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African religious ministers' transition from expatriation to migration: the role of world-view

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African religious ministers' transition from expatriation to migration: the role of world-view

Abstract
Purpose - This article explores the contextual determinants of the move from expatriation into migration among ministers of religion originating from the developing world.
Design/methodology/approach - We used in-depth analysis of narratives of four African religious ministers working in France, plus interviews with their five superiors and three host country national colleagues.
Findings - The findings point to personal-level, organisational-level and country-level contextual determinants, which come into play as levers or barriers in the 'expatriation into migration' process.
Originality/value - Our study develops a theoretical framework which points to the positive and negative influence of three-layered contextual determinants on how expatriated low-status church ministers from the developing world become migrants. We found a so far unreported determinant of the personal context: the role of a world-view: very visible as 'God centrality' in our participants. Results also shed new light on the international careers of this overlooked category of 'non-traditional expatriates' from Africa.
Keywords Low-status church ministers, non-traditional expatriates, developing world, 'God centrality', world-view, Africa
Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The issue of global mobility has been studied separately across two main bodies of research: expatriation and migration. Research linking expatriation and migration mostly compares expatriates to migrants or aims to provide conceptual distinction between the two modes of international engagement (McNulty and Brewster, 2017; Al Ariss, 2010; Al Ariss and Crowley-Henry, 2013). Beyond these comparative reflections, which lead to different typologies of international workers, there is a lack of research at the intersection of expatriation and migration, and more specifically on the important, and common 'expatriation into migration' pattern. To redress this gap, this study enriches the global mobility literature at the intersection of these two streams by exploring the contextual determinants that contribute to explaining the 'expatriation into migration' process among expatriated African religious ministers working in France. We develop a theoretical framework which offers a better understanding of how expatriated low-status church ministers from the developing world transfer from temporary (expatriate) status to settled (migrant) status.

There have been centuries-old traditions of religious international mobility by European missionaries preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ worldwide, following his command to "…make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). However, as mentioned by Oberholster and Doss (2017, p. 319) "more than 50% of Christian missionaries now originate from non-Western countries, particularly from Africa, Asia and Latin America". This global trend reversal in the twenty-first century includes a growing number of 'non-traditional expatriate' religious ministers originating from the developing world who are today ministering in developed western countries which are confronted by a shortage of parish workers. By 'bringing Africa in' (George *et al.*, 2016, p. 377) in a study of expatriated African ministers of religion who become migrants in France, we respond to recent calls for research on 'non-traditional expatriates' (Guttormsen, 2018) and on internationally mobile workers from the developing world (Al Ariss, 2010; Al Ariss and Crowley-Henry, 2013). Within the study of this overlooked category of non-traditional expatriates from Africa, our exploration aims to better comprehend the important phenomenon of expatriation to migration, which is a reality for many developing country expatriates who become migrants, but is rarely examined in the global mobility literature.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we outline the theoretical framework of our study around the management study of religious issues and religious ministers, and the literature on the

global mobility of international workforces. By bridging these two streams of literature, we identify knowledge gaps which enable us to establish our research questions and explain our research methods. Our approach relies mainly on the personal narratives of four African Christian religious ministers, triangulated with interviews with each one's superior and with a host country national colleague. Finally, we present our results and discuss them in terms of potential implications, limitations and future research directions.

Religion and global mobility: the study of religious ministers

For decades, since religious creeds were assumed to belong to the personal private sphere, management research addressing religious issues within the workplace remained scarce. More recently, however, there has been growing awareness of the importance of religion and belief in the management discipline (Benefiel *et al.*, 2014; Giorgi and Palmisano, 2017; Van Buren *et al.*, 2019) and a growing number of studies are starting to study religious issues in different areas of management, such as in entrepreneurship (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2009), finance (Johannidès, 2009), marketing (Stolz and Usunier, 2019), in human resource management (Byrne *et al.*, 2011). Despite this growing interest including international business research (e.g. Richardson, 2014; Richardson and Rammal, 2018), religious ministers are rarely examined neither in general management, nor in the global mobility literature, in particular. We identify knowledge gaps that enable us to enhance managerial studies on the work experiences of religious ministers from Africa working in France.

Multiple potential lenses are theoretically available for exploring the link between management and religion. Gomez (2012) suggests six angles of research: 1-religious values and behaviour in business; 2-religious diversity and organisational adaptation; 3-religious issues and social demands at work; 4-individual religious identity at work; 5-commercial productions of religious organisations; and, 6-management of religious organisations. The first four themes address religious issues at work, within the human resource management paradigm of diversity management. The *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* founded in 2004 (Biberman and Altman, 2004), and the study of religious issues (e.g. Gebert *et al.*, 2014), spirituality (e.g. Saks, 2011), worker-priests (e.g. Bell, 2007), or religious discrimination/ conflicts (e.g. Ghumman and Ryan, 2013) at work have meant religious issues have become accepted concerns for managerial scholars. We focus in particular on recent studies of religious ministers, anchored in the 'management of religious organisations'- Gomez (2012)'s sixth theme.

Generally, the few studies of religious ministers that there are focus on their leadership and their management styles. Wirtz (2017) compares the governance systems of Dominican monasteries and Benedictine abbeys. Maroun (2013) emphasises the importance of leadership in the Maronite Church. Andersen (2004) and Ramboarison-Lalao (2012) point to the similarities and differences of their leadership in relation to private sector managers. Religious ministers - the priest, the pastor, the rabbi and the imam - mostly adopt the servant leadership style in their parish (Ramboarison-Lalao *et al.*, 2015), which has a positive impact on church members' commitment (Joo *et al.*, 2018). Unlike the 'high-status' of the pope or the bishop, these servant leaders are 'low-status' ministers who serve to lead and lead to serve: they are poorly, or not, paid and that determines their 'social status' (Beumier, 2006). The modest pay[i] and humble working conditions inherent to the specific philanthropic ministry of these servant leaders mostly determine their low-status, notwithstanding their qualifications.

