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Global talent’s location decision: the impact of intrinsic motivation and location branding

Abstract

City location branding is becoming an important concept for HR academics and it is used by cities as a critical strategy in winning the ‘war for talent’. However, the impact of location branding on attraction of global talent has not been explored in the HRM literature, and further research is needed. A conceptual model is developed which integrates literature on location branding and SIEs’ individual motivations to explain global talent’s location decisions. Contributions are made to the HRM literature by emphasising the role of location branding in attracting global talent, and to government authorities in providing recommendations for developing location branding strategies based on the factors that attract global talent.

Keywords:

City, location branding, skilled migration, global talent, self-initiated expatriates, motivation.
**Introduction**

Talent is a key variable in attracting high-technology industries to cities and generating higher incomes (Florida, 2002b). Global demographic and economic trends such as an ageing workforce and declining birth rates exacerbate the need for not only countries, but cities as well, to compete in the ‘war for talent’ (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). Increasingly, cities all over the world are facing the need to attract and retain a skilled workforce as the primary factor sustaining their economic growth (Glaeser, Scheinkman, & Shleifer, 1995). However, increased mobility of high-skilled workers and the development of knowledge-based economies pose a challenge to attracting and retaining global talent.

The use of location branding is an important strategy for city authorities in attracting and retaining global talent, and winning the war for talent. Popularity of the branding of cities is increasing among city officials (Zenker, 2011), supporting the view that “location branding has become a real-world phenomenon” (Van Ham, 2002, p.252). However, branding of locations has attracted relatively little interest in the academic literature, especially in relation to attracting and retaining global talent. The role of location branding in assisting local governments to attract global talent has not been explored in the HRM literature (Thite, 2011). This area of literature typically focuses on managing, acquiring, developing and retaining global talent from an organisation’s point of view (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). Clearly there is a growing disparity between actual government needs, practices and developments in the HRM literature.

The purpose of this article is to explore the role of location branding and global talent’s motivation in making their location decision, and by doing so the paper addresses two main limitations in the existing literature. First, the HRM literature has not explored the role of location branding in understanding global talent’s decision to relocate. Second, city branding
literature typically focuses on visitors, tourists and investors, and rarely considers global
talent. Consequently, identified factors influencing location branding are not necessarily the
ones assessed by global talent when deciding to relocate to a city.

In this paper, we explore elements of location branding, global talent’s motivation, and their
subsequent decision to stay or to move to another city. We will draw on the HRM literature
on global talent, particularly related to self-initiated expatriates, as well as marketing
literature on location branding. In addition, we examine individual psychological differences
that influence expatriate motivations and location decisions. A conceptual model that
integrates location branding factors and global talent’s motivation is developed. Both
components of the model influence the global talent’s decision to stay or move to another
location. By emphasising the role of location branding in attracting global talent, the paper
provides a significant contribution to the HRM literature. Another contribution of the paper is
in making recommendations for government authorities on developing location branding
strategies based on the factors that attract global talent.

**City related factors that attract global talent**

Global talent can be defined as individuals who possess high levels of human capital i.e. right
skill set and levels of motivation that is consistent with the needs of businesses operating in
the global business environment. Global talent are also skilled, innovative and entrepreneurial
(Hugo, 2006) and promote economic growth through their creativity (Thite, 2011). Clearly,
an important characteristic of global talent is human capital, as indicated in Beaverstock and
Hall’s (2012, p.272) explanation of talent labour as “highly skilled professional and
managerial labour”. Thus, an important measure of global talent’s human capital is their
knowledge-intensive occupations that reflect actual economic value created by the global
talent, rather than considering only educational attainment of the global talent (Florida, 2002b).

Apart from a high level of human capital, another important characteristic of global talent is that they are free to sell their labour to any employer in the world. In fact, Beechler and Woodward (2009) note that emigration rates for high-skilled workers is 5.5%, while the emigration rate for low-skilled and medium-skilled workers is 0.9% and 1.6% respectively. In other words, global talent are mobile and free to choose the city in which they live and work (Florida, 2002b). Hence, the mere existence of universities, training and education facilities does not guarantee the retention of talent which is highly mobile. In fact, universities can be seen as ‘talent factories’ that may establish an initial advantage for a city in the war for talent (Glaeser, Gyourko, & Saks, 2005) or more commonly supply knowledge workers to other regions (Florida, 2006).

