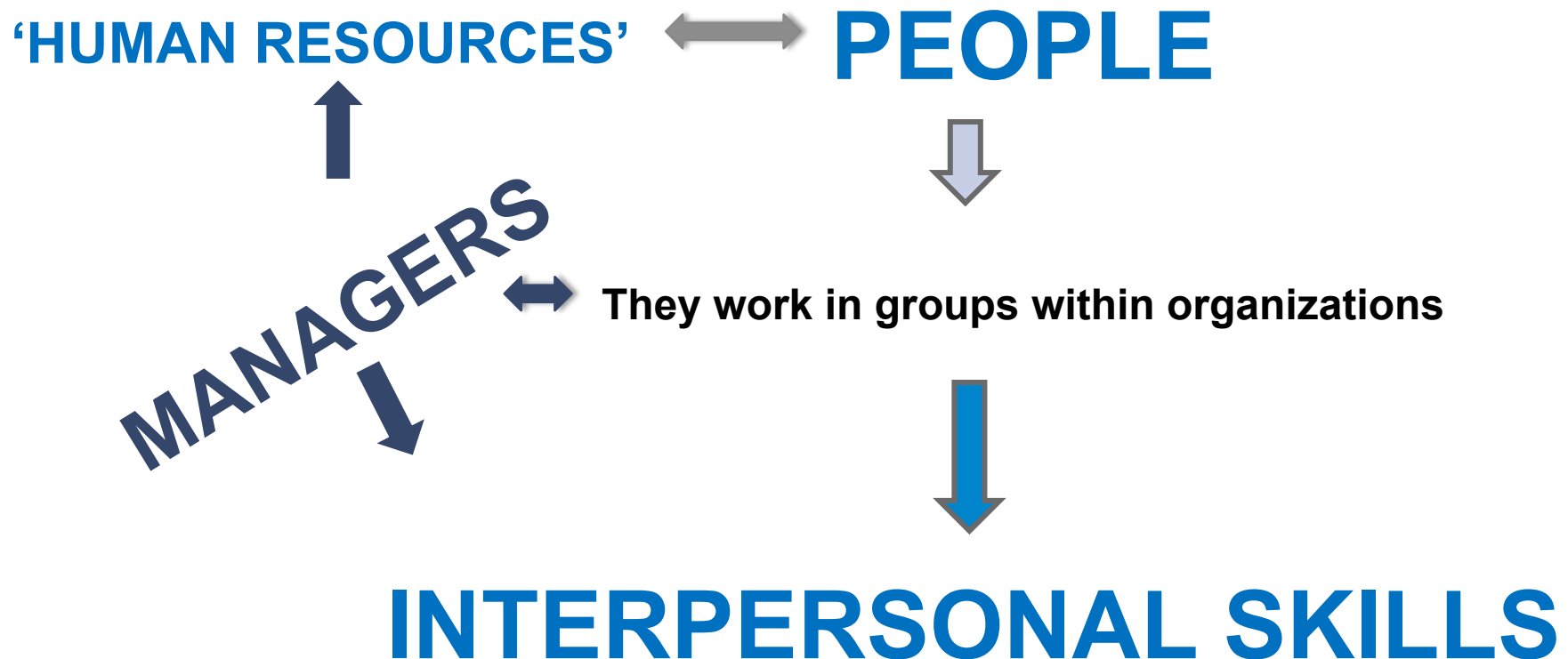
Employment security: having the kinds of skills that employers in the labor market are willing to pay for

As we move further into the information age, job security has become less important to workers than employment security.

Cascio & Aguinis (2014, p. 1)

