

**An Exploration of the International Career  
Experiences of Self-Initiated Expatriate  
Argentinean Women in NZ**

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## **Abstract**

Self-initiated (SI) expatriates are international travellers who pursue overseas work, temporarily and by their own means (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Myers, Inkson, & Pringle, 2017; Suutari, Brewster, Mäkelä, Dickmann, & Tornikoski, 2018). The experiences of this growing global workforce, and in particular the experiences of SI expatriate women, are under-researched (Ressia, Strachan, & Bailey, 2017; Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). Furthermore, little research has been carried out on Latin American women undertaking self-initiated expatriation (SIE) in New Zealand (NZ).

This dissertation provides a unique contribution to the literature by exploring the motivations of Argentinean women to embark on a SIE to NZ, as well as their career experiences and development in the country. The career stories of five Argentinean SI expatriate women were analysed through narrative inquiry, which is described by Polkinghorne (1995) as a methodology that explores human experiences through storytelling. The research paradigm used is interpretive (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013).

The findings of this dissertation provide new insights into the strategies undertaken by the participants that contributed to their career experiences and development: mentoring, networking, access to community support, pursuing local qualifications and training. Additionally, evidence of some discriminatory practices by NZ employers was found, such as failure to recognise overseas qualifications and experience. However, SIE was a powerful experience that contributed to the participants' career development, resulting in transformational life change for all of them.

Certain implications for Argentinean women and their employers were identified. Other SI expatriate women seeking to improve their career development in NZ may find it useful to learn about the experiences, strategies and challenges which the participants shared. New Zealand employers wishing to retain or attract skilled SI expatriate women could endeavour to do so by supporting them with technical training, cross-cultural training, ongoing language training, mentoring, and formal and informal networking opportunities (Cao et al., 2013; Cao et al., 2014; Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Fontinha, De Cuyper, Williams & Scott, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Vaiman, Haslberger, & Vance, 2015).

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## List of Acronyms

AE	Assigned Expatriation
HR	Human Resource
CVs	Curricula Vitae
KSAs	Knowledge, Skills and Abilities
NZ	New Zealand
SI	Self-Initiated
SIE	Self-Initiated Expatriation

## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Luciana Ornela Nodesco

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

Self-initiated (SI) expatriates are important human resources (HR) from which organisations can benefit, as they bring highly valued skills, experience and networks that are useful for working in international markets. SI expatriates usually have valuable experience and knowledge from their parent countries, as well as knowledge and experience from the host country (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Harry, Dodd, & Chinyamurindi, 2017). Moreover, this global workforce usually brings high levels of qualifications and at a lower cost compared to corporate-assigned expatriates. It has been found that when SI expatriates have lived and worked in the host country for a significant time before hiring, they may then adapt better to the country (than assigned expatriates). Self-initiated expatriates also usually possess a good understanding of the local language and culture as well as intentions to stay in the host country (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Vaiman et al., 2015).

Thus, employees with international experience (like SI expatriates) are a key component for success in organisations competing in global markets, particularly in professions where there are skills shortages (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). For organisations to benefit from this global talent, they need to proactively lead practices and initiatives that facilitate SI expatriate employees' workplace adaptation (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). Therefore, research increasingly recognises the need to understand SIE (self-initiated expatriation) experiences so that organisations and governments can attract, retain and motivate this growing global workforce (Doherty, Richardson, & Thorn, 2013a; Harry, Dodd, & Chinyamurindi, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

Hence, this dissertation aims to explore the motivation for international mobility and the factors that contributed to SI expatriate Argentinean women's career development in New Zealand (NZ). Specifically, it will investigate participants' experiences in relation to the following research questions:

- What are the motivations of Argentinean women coming to NZ as SI expatriates?
- What are the career experiences of SI expatriate Argentinean women in NZ?
- How does the SIE experience impact the career development of Argentinean women in NZ?

Furthermore, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss and provide the context for this research, including the rationale for studying Argentinean women undertaking SIE to NZ, and an overview of international mobility trends. Lastly, this chapter also outlines the structure of the dissertation.

## 1.1 Why Study Argentinean Women Undertaking SIE to NZ?

The number of Latin Americans living in NZ has doubled between 2006 and 2013, increasing from 6,654 to 13,182 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Within this number, several Latin American ethnic groups are represented: Brazilians, Chileans, Colombians and Argentineans (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Yet, little is known about this ethnic group in terms of their NZ work experiences

as there seems to be a lack of studies of Latin Americans in NZ. In addition, research confirms that 50 per cent of SI expatriates are women (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Myers et al., 2017; Tharenou, 2009, 2014; Tucker, 2012). Thus, this dissertation seeks to fill these gaps by exploring the motivations, career experiences and development of Argentinean women undertaking SIE to NZ.

Moreover, Argentina is a developing country which is slowly recovering from a financial crisis that took place in the early 2000s (López Murphy, Atana, & Navajas, 2003). In 2001, the Argentinean economy went into recession and since 2004 the local currency has steadily weakened. In 2002 Argentina faced an inflation peak of 41 per cent as a result of the financial crisis, and since 2010 Argentineans have once again experienced high levels of inflation (Ferrari-Filho & de Paula, 2016). In addition to these financial obstacles, women tend to face gender inequalities. According to the last local official report, women in Argentina are paid 27 per cent less than men, and 6.8 per cent of the individuals with lowest income in Argentina (out of the 10 per cent of the population) are women (Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social, 2017). As salaries increase, the female proportion decreases (Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social, 2017), showing the underrepresentation of women in the workplace. Due to the deterioration of the Argentinean economy, unemployment and poverty levels have increased and consequentially more Argentineans have emigrated for better life opportunities (Carballo & Turner, 2005; Jachimowicz, 2006; Mundo Untref, 2017). The Argentinean population in NZ increased approximately by 87 per cent from 2006 to 2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014) and this trend may continue, making it even more important to explore their career experiences in NZ.

The Argentinean work culture has important differences compared to the NZ work culture, which highlights the need for this type of research. The Argentinean's labour context is connected to the country's financial context: there are high levels of individuals working informally in undeclared jobs, without social security (Groisman, 2016). In this unstable context, personal relationships play a key role in surviving the challenging times (World Business Culture, 2019). Culturally, Argentineans tend to be direct and more expressive compared to other cultures. This is reflected in the workplace with noisy meetings and heated arguments (World Business Culture, 2019). Another significant difference to NZ practices is the Argentinean recruitment processes. In Argentina candidates do not need to prepare cover letters or curricula vitae (CVs) tailored to the advertised position, like in NZ. Thus, Argentineans relocating to NZ may, at the start, struggle to understand the NZ work culture and recruitment processes. This dissertation provides Argentineans in NZ with information to better start their SIE experiences.

Furthermore, my own experience as a SI Argentinean woman who undertook SIE to NZ, spurs my personal interest in this dissertation. Eight years ago I embarked on my overseas experience: travelling from Argentina and working in NZ for one year. Unexpectedly, NZ became my new permanent home. Therefore, I seek to explore the motivations of other SI expatriate women who relocated to NZ, what helped them to develop their NZ careers and how they overcame challenges, in order to learn from their experiences for my own career and personal development.

## 1.2 Background: International Mobility

Globalisation has extended individuals' career choices beyond their home countries, creating global careers (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Harry et al., 2017; Thorn, 2009). Career relates to an individual's work experiences over his/her life (Parker, Khapova, & Arthur, 2009) and individuals are now more in charge of their own careers as they move across organisational and national boundaries in search of better employment prospects. This is referred to as having a 'boundaryless career' (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Thorn, 2009). This contemporary career paradigm differs from the more traditional and linear model, in which employees were expected to stay long-term in an organisation progressing in seniority with age and time (Kuen, Nesbit, & Ahlstrom, 2013; Thorn, 2009).

Boundaryless careers are characterised by freedom, mobility and autonomy, as individuals are now motivated to go beyond the limits of organisations and nations to gain the needed skills to operate in global markets (Kuen et al., 2013; Thorn, 2009). It is argued that this career model can better meet the needs of modern global businesses, however it also shifts the responsibility, risks and costs from the organisations on to individuals, who need to develop and manage their careers on an independent basis (Kuen et al., 2013; Savickas et al., 2009).

The concept of boundaryless careers has been linked to expatriates as they are usually pictured as professionals with unlimited opportunities, who break through flexible boundaries and embark on international careers (Jokinen, Brewster, & Suutari, 2008). However, this concept has been challenged by scholars as lacking in empirical support and not being clearly defined (Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, & Roper, 2012; Pringle & Mallon, 2003). One of the main critiques of this concept is that it prioritises organisational limits over the other boundaries that individuals can cross during their careers, such as type of employment or social class (Inkson et al., 2012). The boundaryless career theory may be a narrow model applicable only to professional and advantaged groups, and not suitable for lower-skilled individuals and minorities for whom boundaryless careers can result in unemployment and insecurity (Inkson et al., 2012; Pringle & Mallon, 2003).

Nevertheless, the growth of global markets has resulted in the development of diverse forms of internationally mobile individuals (Myers & Pringle, 2005; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013). More and more individuals embark on 'overseas experiences' (an earlier term for self-initiated travel and work used in NZ and Australia) in search of adventure, self-discovery and career advancement (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Myers & Douglas, 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005). 'Overseas experience' has been characterised in the literature as the choice of young people who undertake SIE, looking for career development and learning about new cultures (Cerdin & Selmer, 2013; Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Myers & Pringle, 2005); and has become the predominant paradigm in countries such as NZ and Australia (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Myers & Pringle, 2005). This form of international mobility has been referred to in various ways: 'self-initiated foreign experience' (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997), 'self-selecting expatriates' (Richardson & McKenna, 2000), 'self-initiated movers' (Thorn, 2009), amongst other terms. Currently, the more accepted terminology is 'self-initiated expatriation' (Al

Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Farcas & Goncalves, 2016; Myers et al., 2017). This is the term that will be used in this dissertation with the acronym 'SIE' (self-initiated expatriation).

### **1.3 Dissertation's Structure**

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the research topic with background information on international mobility, as well as commentary on the significance of this dissertation, the rationale for studying Argentinean women in SIE and the need for further research in this area.

Chapter 2 starts by outlining the different types of globally mobile individuals, followed by a discussion on individuals' motivations to undertake SIE, including women's motivations for undertaking SIE, such as personal reasons and limited opportunities as assigned expatriates. The next section explores the career experiences of SI expatriates as well as the main career challenges they may face, and the organisational strategies that can provide support for their career development and experiences. The last section examines the development of career capital during SIE and the career development of women undertaking SIE.

Chapter 3 presents the research process used in this dissertation and provides some important definitions around the researcher's philosophical positioning. It explains the choices of relativism as the ontology and constructivism as the epistemology, in addition to the rationale behind an interpretive paradigm and a narrative inquiry methodology. The data collection process (in-depth narrative interviews), data analysis and the ethical considerations are also examined.

