New Zealand Sociology
2025, Vol. 40, No. 2, 75–94

Recrafting Career Selves: International Relocation and Accompanying Partners

Mohini Vidwans and Rosemary Du Plessis*

Abstract
This article examines the experiences of 21 women and men in dual career couples whose spouses relocated to Aotearoa/New Zealand for professional and managerial work. It investigates the challenges they encountered, the strategies they adopted, and the impacts of international relocation. Thematic analysis, using NVivo software, enabled the coding of interview material to identify trends in the accompanying partners' narratives. The research was informed by theorising about the recrafting of selves, especially career selves, and intersections of governmentality and participants' perceptions of agency during their transition to life in a new country. As transnational mobility of highly qualified women employees intensifies, this investigation extends literature about the experiences of accompanying partners, the complexity of contemporary gendered practices, and the sense making of those involved in international relocation.

Keywords: international mobility; accompanying partners; dual career couples; career selves; gender and governmentality

Introduction

International relocation has increased in the last few decades among those who are highly skilled (Habti & Elo, 2018; Harsløf & Zuev, 2022; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008; 2022). The accompanying partners of international employees face challenges when they suspend their careers during a period of adjustment in a new country (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Föbker, 2019).[1] In the late twentieth century, the term 'trailing spouse' referred to the female partner of an expatriate employee (Harvey, 1998, p. 311) who relocated to support their spouse's career and was not employed in the host country (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001).[2] More recently the terms 'secondary movers' or 'tied migrants' have been used, and researchers in the field have explored how some professions may increasingly require changes in employment location (Suter & Cangià, 2020). The increasing number of dual career couples with independent career ambitions has intensified the challenges of international relocation for accompanying partners (Anderson, 2001; Andreason, 2008; Linehan, 2001; Mancini-Vonlanthen, 2021). Geographical mobility is often entangled with other aspects of people's lives, their multiple selves, and the persistence of gendered discourses (Cangià, 2021). Power is visible through analysis of accompanying partners' strategies as they recraft their careers in response to new employment contexts (Saurombe & Zinatsa, 2023, p. 2).

* **Mohini Vidwans** is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Agribusiness and Commerce at Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki | Lincoln University.
Email: Mohini.Vidwans@lincoln.ac.nz
Rosemary Du Plessis is an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Sociology, School of Language, Social & Political Sciences at Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury.

[1] We use the term 'accompanying partner' to refer to those who relocate internationally when their intimate partner is recruited to a new position. To avoid confusion between participants in this research and their intimate partners, who may or may not be formally married, we use the term 'spouse' to refer to their intimate partners.

[2] The term 'expatriate' is typically used to refer to legally employed individuals who reside temporarily in a country of which they are not a citizen in order to accomplish a career-related goal, being relocated abroad either by an organisation, by self-initiation or directly employed within the host country (McNulty & Brewster, 2017, p. 46).

This article analyses the experiences of men and women whose spouses moved countries to take up highly skilled professional and managerial positions in Aotearoa/New Zealand.[3]

Research on international human resource management has largely been devoted to analyses of expatriate assignments (Chen & Shaffer, 2018; Collings et al., 2007; Mayrhofer et al., 2020; Riusala & Suutari, 2000) that involve short-term periods of work abroad, mainly by professionals and managerial employees. However, the past decade has seen rapid development of self-initiated expatriation as a form of international career mobility (Collings & Isichei, 2017; Global Mobility Trends Survey, 2016; Suutari et al., 2018). As seen in the current study, this phenomenon represents an important segment of the global talent market (Lazarova & Ipek, 2020): only one of the 21 participants' spouses in this study was an assigned expatriate—his relocation to Aotearoa/New Zealand was organised by his European-based international company.

The choices of dual career couples are often gendered (Rusconi et al., 2013), and men and women tend to make different career decisions when faced with the need to coordinate the careers of two partners (Känsälä et al., 2015; Pixley, 2008; Quinn & Rubb, 2011). Research on the experiences of accompanying spouses have predominantly documented the challenges for women when they suspend their careers (often temporarily) due to international relocation (Bikos et al., 2007; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; van der Zee et al., 2005). These impacts are most problematic when they lead to social isolation and a disruption of accompanying partners' career identities (Cole, 2011). An interest in exploring connections and differences between the experiences of male and female spouses/partners of professionals and managers recruited internationally led to in-depth interviews with roughly equal numbers of women and men. This created an opportunity to assess the relevance of gender for accompanying spouses in dual career households in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Relocating to a new country may not only interrupt accompanying partners' career trajectories, but also their sense of self (Cangià, 2018; Petriglieri & Obodaru, 2019). Difficulties related to meaningful employment and social connections can disrupt the accompanying partner's professional identity (Cole, 2011). To cope, an accompanying partner may need to create a new personal identity (Kupka & Cathro, 2007; Mohr & Klein, 2004), or a "meaningful portable identity" (McNulty, 2012, p. 417). We explore the challenges accompanying partners encounter in a new context and how they articulate the relationship between their careers and other aspects of their lives. The overlapping and interactive aspects of their career identities and other selves (including the impact of discourses relating to gendered selves) were analysed using material generated through 21 in-depth qualitative interviews with participants who relocated to Aotearoa/New Zealand for their spouse's career. We asked:

1. What challenges do accompanying partners in dual career relationships experience when they relocate to Aotearoa/New Zealand?
2. How do they respond to these challenges?
3. What factors shape how they craft and/or recraft their careers?

This is the first empirical study in Aotearoa/New Zealand to consider the challenges of accompanying partners in dual career relationships, their career strategies and the outcomes of those strategies. Widely known as 'a nation of immigrants', Aotearoa/New Zealand provides a unique context, with much of the literature on dual career couples and international relocation to date focusing on the USA,

[3] These occupations are associated with higher pay and, therefore, the research participants were concentrated in higher-income households. They were also primarily from countries who are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)—primarily high-income countries with relatively skilled populations. For this reason, the research findings cannot represent the diversity of individuals and households entering the country due to international recruitment of employees, particularly employees from developing Pacific Island economies.

UK, Germany, Denmark and Australia. However, the focus on accompanying partners with spouses in professional and managerial positions, while relevant to the international literature in this field, does not represent diversity in transnational recruitment of employees in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Recruitment of employees with fewer formal skills and lower incomes entails very different options for their families. Obtaining a visa for spouses/partners and children with rights to employment and education depends on transnational workers' earnings, their job skill levels, and whether they are defined as having skills deemed to be 'essential' by Immigration New Zealand.[4]

The timing of the interviews, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, also provides an interesting point of difference to periods of previously high immigration. (For a brief history of Aotearoa/New Zealand immigration, see Collins (2024).) Moving on from previous studies on female 'trailing spouses', in consideration of changing social conditions, this article includes interviews with both male and female accompanying partners. Like Kallane and Punnett (2023), it takes the view that accompanying partners are anything but passive or lacking in agency: the individuals interviewed for this study also displayed "dexterity" and "resourcefulness" in their attempts to create a new life in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Finally, the article does not limit its focus to a particular industry (for example, see Shortland's (2020) study on women working in the oil and gas industry), but instead concentrates on a particular time period.

By exploring the lived experiences of both men and women, the article contributes to the growing body of literature on dual career couples and the challenges they experience as a result of international relocation (Harvey & Buckley, 1998; Kallane & Punnett, 2023; Shortland, 2020). As indicated in the literature, accompanying partners may struggle to find suitable employment commensurate with their skills or education or may face breaks to their careers due to problems associated with obtaining a work visa or needing to settle children into a new environment (Anderson, 2001; Andreason, 2008; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Du Plessis & Vidwans, 2023; Föbker, 2019; Linehan, 2001). In addition, the article expands understandings of the ways in which accompanying partners negotiate different aspects of self as they transition to life in a new country—including their gendered selves. We examine how they experience themselves as immigrants in a different national context and how they pursue, and sometimes rework, their career trajectories.[5] Theorising about gender, governmentality and the (re)crafting of selves and careers are key analytic resources.