There have been calls for further studies to examine "the career motivations of foreign ministers of religion working in western countries" (Ramboarison-Lalao, 2012, p. 166) and Oberholster and Doss (2017, p.319) tell us that today "…African missionaries are having notable success in Europe". In 2017, as an example, one third of the 7,000 Catholic priests ministering in France were foreigners, with two thirds of them originating from Africa[ii]. But little is known about the modes and consequences of the global mobility of religious ministers from the developing world, or about how these expatriated low-status church ministers from Africa become 'migrants', settling in their new country. Through the study of these under-researched religious ministers from Africa, who could be considered as 'extreme cases' (Pettigrew, 1990), our exploration aims to better comprehend and surface a theoretical framework of the process from expatriation to migration.

Expatriation and migration

The research on western mobile workforces is expanding into new directions (McNulty and Selmer, 2017), and there is growing interest in studying the international careers of individuals from the developing world working in western developed countries. In the literature on migration, for example, Cerdin *et al.* (2014) and Ramboarison-Lalao *et al.* (2012) have shown that, in France, qualified migrants from the developing world have to confront numerous challenges in their socio-professional integration into the country of adoption. In parallel, in the literature on expatriation, Haak-Saheem and Brewster (2017) have explored the career experiences of low-status 'hidden expatriates' from poorer countries. While Clarke *et al.* (2017, p. 143) call for research on expatriates to and from developed and developing countries, Guttormsen (2018) suggests developing research on the nascent category of 'non-traditional expatriates', both of which apply to our sample.

Most of the research on expatriates is related to assigned expatriates (AEs), people who are sent abroad by their employer (Selmer, 1999). More recently, following the identification of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) who make their own way to a foreign country rather than being sent there by their employer (Suutari and Brewster, 2000), that has changed. There has been a surge of research into SIEs (e.g Selmer and Lauring, 2010, 2012; Selmer *et al.* 2017). Cerdin and Selmer (2014) suggest that the key characteristics used in that literature are: a personal initiative in relocating to a host country from another country; employment in the host country; an intention to stay for a finite (temporary) period of time; and the undertaking of skilled or professional work. The second criterion (employment) brings this literature into the management arena: if they are members of the workforce, then there are management issues associated with that status. The final criterion has no analytic force (McNulty and Brewster, 2017), but nevertheless applies to our sample.

Migration and expatriate studies suffer from a lack of certainty of definitions (McNulty and Brewster, 2017; Guttormsen, 2018). It is important to have clear constructs that distinguish these categories and are not infected by popular stereotypes. Al Ariss (2010) compared stereotypes of expatriates and migrants, arguing that 'migrant' has a negative, and often unstated, racial connotation of inferiority whereas 'expatriate' has a positive connotation. That is, it is assumed that migrants, often with 'black', 'yellow' or 'brown' skins, move from less developed countries to developed countries, whereas expatriates are usually thought of as 'white' people moving from a developed country either to another developed country or to 'inferior' less developed countries. Hence, for Al Ariss and Crowley-Henry (2013), 'ethnic migrants' would consist of people moving from a developing to a developed country, regardless of their period of stay in the host country. Attempting to take a more objective, business and management, perspective, we argue in this study that the main distinguishing feature between migrants and expatriates is intent to stay: migrants aim to move permanently, or at least for their working lives, and expatriates intend to stay for only a few years: "Migration is the process of moving to, and intending to settle in, a country other than one's own. It involves the intent of permanent relocation in that country" (McNulty and Brewster, 2019, p. 12), whereas "Expatriation is the temporary relocation of someone from one country to another" (ibid, p. 9).

In practice, expatriates may stay on at the end of their assignment term, and migrants may choose, or be forced, to return to their home country within a few months. Migration and expatriation boundaries are thus fungible, but research at the intersection of expatriation and migration remain scarce. While context matters in expatriation studies (e.g. Selmer *et al.*, 2015), very little is written on the personal-level, organisational level and country-level contextual determinants (Kim and Von Glinow, 2017) of the 'expatriation into migration' pattern. That is our focus here. In line with recent studies of the global mobility of modern-day religious missionaries (Oberholster *et al.*, 2013; Oberholster and Doss, 2017), we address two research questions:

> *RQ1*. How do the global mobility and career experiences of these religious ministers from Africa working in a western country unfold?
>
> *RQ2*. What are the contextual determinants which contribute to their 'expatriation into migration' transition?

Methodology

Research design

Given the limited previous research, our lack of knowledge, and what is therefore the exploratory nature of our research, we adopted a qualitative approach (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Similar to other research on international mobility (e.g. Kohonen, 2004; Näsholm, 2014), we use narratives to study the personal trajectories of four African religious ministers in France (Sanséau, 2005; Chaitin, 2004). We "foster new ways of seeing" in qualitative research (Bansal *et al.*, 2018, p. 1189) through using Hajro's 'life-story' design (Hajro, 2017), to report their personal stories. We also adopted a 'triangulation-sensitive' approach (Al Ariss and Crowley-Henry, 2013, p. 90), by conducting semi-structured interviews with five superiors and three host country national colleagues, who were able to provide complementary insightful information. In our inductive exploration, the content analysis of our data relied on an interpretative approach (Mucchielli, 1994).