Global talent is commonly found in city regions that are tolerant and open to diversity, indicating lower barriers to entry for human capital (Florida, 2002a). In addition, Florida (2001) found a positive association between concentrations of gay households and regional development. Interestingly, Florida (2002b) found that talent is more attracted to diversity than to measures of climate, recreational, and cultural amenities. In another study, Mellander and Florida (2006) found that universities, amenities, as well as tolerance and openness to diversity have a complementary role in attracting global talent. Florida, Mellander, and Stolarick (2010) found that tolerance influences talent, production and regional income in Canada where each of the three tolerance measures have a different influence on talent and income.

A number of studies have explored a range of external factors that attract global talent to a particular location. Amenities such as wage levels, economic opportunity, and land-rent have been considered to affect attraction of global talent (Roback, 1988). Additional amenities
such as lifestyle, that is, consumer and personal service (Glaeser, Kolko, & Saiz, 2001), entertainment, nightlife and culture have been stressed in attracting talent (Florida, 2002b). Indeed, factors that attract global talent consider more than jobs and economic opportunity, and include quality of life that encompasses social cohesion, health care, public education, housing, transportation, environmental quality as well as culture and recreation amenities (Donald, 2001).

Although the identified factors are relevant and important indicators of talent workers’ preferences of location characteristics, the reviewed literature does not focus on global talent or the role of city authorities in creating quality environments. In other words, existing literature does not address the issues of labour supply and mobility. The focus of this paper combines both location characteristics as well as global talent’s motivation in developing an understanding of their decision to relocate.

In contrast, Thite (2011) distinguishes between the factors that attract new workers to smart cities such as Edmonton (Canada), Austin (Texas, USA) and cities in EU, identified as ‘magnet’ factors, and factors that hold communities together and retain workers or ‘glue’ factors. Smart cities attract knowledge workers through local government investments focused on increasing the quality of life, which are done in partnership with local business leaders (Thite, 2011). Attraction factors are “a healthy and well-educated workforce, clean environment, vibrant business climate, and a solid social and cultural infrastructure” (Thite, 2011, p.627). Glue factors are “physical infrastructure that supports daily life and work (such as roads, sewers, electricity and communications systems), [...] a social and cultural infrastructure to solve problems and promote the economic and social well-being of all their members” (Thite, 2011, p.627).

Similar factors are identified as foundations of a knowledge city (KC), where a purposeful city design nurtures innovation, science, and creativity, which in turn supports knowledge
creation, and economic growth and development (Yigitcanlar, O’Connor, & Westerman, 2008). KCs need to attract and retain talented workers and this is done through development of knowledge industries and human capital programs. The foundations of a KC that attract knowledge workers include the knowledge base, industrial structure, quality of life and urban amenities, urban diversity and cultural mix, social equity and inclusion, and the scale of a city (Yigitcanlar et al., 2008). However, these foundation factors are being shaped by local government’s tools, namely, technology and communication, creativity and culture, human capital, attracting knowledge workers, and urban development clusters and spatial relationships.

It is evident from the discussion above that global talent is important for economic growth and development of cities and that global talent is attracted to quality environments. Another important conclusion is that governments have an important role in attracting global talent by influencing and promoting cities as places to live and work. This is done through location branding which is discussed next.

**Location branding**

This paper posits that location branding of a city has an important role in attracting and retaining global talent. Location branding is defined as a location image-building strategy that links place attributes (physical, emotional, social, symbolic, and experiential) with global talent’s perception of quality and value of these attributes (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). This is a relatively new concept, with origins in product branding marketing theory and application in public urban planning (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005).