The findings are presented in chapter 4, starting with an outline of the participants' backgrounds before relocation and an overview of their SIE experience in NZ. The themes that emerged from the data analysis are discussed and structured in three parts, according to each research question: participants' motivations to undertake SIE to NZ, participants' career experiences and their career development in NZ.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to the relevant SIE literature and the participants' career stories. The last chapter (Chapter 6) consists of the dissertation's overview, contributions and implications, limitations and suggested areas for future research. Overall, SIE was found to be a powerful path to enhance individuals' career development. Latin American SI expatriate women pursuing career development in NZ may benefit from this dissertation's findings.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter examines the terms around self-initiated expatriation (SIE) and discusses the literature relating to the three key themes of this dissertation: motivations for undertaking SIE, career experiences during SIE and career development of self-initiated (SI) expatriates. In order to achieve a better understanding of SIE, it is important to learn about the reasons why individuals embark on self-driven international work experiences. Thus, the motivations to undertake SIE, including what may influence women to embark on SIE is explored in section 2.2. It is argued that women's motivations to undertake SIE tend to be more personal than professional reasons, like family, relationships and personal development (Myers & Douglas, 2017; Myers et al., 2017; Thorn, 2009).

In addition, SI expatriates often imply individuals with higher qualifications (Cerdin & Selmer, 2013), like skilled migrants. Even though expatriates move to another country temporarily, their intentions could change, and they could stay permanently in the host country, resulting in migration (Thorn, 2009). Due to skilled migrants sharing part of the SIE definition and the literature on SIEs' experiences being limited, research on skilled migrant women's career experiences is also drawn on. This will further inform the discussion of the following section (2.3), which reviews the career experiences of women who self-initiated their expatriation to New Zealand (NZ). This section focuses on the career experiences of SI expatriate women and skilled migrant women both in general and in NZ, as well as on the organisational strategies that can impact on the experiences of SI expatriates. It is suggested that the lack of recognition of overseas qualifications (Manhica, Östh, & Rostila, 2015; Ressia et al., 2017) and overseas experience may contribute to the challenge individuals face after expatriation (Dietz, Joshi, Esses, Hamilton, & Gabarrot, 2015; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). Also, some organisational practices may support SI expatriates' career experiences (Cao et al., 2014).

The last section (2.4) discusses the effect that SIE can have on the career development of women, specifically, the competencies that individuals develop from going on a SIE and how these experiences can impact their career development or career outcomes. Research on the influences of SIE on the career development of women is limited, thus the first part of this section ('Career Development in SIE') draws from the SIE literature in general, for both men and women. The second part ('Women's Career Development in SIE') builds on SIE women's literature exclusively. This section argues that SIE can be a source of career development as it increases the individual's career capital (Myers & Pringle, 2005; Suutari et al., 2018).

### 2.1 SIE and International Mobility

The terms 'assigned expatriate', 'SI expatriate' and 'migrant' are often used interchangeably, and the limits between each category are not clearly defined (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld, & Dickmann, 2014; Doherty, Richardson, & Thorn, 2013b; Thorn, 2009). Nevertheless, these three concepts may present different motivations for seeking an international career.

A migrant can be defined as any person who relocates to another country with the intention of staying permanently (Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2013). Migrants tend to be characterised as a less advantaged group with lower levels of skill compared to expatriates (Doherty et al., 2013b) and with a negative connotation that migrants move abroad out of need rather than by choice (Al Ariss, 2010). On the other hand, the term 'expatriate' has been traditionally used to refer to a more privileged group of professionals with higher qualifications (Cerdin & Selmer, 2013). Expatriates are individuals who choose to move to a country temporarily and perform work in the host country (Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013b).

Expatriates can be differentiated by reference to two main groups: individuals sent overseas by companies - 'assigned expatriates', and those who move internationally by their own accord – 'self-initiated expatriates' (Andresen, Biemann, & Pattie, 2012; Doherty et al., 2013b). If the expatriation is initiated by a company and the organisation is supporting the individual to move and work overseas, the expatriation is considered an assigned expatriation (AE) (Andresen et al., 2012; Doherty et al., 2013b). Traditionally AE is the most researched mode of global mobility (Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Suutari et al., 2018). However, this dissertation focuses on SI expatriates, a less conventional type of internationally mobile individuals but increasingly important group in the current global labour market (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Myers & Pringle, 2005; Suutari et al., 2018).

Rather than waiting for their employers to progress them up the corporate ladder, SI expatriates create their own destiny by embarking on an overseas experience of their own initiative and without organisational support, deciding to live and work abroad by their own means (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Andresen et al., 2012; Cerdin & Selmer, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013b; Myers et al., 2017). The literature presents an array of definitions for SIE. Common elements of the definitions could be that SI expatriates are individuals with self-directed intentions to seek work internationally on a temporary basis, the majority of whom have professional qualifications (Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2013). Self-initiated expatriates are usually pictured as young and highly educated individuals who have moved from developed countries (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013b). However, SI expatriates are not a homogenous group and diversity exists within this type of mobility (Cerdin & Selmer, 2013). For instance, SI expatriates could be highly educated individuals moving from a developing country to a developed country.

Both types of expatriates cross national and cultural borders but it is suggested that SI expatriates might show a greater desire to pursue international work experience and have more of a tendency for international mobility (Andresen et al., 2012). Self-initiated expatriates might be more motivated by individual agency, choosing where to relocate and seek work, guided by their personal motivations (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Andresen et al., 2012; Cerdin & Selmer, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013b; Myers et al., 2017). Compared to assigned expatriates, SI expatriates are usually less driven by a desire to follow the traditional hierarchical career path and are less

committed to a specific organisation (Suutari et al., 2018). They are more driven by their own personal interests and lead a more autonomous life (Andresen et al., 2012).

## **2.2 Motivations for Undertaking SIE**

The way individuals design their own careers is indicative of the internal lens through which they see the world (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009). Choosing a self-directed career path shows a certain career attitude that is often driven by personal values ('protean career attitude') rather than organisational commitment (Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2013; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009). People with protean career attitudes (like SI expatriates) are generally self-driven, take an active role in the design of their careers, and tend to have a more holistic perspective of their lives (Cao et al., 2013). Therefore, their reasons for moving overseas can go beyond their professional goals and be also driven by their intrinsic whole-life motivations (Cao et al., 2013).

The global mobility literature has in the past taken a narrow view of individuals' motivations and has mainly focussed on the financial gains of overseas work experiences (Thorn, 2009). However, individuals can embark on international careers for a range of factors and the importance of each reason may alter over time as careers develop and life priorities change (Myers et al., 2017; Thorn, 2009). Several studies find that, besides financial gain, personal fulfilment, family, career development, the pursuit of adventure, travelling and experiencing new cultures are frequent motivations for SIE (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Selmer & Lauring, 2010). Self-initiated expatriates may find the local culture of the host country more appealing (in comparison to assigned expatriates), and cultural exploration can be one of the motivations for undertaking a SIE (Von Borell de Araujo, Teixeira, da Cruz, & Malini, 2014). Nonetheless, as mentioned above, SI expatriates are a diverse group (Cerdin & Selmer, 2013), so the motivations to undertake SIE may be dependent on personal interests and contexts.

### ***2.2.1 Women's Motivations to Undertake SIE***

As an individual's focus changes over time, women's motivations may vary as they transition through different life stages. According to studies conducted on women who undertook SIE, in their early career women may experience an exploration phase in which they seek self-discovery, adventure and autonomy (Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Tharenou, 2009; Thorn, 2009). In this stage, women may undertake SIE to learn about their own potential, to challenge the boundaries set by family and traditions in their home countries, and to experience new cultures (Myers et al., 2017; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Thorn, 2009). In their early career, women can also be attracted to the potential career development opportunities that SIE may bring (Myers et al., 2017; Suutari et al., 2018; Tharenou, 2009).

Women might then transition to a stage where they balance or reassess a mix of work and life factors to evaluate their career direction (Pringle & Dixon, 2003). In this phase, women's international mobility tends to be more focussed on relationships and what is best for the family, and they often seek destinations that provide better work-life balance for greater involvement with

the family (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Tharenou, 2009; Thorn, 2009). In the middle stages of their career, even though women might initiate expatriation to advance their careers, the importance of their partners and family can have a greater influence on their decisions than their own career outcomes (Tharenou, 2009). According to some scholars, women often have a key focus on relationships throughout their lives and this focus may be the source of personal satisfaction and provide a sense of development (Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Thorn, 2009). However, it is suggested that women without family commitments initiate expatriation more for career development (in early and mid-career) and this could remain their focus over the course of their careers (Tharenou, 2009).

Women whose main focus is career development and who experience career obstacles in their home countries might perceive SIE as a way of overcoming the lack of opportunity (Andresen et al., 2012; Farcas & Goncalves, 2016; Myers & Pringle, 2005). These career obstacles can relate to the gender bias sometimes held by top management or human resource (HR) departments (often referred 'glass ceiling'), which creates additional challenges for women's career progression (Linehan, 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005; Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015; Verniers & Vala, 2018). Therefore, for some women, one motivation for relocation can be leaving negative work environments or poor work prospects and conditions (Myers & Pringle, 2005), and/or struggling economies in the country of origin (Froese, 2012; Massey & Espinosa, 1997).

Besides 'glass ceiling' obstacles, studies show that women are less likely to be sent on AE because of some persistent myths supported by employers. Studies show that organisations can be reluctant to send women on AEs and female assigned expatriates are still a minority (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Vance & McNulty, 2014). Certain myths may contribute to the employers' gender discrimination: the presumption that women do not want to undertake AEs and the assumption that all women are less likely to be internationally mobile due to their partners' careers (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Moore, 2002). Even though studies often find that women prioritise family and relationships over their careers, this cannot be generalised to all women in all contexts, and even more so with the prevalence of dual career couples (when both partners pursue professional careers). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that women, in all situations, will subordinate their own career to their partners' careers (Moore, 2002).

Moreover, the low number of women sent on AEs may be related to another barrier women face: the lack of women in senior management positions (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009). This confirms women's underrepresentation in leading roles and the gender-based barriers women encounter. The inequality in the number of female managers can be due to informal recruitment and selection processes that advantage men (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015; Verniers & Vala, 2018). Managers in charge of selecting staff may, for example, choose a man over a woman influenced by the myth that marriage and motherhood are the most important aspects of women's lives. Thus, women's proclivity to embark on SIE may be influenced, in part, by this 'double glass ceiling' as they may not only face a managerial glass ceiling but also fewer opportunities to be chosen for AEs (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Linehan, 2017; Tharenou, 2014).

However, even though there still is an imbalance between the number of men and women in AEs, over time, women have gained some ground in the AE's field. In 1992, a study of multinational enterprises in North America, Europe and Asia found that only five per cent of international assignees were female (Altman & Shortland, 2008). In 1996, in a survey carried out in the United States, women constituted 14 per cent of the AE group (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Tucker, 2012). In 2009, this figure rose to 20 per cent (Tucker, 2012). This indicates that there has been a slow but significant improvement in the percentage of women being sent on international assignments.