Sample and data collection

We had two categories of informants: four African ministers of religion and their host country national superiors/ colleagues (five superiors and three colleagues). The study mainly relies on the personal narratives of the four expatriated African religious ministers who were likely to stay permanently in the host country and to become migrants. The member of the research team who conducted the interviews is himself a migrant scholar, which facilitated access to and empathy with these African religious ministers in the process of data collection, self-reflexive analysis and presentation. Our convenience sample was not intended to be representative and consisted in total of 12 participants, as shown in Table I. Nine of our 12 interviewees agreed to be tape recorded: detailed notes were taken for reluctant individuals. Transcriptions and detailed notes were translated from French to English by the researchers. We preserve the respondent's anonymity by the use of pseudonyms.

Insert Table I about here

We interviewed low-status Christian ministers (since Christianity is the largest religion in France) working in two regions of France. Following the life story method, we sought sufficient 'variety' (Sanséau, 2005, p. 50) in the composition of our sample: 1- Four Christian confessions were represented (Discalced Carmelite Catholic; Lutheran Protestant; Revivalist New Protestant Church in Madagascar and Seventh Day Adventist); 2- we interviewed one female Protestant pastor; 3- we interviewed African ministers from Madagascar and Ghana; 4- we interviewed a lay religious elder who is a volunteer minister in the absence of a pastor. As recommended in the life story method (Sanséau, 2005; Chaitin, 2004), each interview started with the open-ended question: "Would you tell me about yourself and your career experiences in France?" The life story interviews of the four ministers lasted at least one hour and all the interviews were conducted in French, except for the interview with the Ghanaian elder, which was in English. The interviews aimed to capture their modes of global mobility and allowed us to identify the determinants which contribute to explaining the 'expatriation into migration' pattern. We conducted in parallel eight semi-structured interviews with their superiors and colleagues to gather data on how the African religious ministers were recruited and managed. These interviews were all in French and lasted around one hour, on average. They covered organisational policies and people management issues in terms of support, incentives, compensation, training and work conditions, which allowed us to fill out and complete our understanding of the data collected through the narratives of the religious ministers. We specifically studied how some of these organisational elements potentially contribute to explaining the ministers' global mobility and the 'expatriation into migration' pattern.

Data analysis

The analysis of the interviews followed two complementary steps, which we use to structure the presentation of our results.

First, we draw on Hajro's design (2017), except that, rather than following it to the letter by using the 'full' version of personal narrative, given the journal's constraints, we have summarised four shorter narratives. We 'carefully' condensed each narrative in a chronological order (Näsholm, 2014, p. 189), using the interviewees' own words. Hajro's design provides an overview of the 'full' personal

narratives, by unveiling the uniqueness and richness of each life story, in combining elements from the past, the present and the future, rather than the reporting of fragmented quotes often used in mainstream qualitative research (e.g. Peltonen, 1998; Gertsen and Søderberg, 2011).

Second, the transcribed audio-recordings were used alongside the detailed notes to manually conduct content analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994), aimed at addressing *RQ2* by identifying the contextual determinants that contribute to explaining the 'expatriation into migration' pattern among our sample. Our preliminary coding process enabled us to identify different themes, summarised in Table II. We structured our interpretation phase around personal, organisational and country-level contextual dimensions (Kim and Von Glinow, 2017), aiming at identifying levers and barriers and at developing an initial approach to a theoretical framework. While the religious ministers' narratives allowed us to identify multi-dimensional contextual determinants, the interviews with the superiors and host country national colleagues led to a coding process around organisational policies and human resource management issues in terms of recruitment, support, incentives, compensation, training and work conditions.

Insert Table II about here

Findings

We present our initial findings through four narratives that consistently condense the richness of the interviewees' stories. These personal stories are completed by derived key elements from our interpretative analysis, prior to the discussion.

From assigned expatriation under formal contract to permanent settlement: Priest Rabe

> "I was born in a practicing Catholic family. My mum, a fervent practicing Catholic, was the Director of a Catholic school. Given the shortage of priests, even in Madagascar, young Catholics are invited to serve God. I cannot explain exactly the origin of my Call, but because of my good relationship with the Catholic priest of our church, I decided to attend different seminars which enabled me to confirm my vocation. Our Discalced Carmelite congregation has been present since 2000 in France, with five missionaries and I had the opportunity, in 2003, to come to France and do my internship under the supervision of one of the missionaries who originates from Madagascar, like me. Following my ordination in Madagascar, and drawing on my probationary internship under his supervision, he asked me to minister as a vicar in the local church in 2007 for a six-year renewable assignment. I was happy to accept the call to serve in France with no hesitation ... my mission is to serve the Catholic Church by preaching, baptising, teaching the Word of God and the Catholic doctrines. I could have been sent to any region of Madagascar, to Canada, Spain, Mauritius, Italy, or anywhere else. After my assignment, I can come back to Madagascar or be sent elsewhere. My family in Madagascar are both happy with the fact that I minister in France, and at the same time a bit sad to be far away from me, but I can help them by sending remittances and they appreciate it. When I came, all accommodation was organised to welcome me, I just brought my personal belongings and had almost nothing special to do. The great challenge for me is to try to spread the Carmelite spirituality based on silent prayers in the search of God, which is, for example, very different from the charismatic spirituality leading to visible miracles, which attracts many other Christians. I had to adapt myself to the social, cultural and local context, which was different from Madagascar; so, I observed first, then I adapted when necessary, and kept my values otherwise. I preach for everyone, but I decline any demands that are against Carmelite principles and try to explain sincerely why. The French State recognises officially our status as missionary priests under the clergy, we are two priests ministering to three churches. We are regularly offered training sessions in France or abroad, I attended a training session in Panama. I have been ministering here for 11 years: in 2007, I was a vicar; in 2013, I became a priest; and, in 2019, I can potentially be renewed for a further six-year mandate. While I am the youngest priest and the dean of the sector because of my 11 years of service, it's difficult for me to speak about future plans, because nobody can predict the future." (Priest Rabe).