Location branding has become an academic discipline fairly recently, with only ten papers written on this topic in the period from 1990-2000, but after 2002 this number started
increasing rapidly and 40 papers were published in 2008, the same year as the Journal of Place Management and Development was created (Gertner, 2011). However, the majority of these papers were qualitative and conceptual in nature, comprising case studies, editorials and essays, with only a minority of papers undertaking quantitative research, as reported by Gertner (2011) in his literature review. Furthermore, the author emphasises “Almost never do the articles propose testable models or hypotheses, present conclusions, advance recommendations, or discuss opportunities for future research” (Gertner, 2011, p.125). Clearly, the location branding research area is expanding as its importance is recognised.

A number of different topics have been explored in the location branding literature and these can be classified into three main groups: a) location branding of cities, regions, towns and countries (e.g., Martinovic, 2002), b) application of marketing theory to location branding such as product branding (e.g., Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005), corporate branding (e.g., Hankinson, 2007; Kavaratzis, 2004), and c) application of location branding in tourism and destination image (e.g. Hankinson, 2005).

Based on Caldwell and Freire’s (2004) findings that factors influencing a country’s image are different from factors influencing image of a city, we will further focus our review on papers that focus on location branding of cities. The distinction between geographical locations is based on Hanna and Rowley’s (2008) findings on location branding terminology. Terms commonly used in the literature to describe a city are ‘Destination’ and ‘Location’. Region is mostly described as a ‘Destination’ and a ‘Place’ and country as a ‘Destination’, ‘Place’ or a ‘Nation’.

Following our research objective, we narrow our focus to reviewing papers that consider specific groups of stakeholders, in particular, global talent, although other groups have been considered in the literature, such as investors, residents, tourists, and city decision makers. Only a handful of papers focus on each specific group of stakeholders and location branding,
and only two studies consider skilled labour, that is, migrants (Baum, Hearns, & Devine, 2008) and the creative class (Sebastian Zenker, 2009). Clearly, the role of location branding needs to be further explored in attracting global talent, and it is this gap to which this paper aims to contribute. We also aim to emphasise the importance of location branding for the HRM literature. The majority of papers on location branding have been published in marketing and tourism journals (Gertner, 2011), while according to our knowledge, no paper on location branding has been linked to the HRM area or published in an HRM journal.

Location identity is a term used to represent the city’s actual characteristics, both tangible and intangible, such as infrastructure and housing on one hand, and a city’s personality and values on the other (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Furthermore, Zenker (2010, p.42) defines a location identity as the “visual, verbal and behavioural expressions of a place, which are embodied in the aims, communication, values and general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design”. The reason for city authorities to engage in development of location identity, its social and economic functions, is to attract human capital, resources and investments, as well as tourism, and thus ensure the city’s growth and development (Hall, 2004). Location identity has three elements, as defined by Kavaratzis (2004). The first element refers to a city’s physical characteristics such as architecture and real place offerings, as well as the city’s behaviour. The second element is official place communication, such as advertising and public relations. The third and the last element of location identity is unofficial place communication, mainly, word of mouth reinforced by the media and the residents.

In general, brands provide customers with certainty about the ‘product’s’ standards, characteristics and quality, thus, guiding customers’ ‘purchase’ decisions and reducing their information complexity and overload (Van Ham, 2002). That is, consumers, as one group of stakeholders, are the ones who are experiencing location identity as a brand created by city
authorities and marketers, and clearly, they need to be taken into account when developing location identity. Realisations of the city authorities’ social and economic goals are mediated by location branding, that is, target stakeholders’ perceptions of the city’s characteristics (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). In addition, Hankinson (2007) explains that place is a product that is co-produced and co-consumed, thus emphasising the interactions between different groups of stakeholders who all have different goals. Location branding is thus often different from the city officials’ intended message and the city’s identity, although it is influenced by both. Consequently, location branding is a dynamic, complex, and not fully manageable process.