Nevertheless, there is still a significant underrepresentation of women when it comes to AEs, which can be illustrated by comparing the proportion of women that undertake SIE and the proportion of women in AEs (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Tharenou, 2009, 2014; Tucker, 2012). Studies with large sample surveys confirm that women constitute half of the individuals who undertake SIE (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Myers et al., 2017; Tharenou, 2009, 2014; Tucker, 2012). However, women usually comprise approximately 25 per cent of the individuals sent on AEs (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Moore, 2002; Tharenou, 2009, 2014; Tucker, 2012). Statistics show that women are willing to undertake international assignments (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Tharenou, 2009, 2014; Tucker, 2012) and that when the opportunity to be an assigned expatriate is not achievable, women may self-initiate their expatriation to develop their career capital, as SIE can be a way of developing the competencies that are valued by external labour markets (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013). This may provide a strong motivation for women to embark on SIE, as now, more than ever, individuals need to rely on competencies that can go beyond a specific company or country in order to maintain their employability (Andresen et al., 2012; Jokinen, 2010). Therefore, accelerated career development (career capital) can be a reason (among others) for seeking overseas work experiences (Andresen, et al., 2015; Selmer & Luring, 2010). This concept is further explored in the last section of this chapter.

To conclude, the disparity between men and women in the assigned expatriate group will remain while women continue to be denied real and equal opportunities to reach top management roles (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009). Research shows that this problem is the result of discrimination in the workplace and not the outcome of women's performance, inefficacy or their unwillingness to embark on international assignments (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009). It seems that to change this gender-related issue, new and more inclusive policies and practices that are championed and facilitated by leaders, managers and HR staff are necessary.

Lastly, besides the professional barriers that push women to self-direct their expatriation, women may also undertake SIE to pursue personal development. Women's careers can be seen through more holistic lenses, in which not only the objective work achievements are considered but also the personal and intellectual development (Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003). Women's motivations for SIE tend to be more personal (like seeking self-enhancement) rather than career-driven (Myers et al., 2017; Thorn, 2009). In some cases, women may look for adventure, to escape from certain situations, or for an opportunity to undertake an expatriate type assignment. The expatriation may be seen as a means of moving away from the negative aspects of life. It

may unexpectedly result in profound life change, as it pushes individuals out of their comfort zones and helps them to develop self-confidence and autonomy (Myers & Pringle, 2005). Women undertaking SIE can feel motivated to travel on their own for personal change and they may perceive SIE to be a new start in life, with more freedom and excitement (Myers et al., 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005).

### **2.3 SI Expatriates and Skilled Migrants' Career Experiences**

Self-initiated expatriates may experience great challenges when adapting to new work environments and work cultures of the organisations that employ them in the host country, resulting in work being a significant stressor (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009). On top of that, they may need to learn the cultural patterns of the country they have relocated to (Vaiman et al., 2015). Thus, they may require support and guidance from the organisations that employ them. However, SI expatriates usually do not receive the same level of organisational support that assigned expatriates do, who are often already familiar with the organisational values and work ethics as they expatriate within the same organisation (Fontinha et al., 2017; Jokinen et al., 2008; Von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014).

Besides the need to learn how to behave in the new culture and organisation, SI expatriates and other type of global careerists, may encounter challenges such as discriminatory practices. These discriminatory practices could especially be related to SI expatriates who do not come from countries such as the United Kingdom, Ireland and South Pacific Island nations, which are traditional sources of labour in NZ (Bedford & Ho, 2006). In this case, SI expatriates may experience similar obstacles as skilled migrants. Skilled migrants' studies often find that participants face discrimination based on their ethnic and geographical origin, irrespective of their qualifications or English proficiency (Dietz et al., 2015; Manhica et al., 2015; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). Indeed, international studies have found that higher levels of qualifications and English fluency may result in greater discrimination (Dietz et al., 2015; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). This means that the more skilled the individual is, the less likely he/she is to gain employment relative to his/her level of qualifications and experience in the host country (Dietz et al., 2015; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). In some cases, even the ethnicity of the name of the applicant was found to be a source of discrimination and an impediment to being selected for an interview (Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). Discrimination seems to be experienced right from the beginning of the recruitment process (Dietz et al., 2015; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016).

Moreover, the lack of local experience and qualifications is often found as an influential factor affecting individuals' opportunities when applying for jobs. Non-local qualifications are often discounted or devalued, although the degree of devaluation depends on the overseas country in which the qualification was obtained (Dietz et al., 2015; Manhica et al., 2015; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). This may result in skilled migrants (and possibly SI expatriates) being unable to practice their own profession, experiencing unemployment and/or underemployment, especially during their early career experiences in the host country (Meares, 2010; Parutis, 2014;

Pio, 2005a; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). In many cases, at first individuals may need to accept lower paid positions and/or temporary roles (Parutis, 2014). Arguably, organisations' discriminatory recruitment practices, combined with migrants' and SI expatriates' unfamiliarity with how the local recruitment processes work, may limit their employment opportunities (Ressia et al., 2017). This is especially applicable for the SI expatriates who relocate with overseas qualifications and seek their first job or employment experience in the host country. However, even though SI expatriates may need to overcome significant challenges in their adaptation to the country and workplace (without any organisational support), SI expatriates may be prepared to adjust to the host country. This is because SI expatriates tend to be individuals with a protean career attitude - proactive behaviour to self-drive one's own career (Cao et al., 2013). Research suggests that SI expatriates have the tendency to seek interactions with locals and modify their behaviours to adjust to the new surroundings, which may help them to adapt to the new workplace and country (Cao et al., 2013; Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills, 2011).

### *2.3.1 SI Expatriate Women and Skilled Migrant Women's Career Experiences in NZ*

In order to overcome workplace adaptation challenges and career difficulties, SI expatriate women may participate in formal and informal networking activities and support groups (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Vance & McNulty, 2014). These networks and social support groups (such as community centres) may provide SI expatriate women with the guidance and mentoring that they need to support their adjustment in the host country, as well as important connections for future work opportunities (Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2014; Vance & McNulty, 2014). The size of these networks (which may be formed by either locals and/or expatriates from the same home country) may influence their experiences by enhancing their career satisfaction (Cao et al., 2014).

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, overseas qualifications are often disregarded by employers, including NZ employers (Manhica et al., 2015; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). This is especially concerning as many of these qualifications are recognised and validated by the NZ Qualifications Authority (Pio, 2005a, 2005b). In some cases, women who have graduated in countries that are not the traditional sources of labour may be unable to practise their professions in NZ and often need to accept less secure positions such as part-time roles, temping or contracting jobs (Meares, 2010; Pio, 2005b, 2010).

In addition to the issue around overseas qualifications being unrecognised, overseas work experience may also be unacknowledged by NZ employers. It was found that minority skilled migrant women in NZ experience discrimination from employers when they have a foreign accent or lack of previous local work experience (Meares, 2010; Pio, 2005a). Employers often require candidates to have 'Kiwi experience' even when they have relevant overseas experiences. This may result in unemployment and underemployment (Meares, 2010; Pio, 2005a). Self-initiated expatriate women may also face similar obstacles to skilled migrant women.

In addition to the challenges migrant women (and possibly SI expatriate women) encounter when attempting to start their NZ careers, they may also experience intensification of domestic chores

which can have a debilitating effect on their careers (Meares, 2010; Ressia et al., 2017). For women who come from developing countries, where domestic help is cheap and commonly used, the relocation to NZ could lead to an increase in household work and time spent caring for children or elders, often to a greater degree than men (Meares, 2010; Pio, 2005a). Furthermore, they also may not have family members to turn to for support, which may force them to give up hours of paid work or withdraw from the labour market and take on most of the domestic chores and childcare (Meares, 2010; Pio, 2005a).

### *2.3.2 Organisational Support to Enhance SIE Experiences*

Self-initiated expatriates' career experiences may be influenced by the organisational and HR management strategies that support (or not) their adaptation. Some of these key strategies are: career development planning, cross-cultural training, mentoring and networking (Cao et al., 2013, 2014; Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Fontinha et al., 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Vaiman et al., 2015). These strategies (which will be discussed shortly) may have the power to enhance SI expatriates' abilities to cope with the stress that a SIE experience may put on their lives, and thus have a positive impact on their career experiences (Cao et al., 2014).

Self-initiated expatriates are an important source of international HR for organisations as they can often bring a good understanding of local and international markets. Organisations can benefit from this global workforce as they are often highly educated individuals whose personal motivations to self-drive their expatriation may encourage them to stay long-term in the host country and at a lower cost compared to assigned expatriates (Dickmann et al., 2016; Vaiman et al., 2015). However, employers may not always recognise the value SI expatriates can add to the organisations and the challenges they may face when adapting to new work environments.

Self-initiated expatriates often experience cross-cultural adjustment, which is the process by which individuals develop the skills and knowledge required to integrate and effectively function in a culture that is different to the one that they were originally socialised in (Fontinha et al., 2017). Individuals whose home is more psychologically and culturally distant to the host country may experience more stress at work and in their adaptation in general (Ceric & Crawford, 2016). Often SI expatriates do not receive the same organisational support that assigned expatriates do, such as language and cultural training before expatriation, housing and so on (Fontinha et al., 2017; Jokinen et al., 2008; Von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014). However, SI expatriates may face greater adjustment challenges at the start of the expatriation as they do not only need to adapt to the host country, but also to the organisation. This differs from assigned expatriates who may be more familiar with the organisation's values, may have an established network within the organisation and who may have engaged in formal organisational pre-departure training programmes (Vaiman et al., 2015).

Organisational strategies aimed at contributing to SI expatriates' adaptation can positively influence their experiences in the host country, enhancing their performance and retention in the company (Cao et al., 2013; Fontinha et al., 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Vaiman et al., 2015). Career development planning practices, where SI expatriates need to assess their career

goals and motivations, and discuss possible future promotions, may contribute to their workplace adaptation (Cao et al., 2013, 2014; Fontinha et al., 2017). The literature often finds that individuals undertaking SIE have personal and intrinsic motivations to move abroad (Cao et al., 2013, 2014). Therefore, organisations may support their SI expatriate employees (and all employees) by developing individualised professional career development programmes that can consider personal goals while integrating them with the organisational goals (Cao et al., 2013, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, cultural adjustment is the adaptation process needed to understand cultural patterns and behaviours to effectively adjust to the unfamiliar environment (Fontinha et al., 2017). Cross-cultural training is highlighted in the literature as a crucial practice that can help individuals to better navigate their international experiences and support their adaptation in the host country and organisation (Cao et al., 2013; Ceric & Crawford, 2016; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). Cross-cultural training may enhance awareness of the expected behaviours in a different culture, provide the information required to reduce the uncertainties of the new culture and support adaptation, not only at work but also in general interactions with the locals (Cao et al., 2013; Ceric & Crawford, 2016; Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Vaiman et al., 2015; Von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014).

Providing technical training and mentoring can also support SI expatriates' work adjustment as it provides the learning opportunities needed to better understand specific tasks (Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Fontinha et al., 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). Technical training may increase SI expatriates' organisational commitment and job performance (Fontinha et al., 2017). Mentoring increases the interactions between SI expatriates and local employees, which can help them understand the interpersonal relationships and interactions involved in their roles (Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). The local employee can also act as a role model and share organisational knowledge (Werner & DeSimone, 2017).

Furthermore, the development of formal or informal organisational networks with host country locals and other expatriates (internal and external to the organisation) can be an additional source of support for the SI expatriates' adjustment (Cao et al., 2014; Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). These networks can bring informational and emotional support and can also contribute to an individual's career capital, which can lead to future career opportunities (Cao et al., 2014). Organisational strategies aimed at growing large networks may help SI expatriates to make contact with key members of the organisation and host country nationals. This contact can assist them to adapt their behaviours to the culture and enhance their career success (Cao et al., 2014; Vaiman et al., 2015; Zhang & Rienties, 2017).