The assigned expatriation of this Catholic priest may turn into migration. It will primarily depend on his own decision, on his personal intrinsic motivation, on his self-perceived gain, on his competences and on his familial and personal situation. He has now been in France for 11 years, has become a 'priest' and the 'dean' of the sector, has become a French national, and enjoys his job in France. These personal determinants may favour the 'expatriation into migration' pattern. Organisational determinants reinforce this pattern through good support, good working conditions, and by providing training abroad and incentives to retain talented workers. Notwithstanding his high level of qualifications, this minister is of similar low-status to his French colleague who points to the same treatment from their hierarchy: noting their low salary levels and that "when we need something, we ask" (Priest Paul). He is able to save money and send remittances to the family: "The priest receives €700 monthly, he is housed by the parish and has a car. Since Vatican II, … promotion has disappeared, but he can become a dean or a coordinator of this or that commission" (Bishop François). At country-level, administrative concerns are facilitated regarding work-permits, given the shortage of priests: "The French State officially recognises our status as missionary priests". Granting French citizenship is also conducive to a permanent stay in France. While this priest subordinates his career plans to God, he said that he "can potentially be renewed for a further six-year mandate", "can come back to Madagascar or be sent elsewhere" and that "nobody can predict the future".

Assigned expatriation to the countryfolk under lay ministering which evolves to a permanent stay: Pastor Razay

> "I was married, and I raised my two daughters at home. Following Malagasy customs, I didn't need to work because my husband had a very good position. When I was 32, The Lord called me for the lay shepherdess ministry in the New Revivalist Church of Madagascar. Following a laying-on of hands, I was touched by Jesus who completely healed a personal illness. I was ordained to preach and to give testimonies around me. After nine years of volunteering as a shepherdess, I was called for the Pastoral ministry and was ordained after following specific theological continuous training for two years. God gave me a job as a seller, then as the manager, of a store and my family supported me. Thus, I started the full volunteering Pastoral ministry of a church in parallel with my job and my family life: from the time I became a shepherdess till now, I haven't received any salary for the religious ministry but am fully blessed, thanks to the Lord and generous donations. In recent decades, the Revivalist New Malagasy Church community in Canada and in France were searching for Pastors from Madagascar. When I retired and stopped working for the store, my husband had passed away a couple of years before and my children were both married and were themselves parents … I was selected among the 12 missionaries called to this Pastoral ministering abroad. Of course, I chose France because I have two brothers and a sister living here, and I had already been to France. I was 61 when I came for a seven-year missionary assignment, and I minister both in Malagasy and in French. I preach in different regions of France and Belgium during Holy communions … I live correctly thanks to generous donations from the churchgoers and from siblings. I sometimes miss my seven grand-children and my two daughters, but I shall visit them soon. I've been in France for five years and I don't know yet if I will complete and renew my seven-year assignment in France, or if I will return to Madagascar to be with my family. I rely on God's Plan for me…" (Pastor Razay).

This lay retiree volunteering Pastor is an assigned expatriate, filling a demand from the Malagasy countryfolk community in France, at the age of 61. She is now 66, a widow, a member of the church council and she enjoys ministering in France and in Belgium, which can be motives for a permanent stay. Notwithstanding her age, her competences are a valuable asset. However, global family issues, such as homesickness, are raised in her story and may influence an early return home. Some of the personal factors may encourage this Pastor to stay permanently, while others are barriers to the 'expatriation into migration' pattern. In her organisation, she does not receive wages as an employee, but benefits from donations and housing: "Pastor Razay was selected among others to minister in France because of her good experience in serving the Lord, and she is a member of our council. In Europe, we are around 500 shepherdesses with around 20 pastors in France: none of us receive a salary as employees, we are all volunteers..." (Ramily). The organisational support in the host country is informal and less important, compared to that of the Catholic priest, which may prevent a permanent

stay and this new Malagasy Protestant church is not officially recognised by the French State, another barrier. At the time of writing, Pastor Razay has, however, asked a lawyer to present a demand for permanent residence, signalling a wish to stay permanently in the country: she says she continues to rely on 'God's Will'.

Self-initiated expatriated scholar who switched vocation and became a migrant: Pastor Randria

> **"**I was 26 when I left Madagascar to prepare my one-year Masters degree in management in a French university. My parents were running a hotel, so I wanted to further my management competences in France, with the objective of family business transmission when I come back. Like every young Malagasy, I was attracted by France, and it was the first time I went there. Before leaving Madagascar, I married my fiancée, following our customs, and my wife stayed and lived with my parents. In France, I went to church regularly, but after I obtained my degree, in fact I did not come back to Madagascar. God had another plan for me: He allowed my wife to join me in France. Because the economic and political situation of Madagascar was getting worse, we decided to stay in France, for the future of our children. It was a dilemma, but my parents understood our choice. I had a very good relationship with the French Pastor of our church who appreciated me a lot… Thanks to our regular discussions, I decided to study theology and engaged in the pastoral vocation: many churches were looking for ministers. My studies in theology were doing well, thanks to the Lord, our daughters were born in France… and following a probationary ministry as pastor-trainee after my graduation in theology, I was ordained as a Pastor in a French parish: unlike other colleagues who minister to the countryfolks, I preach in French to French worshippers. Because of the Concordat Agreement of 1801which prevails in our region, religious ministers are public agents. By Lord's Grace, I was granted French nationality with my family, and we are housed in the presbytery of the parish. I regularly travel to Madagascar with my churchgoers, to help the country through humanitarian support. I feel blessed and fully integrated" (Pastor Randria).