The next section presents the contextual background and relevant literature, before outlining the research strategies. The subsequent section interprets the findings before reflecting on the research's contributions, its limitations and directions for future work.

Setting the context—international migration and accompanying partners

Aotearoa/New Zealand—migration trends and employment rights

Government policy in destination countries impacts upon international relocation decisions (Doomernik, 2017). Employment laws have a major impact on accompanying partners' opportunities to pursue employment (Föbker, 2019, p. 3). While accompanying partners can apply for work visas in Aotearoa/New Zealand, access depends on the spouse's visa, which relates to their occupation and their rates of remuneration (Immigration New Zealand, 2024). Open work visas (which enable work for any employer at any rate of pay) are available to those whose spouses have an Accredited Employer Work Visa, an Essential Skills Work Visa and those who earn above an hourly wage threshold or work in a high-demand

[4] New Zealand Immigration. (n.d.) *Bringing family if you have a work visa*. Retrieved 16 September 2025 from https://www.immigration.govt.nz/process-to-apply/once-you-have-a-visa/bringing-family-to-new-zealand/bringing-family-if-you-have-a-work-visa/

[5] We use the term 'immigrant' to mean a person who is subject to immigration control, who needs permission to enter or remain in a country. To immigrate means to come to a country of which one is not a native, usually for permanent residence.

Green List role. Although the participants in this study were partners of professionals and managers with higher earnings and thus were eligible to apply for open work visas, having the right to work does not guarantee a job.

Due to its essential skills policy,[6] Aotearoa/New Zealand experienced a large increase in the volume of inward migration in the years preceding this research (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2021, pp. 4–6). There was a notable increase in the number of non-New Zealand citizens arriving with intention to stay from 2015–2020 when the net migration gain averaged 60,000 people a year. This figure dropped sharply, from a peak of 80,353 in non-New Zealand citizen migration in March 2020 to −17,711 in March 2021 due to restrictions on immigration associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and departures of recent immigrants. Immigration of non-New Zealand citizens began to increase in September 2022, reaching 88,908 in March 2023 (Stats NZ, 2023).

In 2023, 28.4 per cent or 1.4 million of the usually resident population was foreign-born (Stats NZ, 2023), with the highest percentage from England, followed by China, India, the Philippines, South Africa and Australia (Collins, 2004). The vast majority of these immigrants (77.28 per cent) were employed in the local labour market (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022). In 2021 and early 2022 when the interviews were conducted, Aotearoa/New Zealand was ranked third in the world, after Switzerland and Australia, in relation to work outlook, aspirational goals and lifestyle in the HSBC Expats Explorer survey, an independent survey that collects a variety of data from expats living around the world (HSBC, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2021, there was limited recruitment of international employees, with the exception of 'critical' health workers or individuals in other fields necessary to the Government's COVID response, people possessing "unique … technical or specialist skills" not readily available in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and those needed to ensure the completion of "approved major infrastructure projects" (Immigration New Zealand, 2022). This was the context in which some participants in this study relocated to Aotearoa/New Zealand with spouses who were recruited to fill specific, often critical skill shortages.

Possible selves, dual career couples and international mobility

This research draws on recent insights into how different aspects of people's lives are relevant for their career trajectories and how they modify their involvement in paid employment and rework their career identities during periods of transition in a new country. The following discussion elaborates on how theorisation about career selves and personal identities are relevant to an analysis of the experiences of women and men in dual career relationships who moved to Aotearoa/New Zealand for their spouse's employment.

The concept of *possible selves* represents individuals' ideas of what they might become, who they would like to be, and what they are afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Understandings of selves change across time and overlap, creating competing demands as individuals move through different life stages (Cross & Markus, 1991; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006; Wurf & Markus 1991). This concept is relevant to analysis of career aspirations and trajectories as individuals adopt new roles and develop new identities (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; Vignoles et al., 2008). Ibarra (2023) challenges the idea of a fixed or stable professional identity, arguing instead that it is a dynamic and evolving aspect of one's self. In this article, the concept of possible selves is used to analyse accompanying partners' narratives of transition.

Dual career couples juggle career, personal and familial identities that rely on being competent and responsible in both work and family roles, resulting in stress (Cole, 2011; Känsälä et al., 2015; Knight, 2018; McNulty, 2015). While scholars have identified a range of challenges that dual career couples face, including

[6] The Essential Skills policy allows New Zealand employers to recruit workers from overseas to meet local shortages.

time scarcity, poor work/life balance, and managing competing career goals (Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005; Kallane & Punnett, 2023; Kierner & Suutari, 2017; Scurry, 2002; Shockley et al., 2024), along with the various coping strategies that they use to ensure their personal and professional success (Saraceno, 2007; Scurry, 2002), there has been much less research on the effects of international relocation on the accompanying partner's sense of self and long-term career management.

Career pathways are influenced by individual, family and organisational contexts, gendered norms, state regulation of immigration and employment, and dominant discourses about gender and careers (Bakker 2022; Holton & Dent, 2016; Kallane & Punnett, 2023; Lupu et al., 2017). Shared societal understandings about gender have strong implications for the crafting of competent (career) selves and life trajectories (Kossek et al., 2017; Papafilippou & Bentley, 2017).

As is well documented in the literature, gender influences the types of careers that individuals aspire to, with some industries being considered more 'masculine' and others more 'feminine'. Gender socialisation, messaging around what is considered appropriate behaviour, occupational cultures and family pressure mean that some selves (and careers) appear more possible than others (Stevenson & Clegg, 2011). Traditional narratives that position men as more 'career orientated' and women as more 'family orientated' mean that women are more likely to experience conflict when attempting to juggle a career and domestic duties. These issues are explored in more detail in the following section.

Gender and technologies of the self

In their recent discussion of labour market integration of female accompanying partners, Saurombe and Zinatsa (2023, p. 2) highlight the way Foucault's (1991a) understanding of 'governmentality', or the exercise of power and control in modern societies, operates through the subjectivities and understandings of individuals. This form of power works through what appears to be the voluntary uptake of gendered self-definitions of competence and responsibility that shape educational aspirations and preferences as well as a range of public and private gendered practices. Power is manifest not just through state-enforced rules, but through the ways individuals act on or 'govern' themselves, practise forms of being, and constitute themselves in particular social contexts (Foucault, 1991a; Luther et al., 1988). This form of power is not imposed by an external state or powerful leader, but is intrinsic to individuals' practices as moral actors and enacted in employment and family contexts. Governmentality is relevant to the way people manage the relationships between their domestic lives and their careers when transitioning to life in a new country on the international recruitment of their partner. Articulated often as personal choices to focus on the needs of their families during periods of transition, these practices nevertheless constitute forms of what Foucault would refer to as 'technologies of the self'—practices of self-governance or control of conduct. At the same time, since gender is socially constructed and not fixed, it can be both reproduced and challenged. As Suter and Cangià (2020, p. 816) argue, accompanying partners can reproduce gendered norms, but also "challenge gendered meanings and re-interpret the notion of 'family' and 'work' ".

This article explores some of the complex ways in which both male and female accompanying partners challenge and conform to gendered practices relating to childcare and the pursuit of careers. As Foucault has argued, these actions are motivated by desires, aspirations, values and beliefs that are often experienced as personal choices, but identifiable as powerful collective discourses or "systems of practices" (Foucault, 1991b). These include publicly articulated aspirations for gender equality and fairness in the relationships between women and men.