## **2.4 Career Development in SIE**

Although the previous section highlighted the often negative organisational experiences that SI expatriates may face, SIE can also be a source of career development (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Tharenou, 2014). Career development refers to a person's work experiences that provide the career capital growth needed to achieve desired career goals (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010). Self-initiated expatriation can boost an individual's career development through the accumulation of

internal and external career capital (Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2012; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013; Suutari et al., 2018). Internal career capital is the personal growth that expatriates gain in areas such as self-awareness and self-confidence (Jokinen et al., 2008). External career capital relates to the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that are desired by labour markets, which then increase an individual's employability in and beyond the current organisation (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Makkonen, 2015; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013; Suutari et al., 2018). In relation to this and according to the intelligent career model, individuals develop their careers by drawing on three types of knowing: why, how and with whom (Parker et al., 2009). Knowing-how (or external career capital) supports the growth of KSAs, knowing-why (or internal career capital) refers to the motivation to pursue a desired career, and knowing-whom (or social capital) alludes to the development of social networks (Andresen et al., 2012; Arthur, Claman, & DeFillippi, 1995; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013).

Self-initiated expatriation supports the development of these three ways of knowing as it helps individuals build technical and soft skills, knowledge and capabilities that are required to perform in an organisation: knowing-how (Cao et al., 2012; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Jokinen et al., 2008). Knowing-how career capital refers to the knowledge and experience the individual brings, which improves job performance (DeFillippi, Arthur, & Lindsay, 2006). The SIE may also provide a source of energy, sense of purpose, motivation and self-confidence to pursue a desired career journey which can lead to greater commitment, performance and learning: knowing-why (Cao et al., 2012; DeFillippi et al., 2006; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Jokinen et al., 2008). Moreover, SI expatriates grow intra-company and inter-company professional and social relationships (knowing-whom) that are essential for the career development and future employment prospects of any type of employee (Cao et al., 2012; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Jokinen et al., 2008; Suutari et al., 2018). Knowing-whom, or social capital, allows individuals to build connections which can be important sources of information for future promotions (DeFillippi et al., 2006; Jokinen et al., 2008; Suutari et al., 2018).

These three areas of career capital are interconnected (Cao et al., 2012; DeFillippi et al., 2006). Through the interactions of knowing-why, knowing-how and knowing-whom, individuals decide to pursue a certain profession or career over others, pursue new contacts and learn how to adapt to a fast-paced labour market with the KSAs portfolio they have built (DeFillippi et al., 2006). Self-initiated expatriates may engage in their career development through their individual ways of knowing. Now more than ever, individuals need to rely on competencies that can go beyond a specific company or country in order to maintain their international employability (Andresen et al., 2012). In current markets, organisations seek to attract and retain employees who have the competencies to coordinate activities in different countries, and international work experience is a way to develop these skills (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Jokinen, 2010; Suutari et al., 2018). Self-initiated expatriation can be a source of enhancing the individuals' competencies to effectively work in international markets (global competences) (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Harry et al., 2017; Jokinen et al., 2008). Self-initiated expatriation can also lead to the development of managerial competencies which in turn increases the individuals'

international employment profile (Brewster, Bonache, Cerdin, & Suutari, 2014; Jokinen et al., 2008).

It could be argued that SIE may provide individuals with an enhanced learning process (knowing-how capital) to a larger extent than assigned expatriates, as SI expatriates need to familiarise themselves with the work environments and find their own way often without the organisational support that assigned expatriates receive (Jokinen et al., 2008). In that case, organisational support could prevent individuals from learning as much as they could have on their own (Jokinen et al., 2008). Therefore, accelerated career development may be a desired outcome for women to undertake SIE.

Moreover, the career outcomes (or career success) of SI expatriates can be seen through objective factors such as salary, position or other types of tangible and external measures of the individual's career situation, or through the individual's internal reflection of the important elements of the career path chosen, for example subjective factors such as job satisfaction (Cao et al., 2012, 2013; Suutari et al., 2018). Wellness, career and life satisfaction can be important subjective indicators when exploring SIE outcomes (Cao et al., 2013). It could be argued that a protean career attitude may contribute to the fulfilment of these subjective factors, as individuals with a protean career attitude can recognise and pursue their intrinsic life goals (Cao et al., 2013). According to Cao et al. (2013), self-directed careers could lead to greater career satisfaction, better cross-cultural adjustment and an intention to stay in the host country (in comparison to assigned expatriates). On the other hand, it can also be suggested that assigned expatriates may have a higher level of career satisfaction than SI expatriates, as assigned expatriates have more extensive networks within the organisation and receive greater organisational support (Dickmann et al., 2016; Kuijpers, Schyns, & Scheerens, 2006; Suutari et al., 2018). However, Suutari et al. (2018) found that there was no significant difference in the career satisfaction of these two groups. The type of expatriation did not influence the subjective career success of the expatriates in Suutari et al.'s (2018) study.

Regarding objective career outcomes of SIE, research suggests that SI expatriates tend to occupy lower positions than assigned expatriates and sometimes may be underemployed in relation to their qualifications and skills (Dickmann et al., 2016). However, Suutari et al. (2018) concluded that there was no significant difference in the career success and career advancement of assigned expatriates and SI expatriates. It seems that international work experiences may, in the longer term, have a positive and long-lasting effect on both SI expatriates' and assigned expatriates' careers. So even though individuals undertaking SIE may start in a less advantaged position, in the long term the benefits from the expatriation may be akin to benefits experienced by assigned expatriates (Suutari et al., 2018).

#### *2.4.1 Women's Career Development in SIE*

The limited research on SI expatriate women suggests that SIE facilitates career development, even when it is not a key driver to engage in expatriation. Studies have found that women who undertake SIE enrich their professional and personal development and increase their career

capital as a result of a SIE experience (Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Myers & Douglas, 2017; Myers et al., 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005). Self-initiated expatriate women perceive that some of the SIE career outcomes are the development of technical knowledge, better communication skills and the ability to build stronger networks (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Myers & Pringle, 2005), a greater sense of employability (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009) and better career advancement (Tharenou, 2014). Self-initiated expatriation can result in a more positive view of future career prospects and the perception that the international work experience will contribute to future career success (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009).

While women are more reluctant to take risks in comparison to men (Harris & Jenkins, 2006), they may be more willing to get out of their comfort zones after starting the SIE (Brewster et al., 2014; Myers et al., 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005). This may motivate women to seek new experiences and new career directions. In many cases, the effect of SIE on women's lives goes beyond professional aspects and includes a number of aspects that are essentially personal, such as an increased sense of wellness and a greater sense of purpose in life. These enable women to clarify their values and priorities in life, enhance their self-confidence and become more independent (Myers & Douglas, 2017; Myers et al., 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005).

Even with important outcomes such as increased career capital, enhanced career development and employability, research reports that women may experience significant personal change as a result of the SIE (Myers et al., 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005). This could be related to the idea that women assess their careers with a more comprehensive view, with a more 'whole-of-life' perspective in mind (Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003). Women may reflect on their SIE as a more holistic life experience, appreciating their personal development and the lifestyle transformation, and not focus as much on their objective work achievements.

## **2.5 Chapter Summary**

There are a variety of reasons why individuals decide to embark on SIE and these motivations can change over time (Suutari et al., 2018; Thorn, 2009). The decision for women to undertake SIE should be understood in terms of the interaction of multiple factors which includes career development and personal enhancement (Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Suutari et al., 2018). Today, individuals need to take charge of their own careers more than ever (Andresen et al., 2012; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013) and SIE seems to offer women a more flexible strategy to progress in their careers when confronting gender-biased corporate barriers (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Tharenou, 2009).

Women may experience unemployment, underemployment, downward occupational mobility, job insecurity and interruptions after relocation (Meares, 2010; Parutis, 2014; Pio, 2005a; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). The lesser value given to overseas qualifications and experience puts globally mobile individuals in a weaker position in the labour market (Manhica et al., 2015; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016).

Moreover, organisational support may contribute to SI expatriates' adaptation in the workplace and in the host country. However, SI expatriates are a heterogeneous group (Cerdin & Selmer, 2013) and ideally organisations could first assess the needs of the specific individuals in order to choose which organisational practices could be most beneficial (Ceric & Crawford, 2016; Howel-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). For example, SI expatriates with few host country nationals in their networks could benefit more from networking as organisational support than individuals with well-established and extensive networks in the host country (Cao et al., 2014).

The literature review revealed that further research into SIE is required. Even though in the last decade there has been an increase in studies on SI expatriates' motivations and the literature is robust, SIE is still an under-researched field which would benefit from further study (Doherty et al., 2013b). Therefore, this dissertation researches the motivations of Argentinean women coming to NZ as SI expatriates. Additionally, there is limited research on the actual career experiences of individuals undertaking SIE and the experiences of women during SIE have been less explored compared to the experiences of men (Ressia et al., 2017; Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). It is clear that the SIE literature mainly draws on the SIE experiences of individuals "moving from and between developed countries" (Doherty et al., 2013a, p.3). Therefore, there is a need to further explore the SI career experiences of individuals coming from developing countries (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Doherty et al., 2013a).

Thus, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the SIE literature by exploring the career experiences of women coming from a developing country (Argentina) to a developed country (NZ). It also intends to add to the existing literature by researching the experiences of a Latin sub-group in NZ, which appears not to have been explored before. Lastly, there are limited studies on the career development of women during SIE (Suutari et al., 2018). By studying how SIE impacts the career development of Argentinean women in NZ, this dissertation aims to shed light on these gaps in the literature by exploring the following research questions:

- What are the motivations of Argentinean women coming to NZ as SI expatriates?
- What are the career experiences of SI expatriate Argentinean women in NZ?
- How does the SIE experience impact the career development of Argentinean women in NZ?

The next chapter describes the research process carried out to explore the research questions that guide this study. The philosophical position of this dissertation will be outlined, as well as the chosen methodology. The chapter also discusses the process of data collection and analysis and concludes with an examination of relevant ethical issues and considerations.

## Chapter 3: Research Methods

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are significant gaps in the self-initiated expatriate (SIE) literature. There is limited research on self-initiated (SI) expatriates' career experiences (for both men and women), particularly SIE experiences and career development of women (Ressia et al., 2017; Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of studies on Latin American SI expatriates in New Zealand (NZ) and limited research on the international career experiences of skilled individuals moving from developing to developed countries (Doherty et al., 2013a).

Thus, this dissertation contributes to these gaps by researching the motivations of Argentinean women moving to NZ on a SIE, as well as their career experiences and career development in NZ. It aims to shed light on the experiences of SI expatriate women who are a Latin American sub-group and who are individuals that moved from a developing country (Argentina) to developed country (NZ). The following objectives frame this dissertation:

- To explore motivations of Argentinean women for coming to NZ as SI expatriates.
- To develop an understanding of the career experiences of SI expatriate Argentinean women in NZ.
- To explore how the SIE experience impacted on the career development of Argentinean women in NZ.