This self-initiated expatriated switched vocation in the host country, and became a migrant, partly for a brighter future for his children. The personal history, the opportunism, the high qualifications and the familial motives of this pastor are personal-level levers of 'expatriation into migration'. He was hired locally in France, like his French colleague, Pastor Emile, and benefits from good organisational work conditions: "Our pastors hold a Masters or a Doctorate in theology … we adopt the salary grid of the Protestant churches, a few are public agents hired by the State under the Concordat agreement ... We regularly offer training sessions and the pastors are paid during illness" (Pastor Joel). At country-level, the poor socioeconomic situation of the home country played a push effect while the French State enabled him to become a French national and to be a public agent, which impact positively the 'expatriation into migration'.

Countryfolk and Host country lay ministry assignment: Elder Kofi

> "I am 67 years now, and I've been in the ministry for almost forty years. I was studying accounting in Ghana from 1967 to 1968, then I left for the USA in 1969. I was not a Christian, I was young and had fun... When I was converted and called by the Lord, I started to study the bible in the USA and went back to Ghana in 1975. In the '80s, I worked as a conference evangelist in Ghana, I did a lot of work in my thirties, our mission was to open many new churches in the countryside. I came to France in 1983 for few months and then moved to America in 1984. Friends sponsored me to attend missionary seminars at Seventh Day Adventist University in the USA. Then I went back to Ghana, and of course I continued to work for the Lord, because it was my nature. When I left Ghana in 1990, I settled definitively in France, where I got a permanent visa in 1996. I didn't decide to stay in France - I was on my way back to America - but God held me here because there was a lot of work to do. As it is said in Jeremiah 10:23, thus I knew that God called me for this mission in France. I was given a job at the Seventh Day Adventist Countrylife Mission, the Seventh Day Adventist Conference employed me till 2001. I was taking care of Ghanaian churches for about ten years, building and reviving churches, visiting, capturing and bringing people back to the church. I preached the second advent of Jesus in English with success in my conferences, in tandem with a brilliant translator who holds a PhD in French literature. We were able to do

this work, by God's Grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, not by qualification standards. Then I came here in 2001 and lived here till now because I was assigned by the Conference to revive and to open and organise a Ghanaian church; and, once a month, I went to a Ghanaian church in the other town. So I have organised two Ghanaian churches. I was like a Pastor and benefited from housing and everything. I can do everything a Pastor is doing, the only difference is that I have a lot of training but not the certificate in theology. A pastor who holds a Masters or a Doctorate will be paid a bit more, but there is no big gap. When I was stopped by the Conference, I had to remain here. I did different jobs in parallel with the mission till I was 63, the age to retire in France. I became a French national ten years ago, my children are in Britain. As a self-sponsored evangelist thanks to donations now, I still continue to spread the Gospel as a lay volunteer minister. Thanks to the new technology, I use two internet radio programmes in Canada and in Germany with up to 17,000 Ghanaian followers worldwide. And as an officiant Elder in both Ghanaian and French Seventh Day Adventist churches, I preach direct messages from the bible in Ghanaian or in English, helped by a translator, and people like that. I baptise, teach, visit members..." (Elder Kofi).

The global mobility of this Ghanaian minister started with early and repeated self-initiated expatriation in the USA before turning into migration "…because there was a lot of work to do" in France. The labour-shortage at country-level enhanced his willingness to turn 'expatriation into migration'. At a personal level, the lack of qualifications, which were not mandatory in Africa, didn't allow him to be permanently employed with the formal status of a Pastor in France, where a Master of Theology is normally required, plus two years as a Pastor trainee in a Seventh Day Adventist church. However, his competence is appreciated by the French organisation, which enabled him to settle permanently in France: "We greatly appreciate brother Kofi, he is a pillar of the Church here, he is an elected member of the Church committee and the Board of Elders of both Ghanaian and French Churches. He is dedicated and gives a lot for the community, without being paid…" (Pastor Matthieu). His lay volunteer French Elder colleague, a 45 years old French logistics manager, echoed this high competence recognition: "I learn a lot with him, he's got a God-given talent to preach, we enjoy visiting members together, evangelising door to door, our church owes him a lot…" (Elder Joseph). Human capital anchored in competence rather than in qualification is here a key determinant which enabled this lay Evangelist to benefit from both formal and informal organisational support, donations and French state recognition - allowing him to become a French national, and thus to switch successfully from expatriation to migration.

Table III summarises the contextual determinants derived from our data, in terms of potential levers or/ and barriers of 'expatriation into migration', that we discuss further below.

Insert Table III about here

Discussion

The narratives of the four African religious ministers point to evolving modes of global mobility: assigned expatriation or self-initiated expatriation, which can turn into migration. In order to offer a better understanding of the contextual determinants of this 'expatriation into migration' pattern, we draw on Table III to discuss our findings and to develop a theoretical framework derived from our insights.

At the personal-level, self-initiated and assigned expatriation of the four African religious internationalists followed different personal trajectories but all converged *in fine*, into migration. Beyond their personal history and motives, family concerns (e.g. a brighter future for the Lutherian Pastor's children), self-perceived gain, job satisfaction and good integration, the human capital assets remain a personal-level determinant of a sustainable career, and a successful permanent stay in the host country. While their recognised qualifications enabled the Catholic Priest and the Lutherian officiants to become French nationals faster, recognition of the competences of lesser-qualified lay ministers also contribute to successful integration, as shown by the example of the Ghanaian lay minister who was granted French nationality, though having no certificate in theology, and the narrative of the female Pastor where her competences enable her to go on ministering with success in

France, knowing that post-retirement career activity is far from easy (Sullivan and Al Ariss, 2019). Her personal global family and work-life balance issues, such as homesickness, may or may not influence an early return home.