While conventional understandings of gendered parenting contribute to the 'trailing spouse' phenomenon and the priority given to men's careers and economic advancement within many heterosexual partnerships (Brandén et al., 2018; Ridgway, 2021), women are increasingly assuming key roles in international organisations, resulting in greater numbers of expatriate assignments that are female-led

(Altman & Shortland 2008; Andreason, 2008; Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Cole, 2012; Hutchings & Michailova, 2017; Selmer & Leung, 2003). Research on the experiences of male accompanying partners is thus growing. Key issues include the numerous barriers they face in finding employment in the host location, social isolation due to their small numbers, their temporary dependent status, and the ineffectual employment support they receive from their working spouses' employers (Anderson, 2001; Cangià et al., 2019; Cole, 2012; Selmer & Leung, 2003). For men, having to "adjust to being secondary breadwinners (or not working at all) … can lead to a negative sense of identity" (Shortland, 2020, p. 3). To assess men's experiences as accompanying partners, and to consider the operation of governmentality in the practices they exhibit in this situation, this study included both female and male accompanying partners of international employees, many of them parents. All the accompanying partners were in paid work before relocating to Aotearoa/New Zealand.

While gendered ideals, such as the traditional breadwinner husband and stay-at-home mother, are changing due to women's greater participation in the labour market (Scurry, 2002), many argue that there is still a long way to go. Pervasive gender ideologies not only affect the roles that women aspire to but also their career progression (Evans & Diekman, 2009; Gewinner et al., 2024; Tabassum & Nayak, 2021). Research has shown that while "men still overwhelmingly hold the majority of career-enhancing expatriate roles", when women take up such positions, they are "less likely to benefit from career outcomes that can flow from expatriate assignments" (Shortland ,2020, p. 3). Dual career women, in particular, experience more work/life conflict than their partners (Shortland, 2020, p. 3). Despite working similar hours, research indicates that women in dual career couples spend considerably more hours completing domestic chores or childrearing activities (Monahan et al., 2024; Scurry, 2002), reflecting deep-seated expectations around women's role within the home.

Individuals' career selves are often a component of their professional, personal, educational, spousal, parental and community selves (Vidwans & Du Plessis 2020, p. 46). These multiple selves are interactive and overlapping. They are shaped by family background, workplace and social environmental factors and by what Foucault has referred to as technologies of the self—how people regulate themselves using available knowledge on how they should act (Luther et al., 1988), including the practices required of good partners, responsive parents and committed professionals. We outline how the participants in this study recrafted their selves on relocation to Aotearoa/New Zealand and the discursive resources they drew on as they shared their stories about periods of transition in a new country. Their strategies included taking on full-time care of their children, retraining/obtaining further qualifications, membership of a religious community, participation in online support groups, and volunteering. For one of the male participants, this involved the acquisition of a four-wheel drive vehicle which consolidated his identity as a man and his connections to other men, while also prioritising the advancement of his spouse's career.

Research design

The study targeted male and female accompanying partners of globally mobile employees in managerial and professional jobs who had mainly relocated in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the five years before 2021. Difficulty finding men who were the accompanying partners of globally mobile women employees contributed to a decision to include a few male participants who were less recent arrivals. The initial goal was to conduct 20 in-depth interviews with equal numbers of male and female participants. Returning New Zealanders were excluded from this study, as the focus was on participants who were relocating to a new country where they had no family support.

After obtaining approval from the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee, prospective participants were supplied with an information sheet and approached via phone calls, email messages and face-to-face conversations. They were identified in late 2020 and early 2021 using public information about

recent career appointments, through the research team's personal networks, and via snowball sampling. Attempts were made to identify accompanying partners who had been pursuing their own careers before relocation.

A demographic data sheet was completed at the start of each face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interview, which occurred at a location of the participant's choice. An interview guide with open-ended questions relating to the relocation and the participant's career as well as personal and family adjustments to life in a new country was used to ensure that each interview covered substantially the same topics (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011), while still enabling participants to contribute specific insights. Like Kanstrén's (2021) study of accompanying partners, the aim was to elicit narratives about the participants' careers and family life prior to relocation and their experience of transition to life in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The interviews were conducted in English by four interviewers. All four interviewers had come to Aotearoa/New Zealand from elsewhere in the world (Asia, Africa and Europe), and three did not have English as their first language. The interviews were digitally recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. The participants were then sent their transcripts for feedback, and their transcript was updated based on their feedback. Thematic analysis, using NVivo software, enabled the coding of concepts and themes for examination (Schensul, 2012). Internal validity was attained through triangulation by cross-examining the interpretation of data within the research team (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). After the coding was conducted independently, the team had several meetings to discuss the codes and share their insights. External validity (Gobo, 2008) was achieved by discussing a summary of the major findings with the participants who agreed to comment on the analysis.

All the participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their privacy. Since our participants came from a range of countries, we attempted to choose pseudonyms that reflected the participants' culture and ethnonational background (Allen & Wiles, 2016; Fazio et al., 2011; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2011).

Participant profiles

A key agenda in the selection of participants was interviewing equal numbers of women and men as the extant literature has focused primarily on women who accompany male partners pursuing international careers. A number of the participants had previous experience of relocation for their spouse's career, usually within the country from which they relocated. As their spouses had taken up professional or managerial work on relocation, the participants were located in higher-income households. No details of household income, however, were obtained during the interviews.

Interviews were completed with 21 accompanying partners of international professional and managerial employees who relocated to Aotearoa/New Zealand in the eight years before the interviews were conducted—11 women and 10 men aged between 30 and 59 years. Ten of the participants were from Europe, four from the USA, two from Australia, two from Sri Lanka, two from South Africa and one from Colombia. Five of the interviewees had relocated between 2012 and 2016, and 16 had moved between 2018 and 2020 (see Table 1.) Most of the participants came from OECD countries, which may be a consequence of the focus on recruiting participants whose spouses were in professional or managerial positions. Seven of the 21 participants did not have English as their first language.

Table 1: Participant profiles

Name	Age	Gender	Occupation	Children (ages at relocation)	Country from which they came	Year of relocation to Ao/NZ
Alicia	30–39	F	Administration	2 (4, 6)	South Africa	2019
Charles	40–49	M	Engineering and project management	2 (3, 5)	UK	2019
Elke	40–49	F	Education	1 (2)	USA	2019
Flora	50–59	F	Real estate	None	UK	2015
Glenda	50–59	F	Health professional	3 (13, 9 and 9 (twins))	USA	2020
Irene	40–49	F	Creative field	2 (6, 10)	South Africa	2020
Isuru	40–49	M	Banking	2 (13,3)	Sri Lanka	2015
James	50–59	M	Creative field	4 (15 to 21)	USA	2020
Janis	50–59	M	Management	2 (15, 17)	Netherlands	2018
Jeroen	40–49	M	Management	3 (12, 10, 6)	Netherlands	2020
Kay	30–39	F	Management	2 (5 and 2)	Australia	2020
Lewis	50–59	M	Public sector administration	None	UK	2016/No
Liz	30–39	F	Administrator	1 (7)	Australia	2019
Maria	30–39	F	Engineering	None	Colombia	2020
Merel	30–39	F	Management consultant	2 (7, 5)	Netherlands	2019
Mike	50–59	M	Health professional	None	UK	2014
Nancy	40–49	F	Management	1 (9)	UK	2019
Pierre	30–39	M	Management	2 (5 and 5 (twins))	France	2012
Sam	50–59	M	Public sector management	2 (21, 17)	UK	2019
Sashi	30–39	M	Engineering	None	Sri Lanka	2019
Sue	50–59	F	Academia	3 (20, 18, 14)	USA	2020

All the participants had been in paid work before they relocated. This work usually involved the acquisition of tertiary educational qualifications. Of the positions taken up by the participants' spouses, 16 were self-initiated (a response to a job advertisement), while four had found out about the position through recruiting agents. One participant's spouse had taken up a position with a large New Zealand company that was arranged by their international employer and was, in this sense, an 'expat'.