The following sections outline and justify the choice of a relativist ontology, constructivist epistemology and interpretive paradigm for this research. Relativism is the ontology for this dissertation as relativism allows for multiple realities to coexist, and which are influenced by an individual's perception and context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructivism is the epistemology because it enables the researcher to explore meaning influenced by the individual's interactions with the environment (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2013). The interpretive paradigm aligns with the chosen ontology and epistemology because in this paradigm individuals construct reality through their interpretation and through their social norms, giving meaning to their surroundings and experiences (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013).

This chapter also describes the choice of narrative inquiry (Polkinghorne, 1995) identified as an appropriate methodology to explore, through the participants' career stories, the participants' motivation to move to NZ, their work experiences and career development in NZ. The importance of reflexivity when using a narrative inquiry methodology, as noted by Darawsheh (2014) and Enosh and Ben-Ari (2016), is also highlighted below. The researcher actively sought to listen and interpret the participants' career stories, while maintaining awareness of her own assumptions as a researcher. Lastly, data collection (in-depth narrative interviews), data analysis and ethical considerations are discussed.

### 3.1 Philosophical Position

Ontology refers to the fundamental beliefs around humankind and how reality is formed (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Tuli, 2011). Researchers and research studies can hold different ontological perspectives, which can not only be significantly distinct from each other, but can also be conflicting or unrelated (Rawnsley, 1998). For example, the ontology of “becoming” in which reality is viewed as chaotic and changing is different to the ontology of “being” in which reality is seen as invariable and steady (Gray, 2013). For positivists, the truth is objective and waiting to be discovered, but for relativists there are numerous realities and various ways to explore them (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013; Tuli, 2011). Thus, it is vital to describe the ontological perspective of this dissertation as it influences its research design (Tuli, 2011).

This dissertation relies on the concept of “becoming” or relativist ontology and is based on the understanding that there are multiple changing realities and not one objective static reality waiting to be discovered (Gray, 2013). For this dissertation, there are as many realities as observers, and these realities are influenced by the perceptions of individuals or groups. Thus, relativism is the underpinning ontology, as it allows the researcher to explore a reality dependent on the individual (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Tuli, 2011). The participants make sense of their own career experiences, motivations and career development. They are influenced by their personal characteristics and the context in which they were immersed while undertaking SIE. Relativism best describes the ontological positioning of this dissertation as reality for the participants is constructed based on their experiences and the context, depending on their individual perception.

Epistemology can be defined as the study of what constitutes knowledge. It relates to the understanding of what is the truth and the evidence drawn on to support it (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013; Hofer & Bendixen, 2012; Wahyuni, 2012). The epistemology provides a philosophical foundation for determining what knowledge is valid (Gray, 2013). There are three main epistemologies: objectivism, constructivism and subjectivism. Objectivism sees reality as independent from the observer and a world in which individuals can discover the unbiased truth if the research is conducted in certain way (Crotty, 1998). In contrast, for constructivism there is no one objective truth or knowledge, rather meaning comes from the interaction between the individual and the world. Reality here is influenced by the individual’s contact with the environment and knowledge is socially constructed (and not discovered as with objectivism) (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2013; Tuli, 2011). In subjectivism, individuals develop knowledge from their collective unconsciousness and beliefs and meaning is imposed on the object by the researcher and/or the people in the research (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013).

There seems to be multiple and opposite (as well as equally valid) perspectives of the world (Gray, 2013). Therefore, it is important to describe this dissertation’s epistemology, as according to Grant and Giddings (2002), epistemology defines the relationship between the researcher and reality. Constructivism is the epistemological perspective in this dissertation because for the researcher, meanings are shaped by the participants’ interactions with the environment and knowledge is

constructed in a reality that is subjective and which is influenced by the participants. Multiple understandings of an experience may exist (at the same time) depending on the social, gender, cultural, political, ethnic and economic factors that influence the individual (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

In this dissertation, the participants make sense of their career experiences by constructing meaning in different ways (even in similar work environments in NZ). Careers are developed through the choices individuals make, and these choices are impacted by the individuals' self-awareness and the context they are immersed in. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on the participants' interpretation of their career paths. Constructivism allows the researcher to see the subjects' careers as an evolving mechanism in which they give personal meaning to their past and present experiences, as well as to their future desires, and in doing so develop a life theme (Melinda, Michelle, & Don, 2014). Thus, this dissertation is guided by the constructivist epistemology. This aligns with the relativist ontology, as in constructivism there are multiple realities constructed by individuals' perceptions (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2013).

### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

A research paradigm is a group of presumptions and values that shape the way the research is directed as well as the behaviour of the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Jonker & Pennink, 2010). The research paradigm relates to the researcher's view of the world and impacts on the interactions between the researcher and the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). There are a range of paradigms, some of the most influential paradigms are positivism, interpretivism and critical inquiry (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013). However, the choice of an appropriate research paradigm is determined by the researcher's ontological and epistemological positioning.

For positivism, the reality is independent from the researcher and is studied by a scientific process. For this perspective, the researcher needs to ensure objectivity and detailed observation, test hypotheses and verify them (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013). For the interpretive paradigm, individuals construct reality through their interpretation and through their social norms. Thus, for the interpretive paradigm there is not an objective reality (as there is with positivism) but multiple interpretations of the world where individuals give meaning to their surroundings and experiences (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013). Lastly, the critical inquiry paradigm builds new knowledge by challenging the status quo, highlighting social injustice and calling for action to address these concerns (Gray, 2013).

As the research paradigm significantly influences the way the research is conducted and paradigms can have conflicting worldviews, it is important to describe the paradigm that best suits this dissertation. The most appropriate paradigm is interpretivism because this dissertation seeks to understand the meaning the participants give to their own career experiences during their SIE. As interpretivism aims to understand the meaning people give to their experiences, this paradigm enables the researcher to construct a reality formed by individual meanings (Grant & Giddings, 2002).

Furthermore, the ontology of this dissertation (relativist ontology) is related to the interpretive paradigm because in this dissertation, reality arises from the participants' work experiences in NZ (as well as their previous work experiences in Argentina), and these career experiences can be different for each of the participants. The career experiences, motivations, perceived career development and the support the participants found useful during their SIE are shaped by their individual experiences and the way they construct meaning. The interpretive paradigm also aligns with constructivism because the participants' interpretation of their career experiences will be formed by their interactions with the environment and their knowledge will be individual and subjective.

### **3.3 Methodology**

The methodology defines how the researcher will gain an understanding of the world that is being explored. Methodology is a systematic mode of inquiry under a specific ontology and epistemology (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Gray, 2013). Narrative inquiry is an appropriate methodology to explore the participants' motivations for international mobility, their career experiences and the factors that contributed to their career development in NZ. Through the gathering of career stories, narrative inquiry methodology enables the researcher to examine the participants' perceptions regarding the following research questions:

- What are the motivations of Argentinean women coming to NZ as SI expatriates?
- What are the career experiences of SI expatriate Argentinean women in NZ?
- How does the SIE experience impact the career development of Argentinean women in NZ?

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research methodology that seeks to capture human experiences through stories of past events (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995). By telling their career stories, the participants give meaning to their experiences by connecting their actions with their career development, gaining greater personal awareness. This methodology is ideal for this dissertation because, through the stories, events can be understood in terms of their contribution to the career paths (Bujold, 2004; Polkinghorne, 1995).

This dissertation used the narrative inquiry methodology because storytelling is an appropriate form for understanding human experiences and within a cultural worldview (Bujold, 2004). The narratives that emerged within the interview process helped the researcher to understand the fullness of the participants' work experiences in NZ, as the stories described and unpacked the interrelations between the participants' actions, motivations and contexts.

Through stories, individuals explore the social, cultural and institutional factors that shape their experiences (Clandinin, 2006). The use of narratives allows individuals to give meaning to their experiences and values (Melinda et al., 2014). According to Tams and Marshall (2011), when individuals analyse their lives, they engage in a biographical reflexivity and understand more deeply their current values, decisions and career choices. Participants interpreted their career paths through stories, which provided a portal through which they contemplated their career

development and work experiences. In the act of telling their career stories, the participants were able to reflect on the relationships in their lives' events.

The researcher sought to understand the participants' experiences and how they made sense of these events. In order to achieve this, she chose to focus on the participants' descriptions and reflections of their career experiences, as well as their actions and explanations. Therefore, she acted as a listener and interpreter of the stories shared by the participants. This required a level of reflexivity from the researcher and a need to interpret by listening and observing the participants. Reflexivity refers to the continuous process of reflection to gain self-awareness of the preconceptions (as researcher) and feelings that may affect the research (Darawsheh, 2014; Enosh & Ben-Ari, 2016; Yiannis, 2015). Reflexivity is an important part of the research design process (Darawsheh, 2014; Enosh & Ben-Ari, 2016) and, with regards to this dissertation, the role of reflexivity was considered at every step of the research. This continuous process of self-reflection allowed the researcher to be aware of any bias she may have held due to her own SIE experience. To enable this, she kept a diary to record responses and feelings she had towards her own career experiences in NZ, in addition to engaging in frequent discussions with her supervisors. Furthermore, the exploration of the career experiences and motivations of the participants in this dissertation involved the interpretation of their career stories beyond the narrative into the implicit meaning of their career stories. There was a high level of reflexivity required to interpret the importance of the participants' career stories, sometimes in ways the participants may not have considered previously. This aligns with Grant and Giddings (2002), that the interpretive paradigm requires a deeper understanding to explore reality. Therefore, knowledge was constructed by analysis and understanding instead of observation.

### *3.3.1 Data Collection and Analysis*

The researcher conducted five in-depth narrative interviews with SI expatriate Argentinean women living in NZ. Open-ended and reflective questions were used to draw out the participants' career stories. Open-ended questions are unstructured and do not suggest or determine answers (Gray, 2013). This type of questioning may provide a richer set of responses, allowing the possibility of answers that may be unexpected (Gray, 2013). During the interviews, probing questions were used when the participant did not understand the question or further clarification was needed. Immediately after data collection, the researcher wrote down the observations perceived during the interview, such as changes in the participants' facial or body expressions and salient points that could not be appreciated in the audio recordings. English language was used during the interview and the conversation was digitally recorded and later transcribed by a professional transcriber.

The criteria for the participant selection of this dissertation was as follows:

- Participants had to be skilled Argentinean women who had moved to NZ with a temporary visa and with higher qualifications.
- Participants had to have worked in NZ for at least four years.

- Participants had to be in their early to mid-career stage, so they had substantial career experiences and career development stories to share.

This selection criteria allowed a deeper understanding as, at the time of the interviews, the participants were already familiar with the NZ work culture and had advanced in their NZ careers. The participants of this dissertation fit the category of SI expatriates as they initiated their expatriation by their own choosing and initially on a temporary basis. This is how the SIE literature often defines SI expatriates (Andresen et al., 2014; Doherty et al., 2013b). However, they also shared characteristics of skilled migrants as they all held higher qualifications and decided to stay permanently in the host country by obtaining NZ residency and becoming migrants (Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2013).