# Approach of the course

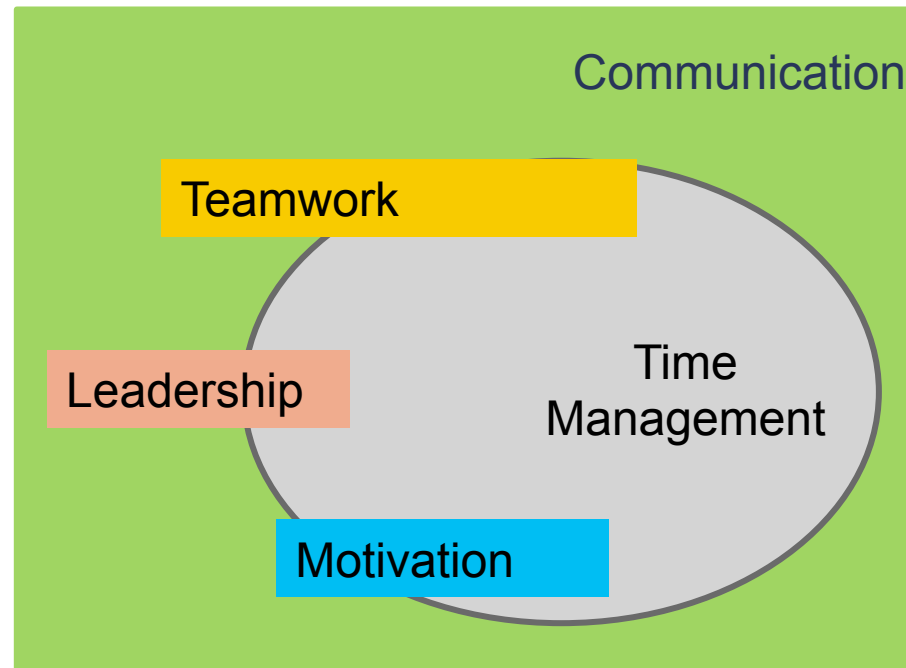
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# Approach of the course (I)

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## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS



# References

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- Cascio, W. F. & Aguinis, H. (2014). *Applied Psychology in Human Resource Management*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Essex: Pearson.
- Dowling, P. J., Festing, M., Engle, A. D. (2013). *International Human Resource Management*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Hampshire: Cengage Learning EMEA.
- Laker, D. R. & Powell, J. L. (2011). *The differences between hard and soft skills and their relative impact on training transfer*, Human Resource Development Quarterly, 22(1), 111-122.
- Noe, R. A., Hollenbeck, J. R., Gerhart, B., & Wright, P. M. (2011). *Fundamentals of Human Resource Management*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.

## How to win friends and influence people?

(Dale Carnegie, 1963):

- Muestre interés por la gente
- Sonría
- Use el nombre de pila del interlocutor
- Escuche atentamente
- Trate temas de interés para su interlocutor
- Hágalo siempre sentirse importante

# Defining international HRM (I)

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“Morgan defines international HRM as the interplay among the three dimensions of human resource activities, type of employees and country of operation. We can see that in broad terms IHRM involves the same activities as domestic HRM (e.g. procurement refers to HR planning and staffing).” (Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2013, p. 3)

# Basic concepts (II)

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## What is meant by HRM?

“Typically, HRM refers to those activities undertaken by an organization to effectively utilize its human resources. These activities would include at least the following:

1. Human Resource planning
2. Staffing (recruitment, selection, placement)
3. Performance management
4. Training and development
5. Compensation (remuneration) and benefits
6. Industrial relations”

(Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2013, p. 2)

# Defining international HRM

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Which activities change when HRM goes international? Morgan (1986) presents IHRM on three dimensions:

1. "The broad human resource activities of procurement, allocation and utilization (these three broad activities can be easily expanded into the six HR activities listed above).
2. The national or country categories involved in international HRM activities: the host-country where a subsidiary may be located; the parent-country where the firm is headquartered; and 'other' countries that may be the source of labor, finance and other inputs.
3. The three categories of employees of an international firm: host-country nationals (HCNs); parent-country nationals (PCNs), and third-country nationals (TCNs)."

(Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2013, p. 3)



# Defining international HRM (II)

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Dowling argues that the complexity of international HR can be attributed to six factors:

- more HR activities: international taxation; international relocation and orientation (arranging for pre-departure training; providing immigration and travel details, providing housing, shopping, medical care, recreation and schooling information, finalizing compensation salaries, etc.), administrative services for expatriates, host-government relations, language translation services.
- the need for a broader perspective;
- more involvement in employees' personal lives;
- changes in emphasis as the workforce mix of expatriates and locals varies;
- risk exposure; and
- broader external influences."

(Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2013, pp. 4-8)

# Variables that moderate differences between domestic and international HRM

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1. The cultural environment
2. The industry (or industries) with which the multinational is primarily involved
3. The extent of reliance of the multinational on its home-country domestic market
4. The attitudes of senior management

(Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2013, p.8)

# What is an expatriate?

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“An expatriate is an employee who is working and temporarily residing in a foreign country. Many firms prefer to call such employees ‘international assignees’. (...) The term inpatriate has come into vogue to signify the transfer of subsidiary staff into the parent country (headquarters) operations. For many managers this term has added a level of confusion surrounding the definition of an expatriate (...) For clarity, we will use the term expatriate (...) to refer to employees who are transferred out of their home base/parent country into some other area of the firm’s international operations.”

(Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2013, p. 3)