The 2020–2021 COVID-19 pandemic contributed to selective international recruitment in Aotearoa/New Zealand of medical professionals, meaning that a significant proportion of participants had a spouse with medical qualifications. Most of these participants had arrived in the three years before they were interviewed. Use of the researchers' professional networks contributed to eight of the participants being the partners of academics recruited from outside Aotearoa/New Zealand. While this generates some limitations for generalisability, as a preliminary and exploratory project, this is not a significant impediment to generating insights about the experiences of the accompanying partners of highly qualified international employees in dual career households.

Research findings and analysis

Challenges of transition

All the participants indicated that 'moving countries' was difficult, especially as a parent with a career. As accompanying partners, they had major responsibilities during the transition period and faced daily challenges. Settling in involved becoming familiar with a new school system, often resolving housing issues and negotiating different bureaucratic and cultural systems. The participants frequently spoke about the lack of supportive friend and family networks and problems with finding paid work. As Alicia explained, "Emigrating is not something you can prepare yourself for. It's … an all-encompassing experience." Nancy recalled, "I probably spent the first two months just getting us settled." Charles revealed that "it was almost a full-time job." Such findings support extant research on the specific challenges accompanying partners encounter (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016; Kierner 2018).

Although Janis had lived and worked in many different countries, he found the first six weeks "really difficult" because he had no job and had resigned from a prestigious professional appointment. While Merel focused on settling her young children into a school where they were required to speak an unfamiliar language, she felt that her status as a successful organisational expert was obscured: "I am very capable of things, and I'm just invisible you know." In both examples, the accompanying partner's sense of self was disrupted by international relocation, a common theme in the literature (Cangià, 2018; Petriglieri & Obodaru, 2019). These participants' experiences were consistent with past research on the relevance of career success for personal self-worth and recognition of competency (Eich-Krohm, 2007). Currently, this experience often transcends gender boundaries.

A number of the participants noted challenges with building relationships. Alicia said, "I think it's still difficult making that connection when you are in different cultures. It took me quite a while to figure out how it works." Other participants spoke about how they had to modify their behaviour and, in some respects, become different people. Nancy commented, "I make quips about things and say funny things and they don't realise that I'm joking..." Liz said, "I knew I would have to tone my 'natural self' down a little bit, even though I don't necessarily agree that I am arrogant." These participants were conscious about the need to recraft themselves as newcomers. In reflecting on aspects of self that required containment in their interactions with others, they became 'immigrant selves'.

Managing dual careers—the impacts of relocation

Dual career couples manage their career trajectories in different ways and sometimes one partner's career is prioritised over the other's (Känsälä et al., 2015). For some couples, the dominance of one partner's

career had been established before relocation. Flora stated, "I guess his [career] probably takes the lead." Like Flora, Charles has followed wherever his wife has gone: "As a doctor, she has moved around a lot and so I've basically followed her."

Most of the accompanying partners potentially destabilised their own careers when they left their home countries and were explicit about doing this to support their spouse's career. Maria said, "It was a great opportunity for him. So we decided to move." Elke revealed, "So much of my success and happiness … is wrapped up in the fact that I'm able to see my partner so happy." Kay said, "I can see how much joy he gets in that [job]. And for me, there's a sense of enjoyment in enabling him to do that." Pierre's statement, "we were in this together" captures how one partner's career goals can generate a mutual commitment to relocate.

These comments provide insight into why some of the participants embraced international relocation, despite the challenges this posed for their own careers. The male participants' comments suggest that prioritising a spouse's career is not exclusive to women. Some professional careers have a long period of training and work experience that requires geographical mobility and is difficult to reconcile with the contemporary ideal of giving equal weight to intimate partners' career goals. Some of the participants managed to sustain their own careers, despite relocating. James's wife had always wanted to be a doctor. He described himself as "an artistic type" with no set work constraints. When she took up a position in her specialist medical field in Aotearoa/New Zealand, he continued a career that largely involves writing online. Other than the time he spent settling the family, international relocation did not disrupt his career as he had already crafted a "meaningful portable identity" that incorporated his spouse's career moves (McNulty, 2012, p. 417).

Some previously career-minded participants were willing to take a step back for their spouse's career at a particular stage in their lives. As Sue's spouse had initially supported her career, she saw giving support for his career as 'payback' time: "I had so many years early on to pursue my career … I feel like this is now his time." Janis indicated that although initially his career had been dominant, "about halfway through we switched". He became "more available for the household, the kids, cooking dinner…" However, being at home for the first six weeks after relocation was a challenge: "To me, that felt like eternity. I was not a very nice husband." While they were not always comfortable with shifts in the priority given to their careers, most of the participants were committed to supporting their spouse's career and taking time out from their own careers during the transition. Demands on them were more intense if there were young children in the household, with extant research showing that the age of the children is a crucial determinant of the accompanying partner's pursuit of paid work (Sprunt & Howes, 2011).

Obtaining an appropriate position—language, location and stage in career

A number of the participants had difficulty finding work in their professional field after relocation. Accompanying partners who came from non-English speaking countries encountered more challenges and their professional expertise was less likely to be officially recognised. Pierre (from France) found having to speak English "a bit of a shock". He moved from being an engineer who managed factory production in his home country to engaging in physical work while he explored other employment opportunities, a phenomenon referred to as "downward occupational mobility" (Feng & Page, 2000, p. 254). He finally found part-time work in his field, which enabled him to care for his children after school.

Maria (from Colombia) is a qualified engineer but not a fluent English-speaker, and her skills were not officially recognised when she relocated for her spouse's job. She took on a low-paid factory job, hoping to accumulate the resources to study for New Zealand qualifications in her professional field: "I just work in the factory doing boxes and checking the quality, but this is not my degree. Anybody can do it." Sharplin (2009) has documented similar difficulties among overseas-qualified professional immigrants in Australia.

A decision by the accompany partner to embark on low-paid work unrelated to their previous careers could lead to long-term disruption of their career. Isuru held a managerial position in the financial sector in Asia, but could not find work in this field after relocation. Attempts to establish a freelance business did not generate enough income, and he moved into low-paid work with flexible hours at a fast food outlet. At the time of the interview, he was engaged in postgraduate study directed at a better-paid job in an expanding technical field.

Isuru's and Maria's experiences are consistent with research findings related to the devaluation and deskilling of qualifications and professional experience for migrants—and in particular, those from the Global South—in Aotearoa/New Zealand and other Anglophone contexts (see, for example, Alam et al., 2023; Grbic, 2010; Hulston, 2025; Hussain, 2019). However, analysis of other interviews indicated that it was not only those whose first language was not English who struggled to find appropriate work and have their qualifications or skills recognised.

A number of the accompanying partners expressed frustration about putting effort into job applications and not receiving feedback. Charles said, "I don't care about getting rejected. But the fact that I've spent three or four hours rewriting my letter, tweaking my CV for that job, and then for you to not even reply." Accompanying partners' responses indicate that familiarity with the language and relevant qualifications may not enough in a new context to secure a position for which they were qualified (McNulty, 2012, p. 417). For some highly qualified and experienced participants like Sam, who had held executive positions in his home country, finding a job was more challenging than expected: "I am on about job application number 25." Advice from others indicated that residing in another city would have enhanced his access to relevant jobs. Finally, he secured a managerial position that required regular commuting. For Sam, "There's only so many loaves and dog walks you can do." However, his managerial career identity was never in doubt.