Participants were recruited via a Facebook group to access the researcher's network of Argentinean expatriates living in Auckland. All selected participants were in Auckland because according to the NZ census in 2013, more than three-quarters of people who identified as Latin Americans (in the Middle Eastern/Latin American/African group) live in the Auckland region (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). This also allowed face-to-face interviews as the researcher was also based in Auckland.

Once data was collected and transcribed, analysis of narratives was carried out. An inductive analysis approach was used to elicit the emerging concepts from the participants' narratives and therefore explore the common themes repeated in the career stories (Mitchell & Egudo, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1995). The analysis process consisted of the following consecutive steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- Step 1: Reading the interview transcriptions several times to become immersed in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- Step 2: Listening to the interview recordings repeatedly and actively (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- Step 3: Generating codes by identifying the hidden or implicit content in the data that seemed relevant to the researcher. The researcher carried out an inductive content analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), she searched for structures and patterns in the career stories from general to specific. These codes were abstractions from the participants' career experiences and allowed the development of common themes that were repeated in the narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995). The codes consisted of long extracts of the interviews transcribed data.
- Step 4: Drawing networks of concepts from the codes identified in step 3, common themes that emerged from the participants' career stories were identified (Polkinghorne, 1995; (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The codes were regrouped by key words and common phrases to identify the repeated themes. This allowed the researcher to make sense of the unique events and actions in each of the participants' career experiences (Treloar, Stone, McMillan, & Flakus, 2015). Some of the codes did not seem to belong to any theme so a "miscellaneous" category was temporarily assigned. The thematic analysis was carried out manually due to the small sample size (five participants).

- Step 5: Reviewing the themes searching for the most repeated themes and the codes under each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this, the overall themes were identified and the codes and extracts for each theme were reviewed.
- Step 6: Identifying names for final themes and re-analysing the data to ensure rigour in the development of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- Step 7: Applying the reviewed theoretical frameworks to the themes identified in step 6, while maintaining the personal experiences of the participants (Atkinson, 2007).
- Step 8: Developing an individual 'story map' for each participant by organising it in four parts (Riessman, 1993):
  - The participants' motivations to undertake SIE.
  - The participants' pre-NZ career experience.
  - The participants' NZ career experiences.
  - The participants' career development.
- Step 9: Developing the analysis report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were central to the research process. The procedures outlined below were developed to ensure the participants' anonymity and confidentiality (Flick, 2014). Before starting the participants' recruitment and interviews, the researcher submitted an ethics application to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee. The ethics application was approved on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 (Appendix 1). The main ethical principles for this dissertation were:

- The participation in this research was voluntary and participants could choose to withdraw from the study at any point prior to completion of data analysis.
- Participants' confidentiality was guaranteed using pseudonyms for individuals' names, and any names of organisations that came up during the interviews were not reported.
- Participants' details, including details of the occupation or organisation that could identify participants, were not shared in the report that was produced as part of this dissertation.
- Interview transcripts were shared with the participants for their review before being used in this dissertation.

Participants received with the invitation (Appendix 2) the objectives of the dissertation, the time that they needed to commit in order to be part of this research and the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 3) with additional information such as how their privacy was going to be protected, the benefits of the dissertation and who to contact in case of any concern. Once participants expressed interest, they were sent a copy of the Consent Form (Appendix 4) to read and sign on the day of the interview (before the start of data collection). The Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form were sent in English and Spanish to ensure participants were adequately informed about the consent process.

During and after the data collection the researcher took the following measures to protect the vulnerability of the participants:

- Participants were reminded before the interview that they could choose which questions to answer, that they could stop the interview at any time and that they could take as many breaks as needed.
- The questions during the interview were directed in a way that helped the participants to feel comfortable and did not cause harm or create feelings of discomfort or embarrassment. The questions were open-ended, which allowed the participants to share as much as they desired and up to where they felt comfortable.
- The participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any point before completion of data analysis.
- Participants received the transcripts of their interviews for their review, before the transcripts were used in this dissertation.

It was not anticipated that any discomfort or embarrassment would be experienced by the participants during the interview as they are skilled SI expatriates who openly shared their career development experiences. Nevertheless, participants were encouraged to stop the interview if they felt upset and to reply only to the questions that they felt comfortable answering. Interviews were conducted at a place of the participants' choosing, including their private homes, so they could feel most comfortable. A copy of the Interview Guidelines can be found in Appendix 5.

Following the agreed safety protocol (Appendix 6), the researcher notified (by email) the primary and secondary supervisor in advance where and when she would be meeting participants in their private homes. The researcher then contacted, by text message, the supervisors when entering and leaving the meeting. It was agreed that the supervisors would contact the researcher, by mobile phone, in case they had not heard from the researcher after an hour of the scheduled meeting.

Participants were treated with respect and a supportive environment was provided during the interview. The researcher was polite and mindful of the participants' culture during any interactions, and as she is of the same cultural background as that of the participants, she had a good understanding of the cultural norms. For example, the researcher built rapport with the participants by spending some time before the interview talking with them and giving them the time to relax. It is common in Argentinean culture to first make small talk before commencing with a meeting.

Lastly, after the data gathering, the researcher chose to work with a professional transcriber, recommended by AUT (refer to Appendix 7 for the Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement). This enabled the transcriptions to be produced in a timely and professional manner. Funding was available for the transcription.

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the research design that guided this dissertation. Relativism and constructivism were discussed as the ontological and epistemological perspectives, as well interpretivism as the research paradigm of this dissertation. This chapter highlighted the existence

of multiple and co-existing realities and possible, different (and valid) understandings of the same experience.

Narrative inquiry was identified as the most appropriate methodology, as it allows a full understanding of individuals' stories (Bujold, 2004), while also emphasising the importance of reflexivity from the researcher to ensure reliable research outcomes. This chapter also documented the process of data collection from the five in-depth narrative interviews conducted with SI expatriate Argentinean women, which included open-ended questions. Finally, it outlined the detailed thematic analysis carried out, the ethical considerations, and the steps the researcher took to ensure the participants' privacy and confidentiality. The main themes emerging from the data analysis will be discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter summarises the findings from the thematic analysis carried out, beginning with a brief description of the five participants' backgrounds and an overview of their career stories in NZ. The main themes identified emerged from the participants' career stories as outlined in the next sections. The findings are organised in three main sections, according to the three research questions. First, the motivations of the participants to come to New Zealand (NZ), second the participants' NZ career experiences, and third their career development arising out of these experiences. Quotes from the participants' interviews are shown in italics in order to highlight their contribution.

### 4.1 Before Arriving in NZ

All the participants were well-educated, proactive in their career development and determined to advance in their careers before they moved to NZ. Prior to their relocation to NZ they all had higher qualifications and held professional jobs in their chosen fields in Argentina, except for Vanessa who moved to NZ soon after she graduated from university. All participants were in their early 30s when interviewed. Nancy and Carmen have been living in NZ for five years, Bianca and Vanessa for seven years, and Amanda for 13 years. Even though none of them came with the intention of staying, after a few years they all fell in love with NZ and decided to pursue NZ residency. Only Carmen had previous SIE experience, while the other four participants had their first self-initiated expatriation (SIE) experience in NZ.

### 4.2 Overview of the Participants' Career Stories in NZ

Amanda reframed her career in NZ and developed her NZ career by completing a local bachelor's degree, as well as by proactively seeking her mentor's advice and networking. She believed that NZ opened up her worldviews, which facilitated discovering her passion in the new profession. She believed that she achieved her desired lifestyle and work-life balance after moving to NZ.

Bianca, after visiting NZ for the first time, decided to start her SIE here. She obtained her first professional role in NZ at an organisation with commercial links to South America. She then sought a new career path in NZ as she held a qualification that was not recognised by NZ, and she would have needed to obtain a local qualification in that profession to work in that field. She had been highly proactive and determined to redirect her NZ career. She sought mentoring advice and worked to build local networks to advance her career. She also valued all the training she received while working in organisations in NZ as this provided her with certifications needed for her development in her new field.

Carmen's previous SIE experience in the UK provided her with connections to boost her NZ career at the start of her SIE, helping her to work in her chosen field from the beginning. She also actively looked for mentors when she found a challenge that she needed help with and continued studying to obtain an additional bachelor's degree in her chosen field to support her career

advancement. After two years she was able to reach the same professional level she had reached in Argentina.

From the beginning of her SIE Nancy was also able to start working in her profession. She was promoted soon after starting her career in NZ. Finding a smaller labour market in NZ for her professional field (in comparison to Argentinean labour market), she had to redirect her career to a wider spectrum of organisations. In order to advance her career in NZ, she decided to pursue a local university graduate diploma so as to obtain greater recognition of her overseas qualifications from NZ employers.

Vanessa was the only participant who did not have a professional job in Argentina before moving to NZ, as she started her SIE soon after completing her bachelor's degree. After only seven years of her SIE, Vanessa went from working on an orchard to become a manager in a large organisation with a team reporting to her. She grew her career by proactively learning through experience, building strong relationships, networking and obtaining local qualifications (training courses and a postgraduate diploma). She also believed that her supervisors' support and the training she received from her employer supported her career development.

## Themes

### 4.3 Motivations for SIE

This section summarises the participants' main motivations for undertaking SIE to NZ. Relationships were a strong motivation to start their SIE to NZ, as well as the desire to experience life in an English-speaking country and/or seeking an escape. Other factors such as career advancement challenges and pursuing personal and career development played a significant role in their motivations to undertake SIE, but often these were not the primary reasons.

#### 4.3.1 Relationships

One of the main themes that emerged was that relationships heavily influenced the participants' decisions to move to NZ. When Vanessa met her partner in Argentina, she had been thinking of travelling to the USA post university graduation. Her partner had been planning (before meeting her) to move to NZ to work and travel for one year. Vanessa decided to go with him to NZ instead of going to America. She says that when deciding where to go for her SIE, the idea of being near her partner drove her change in destination, even though America was more appealing to her as a destination:

*I said like I would be by myself...and my now husband, my boyfriend at the time, he was doing his OE [overseas experience] and he came to NZ so I said like... I don't know if that is what I want but definitely I would feel the company of [being accompanied by her boyfriend] and so I will be totally supported by him.*

After meeting her partner (a New Zealander) in the UK, Carmen went back to Argentina while her partner stayed in the UK. They continued a long-distance relationship and then decided to move

together to Auckland. Carmen explains that even though it was really hard to leave the interesting role she had at the time in Argentina, she decided to move to NZ to continue her relationship:

*While I was in the role [manager role in Buenos Aires, Argentina] then we decided with my now husband to move to NZ...And so we were on a long-distance relationship [Carmen in Argentina and her partner in the UK]... we thought what was the best decision to make...which was really hard to be honest [the decision to move to NZ], because I really liked my job [her role in Buenos Aires]. (Carmen)*

After spending one year in NZ and meeting a New Zealander, Amanda decided to return to Argentina. However, a year after being back in Argentina she decided to come back to NZ to resume her relationship with a man she had met in Auckland:

*I went back to Argentina after a year but I was already quite engaged in a relationship with him [man from NZ]...I still went back to Argentina, I was uncertain what I was going to actually do...my plan was to go back [to Argentina ] and get a job and continue with my studies but I pretty much got back to Argentina, I got myself a job...half the way in the trip [in NZ] I met a kiwi man, a kiwi boy I guess, and we became very close and I guess the decision for me to come back [to NZ]. (Amanda)*

#### 4.3.2 Experiencing Life in an English-Speaking Country

Another key finding was that participants were motivated to move to NZ to experience living in an English-speaking country and enhance their English language skills. Bianca shared: *the main reason why I decided to come to NZ was first to improve my English.* Likewise, Nancy and Vanessa, wanted to make use of their English language knowledge: *But Mainly the reason for NZ was not for career...but I also, living overseas, living in an English-speaking country was very important for me, because I had been studying English for so many years.* (Nancy)

In some cases, the participants were questioned by their parents for not following a more traditional career path, for example continuing the career progression they had started in Argentina. Instead, they sought experiencing new cultures.