Location branding refers to the location stakeholders’ perceptions of the place, as reflected in Zenker’s (2010, p.48) definition of location branding being a “mental representation in the individual persons’ mind”. Location branding is influenced by location identity, as observed in Zenker and Braun’s (2010, p. 3) definition of location branding: “a network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place [...]”. Location branding literature informs that individuals create their perceptions of a city as a place to work and live, through cognitive processing. Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) identify three processes though which people make sense of places. These are planned intervention (planning, urban design etc.), use of the place by the person or others, and place representations (e.g., news reports, movies, novels). In other words, location stakeholders develop their perception of a place through direct experience by visiting the city, formal communication though media as well as informal communication with residents or previous visitors of a city. These processes are aligned with Kavaratzis’ (2004) three elements of location identity, leading to a conclusion that global talent makes sense of a place through location identity. Global talent’s perception of a city may be particularly influenced by the
informal communication, particularly word of mouth from their friends, colleagues and families (Thite, 2011).

**Figure 1**: Location branding and global talent’s decision to relocate

![Diagram](image)

Figure 1 above summarises our discussion on location branding literature in relation to global talent’s decision to relocate. The outcome variables are conceptualised as global talent’s decision to relocate to the city (attraction), to stay in the city (retention) or to move to another city.

However, location branding may be a critical but not sufficient factor that explains global talent’s decision to relocate. In this paper, we argue that global talent’s motivation is another factor that needs to be considered when conceptualising global talent’s decision to relocate. Motivation is based on global talent’s expectations, values, and personalities, and as such it provides a set of criteria based on which they create their perception of a place. Such an argument has been implicit in the tourism literature that applies location branding. A successful example of linking location branding with tourists’ needs and motivation is reflected in Hall’s (2004) model of location branding for tourism purposes. Elements of the model are local people’s values and character, place with its landscapes and buildings, power status of the location, romance reflecting feelings of the location, and its accessibility which is at the heart of the model. Accessibility refers to tourists’ ease of meeting local people,
experiencing the location, and associated feelings, as well as ease of arriving at the destination. The model reflects the underlying assumption that visitors are motivated by, and value meeting local residents and experiencing several dimensions of the place itself. Hall’s (2004) model emphasises creating emotional links with tourists by linking their motivation and the place itself. Such an approach ensures the optimal value from location branding.

The focus of this paper is on global talent rather than tourists, as global talent is of particular importance for economic growth and development of a city. Global talent presents a different category of consumers for a city branding strategy. In contrast to tourists, global talent is interested in more than just a geographical location, culture, history and entertainment (Herstein, 2012). The aim of this paper is to explore the role of location branding as well as global talent’s motivation in shaping their decision to relocate to a city. So far location branding literature has focused on individuals’ perceptions of a place and mental processes through which they create such perceptions, while failing to consider their motivation to relocate. Motivation needs to be considered in order to further understand global talent’s decision to relocate, and to inform city authorities on what global talent expects from a place which may be particularly important in developing successful location branding strategies.

By considering global talent’s motivation and location branding literature, we are hoping to establish a link between marketing, psychology and HRM disciplines, and to emphasise the relevance of location branding for HRM literature that focuses on global talent.

In line with the arguments above, we can conclude that global talent’s location choice is influenced by both the location branding and their intrinsic motivation. Global talent’s motivation is discussed more in the following section.
**Self-initiated expatriates**

The focus in both HR and broader management literature has shifted from a broad emphasis on expatriates generally, to distinguish between company-initiated (CIE) and self-initiated expatriation (SIE) (e.g., Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997; Selmer & Lauring, 2010). Individuals invited by their current employer to take up an international posting have different needs and give different reasons for seeking or accepting such a post than do individuals who seek a new employer in an international location (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). While the importance for employers of understanding motivations of CIEs cannot be understated, this research focuses on SIEs, as their behaviours are less well understood. The defining difference between these two groups is the source of the initiative to leave the home country. For CIEs it comes from the employer while for SIEs it comes from the individual (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). For SIEs this process of leaving home has been defined as “long-term individually initiated travels to other countries to pursue cultural, personal and career development experiences” (Myers & Pringle, 2005, p. 421).