Embracing change—new careers and new qualifications

Some of the participants who had experienced frustration in their previous jobs successfully embarked on new careers. Flora "really wanted to get out of property". After completing a summer course, she was offered a position that aligned with her aspirations to work in conservation, describing it as "the best job in the world". Other participants pursued further qualifications, to expand their skills in areas they had worked in earlier, or to consolidate existing areas of competence. While Merel withdrew from paid work to meet her children's needs, she pursued an online international qualification that was relevant to her consultancy background, motivated by what Taber and Blankemeyer (2015, p. 21) refer to as "future work self-salience". After an unsuccessful job search, Lewis opted to pursue a postgraduate degree in his professional field to obtain local qualifications, although follow-up communication indicated that he was still looking for job after completing this qualification. By responding to the challenges of a different labour market and envisaging other possible career selves, Lewis and Merel demonstrated proactive "career adaptability" (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015, p. 22).

Mobility, location and career opportunities

Some accompanying partners found that a shortage of professional skills in Aotearoa/New Zealand facilitated easy access to work in their field. Elke said, "I think I got very lucky in the fact that a very unique position opened up that matched … with the things that I've done in the past." Mike also got a job because there were few people with his skills in the country. Being in the wrong location made it more challenging for some participants. Isuru explained, "For two years, I was looking for a job. Then I realised [the city] is one reason … in [a bigger city], I can find a job easily."

For one participant, the time difference between Aotearoa/New Zealand and their home country was positive because it enabled her to work remotely during the day (New Zealand time) in a job that required providing consulting services in the evening in the USA. For others who had skills that were easily transferable, and at that time more desirable, finding employment was relatively easy. While Glenda's partner was the leading spouse for immigration purposes, her job offer was finalised first because, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, her skills were extremely relevant.

Parental and career selves

Sometimes accompanying partners embrace relocation because they prioritise their children's interests and, in the process, compromise their careers. James and Elke were dissatisfied with political developments in their home country and wanted a better future for their children. This contributed to Elke's interest in relocating for her partner's job. For others, a career break was useful when they had younger children who needed parental care. Before she moved, Alicia had two preschool children and a full-time job. Relocating to Aotearoa/New Zealand meant that she could spend more time with them. Alicia saw withdrawal from paid work as an experienced academic administrator as a temporary arrangement while the children were preschoolers.

Other female participants used a 'stand back for a time' strategy to manage parental responsibilities when the children were young. While she initially continued working online after relocation, at the time of the interview, Kay had taken a year off from work: "I think it's a season … Right now, they just need me to be present and I know that the time they're with us will be very short." Similarly, Liz said, "I was able to take the six months off work and do that [childcare]." After the birth of her son, Nancy "came out of management and … down to something that required less involvement and less responsibility". These examples demonstrate the ways in which some of the participants' 'parental selves' may have a dominant effect on career decisions, and how these decisions change over time depending on their children's ages. While Kay, Liz, Alicia, Merel and Nancy saw themselves as actively 'choosing' to be at home with their children, their behaviour may be interpreted as examples of what Foucault would refer to as governmentality (Luther et al., 1998). However, Suter and Cangià (2020, p. 817) have argued that focusing on parenting temporarily by accompanying partners can be analysed as "a time of exception" when they can "re-interpret gendered meanings about moving with the family" and gain a sense of personal autonomy. This is consistent with how some accompanying partners often explained their withdrawal from paid work or containment of career advancement.

All the participants who were parents considered their children's needs when deciding to relocate. The accompanying partners (regardless of their gender) usually reduced attention to their own career, often temporarily, in order to facilitate their children's transition. Charles suspended his career in order to meet the extra demands of settling his children into a new environment. Initially he left them in childcare for short periods of time, and, when he had some hours to himself, began running and working on his master's dissertation. He used a suspension of his paid work to focus on other aspects of self that were important to him—fitness and further education.

Even when they pursued their careers after relocation, the participants often adjusted their paid work to accommodate their children's needs. Elke and her husband were both working from home and managing the care of a very young child when they arrived in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This involved getting up at five o'clock in the morning and continuing with their paid work until late into the night. While Elke admitted that it was very difficult to "find that balance", they managed to share childcare. They introduced "a cocktail hour at five o'clock" to indicate "that [they] had switched from being in work mode to … family mode".

Couples with older children often asked for their input into the relocation decision. Sue revealed, "We wanted to invite the kids into the conversation." James recalled, "As far as I am concerned, they had veto power." Glenda saw relocation as a family adventure: "It would allow us to have this family kind of adventure, but not stop our careers or have a financial hardship." For some of the participants, their children's pleasure in a new context contributed to their decision to stay longer than initially planned. Charles revealed, "The kids absolutely love it here and it's a really nice place to be." As Janis explained, their plan to stay a couple of years has evolved into "something that might be long-term because the girls have integrated really well". These comments illustrate how aspects of parenting selves intersect with the accompanying partners' career selves (Du Plessis & Vidwans, 2024).

Self-worth, self-care and personal identity

Satisfying employment and related financial rewards facilitate self-worth. Kierner (2018), for example, found that accompanying partners missed having a job, were concerned about the contribution they were making to family life, and felt that they lacked self-importance. Alicia, who temporarily became a full-time parent when her husband got a job in Aotearoa/New Zealand, said that her career was central to her identity: "You don't get to hear you did a great job for washing the dishes". She was learning to change her "expectations about [her] worth". Sue, who took a break from her career after relocating, confessed, "I am not happy not earning money and contributing financially." She wanted to find "something [she could] … invest myself intellectually in".

For some of the male participants, international relocation was an opportunity to enjoy a different lifestyle. Sashi commented, "There's a better work-life balance..." Pierre said, "The country has evolved me into a better person." After relocating, Pierre stopped smoking, spent less time partying, put effort into making friends and spending time outdoors. Janis, who has major parental responsibilities during the week, revealed that he had bought a 4x4 truck and joined a local club: "Suddenly I could do something that was really me." He has "become a better partner, a better husband, and a better father". These male participants' attempts to pursue their personal interests post-relocation are consistent with other research into accompanying partners' coping strategies (Kupka & Cathro, 2007; McNulty 2012; Mohr & Klein, 2004). None of the female participants reported similar strategies, despite confessing they would like some recreation time.

Challenges, responses and analysis—a summation

These research findings indicate the key challenges a set of accompanying partners encountered during a transition to Aotearoa/New Zealand following their partners' transnational appointments to highly skilled professional or managerial positions. The discussion has focused on the strategies the participants adopted in the context of relevant international literature on accompanying partners. The (re)crafting of their career selves and other aspects of their personal identities has indicated the range of practices associated with technologies of the self and discourses of gender that are articulated as expressions of personal agency. Attention to the narratives of both women and men has highlighted the complexity of gender in the accompanying partners' career strategies—women's and men's practices are both similar and different. The following section summarises the conclusions, addresses the research's limitations and identifies directions for future work, particularly in the context of limited research in Aotearoa/New Zealand on accompanying partners' experiences.

Discussion and conclusion

This research has explored how a set of accompanying partners (regardless of gender) undertook the practical responsibilities of their households' transition to life in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and responded

to the personal challenges of living elsewhere. This included challenges to their sense of self, a recrafting of different dimensions of their lives, and engagement with technologies of the self (Luther et al., 1988). While analysts of technologies of the self might consider their responses evidence of governmentality, the research participants saw themselves as dynamic agents pursuing their personal goals and making choices as they crafted their lives in a new context. Their narratives illustrated how perceptions of agency operate as a feature of everyday life, embedded in structural, economic and discursive frameworks that are gendered and entwined with multiple forms of social differentiation (Bacchi, 2020).

