

ABSTRACT

What do women SIE careers look like?

Courtenay Basnayake

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This presentation aims to highlight the existing literature around self-initiated expatriation (SIE), gender and careers. One novel way of viewing these distinctive areas of literature is through a 'going gender' lens. SIE women are increasingly using expatriation as a source of career and lifestyle development. However, little detail is known for the career aspirations and expectations of these highly autonomous women, with a particular focus on the diverse, multi-dynamic factors influencing and impacting these individuals' decision-making processes. Academics within the international mobility and gendered careers research spaces have identified the value of looking at the multidimensional nature of decision-making, career strategies, and experiences of internationally mobile individuals. Furthermore, recently, a 'going gender' framework is designed, an extension of the traditional 'doing' and 'undoing' gender theory, aiming to conceptualise the dynamic impact on gender that is experienced by women moving between different contextual spaces (Stenbacka & Frosberg, 2020). In this research study, I have adapted this framework to look specifically at the multi-dynamic factors influencing women SIEs and their careers, choosing to unpack the different layers of influence using a network thematic analysis. Using a life story approach, through a narrative inquiry methodology, this research study looks at the live stories of 15 self-identified SIEs. Initial findings align well with the framework identified, going far beyond the concept of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, taking into consideration the impact that mobility has on their gender role identification and finally, how these together, have influenced their career aspirations and experiences between different geographic contexts. The outcome of this research study is to contribute to the ever-growing literature surrounding women SIEs and their diverse experiences, impact on identity, multi-faceted decision making, and lifestyle changes made, in order to pursue their career aspirations in different geographic spaces.

References

Susanne Stenbacka & Gunnel Forsberg (2020) To 'go gender' – A conceptual framework for analysing migration-related strategic gender practices, *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift - Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 74:5, 296-309, DOI: 10.1080/00291951.2020.1858154