*It was not easy [relocating to NZ] because of course telling my dad...and he would not support...he didn't like the idea, he never accepted the idea...until I found my first professional job in NZ and then he was sort of all right...(Bianca)*

Nancy's father had thought Nancy should not have left her job in Argentina and moved to NZ, as she had been a manager in her last role in Argentina and he had been of the view that the job was something that should not have been given up: *My dad, who's from a more conservative workers class, someone who values a stable job a lot, as an employee, my dad would encourage me to keep that job because he thought that it was wonderful, I was the boss.* (Nancy)

#### 4.3.3 Seeking an Escape

An important motivation for the participants to undertake SIE to NZ was also to escape. For these participants, the SIE was a channel to move away from the negative aspects of life and work, resulting unexpectedly in a meaningful life change. Amanda said that when she decided to put her studies on hold (a second bachelor's degree) and leave her job in Argentina to come to NZ, she needed a break from her life. She first came to NZ to stay for four months, which became a year and then 13 years living in NZ:

*Just thinking back, I was not being fulfilled by my role [role in Argentina] and I guess I just needed a break. Not that I knew that I was going to be changing careers, that was not the whole point, I think it was more needing a break and just wanting a bit of a change before getting back into it and finishing that...degree. (Amanda)*

Nancy was also pursuing a change in her life when she decided to leave her job in Argentina. She had felt the need to leave a role with a poor work-life balance and moving to NZ had allowed her to change this:

*What happens in [her field in Argentina] is it's quite demanding and because it's so competitive it was very hard to have a work-life balance because I would finish technically at 6pm but it never happened because there was always a client last minute wanting something done for that same day or the next day, so I ended up cancelling personal plans, and I was getting tired.*

## **4.4 Career Experiences**

This section covers the participants' career experiences in NZ. It explores the career support participants sought or received that resulted in career development as well as the career challenges that they faced. Most of the support the participants experienced was proactively pursued by them. These self-driven strategies helped them navigate and advance in their careers. However, they also acknowledged that certain organisational support was beneficial for their workplace adaptation and career advancement. Furthermore, the challenges that are described below are mainly career-related, nevertheless other broader challenges that participants encountered were identified as well. These broader challenges had an impact on the participants' careers at certain stages.

### *4.4.1 Self-driven Strategies to Enhance the Career Experiences and Career Development*

The following self-driven strategies helped the participants improve their career experiences and workplace adaptation and supported their career development.

#### *4.4.1.1 Local Qualifications and Training*

Vanessa, Nancy and Bianca found that completing NZ qualifications or training improved their career experiences and career advancement in NZ as it was highly valued by employers. According to Vanessa, obtaining local degrees and attending local training had prepared her better for her future roles and had improved her confidence, which positively influenced her career experiences:

*Not only it improved [completing local training]...my skills...in every single role that I had but also it helped me to be more confident 'cos I had the knowledge...The university gave me like lots of tools, lots of like information and it's super insightful once you attend those classes because...I got to learn like so much and things that I can even bring to my role, different roles, and...improve.*

Nancy explained that she had to do some papers at a NZ university so that her Argentinean qualifications could be properly acknowledged by employers in NZ. She commented, with frustration in her voice:

*Before changing jobs, I started a graduate diploma...I needed to formalise my knowledge in NZ terms, so that they believe me! And funnily enough, that's the very first question I got in some of the interviews, oh, you're studying here, but I was, hold on, I studied ten years in Argentina and nobody asked me about that, they're asking me about one paper one semester! Alright! It's worth it then, I'll keep going, doing it!...only after having formalised some of my knowledge through some papers in a NZ university did I have the possibility of getting to that job [manager role in her profession].*

#### 4.4.1.2 Mentoring

The majority of the participants found that mentoring, from mentors either within or external to the organisations they were working in, helped them to develop their careers and to adjust to NZ workplaces. All participants had taken the initiative to find mentors (it was neither suggested nor provided by employers) as mentoring helped them develop their skills, provided technical support and advice on how to deal with difficult work situations. The Argentinean culture is very different to the NZ culture as mentioned in the introduction chapter, thus the mentors enhanced the participants' new cultural awareness and helped them to adjust at work.

*So I always had since day one in my NZ roles, with NZ employers...NZ mentors, usually within [her profession] but always one from inside the company that I used to work, or I work, and one outside... I get advice on...from how to prepare for my performance review annually with my company to how to deal with any issue or tough conversation to have with your boss or supplier. (Bianca)*

When facing a conflict with a manager, Carmen sought the advice of another manager in her company, a type of informal mentor:

*I wasn't getting along with the manager I had, and I tried different ways of getting along, but I just wasn't getting what I wanted from this person so I went and I found someone that could help me...within another team so it was a person that had the same role as my manager...but I got along with her...Someone that could recommend me, give me suggestions...So we were meeting regularly and having catch-ups...and I will come sort of with homework, things that I will ask her about...it was really good, very, very helpful. (Carmen)*

#### 4.4.1.3 Community Support

Vanessa, Nancy and Bianca sought advice from recruitment agencies and non-governmental organisations (such as the Citizen Advice Bureau or community centres) on how to apply for jobs and how to write their curricula vitae (CVs) and cover letters. Some of them attended training sessions and others received feedback on how to tailor their CVs and cover letters for the NZ labour market. They all found that this advice helped them to better understand the job application process in NZ, which is significantly different to the Argentinean application process as described in the first chapter.

*It's an NGO I think, they help migrants to find jobs and things like that and I remember going to this place quite a lot...just to get advice on like...they were reviewing my CV and cover letter, so it was quite good. It's like the Citizen Advice Bureau but more like employment focussed. (Bianca)*

*The recruitment agency, they said oh, your CV, the format is not too well like, I will recommend you to go to this community centre, they do have workshops that they run...They help you to put together the CV, so I did one of those workshops and we prepared my CV to look to the standards that the kiwi people would love to kind of like see. (Vanessa)*

#### 4.4.1.4 Overcoming Language Barriers

Vanessa stated that, at the beginning, she found it challenging to work with people with diverse accents. However, she said it was useful to be exposed to different accents: *I found it really hard to understand...when I moved to...a team... [with people with diverse English accents] ...so I said, I will pick it up. It's hard but then I got to learn it quite well.* Even though only one participant commented on this strategy (to seek to be exposed to diverse English accents), it could be valuable as language barriers was one of the main challenges the participants encountered.

#### 4.4.2 Organisational Support

Some of the participants found that different types of support provided by their employers helped them with their work adaptation and career development in NZ. Although participants gave examples of how they felt supported by their organisations, it was not a significant part of the overall support they relied on, as when reflecting on the practices that enhanced their career, the majority were self-driven. At the same time, some of the participants who received organisational support also faced unhelpful employers.

Nevertheless, at different times in their careers, some participants found supportive managers who helped them advance their careers and supported their work integration, while others were offered employee training aimed at enhancing their technical skills. One participant appreciated her employer's informal acknowledgment of the value of her overseas qualifications and experience. Even though participants received organisational support of some kind during their NZ careers, most of the support the participants experienced (and which enhanced their career experiences) was proactively sought and organised by themselves.

##### 4.4.2.1 Supportive Managers and Career Development Support

Bianca felt that her employers in NZ helped her with her work adaptation: *I've been so lucky, every organisation that I work for here, they have treated me great...no different way to how they treat locals, like everyone has been quite...integrating.* Vanessa, who had positive experiences with the managers she had in NZ, expressed a similar view. She found that they had been supportive of her career development and had helped her advance her career. Vanessa commented: *My managers were absolutely amazing...We do have...lots of opportunities...to grow...and I do have two reports now...And lots of support from my manager as well so, yeah, it feels like I'm in a very nice space.*

When Carmen moved to Auckland, her first employer supported her to advance in her career:

*So the person that originally hired me, she definitely invested in me I think...when she moved to a different company she actually got me an interview at the new company as well...she really believed in my qualifications or my quality as a worker (Carmen).*

However, Carmen, for example, also faced an unsupportive manager later in her career, so while there were some examples of positive organisational career experiences, in some cases participants also encountered a lack of organisational support during their careers in NZ.

Moreover, Nancy's experience was that employers did not acknowledge or value her six-year bachelor's degree from Argentina. She explains that this degree is a three-year course in NZ, but it takes six years to complete the same bachelor's degree in Argentina as it is more specialised. She found employers lacked trust in her overseas qualifications, except for one manager who was aware of the difference between the NZ qualification and the Argentinean for this specific field:

*The person who hired me and interviewed me, had experienced living overseas and studying overseas...she was very aware of the, there is something else beyond NZ and I think that's why she saw exactly what my background was...So that was a huge relief, finally someone that can listen to what I have to say in a truthful, authentic way, and they welcome that.*

#### 4.4.2.2 Employee Training

Two participants found that the training provided by their employers positively influenced their career experiences and supported their career development. This better prepared them for social interactions as well as improved their organisational commitment and job performance, enhancing their international career experiences and career development. The type of training they received was technical and related to their roles, so it improved their job adaptation. When Bianca described how her NZ career developed, she recognised the importance of the training provided by the organisations she worked in: *Since my first role...they invested in me with the professional certification that it's the only one available in the entire world.* This was especially important for Bianca, as she had to reframe her career in NZ. Receiving training from her employer helped her gain expertise in her new career.

#### 4.4.3 Challenges

Participants encountered career-related challenges such as (initially) needing to accept roles for which they were overqualified, challenging job search processes for the first job in NZ, and situations within the workplace context where organisational support was not forthcoming. Some of them also experienced broader challenges other than career related, such as language barriers and visa restrictions, which negatively impacted them at various *times*.

##### 4.4.3.1 Unchallenging First Roles and Challenging First Job Search

All participants experienced underemployment, for instance they were overqualified for the roles they took at the start of their careers in NZ. Four participants (out of five) felt the need to take these roles, and the fifth participant chose to take on a role for which she was overqualified. The fifth participant (Vanessa) decided not to pursue a role in her profession at the start of her journey in NZ because she wanted a less intellectually demanding job at the time.