The participants selected for this study were the partners of those in professional or managerial jobs and mainly from OECD countries with the highest per capita incomes in the world. It is a limitation of this research that it did not explore the experiences of relocation of men and women from a more diverse set of countries of origin and ethnicities. This limitation could provide the basis for future work.

For most of the parents, relocation not only meant finding accommodation and settling children into preschools or schools, but also some disruption of their own career trajectories. The male partners applied for jobs earlier than the female partners did and were more eager to resume their careers, especially if they had young children. Dominant gender discourses remained powerful in these parents' lives, while at the same time they were often challenged by men who temporarily took on major parenting responsibilities.

For some of the participants, relocation was associated with the choice to temporarily withdraw from paid work, while others could not find employment in their previous occupations. The decision to withdraw from paid work temporarily depended on income associated with the higher-paid positions of their spouses. Those who were involved in online work were most able to sustain their career trajectories in a different context, while also supporting their partners' careers. Some of the participants used relocation to search for new forms of employment and pursue relevant qualifications. These participants were often most positive about moving to Aotearoa/New Zealand and exhibited the greatest sense of personal agency. Others enrolled in vocational courses when they were unable to find suitable work. A number of the accompanying partners recrafted their professional lives and forged future-orientated career selves after moving countries for their partner's work.

The participants who had most difficulty pursuing their careers on relocation were those from countries where English was not their home language, particularly if they were from South America or Asia. A few of them found that their qualifications were not recognised in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Even those with considerable job experience and professional success in their home country sometimes encountered recruitment processes and requirements for CVs that were different in Aotearoa/New Zealand; they had to recraft how they presented their capacities and their potential as employees, reworking their career selves.

Despite the challenges of relocation, the participants of both genders wanted to support their partners' careers in a new country; they exhibited "high partner salience" (van der Velde et al., 2017; see also, Du Plessis & Vidwans, 2023). Commitment to a partner's career is possibly a key condition for this type of relocation and continuing to live abroad. If this commitment cannot be sustained, couples return to their home country or face relationship challenges.[7]

While the findings' generalisability is limited due to the small number of participants and their membership of economically privileged households, the study contributes to literature on how men can respond to the challenges of being accompanying partners (Anderson, 2001; Cangià et al., 2019; Cole, 2012; Selmer & Leung, 2003). It also illustrates how female parents who step back from paid work may sustain a commitment to their career selves while temporarily prioritising their partners' and children's interests.

[7] A few months after the interviews, the researchers learnt that two couples had returned to their home country and one couple has since separated.

Future research in this field should involve interviews with both partners in dual career couples who engage in international relocation. This exploratory study only accessed accompanying partners' narratives about their experience of employment-related highly skilled international migration. Work in this field would also be advanced through attention to the transition experiences of households from a wider range of countries of origin and those employed in more diverse occupations. The use of both in-depth qualitative interviewing and online survey techniques would provide more detailed information about a wider range of experiences of transition among families who engage in international migration. It is important to document the diverse effects of geographical relocation directed at the pursuit of career opportunities (Feuvre et al., 2023, p. 82), including challenges to traditional gendered divisions of labour. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, where high proportions of those in employment are born elsewhere (Stats NZ, 2023), there is a particular need for more research in this field.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the participants in this study who generously talked about their lives before and after their relocation to Aotearoa/New Zealand and the challenges they encountered as accompanying partners. Rianna van Zalinge and Collette van Boxtel both contributed to the research design, identified potential participants and conducted several interviews. They also participated in initial discussion of the findings. Thanks to the reviewers for their critical feedback on an earlier version of this article. Editorial comment was also much appreciated.

Funding details

An internal Lincoln University grant enabled the employment of a research assistant who assisted with the transcription of interviews.

References

Alam, A., Nel, E. Hill, D., & Bulloch, H. (2023). Settling in New Zealand's small towns: Experiences of minority ethnic immigrants. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 24*, 1079–1101. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-023-01044-6

Allen, R. E., & Wiles, J. L. (2016). A rose by any other name: Participants choosing research pseudonyms. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *13*(2), 149–165. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2015.1133746

Altman, Y., & Shortland, S. (2008). Women and international assignments: Taking stock—a 25-year review. *Human Resource Management*, *47*(2), 199–216. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20208

Anderson, B. A. (2001). When expatriation means 'Follow that woman.' *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 39*(3), 109–116. https://doi.org/10.1177/103841110103900307

Andreason, A. W. (2008). Expatriate adjustment of spouses and expatriate managers: An integrative research review. *International Journal of Management, 25*(2), 382–395. https://doi.org/10.1108/eb047459

Bacchi, C. (2020). *Conceptions of "agency"*. https://carolbacchi.com/2020/01/31/conceptions-of-agency/

Bakker, A. B. (2022). The social psychology of work engagement: state of the field. *Career Development International, 27*(1), 36–53. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-08-2021-0231

Bikos, L. H., Çiftçi, A., Güneri, O. Y., Sümer, Z. H., Danielson, S. DeVries, S., & Bilgen, W. A. (2007). A longitundinal, naturalist inquiry of the adaption of experience of the female expatriate spouse living in Turkey. *Journal of Career Development, 34*(1), 28–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845307304064

Bird, G., & Schnurman-Crook, A. (2005). Professional identity and coping behaviours in dual-career couples. *Family Relations, 54*(1), 145–160. https://doi.org/10.10.1111/j.0197-6664.2005.00012.X

Brandén, M., Bygren, M., & Gähler, M. (2018). Can the trailing spouse phenomenon be explained by employer recruitment choices? *Population, Space and Place*, *24*(6), Article e2141. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2141

Caligiuri, P., & Bonache, J. (2016) Evolving and enduring challenges in global mobility. *Journal of World Business*, *51*(10), 127–141. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2015.10.001

Cangià, F. (2018). Precarity, imagination, and the mobile life of the 'trailing spouse'. *Ethos*, *46*(1), 8–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12195

Cangià, F. (2021). Waiting as liminal: Male accompanying partners in Switzerland and beyond. In *Liminal moves: Travelling along places, meanings and times* (pp. 108–131). Berghahn. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781800730489

Cangià F., Zittoun T., Levitan D. (2019) Work and geographical mobility: The case of the male accompanying spouses. In P. Bendassoli (Ed.), *Culture, work and psychology: Invitations to dialogue* (pp. 159–182). Information Age. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-33369-012

Chen, Y. P., & Shaffer, M. (2018). The influence of expatriate spouses' coping strategies on expatriate and spouse adjustment: An interdependence perspective. *Journal of Global Mobility*: *The Home of Expatriate Management Research, 6*(1), 20–39. https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-07-2016-0032

Cole, N. D. (2011). Managing global talent: Solving the spousal adjustment problem. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *22*(7), 1504–1530. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.561963

Cole, N. D. (2012). Expatriate accompanying partners: The males speak. *Asia Pacific*, *50*(3), 308–326. https://doi.org/10.11111j.1744-7941.2012.00024.x

Collings, D. G., & Isichei, M. (2017). Global talent management: What does it mean for expatriates? In Y. McNulty & J. Selmer (Eds.), *Research handbook of expatriates* (pp. 148–159). Edward Elgar. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315200170

Collings, D. G., Scullion, H., & Morley, M. J. (2007). Changing patterns of global staffing in the multinational enterprise: Challenges to the conventional expatriate assignment and emerging alternatives. *Journal of World Business, 42*(2), 198–213. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2007.02.005

Collins, F. L. (2024, October 16). New Zealand: From settler colony to country reliant on temporary migration. *Profile*. Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/new-zealand-migration-profile-history

Cross, S., & Markus, H. (1991), Possible selves across the life span. *Human Development*, *34*(4), 230–255. https://doi.org/10.1159/000277058

