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**Adjustment in Western European overseas assignments:
Do France and Germany pose differing challenges to
expatriate managers?**

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Abstract

Purpose – Most research has focused on the individual in relation to expatriate adjustment. The general conditions of the host country, however, could represent an important contextual factor that needs to be explored further. Thus, the objective of this study is to assess differences between the adjustment of expatriates in Germany and France.

Design/methodology/approach – Based on an empirical study of 130 expatriate managers on foreign assignments in France (61) and Germany (69), we take a comparative perspective and examine differences for sociocultural and psychological adjustment as well as time to proficiency in both countries.

Findings – We found that expatriates assigned to France show higher degrees of work adjustment and general adjustment than those in Germany. This was unexpected as Germany is generally described as a more transparent, open and welcoming country. Results may thus challenge stereotypical conceptions of national differences and indicate that globalization processes are gradually changing country specific conditions.

Originality/value – Only scant research has dealt with expatriates adjusting to Western European countries and no other studies have compared the adjustment of expatriates in Germany and France.

Keywords Expatriates, Western Europe, Adjustment, Germany, France, Time to proficiency

Paper type Research paper