**Variety seeking**

An individual characteristic or personality trait that holds promise for understanding the relocation behaviour of global talent is variety seeking. In a qualitative study of 30 self-directed British expatriate academics, it was notable that the vast majority stated that the decision to undertake an international location change was spontaneous (Richardson & Mallon, 2005), initiated through inadvertent knowledge of an opportunity. This raises the question of possible individual differences on variety seeking that lead to a higher susceptibility to such opportunities.

McAlister and Pessemier (1982) explored influences on changes in behaviour and believe that both internal and external forces are required to cause the satisfaction some individuals
gain from such change. The internal forces are threefold: 1) the desire for the unfamiliar, 2) desire for alternation among the familiar and 3) desire for information. The external forces include needs for personal identity and group affiliation (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982; Raju, 1980). This variety-seeking behavioural trait is linked to the existence of an ideal level of stimulation (Raju, 1980). As an individual’s stimulation falls below the optimal level, cognitive action will produce more input (e.g., exploration, novelty seeking) (Driver & Streufert, 1964). If stimulation increases beyond the ideal level, cognitive action will attempt to reduce or simplify input. The nature of SIEs, as defined above, is such that they are likely to hold an inherent need for stimulation.

An additional aspect of the variety seeking trait was investigated by Homburg and Giering (2001) in their work on the link between customer satisfaction and loyalty. They found that variety seeking, age, and income were significant moderators of the relationship between satisfaction with the status quo (e.g. current employer, city location, position) and their likelihood of continuing the relationship. Individuals, if they have strong variety seeking characteristics, have the potential to become SIEs if they are dissatisfied with their current conditions or see potential for greater satisfaction in another location. Classifying current employees on the strength of their variety seeking trait would enable greater effectiveness in communicating with these individuals via location branding.

Other motivators

Recent research on expatriate motivation distinguishes between SIE and company-backed expatriates (Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills, 2011; Selmer & Lauring, 2010) and the majority of this research investigates the context of academic careers (Richardson & McKenna, 2002; Selmer & Lauring, 2012). Investigations of other industry contexts is limited (e.g., Doherty, et al., 2011).
Within the relatively small body of research focusing on the motivation of SIEs there have been a number of influencing factors identified. Richardson and McKenna (2002) determined that adventure/travel, life change/escape, financial incentives, and career considerations were paramount. A later study by Jackson, et al. (2005) outlined a different set of priorities from economics, career, family, lifestyle and culture, and the political environment. Meyskens, Von Glinow, Werther, and Clarke (2009) investigated a range of motivations for global talent to relocate, finding that gender, marital status, family issues, dual-career issues, work-life balance, security, tax management, immigration laws, and cost control all had substantial influence on choices.

Suutari, Tornikoski, and Mäkelä (2012) explored what motivates and influences international employees’ recent career decisions (either a change of employer or a rejection of external job offers). They found that global careerists base their career-move decisions on two categories of returns: first on motivational intangible and non-financial rewards, and secondarily on financial rewards. Cerdin and Le Pargneux developed a set of 12 items to measure motivation for expatriates (Cerdin, 2012) which they categorised and push and pull factors. These included the challenging nature of a job opportunity assignment, monetary or family considerations, and the geographic location of an expatriate assignment (Cerdin, 2012).

The motivating influence of a range of demographic factors has been explored including gender and age (Selmer & Lauring, 2010), location and life stage (Thorn, 2009), and marital status (Jackson, et al., 2005). Results indicate that each of these factors has an impact on the decision to expatriate and it is clear that as these demographic elements change over time, so do motivations and the strength of the stimulus to expatriate (Ackers, 2005).

One of the few studies explicitly examining the influence of location factors (Thorn, 2009) explored the link between location and motivation. In order to determine if different destinations attracted people who had particular priorities, an analysis of the motives by the
continent of residence was undertaken. Results indicated that there are some clear differences in motivation between global talent residing in particular locations. Career development reasons were the strongest influence on those living in Oceania and North America, while those living in Asia relocated there for primarily economic reasons (Thorn, 2009).