Doomernik, J. (2017). Migrant smuggling between two logics: Migration dynamics and state policies – Issue brief #2. *The International Spectator*, *48*(3), 113–129. https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2013.815027

Du Plessis, R., & Vidwans, M. (2023). Gender, careers, and kids: A qualitative study of the partners of international employees. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, *19*(3), 261–279. https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2023.2252873

Eich-Krohm, A. (2007). Make it or break it – women's career interruptions in the age of professional migration: Analysis of German female migrants to the United States. *International Journal of Sociology*, *37*(2), 75–93. https://doi.org/10.1007/s/11199-005-5681-7

Evans, C. D., & Diekman, A. B. (2009). On motivated role selection: Gender beliefs, distant goals and career interests. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 22*, 235–249. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2009.01493.x

Fazio, A., Hunt, G., & Moloney, M. (2011). "It's one of the better drugs to use": Perceptions of cocaine use among gay and bisexual Asian American men. *Qualitative Health Research*, *21*(5), 625–641. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732310385825

Feng, K., & Page, S. J. (2000). An exploratory study of the tourism, migration-immigration nexus: Travel experiences of Chinese residents in New Zealand. *Current Issues in Tourism, 3*(3), 246–281. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500008667875

Feuvre, N., Davione, E., & Cangià, F. (2023). When mobility meets gender in the transnational life-course. In D. Spini & E. Widmer (Eds.), *Withstanding vulnerability throughout adult life* (pp.67–89). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-4567-0_5

Föbker, S. (2019). "This is not a career move" – accompanying partners' labour market participation after migration. *Comparative Migration Studies*, *7*(6), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-018-0104-4

Foucault, M. (1991a). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 87–104). University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226808811.001.0001

Foucault, M. (1991b). Questions of methods. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp.73–86). University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226088811.001.0001

Gewinner, I. V., Bauer, V. A., & Osterburg, M. (2024). Extending the understanding of gendered career choices in STEM: A culture-rooted theoretical model. In J. Huisman & M. Tight (Eds.), *Theory and method in higher education research* (pp. 57–76). Emerald. https://doi.org/10.1108/S2056-37522024/400000010004

Global Mobility Trends Survey. (2016). *Breakthrough to the future of global talent mobility*. https://ivemadeit.com/pdf/Key-Findings-BGRS-2016-Global-Mobility-Trends-Survey.pdf

Gobo, G. (2008). *Doing ethnography*. Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529682847

Grbic, D. (2010). Social and cultural meanings of tolerance: Immigration, incorporation and identity in Aotearoa, New Zealand. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 36*(1), 125–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830903123187

Habti, D., & Elo, M. (2018). Rethinking self-initiated expatriation in international highly skilled migration. In D. Habti & M. Elo (Eds.), *Global mobility of highly skilled people. Multidisciplinary perspectives on self-initiated expatriation* (Vol 16, pp.1–37). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95056-3_1

Harsløf, I., & Zuev, D. (2022). Temporary transnational labour mobility and gendered individualization in Europe. *Mobilities*, *18*(2), 232–249. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2022.2092417

Harvey, M. (1998). Dual-career couples during international relocation: The trailing spouse. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *9*(2), 309– 331. https://doi.org/10.1080/095851998341116

Harvey, M. G., & Buckley, M. R. (1998). The process for developing an international program for dual-career couples. *Human Resource Management Review, 8*(1), 99–123. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830903123187

Holton, V., & Dent, F. E. (2016). A better career environment for women: Developing a blueprint for individuals and organisations. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *31*(8), 542–561.

HSBC. (2021). *Future outlook* (An Expats Explorer survey). https://www.expat.hsbc.com/expat-explorer/future-outlook/

Hulston, P. (2025). *The migrant experience of decent and meaningful work: A qualitative exploration* [Master's thesis, University of Canterbury]. UC Research Repository. https//doi.org/10.26021/15840

Hussain, Y. (2019). "I was professor in India and here I am a taxi driver." *Migration Studies, 7*(4), 496–512. https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mny025

Hutchings, K., & Michailova, S. (2017). Female expatriates: Towards a more inclusive view. In Y. McNulty & J. Selmer (Eds.), *Research handbook of expatriates* (pp. 241–260). Edward Elgar. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781784718183

Ibarra, H. (2023). *Working identity, updated edition, with a new preface: Unconventional strategies for reinventing your career*. Harvard Business Press. https://doi.org/10.1177/103841620401300111

Immigration New Zealand. (2022). *H5.30 definitions*. https://www.immigration.govt.nz/opsmanual/77741.htm

Immigration New Zealand. (2024). *Partner of a worker work visa*. https://www.immigration.govt.nz/visas/partner-of-a-worker-work-visa/

Kallane, Y., & Punnett, B. J. (2023). The trailing spouse: An evolving global phenomenon. In Y. Kallane, J. Mutter, & H. Collins (Eds.), *Research handbook of global families* (pp. 72–124). Edward Elgar. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788112871.00008

Känsälä, M., Mäkelä, L., & Sutari, V. (2015). Career coordination strategies among dual career expatriate couples. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *26*(17), 2187–2210. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2014.985327

Kanstrén, K. (2021). The career transitions of expatriate partners and the effects of transitions on career identities. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 32*(21), 4491–4525 https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1674356

Kierner, A. (2018). Expatriated dual-career partners: Hope and disillusionment. *Journal of Global Mobility*: *The Home of Expatriate Management Research, 6*(3/4), 244–257. https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-02-2018-0011

Kierner, A., & Suutari, V. (2017). Repatriation of international dual-career couples. *Thunderbird International Business Review, 60*(6), 885–895. https://doi.org/10.1002/he.21947

Knight, R. (2018, December 4). How to decide whether to relocate for a job. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2018/12/how-to-decide-whether-to-relocate-for-a-job

Kossek, E. E., Su, R., & Wu, L. (2017). "Opting out" or "pushed out"? Integrating perspectives on women's career equality for gender inclusion and interventions. *Journal of Management*, *43*(1), 228–254. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316671582

Kupka, B., & Cathro, V. (2007). Desperate housewives – social and professional isolation of German expatriated spouses. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *18*(6), 951–968. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190701320908

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Sage.

Lazarova, M., & Ipek, E. (2020). "Home country" in studies of self-initiated expatriates. In M. Andresen, C. Brewster, & V. Suutari (Eds.), *Self-initiated expatriates in contex*t: *Recognising space, time and institutions*. (pp. 19–37). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429352690

Linehan, M. (2001). Women in international management. In H. Scullion & D. G. Collings (Eds.), *Global staffing* (pp. 178–191). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203643433

Lupu, I., Spence, C. & Empson, L. (2017). When the past comes back to haunt you: The enduring influence of upbringing on the work-family decisions of professional parents. *Human Relations*, *71*(2), 155–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726717708247

Luther, H. M., Martin, J., Gutman, H., & Hutton, P. H. (Eds.). (1988) *Technologies of the self*: *A seminar with Michel Foucault*. University of Massachusetts Press. https://doi.org/10.1604/9780870235931

Mancini-Vonlanthen, N. (2021) *Career difficulties and strategies of female self-initiated expatriates and self-initiated expatriate couples in Switzerland* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Fribourg]. Swiss Open Access Repository. https://sonar.ch/documents/309322/preview/ManciniVolanthenN.pdf

Markus, H. & Nurius, P. (1986). "Possible selves." *American Psychologist*, *41*(9), 954–969. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954

Mayrhofer, W., Pernkopf, K., & Reiss, L. (2020). Self-initiated expatriates at different life and career stages: The meaning of families and their impact on the expatriation and repatriation experiences of self-initiated expatriates. In M. Andresen, C. Brewster, & V. Suutari (Eds.), *Self-initiated expatriates in context* (pp. 110–113). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429352690

