

# What Do Women Self-Initiated Expatriate Careers Look Like?

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## Mobile Careers

In this research the definition of career used is that of Arthur (2008) which suggests that a career is “the evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time”. It is what you do with your career and the life journey that defines you as an individual.

A career is often viewed as a type of trajectory, described as a ‘journey’, ‘road’ or ‘path’, inheritance, cycle, action, fit, journey, role, relationship, resource ascending, descending, stable, kaleidoscopic and story. The traditional models of career progression do not acknowledge the changes in trajectory or priority which are peppered throughout the stages of a woman’s career journey. Some of these metaphors take into consideration mobility throughout a career

## Gendered Mobile Careers

One parameter of the gendered career is the role of household divisions. Household divisions are evident to varying degrees in most cultures. Motherhood or caring responsibilities can put a hold on a women’s career and because of the hierarchical nature of and vertical segregation within many jobs, there is added pressure to either return prematurely or, alternatively, sacrifice career progression.

Early studies suggest that women chose skill advancement and intellectual challenges as two key intrinsic factors stimulating their desire for internationally mobile careers.

Recent studies suggest that it is no longer simply about skill advancement and intellectual challenge, but the development of individual goals, values, skills, characteristics, and competencies

What we do know is that as more women aspire to be internationally mobile, they face issues such as whether to follow a traditional career path or whether to pursue a more flexible career path however there is little.

## From Doing Gender to Going Gender in Mobile Careers

Gendered relations exist and persist ultimately because of everyday activities, norms and practices and are developed and adapted when they are challenged. Traditional doing gender research is somewhat fixated on the concept of feminine and masculine activities, behaviours and norms throughout society.

The transformation of gender performances is what we deem as going gender, whereby there is a continuous process of learning how to exist in between geographic spaces, often involving tension, persistence and resistance. Going gender is not limited to one type of journey, but one that is varying dependant on age, sexuality and geographic context(s). It is also dependent upon to what degree a woman is willing to be challenged by tension, show persistence, and overcome resistance. Going gender is also a continual process, requiring the individual to eb and flow depending on the influences around them.

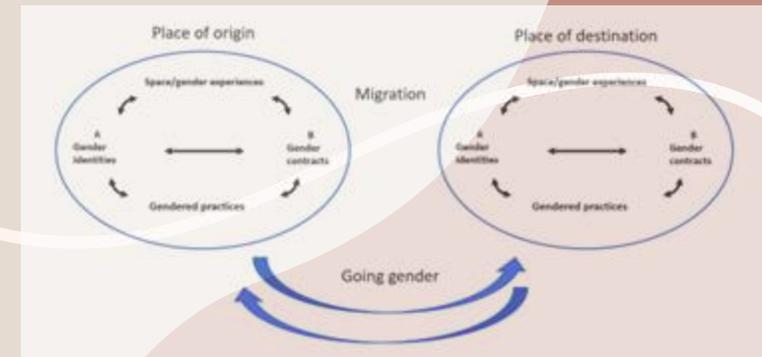


Fig. 1. 'Going Gender' in Migration (Stenbacka & Forsberg 2020)