In line with the trend toward understanding the effect of individual differences on decision-making (e.g., Nair & Ramnarayan, 2000), some prior research has explored elements of attitudes with relation to expatriate motivations. This includes employee-work-related attitudes such as job satisfaction (Bhuiyan, Al-Shammari, & Jefri, 2001) which were found to strongly affect job performance, absenteeism and organisational commitment.

A seminal study by Richardson and McKenna among self-initiated expatriate academics identified the motivations of desire for adventure, dissatisfaction with current situation, and desire for greater job rewards (Richardson & McKenna, 2002) which allowed classification into four distinct categories of SIE, namely explorer, architect, mercenary and refugee. Based on individual motivation, each form of SIEs will value and focus on different aspects of location branding. Understanding SIEs’ underlying motivation to expatriate has important implications for their location decisions, as discussed next. We believe this typology of intrinsic motivation may have validity beyond the academic context among SIEs from varied industries.

Explorers are characterised by their desire for adventure and travel. They are motivated to make a location decision to fulfil their desire to explore and experience different cultures at a deeper level. Cultural amenities of a city, as well as a range of recreation and lifestyle opportunities would have an important impact on their location decision (Richardson & McKenna, 2002). Based on explorer’s motivation to expatriate we further propose:
**Proposition 1A:** Explorers will decide to locate to cities characterised by urban diversity and cultural mix, social equity and inclusion.

**Proposition 1B:** Location branding strategies that emphasise cultural diversity and uniqueness, as well as distinctive lifestyle will attract explorers.

An Architect’s main motivational drive is enhancement of their career prospects. Thus, he/she is motivated to change location in search of improved career prospects. They are attracted to places with a high concentration of professionals where they can build professional networks, and engage in activities and projects that would enhance their careers. They are attracted to places in which they can obtain training and experience and develop a strong reputation in their field (Richardson & McKenna, 2002).

**Proposition 2A:** Architects will decide to locate to cities with strong business image, and prospects for career development.

**Proposition 2B:** Location branding strategies that emphasise vibrant business community, strong knowledge base, and innovative industrial structure will attract architects.

A Mercenary’s primary motivation to change location is financial gain. They are willing to put up with discomfort as long as they are satisfied with the cost/gain ratio. They are judging the location branding through the lens of financial reward, and hence their location decision is influenced by the costs of a location (e.g., living, housing, transportation) in relation to the available salary level. As financial gain is their main driver, they are less likely to be committed to the organisation in the long run, as they would be constantly seeking better opportunities (Richardson & McKenna, 2002).

**Proposition 3A:** Mercenaries will decide to cities that offer high salary potential and/or lower cost of living.
Proposition 3B: Location branding strategies that emphasise business opportunities and financial gains, low income tax, low cost of living (e.g., housing, transportation) will attract mercenaries.

A Refugee’s decision to change location and expatriate is driven by their desire to escape their current situation, and to find a better personal and professional life. Thus, we believe that refugees will locate to those cities that offer an overall high quality of life, cultural and urban amenities, as well as community safety. (Donald, 2001; Richardson & McKenna, 2002)

Proposition 4A: Refugees will decide to locate to cities characterised by good quality of life and urban amenities, social equity and inclusion.

Proposition 4B: Location branding strategies that emphasise openness to diversity, good lifestyle and favourable immigration policy will attract refugees.

This classification fits neatly with the goal orientation theory (Locke & Latham, 2002) premise that conscious goals affect action. For example, with a personal performance goal of achieving a particular rank or status within a profession, an Architect will search for locations that are most likely to enable that advancement.

To date, the question of the impact of individual psychological differences on motivation to expatriate has not been extensively explored, and the influence of these factors on the motivations of self-initiated expatriates or global talent has received no attention. A foundational psychological understanding of these individuals is critical for effective communication of location branding based on accurate segmentation. As consumer heterogeneity both within and between cultures becomes an increasingly critical element in understanding audience responses to persuasive communication (Koslow & Costley, 2010),
there is a need for extensive research into the broad range of influences on reactions to location branding stimuli.