At the organisational-level, our results also provide first insights into how these low-status African ministers are managed in terms of recruitment, pay and work conditions in the host country. Some of the interviewees are recruited locally in the host country while others are assigned expatriates from their home country, with important organisational support for the Catholic priest, for example. The organisational support, good working conditions and incentives (training abroad, fringe benefits) and talent retention policies are important levers in favour of a permanent stay, especially among those recruited under formalised contracts (the Catholic Priest and the Lutheran Pastor). Volunteer lay ministers often benefit from sponsor donations and informal organisational support but these are more fragile; which may constitute a barrier to staying on.

At the country-level, the general shortage of religious ministers in France has a pull effect, in that many religious ministers of foreign origins are called to fill the vacant positions. Previously, African assigned expatriates were normally recruited for a finite period of time and returned home. However, the poor conditions of the African home countries may reinforce their desire to stay permanently (Ramboarison-Lalao *et al.*, 2012), made easier by the work permit facilities and French citizenship provided by the French State, triggering an opportunistic switch to the pastoral ministry among self-initiated expatriate scholars, as shown in the example of the Lutherian Pastor.

Results point to the moderating influence of personal-level, organisational-level and country-level contextual determinants, as potential levers or barriers, on the expatriation into migration pattern, as represented in Figure 1 (adapted from Kim and Von Glinow, 2017, p. 318). More importantly, we found a previously unreported determinant of the personal context, which plays a central role in the model. For the four interviewees, all their career plans are subordinated to and mainly driven by "God's Will", and those plans include their 'expatriation into migration' pattern. For them, we identify a 'God centrality' sphere as fundamental to their personal context. God's Will shapes and surrounds all other contextual variables, being 'above all of them': this subjective personal-level contextual determinant, commonly shared by the ministers of religion of the sample, appeared to be more critical than their human capital assets, which leads us to speak about God centrality.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Responding to the recent calls of Van Buren *et al.* (2019) to study religion as a macro social force affecting business research, we identify a new contextual determinant (perhaps best captured by the German word 'Weltanschauung') that we call 'world-view', encompassing the deep-seated beliefs and values of the internationally mobile worker. In our cases here this is specifically religious-based and refers to the 'God centrality' of the understanding of the world of the people within our sample. This novel dimension can be anchored in religion - or may not be. According to Collins' definition, "A person's world-view is the way they see and understand the world, especially regarding issues such as politics, philosophy, and religion". The world-view was explicitly highlighted in our findings and offers a new lens of analysis for future research. While 'God centrality' is critical and very specific to religious ministers from the sample (Figure 1), the emerging findings enable us to extend the notion from the specific to the broader 'all-encompassing' concept of 'world-view' (Figure 2). In other words, the world-view translates as God centrality for these four religious ministers who shared the same vision: for them, God's Will-based world-view is more important than any other determinant. Conversely, we might expect that human capital would be more critical for Cartesian individuals, and thus would constitute their centrality, instead. While our first results among ministers of religion challenge the mainstream assumption of the centrality of human capital in international mobility, we assume the importance of a world-view aspect of the personal context is interchangeable, depending on the nature of the sample and the individual's subjective perception in weighing of the importance of each dimension. We assume these findings can be generalizable to all people transitioning from expatriates to migrants: in other words, God centrality is the world-view of this group but others without such belief will also have a world-view (maybe less articulated and consistent) that will have a

big impact. It is the very clearly articulated and consistent nature of the ecclesiastics' world-view that made it apparent, but we believe that this must apply (can be generalized) to all others, even those for whom have devoted less consideration to it. World-view may be less visible in other expatriates or migrants, but is nevertheless there and is more or less important, and perhaps reflected in attempts to explain specific aspects of careers and international careers in, for example, the notion of career anchors (Cerdin and Le Pargneux, 2010; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2013; Schein, 1990). The new addition to the personal context brings a wider perspective, challenging the current limited focus and leading to promising future research of different 'socio-professional' patterns among any category of expatriates or migrants.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Conclusions

Religious ministers originating from developing countries are under-researched both in the international mobility literature and in the management literature on religious issues. Our exploratory study tackles an overlooked pattern in the global mobility literature and specifically contributes to the global mobility literature at the intersection of the 'expatriation' and 'migration' literatures, by shedding new lights on the moderating effects of contextual determinants which explain how these non-traditional assigned or self-initiated expatriate religious ministers from the developing world become migrants. We also found a so far unreported determinant of the personal context: the role of a world-view - very visible as 'God centrality' in our participants.

For scholars, we make an important contribution, by developing a theoretical framework (Figure 1), which can be a starting point for further comparative studies of the transition from expatriation to migration. We also offer a starting point of promising future research avenues, by providing a new extension to the personal context based on an individual's 'world-view', which can be applied to the study of different 'socio-professional' patterns among any category of expatriates or migrants (Figure 2).

Responding to Hajro's call (Hajro, 2017, p.192) for the use of personal narratives in international mobility to set future research directions, we "foster new ways of seeing" in qualitative research (Bansal *et al.*, 2018, p. 1189). Reading the 'open-source' 'raw material' of the 'full' personal narratives (rather than fragmented quotes), scholars are able to capture multiple lenses of research that they may find worth further exploration; drawing on, or going beyond our interpretative analysis. We advance research through the input of this novel method design: one that is particularly relevant for future research on the study of 'extreme cases' or unsearched population sample.