McNulty, Y. (2012). 'Being dumped in to sink or swim': An empirical study of organizational support for the trailing spouse. *Human Resource Development International*, *15*(4), 417–434. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2012.721985

McNulty, Y. (2015). Till stress do us part: The causes and consequences of expatriate divorce. *Journal of Global Mobility, 3*(2), 106–136. https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-06-2014-0023

McNulty, Y., & Brewster, C. (2017). Theorizing the meaning (s) of 'expatriate': Establishing boundary conditions for business expatriates. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 28*(1), 27-61. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2016.1243567

Miyazoe, T., & Anderson, T. (2011). Anonymity in blended learning: Who would you like to be? *Journal of Educational Technology and Society*, *14*(2), 175–187. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220374852_Anonymity_in_Blended_Learning_Who_Would_You_Like_to_Be

Mohr, A. T., & Klein, S. (2004). Exploring the adjustment of American expatriate spouses in Germany. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *15*(7), 1189–1206. https://doi.org/10.1080/0958851042000238400

Monahan, T., Waltz, M., Parker, A., & Fisher, J. A. (2024). A review of the institutional landscape for dual-career hiring in higher education. *Discover Education, 3*, Article 34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-024-00118-6

New Zealand Productivity Commission. (2021). *International migration to New Zealand: Future opportunities and challenges* (New Zealand Working paper No. 2021/09 PCWP). https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-05/pc-wp-international-migration-to-nz-future-opportunities-and-challenges.pdf

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2008) *The global competition for talent: Mobility of the highly skilled*. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2008/09/the-global-competition-for-talent_g1gh9477.html

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2022). *Migration*. https://www.oecd.org/migration/

Oyserman, D., & Fryberg, S. (2006). The possible selves of diverse adolescents: Content and function across gender, race and national origin. In C. Dunkel & J. Kerpelman (Eds.), *Possible selves: Research and application* (pp. 17–39). Nova Science.

Papafilippou, V., & Bentley, L. (2017). Gendered transitions, career identities and possible selves: The case of engineering graduates. *Journal of Education and Work*, *30*(8), 827–839. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369080.2017.1375088

Petriglieri, J. L., & Obodaru, O. (2019). Secure-base relationships as drivers of professional identity development in dual-career couples. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *64*(3), 694–736. https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839218783174

Pixley, J. E. (2008). Life course patterns of career-prioritizing decisions and occupational attainment in dual-earner couples. *Work and Occupations*, *35*(2), 127–163. https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888408315543

Quinn, M. A., & Rubb, S. (2011). Spouse overeducation and family migration: Evidence from the US. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues, 32(*1), 36-45. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10834-010-9213-4

Remler, D. K., & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2011), *Research methods in practice*. Sage.

Ridgway, M. (2021). Taking a step back? Expatriation consequences on women in dual-career couples in the Gulf. *Merits*, *1*(1), 47–60. https://doi.org/10.3390/merits.1010006

Riusala, K., & Suutari, V. (2000). Expatriation and careers: Perspectives of expatriates and spouses. *Career Development International, 5*(2), 81–90. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430010318945

Rusconi, A., Moen, P., & Kaduk, A. (2013). Career priorities and pathways across the (gendered) life course. In D. A. Major & R. J. Burke (Eds.), *Handbook of work-life integration among professionals* (pp. 95–119). Edward Elgar.

Saraceno, C. (2007). Introduction to the special issue: Dual-career couples. *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung*, *19*(3). S255–262. https://doi.org/10.20377/jfr-281

Saurombe, M. D., & Zinatsa, F. (2023) Governing policies and factors affecting the labor market integration of female accompanying spouses. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *7*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2022.1084390

Schensul, J. J. (2012), Methodology, methods and tools in qualitative research. In S. D. Lapan, M. T. Quartaroli, & F. J. Riemer (Eds.), *Qualitative research: An introduction to methods and designs* (pp. 69–106). Jossey-Bass.

Scurry, T. (2002). Navigating dual-careers: The challenge for professional couples. *Personnel Review*, *51*(7), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-05-2020-0367

Selmer, J., & Leung, A. S. (2003). International adjustment of female vs male business expatriates. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *14*(7), 1117–1131. https://doi.org/10.1080/0958519032000114237

Shaffer, M. A., & Harrison, D. A. (2001). Forgotten partners of international assignments: Development and test of a model of spouse adjustment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*(2), 238–254. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.2.238

Sharplin, E. (2009). Bringing them in: The experiences of imported and overseas-qualified teachers. *Australian Journal of Education*, *53*(2), 192–206. https://doi.org/10.1177/00494410905300207

Shockley, K. M., Sten, W., & Dodd, H. (2024). Dual-earner couples. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour, 12*, 369–394. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-110622-053405

Shortland, S. (2020). Career cooperation, coordination, compatibility and co-working: How female expatriates mobilise dual-career strategies. *Gender in Management: An International Journal, 35(*2), 121–139. https://doi.org/10.1108/HRMID-05-2020-0116

Sprunt, E., & Howes, S. (2011). Results of dual career couple survey. *Journal of Petroleum Technology*, *63*(10), 60–62. https://doi.org/10.2118/1011-0060-JPT

Stats NZ. (2023, May 12). *Net migration gain driven by non-New Zealand citizens* (Media release). https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/net-migration-gain-driven-by-non-new-zealand-citizens/

Stevenson, J., & Clegg, S. (2011). Possible selves: Students orientating themselves towards the future through extracurricular activity. *British Journal Research Journal, 37*(2), 231–246. https://doi.org/10.1080/0141920903540672

Suter, B., & Cangià, F. (2020) Time and family on the move: 'Accompanying partners' in geographical mobility. *Time & Society*, 29(3), 813–835. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X19897431

Suutari, V., Brewster, C., Mäkelä, L., Dickmann, M., & Tornikoski, C. (2018). The effect of international work experience on the career success of expatriates: A comparison of assigned and self-initiated expatriates. *Human Resource Management*, *57*(1), 37–54. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21827

Tabassum, N., & Nayak, B. S. (2021). Gender stereotypes and their impact on women's career progress. *IM Kazhikode Society and Management Review, 10*(2), 192–208. https://doi.org/10.1107/22779752209755513

Taber, B. J., & Blankemeyer, M. (2015). Future work self and career adaptability in the prediction of proactive career behaviors. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *86*, 20–27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.10.005

van der Velde, M. E., Jansen, P. G., Bal, P. M., & van Erp, K. J. (2017). Dual-earner couples' willingness to relocate abroad: The reciprocal influence of both partners' career role salience and partner role salience. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *26*(2), 195–207. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2016.1241768

van der Zee, K. I. Ali, A. J., & Salome, E. (2005). Role interference and subjective well-being among expatriate families. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 14*(3), 239–262. https://doi.org/10.1080/13594320500146250

Vidwans, M., & Du Plessis, R. A. (2020). Crafting careers in accounting: Redefining gendered selves. *Pacific Accounting Review*, *32*(1), 32–53. https://doi.org/10.1108/PAR-03-2019-0027

Vignoles, V. L., Manzi, C., Regalia, C., Jemmolo, S., & Scabini, E. (2008). Identity motives underlying desired and feared possible future selves. *Journal of Personality, 76*(5), 1165–1200. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2008.00518.x

Wurf, E., & Markus, H. (1991). Possible selves and the psychology of personal growth. In D. J. Ozer, J. M Healy, & A. J. Stewart (Eds.), *Perspectives in personality* (pp. 39–62). Jessica Kingsley. https://doi.org/10.12691/education-5-1-7