In order to further understanding of the contributing factors and possible catalysts motivating global talent, we explore the influence of values as an alternative theory of motivation to relocate (Fornerino, Jolibert, Sánchez, & Zhang, 2011).

**Values**

Human values have long been researched for their motivating influence on behaviour (Maslow, 1962; Rokeach, 1966, 1973). Early work concentrated on classifying values (Rokeach, 1973) which then led to further research on how values could be altered, along with the behaviours they mediate (Rustogi, 1990; Yau, 1988). Numerous typologies have been developed in an effort to understand the behaviours of individuals and groups (Bond, 1988; Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988).

More recently, Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) developed the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) as a tool to classify individual value motivations. Since 2002-2003, the SVS has been included in the European Social Survey (ESS), an instrument developed to investigate attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of individuals in more than 30 nations (ESS, 2014). The purpose of the ESS is to chart and understand change in social, political and moral arenas. The choice of the SVS over other value typologies is based on its designed ability to capture both individual-level and national-level values (Schwartz, 1994).

Development of the SVS distinguished ten motivationally distinct individual-level basic values, extracted from 57 items rated by respondents for their importance as ‘as a guiding principle in my life’. These dimensions are (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001, p. 270):

- Power: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (social power, authority, wealth, preserving my public image)
• Achievement: Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards (successful, capable, ambitious, influential)

• Hedonism: Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life)

• Stimulation: Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (daring, a varied life, an exciting life)

• Self-direction: Independent thought and action choosing, creating, exploring (creativity, freedom, independent, curious, choosing own goals)

• Universalism: Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (broad-minded, wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace, a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment)

• Benevolence: Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact (helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible)

• Tradition: Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self (humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect for tradition, moderate)

• Conformity: Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms (politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honouring parents and elders)

• Security: Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self (family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favours)

Differences between individuals on these values will affect their attitudes and behaviour and thus their response to marketing communications (Chow & Amir, 2006). From prior research, we believe that certain value dimensions will be dominant in SIEs. The Explorer (Richardson
& McKenna, 2002) appears likely to be strong in Stimulation, the Architect would have strong Achievement values, the Mercenary strong in Power, while the Refugee is likely to see greater utility in Security, Conformity and Tradition. All SIEs, by definition, are likely to hold strong Self-Direction values. Collection of such values data from SIEs would enable a greater understanding of the motivating impact of these values on decisions to relocate.

Values inherent to a city are displayed in their location branding either explicitly or implicitly. This can be seen from a large number of cross-cultural studies investigating the presence and influence of values in advertising (e.g., Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun, & Kropp, 1999; Fam & Grohs, 2007). Gilmore (2002) believes that the core values of a location must be central to its branding strategy because they represent “what the nation’s citizens believe in and believe about themselves” (p. 286). Thus, the values displayed in a city’s location branding will influence global talent’s responses to that branding. They will search for locations either consciously or unconsciously that display values that match their own inclination.

Explorers will be drawn to locations that offer Stimulation and where such activities are seen as appropriate. While regimented societies and locations such as North Korea may offer novelty and excitement in the short term, any longer term residence in that culture would be stifling and uncomfortable for Explorers. Architects will favour locations in which personal Achievement is encouraged, such as New York or Hong Kong. Mercenaries will look for locations where they can achieve the greatest financial gain while building themselves a position of personal Power. Refugees will pursue opportunities in locations that fulfil their needs for Security, Conformity and Tradition such as Auckland or Toronto.
Conceptual model

Figure 2 is a graphic representation of the links between the key constructs which have been discussed as antecedents to global talent’s relocation decision. Initial work by city planners on their marketing strategies contributes to location identity. Global talent’s individual perception of that identity is termed location branding. This branding image interacts with individual’s intrinsic motivations of value and variety-seeking, resulting in their emergence as one of the four forms of SIE (Explorer, Architect, Mercenary or Refugee) and contributing to a location decision. The shaded areas highlight where a body of literature from differing disciplines has been integrated.