This study also has implications for HRM policies and expatriate management practice, at organisational and individual levels. At the organisational level, Churches who are recruiting expatriated foreign religious ministers from developing countries, have to consider carefully their financial and familial situation, to give efficient organisational support, and to assist their sustainable professional integration before their likely pattern of switching from expatriation to migration. At the individual level, the life stories provide useful information for developing country ministers of religion, who may wish to work in a developed country with the ultimate aim to of migrating, given the churches' need for officiants in such situations. However, they must be aware that their competence under probationary ministries will condition sustainable work in developed countries like France if they plan to settle permanently in the host country.

While our sample size is appropriate for our narrative purposes here (and comparable to similar qualitative studies in the field of global mobility such as Kim and Von Glinow, 2017), and the narrative structure allows us to identify and explore issues that would otherwise get lost, our data is not representative. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks derived from this exploratory study, we thus call for further research, representative rather than exploratory research, on the transition from temporary (expatriate) to permanent (migrant) status and the contextual determinants of that; and the study of the importance of 'world-view' as a key aspect of internationally mobile workers understanding of their situation and potential future.

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Table I. Interviewees (Sample n=12).

Religious Minister	**Hierarchy**	**HCN colleague**
• Catholic male priest of Malagasy origin: Priest Rabe	• French Archbishop, male: Bishop François • French Lay female HR Manager: HRM Odile	• French Catholic Priest: Priest Paul
• Revivalist NPC Protestant female pastor of Malagasy origin Pastor: Pastor Razay	• A Malagasy board member of the collegiate Priestly Council Gasy: Ramily	• No interview
• Lutherian protestant male pastor of Malagasy origin Pastor: Pastor Randria	• French HRM Pastor: Pastor Joel	• French Lutherian protestant Pastor: Pastor Emile
• Seventh Day Adventist lay male Elder of Ghanaian origin: Elder Kofi	• Seventh Day Adventist French protestant Pastor: Pastor Matthieu	• French Seventh Day Adventist laical volunteer Elder: Elder Joseph

Table II. An overview of the religious ministers' profile.

Themes	Catholic Priest Rabe	Revivalist NPC Pastor Razay	Lutherian Pastor Randria	Seventh Day Adventist Elder Kofi
Background	42 years old, male, Malagasy single, who became French national; arrival in France: 31 years old	66 years old, female, Malagasy national, widow with two daughters and seven grandchildren in Madagascar; arrival in France: 61 years old	47 years old, male, Malagasy who became French national, married with a Malagasy with three daughters; arrival in France: 26 years old	67 years old, male, Ghanaian who became French national, with five children who are in Britain, married to a Ghanaian; arrival in France: 31 years old; 38 years old
Qualifications & Religious Call	Bachelor of Philosophy and Theology obtained in France	Certificates in English Study and in Theology in Madagascar	Masters in Management and in Theology obtained in France	Study in accounting; On the job training and seminars in Theology in the USA with no graduation Diploma
	Primary vocation in Madagascar; ordained in Madagascar	Secondary vocation as dual-career in parallel with her work as store manager till retirement in Madagascar; ordained in Madagascar	Secondary vocation and opportunistic career switch for religious ministry in France; ordained in France	Early secondary vocation after spiritual transformation in the USA; Elder ordained in Ghana and France
Modes of international mobility & Integration	Assigned expatriate from Madagascar initiated by the French church within ecclesiastical network	Assigned expatriate from Madagascar for a ministering to countryfolk church community in France	Self-initiated Expatriate scholar in Management which turns into Migration as a Pastor	Self-initiated Expatriate in the USA, then work in Ghana as an evangelist before Self-initiated expatriation which turns into Migration in France
	Speaks French fluently, feels integrated and enjoys his job	Speaks French fluently, feels integrated and enjoys her ministry, with often homesickness	Speaks French fluently, feels integrated with his family, enjoys his job	Doesn't speak French fluently, feels integrated with his wife, enjoys his ministry
HRM issues: Work ministry	Ministry to HCN churchgoers in France	Ministry mainly to countryfolk in France, and sometimes in Belgium	Ministry to HCN churchgoers in France	Ministry to countryfolk and to HCN churchgoers (preaching translated into French) in France
Recruitment (contract)	Regulated paid and six-year renewable contract after a probationary internship; formal professional status of priest before the French Law	Volunteering, seven-year renewable assignment, no financial compensation; lay volunteering status of pastor	Permanent regulated public official contract after a probationary trial period; formal professional status of French Public agent before the French Law (Concordat agreement of 1801;1905 Act)	Lay religious evangelist employed by the Seventh Day Adventist Conference; then lay volunteering minister with no financial compensation
Compensation & Work conditions	Minimum HCN regulated Priest salary; fringe benefit (housing, car); health insurance; continuous training; annual leave for vacation	No financial compensation; donations; housing	Official salary grid of Public religious agents; housed in the presbytery of the parish; continuous training; annual leave for vacation	Salary, housing and fringe benefits when employed by the Seventh Day Adventist Conference as a lay evangelist. Then volunteering lay ministry: donations

Table III. Tri-dimensional contextual determinants of the 'expatriation into migration' pattern: potential levers or barriers.

Contextual determinants	Levers	Barriers
Personal-level context dimension1	God's Will, Human capital assets (qualifications and/ or competences), personal history and motives, family concerns (e.g. brighter future for children), age, self-perceived gain, job satisfaction, good integration	God's Will, Lack of qualifications and/ or competences, family concerns (homesickness), age (oldness), failure in integration
Organizational-level context dimension2	Organizational support, good work conditions and HRM incentives (training abroad, fringe benefits), talent retention policy, formal professional status and contract renewals, informal organisational support and donations (Lay ministers)	Lack of formal support (Lay ministers), absence of formal contracts (Lay ministers), contract termination
Country-level context dimension3	Labour-force shortage creating a permanently demand in the host country, work permit and formal professional status of French public agent before the French law, home country socio-economic push effect	Non recognition of church by the host country state (e.g. the new revivalist Malagasy protestant church) creating several organisational and personal-level barriers

Figure 1. Theoretical framework of the moderating effect of the contextual determinants on 'expatriation into migration' and the critical role of 'World-view' (which translates as God centrality for the religious ministers).