Figure 2: Factors impacting SIEs’ location decision

Managerial Implications

In this paper global talent’s location decision has been conceptualised as being determined by individual motivation and location branding. Such an integrated model has several
implications for the HRM and location branding literature, as well as city government authorities.

Location branding implies that the power to attract global talent does not reside with employers only, but with city authorities as well which have a range of strategies at their disposal. With the range of international and global media channels constantly expanding, city authorities’ impact on global talent’s location decision will continue increasing in the future. Partnerships between city authorities and business community are needed to align their strategies for attracting global talent, and further collaboration between government and businesses should be fruitful for both. For example, location branding can be used by employers in recruiting global talent. Employers can create additional strategies linked to the city’s brand image to increase global talent’s commitment to the organisation, their satisfaction and consequently productivity. Government authorities can focus on creating specific location branding strategies that would assist global talent’s transition to a new culture, particularly nourishing a culture open to diversity, with extensive cultural and urban amenities.

Cities that collaborate strongly with businesses in creating their location branding strategies will be more successful in attracting global talent and winning the war for talent. Clearly, HRM literature on global talent needs to consider the importance of location branding in explaining global talent’s decision to expatriate. In addition, understanding SIEs’ intrinsic motivation to expatriate has important implications for management of global talent and finding ways to increase their commitment and loyalty.

In designing location branding strategies, city governments need to have their key stakeholders in mind, particularly global talent. Individual motivation differences are valuable for segmentation of stakeholders to increase the focus and effectiveness of city branding communication. By understanding key motivational drivers that influence global
talent’s location decision, namely, personal challenge, cultural experience, financial gain and career development, city authorities can develop location branding strategies targeted at attracting global talent. Based on understanding motivational drivers, city authorities can focus on the following four main strategies: a) improving quality of life through building cultural, urban and recreation amenities and encouraging diversity and openness; b) partnership with the business community, supporting its development, vibrancy and reputation; c) cost of living, that is, creating taxation and immigration policies that are global talent friendly; and d) creating a strong brand of the city that is based on one of the previous three location branding strategies.

Future research

An extensive program of research is needed to better understand the factors which influence the location decision of global talent, and in particular the SIEs. A comprehensive and in-depth evaluation of internal and external forces influencing SIE’s decision to relocate and their location choice should be initiated through both qualitative and quantitative studies. This should include collection of data from current SIEs on their values and variety seeking propensities and empirical testing of the link between these motivation factors and their emergence as Explorers, Architects, Mercenaries or Refugees.

In addition, it is important that SIE reactions and responses to location branding are investigated. This should begin with an assessment of media consumption habits to determine exposure to current city branding programs and incorporate information from current, past and potential SIEs. Clarifying how these global talent individuals learn about city branding and their response to those marketing strategies will enable city authorities to select the most effective communication channels for that branding. Refinement of location branding
strategies would then become possible through emphasising the appropriate quality of life factors and intrinsic values of the location in branding communication directed at global talent.

Another aspect of this topic that demands investigation is the examination of past and current location branding strategies for their effectiveness in attracting global talent. As discussed previously, this category of stakeholders has not usually been the prime target of location branding and it would be valuable to determine how their coincidental recruitment was achieved.

**Conclusion**

HRM literature has mainly focused on the role of corporations in attracting global talent. In this paper we have emphasised the role of location branding in influencing the location decision of global talent as well as intrinsic motivation. More specifically, three streams of the literature have been reviewed, literature on global talent and self-initiated expatriates, location branding and motivation, with the purpose of exploring global talent’s location decisions.

The conceptual model presented in this paper integrates city location characteristics as perceived by global talent, global talent’s motivation to move or stay in a city, and four categories of global talent that all influence their location decision. Such a model contributes to the existing literature and expands the HRM focus on global talent by emphasising location branding as an important tool in attracting global talent to cities. The model has implications for city authorities and marketers, in that they need to address the needs of global talent when developing location branding strategies. Focusing on global talent as a target audience is a promising avenue in helping cities win the war for talent, increase and sustain their economic growth.
References