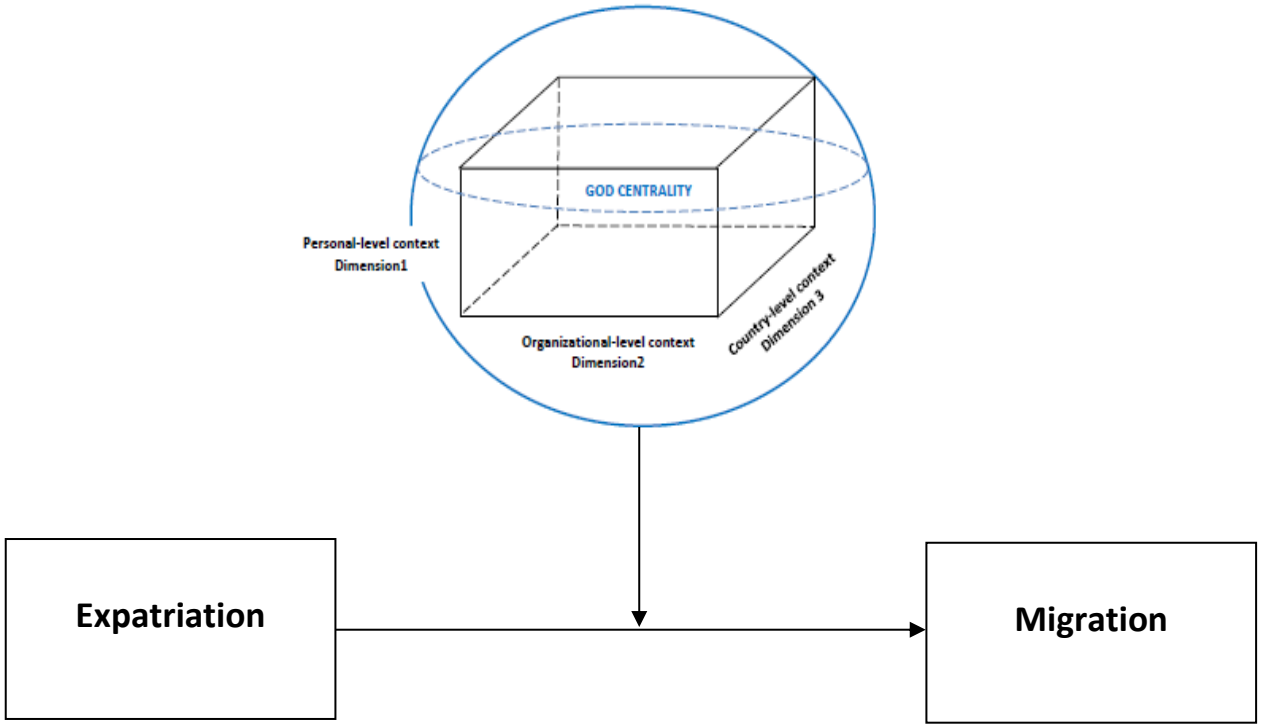
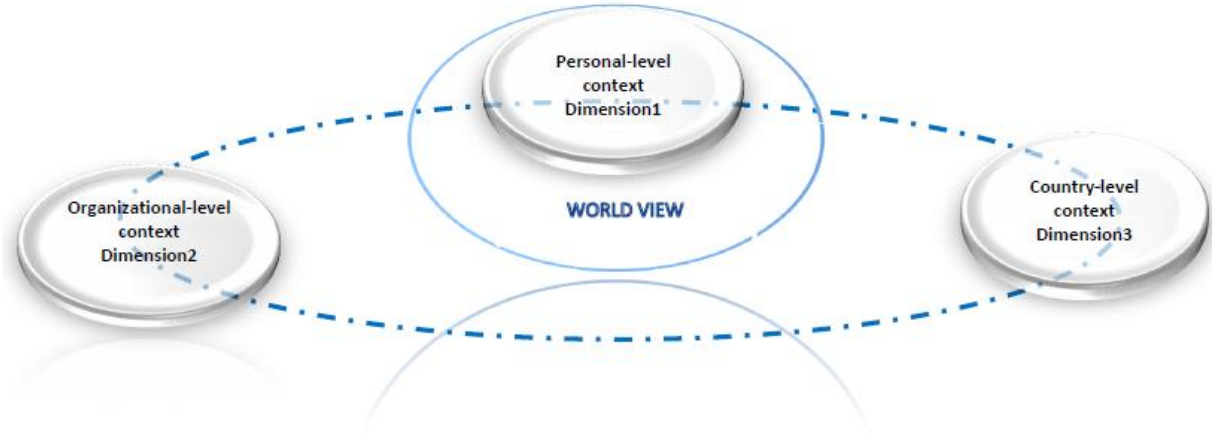


Figure 2. 'World-view' dimension: Theoretical 'model of contextual determinants of a sphere of centrality'.



[i] https://www.reforme.net/2016/03/10/le-salaire-des-pasteurs/; https://fr.aleteia.org/2017/08/01/comment-les-pretres-sont-ils-payes/

[iiii] https://mission-universelle.catholique.fr/echanger/pretres-etrangers-en-france/297523-pretres-venant-dailleurs-dioceses-de-france-2017/