After working in Argentina in her professional field, Bianca had to accept a job for which she was overqualified and out of her chosen field when she moved to NZ. She shared the experience of her first job in NZ (working in a restaurant):

*But finishing at 11 and it was so cold in winter and walking by myself thinking, what have I done, you know, did I come all the way here to be, well, nothing wrong with waitresses...But it's just...last month I was...in an important job in Argentina...Now I'm serving customers in a country that's not even my country... So a month and a half of being like very, very tough, working very long hours, and again questioning myself, what have I done. (Bianca)*

Nancy found that NZ employers did not value her overseas experience and while she felt overqualified for her first position in NZ, she felt the need to accept it as she found that there were more limited opportunities in her field in NZ. Nancy shares: *And I now worked in that role for about one year, it wasn't a challenge at all, it was not, I was getting quite bored. I wasn't learning anything.*

Additionally, three participants found the process of looking for their first job in NZ challenging. Vanessa says that when she first started her SIE, applying for jobs was difficult. She comments: *I didn't know how to look for a job...that was at the beginning, so... I have super-short CV.*

#### 4.4.3.2 Visa Restrictions

Visa restrictions was also a common challenge when applying for jobs. Participants experienced either work interruptions or difficulties in finding jobs due to visa restrictions. For example, Carmen had come to NZ with a tourist visa at first, as did Amanda the second time she came to NZ (to continue her relationship with a New Zealander). This meant that for the first few months they could not work, until they obtained the partner visa which allowed them to seek employment. Not being able to work at the beginning was difficult for both, making the beginning of their SIE challenging. Carmen moved to NZ to be with her partner (who she met in the UK), she shares:

*When I came to NZ I had to be on a tourist visa for three months...so that was a really hard decision for me to make, like by then I had been working for ten years non-stop and...not having a job was very hard...It was scary...it was very scary. And that's one of the things that made me have second thoughts. (Carmen)*

Amanda came to NZ the first time with a work and holiday visa, she then went back to Argentina for a year and later returned to NZ to continue a relationship, but she had to start again in NZ with a tourist visa: *I came over just on a tourist visa...so I couldn't work...it was a lot of waiting around and sort of felt lonely...it was a bit of a wait, or it felt really long.*

Nancy commented that at the beginning of her SIE, when she applied for jobs while on her work and holiday visa (which allowed her to work for one year in NZ), recruiters usually disregarded her application for permanent low-level administrative jobs as she did not have a longer work permit. Another common response from recruiters was that she lacked 'kiwi experience' to be considered for such low entry positions. Nancy shares:

*I had applied to quite a few positions where, when I looked at them, oh, this would be so easy, they cannot say no to me for this, and they did say no...because, I think two reasons, one was the visa, I was on a working holiday visa, and a recruiting company will not present a candidate with a working holiday visa...to their clients. So they kept, the statement that I heard myself and other people told me they heard as well was, you don't have kiwi experience, you need to have NZ experience to work in this role, even as a data entry...I heard that many times...So when I started to get the answers about the positions I had applied to...they replied to say no, your experience is not suitable. I said,*

*what? I can use Word, I can type, I can fix the most difficult Word documents, are you kidding me?*

#### 4.4.3.3 Lack of Organisational Support

As previously discussed, even though participants experienced some positive organisational support, they still faced challenges within the workplace where support was not often available. Thus, another key theme that emerged from the data analysis was the lack of organisational support that some of the participants faced. It is possible that due to this, the participants were highly proactive when it came to career development and workplace adaptation. In some cases, participants found certain managers did not support their career development or did not value their work, while in some other cases the organisation did not help them with their work adaptation.

Carmen shared that she did not receive her manager's support when planning her career development or wanting to discuss her career goals and possible future promotions: *The manager that I didn't get along with, and it's not that I didn't get along, it's that I wanted...put together a very neat plan on how my career progression was going to go and she wasn't giving me that.*

Amanda felt that one of her managers did not value her efforts at work and this was making her lose her passion for the profession she discovered in NZ. She commented: *My direct boss...was not appreciating the work...I was doing and the amount of hours I was putting into the work and it was a very stressful job...I had to make the decision of...just moving on...because I was...losing the passion [for her field].*

#### 4.4.3.4 Language Barriers

Amanda, Bianca and Vanessa faced language barriers, from feeling stressed about not expressing themselves well at work during important meetings, to struggling to communicate with people with different accents in English.

*So I think that's the ongoing challenge that I have... we all have good days and bad days with English...But if you're, you have that important meeting on that day that your English is not...Is not great, it's quite...frustrating and disappointing but at the same time I try not to be so hard on myself... But still it is a challenge...especially in my role that I need, it's quite sort of, I meet really very senior people...and you just feel, hey yes, not only you double me in age but also the language barrier... I think that's the main challenge.*  
(Bianca)

## 4.5 Career Development

The previous section focussed on the participants' career experiences and the practices or strategies that improved their career experiences and, therefore, supported their career development. It also covered the broader challenges they faced during their SIE. This section discusses the impact of SIE on the participants' career development, specifically the skills, knowledge and competencies (career capital) they developed in NZ and how these were obtained.

The participants took a proactive approach in their career management and most of the self-driven strategies described in the previous section not only improved their career experiences but also contributed to the development of their career capital. Therefore, the self-driven strategies, such as completing local qualifications or training and being mentored are relevant to this section as well. Likewise, some of the organisational practices that supported their career development, for example employee training and career support from managers, are pertinent to this section as well.

Completing local qualifications provided the participants with the learning opportunities needed to advance in their roles and were highly valued by the NZ employers, and thus important for their individual career advancement. Mentoring supported the participants' technical growth and interpersonal skills, which is also important for career development. When technical training was provided by their employers, this supported their career advancement as it improved their job performance. When participants received support from their managers, this enhanced their careers. Therefore, all these factors should also be considered part of the strategies or practices that supported their career development (as well as enhanced their international career experiences).

#### *4.5.1 Career Capital Developed During SIE*

Some of the participants commented on the personal growth they experienced due to the SIE. Participants gained personal skills such as being more resilient, patient, determined, adaptable and confident. Amanda and Bianca found that their SIE contributed to their personal development. Amanda concludes that she changed as a person due to the SIE experience:

*I've changed a lot...as a person, I feel that in Argentina...I was quite theoretical, and I think one of the reasons why I moved into studying this [the new career she discovered in NZ] is because it's totally the opposite to what I used to be and I became quite a practical person...and definitely that's a highlight, something I'm very proud of myself, just having put myself in that situation. (Amanda)*

*I'm a more patient person since I live here... more resilient....because even though here things are very easy at the same time it takes so long to do things...also in the corporate world, so much bureaucracy, so yeah, more resilient and more patient. (Bianca)*

Even though the participants' motivations to undertake SIE were more personal than career oriented, they acknowledged they gained external career capital during their SIE. When reflecting on the participants' career stories, it was clear that they developed a set of managerial, personal and/or technical competencies during their SIEs, as well as additional professional and educational qualifications during their SIE (listed in Table 1). All participants completed courses during their SIE or were working towards a degree at the time of the interviews, such as bachelor's degrees, postgraduate courses, certifications and other programmes of study. They developed managerial skills, such as commercial acumen or business analysis, public speaking and interpersonal skills. They also expanded on their technical skills needed for their work.

*And then the other one is the analytical side of things, analysing the business and understanding, you know, how the marketing parts and how you can fix it or how you can make it better, so that's definitely a skill that I have developed a lot. (Carmen)*

Another important theme that participants recognised was the importance of building strong networks in NZ to further develop their careers. They grew their personal and professional networks as a result of the SIE. These networks provided them with information on potential jobs as well as important connections for their future career development. When participants were asked about the competencies developed in NZ, they commented: *I get to build relations, like really solid relationships in every single role...all of the roles...I build this trust.* (Vanessa).

*It's the personal situation or any relations, who you know...because I remember, my kiwi friends they were quite helpful...they were talking to me...I think that would be good to meet this person to have another view and they will set up a coffee for me... I think that's why I got into the world much faster, yeah.* (Bianca)

Table 1

*Career Competencies Developed During SIE*

<b>Qualifications and training during SIE</b>	<b>Technical skills</b>
Postgraduate	Administration
Bachelor's degree	Legal
Graduate diploma in business studies	Marketing
Professional certification and courses	Procurement
Excel training	Supply chain
SAP training	Technology
<b>Managerial skills</b>	<b>Personal skills</b>
Business and commercial acumen	Adaptability
Communication	Determination
Conflict management	Flexibility
Interpersonal skills	Patience
Leadership	Practicality
Negotiation	Resilience
Networking	Resourcefulness
Public speaking skill	Self-confidence
	Teamwork
	Cross-cultural awareness

Moreover, participants grew their career capital with the SIE experiences and qualifications. As discussed in the previous section, Vanessa, Nancy and Bianca found that completing qualifications or training supported their career advancement, as this was found to be highly

valued by employers in NZ. Vanessa believed that doing a local postgraduate diploma helped her to get her most recent promotion: *It's a really nice job and I think I got it because at the time I was doing a postgrad in [in her field, in a NZ university].*

Amanda, Carmen and Vanessa believed that they developed their careers through work experience during their SIE. Vanessa had been shadowing managers who held the position she aspired to, as a step towards developing her competencies and getting ready for her next role. Vanessa shared that she developed her skills through her work experience in NZ:

*It's definitely experience 'cos I'm getting experience on a different side of the industry that I didn't have before coming to NZ, and I think within the knowledge that I have of the industry...I feel like I know a lot more...but it's just experience, it's just being out there and spending time.*

Amanda also learnt from dealing with difficult work situations that despite being stressful at the time, helped her to grow her skills. When she spoke about a stressful role and an unsupportive manager, she concluded: *I'm even grateful for that boss as well...because I've learnt a lot from him too as well and from the pressure of the job, I don't regret actually doing the job.*

#### 4.5.2 Career Transition and Change

Most of the participants reframed their careers during their SIE, two of them made a deliberate choice to change career path, while other two had no option but to do so because of limited work opportunity or impossibility of using their Argentinean qualifications. At the start of her SIE, Amanda started rethinking her own worldviews, her career, life in general and what made her happy. In NZ, Amanda allowed herself to explore what she did not allow herself to consider earlier, a new career in a very different field: *I guess quit my job and come to NZ on a, it was meant to be a four-month OE [overseas experience]...ended up staying a whole year here in NZ and rethinking my views on life, on my career, and what makes me happy.* When she talked about the change of careers and going back to university in NZ, she reflected:

*I think I just didn't even know that existed [her new career], all of this became aware to me through my travels, through being here [in NZ], so I didn't know that existed... I was not involved in any of that so I guess I didn't see that as being available.*

On the other hand, Bianca having come to NZ with a profession she could not use without retraining completely, had the need to reframe her career. She decided to leave her promising future in Argentina to pursue her dream of moving to NZ:

*I did have a great job and my future...career was like looking pretty good but then I think it was more...that I wanted to try how it was to work in NZ, that I decided to come back [after visiting to NZ for the first time]...It was a very tough decision to make...First of all because I knew before coming here that I was not going to be [able to work in her chosen profession].*

## 4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the main themes that emerged from the participants' career stories relating to the three research questions. First, the participants' motivations to undertake SIE were explored. It appears that relationships were a key motivation for moving to NZ, as well as the

desire to live in an English-speaking country and the pursuit of a life change. Second, the participants' career experiences were discussed. Even though some of the participants received some support from their employers and they were most appreciative of this, overall there was a lack of organisational support in many instances. Therefore, most of the strategies that enhanced their career experiences and work adaptation were proactively sought by the participants. The key self-driven personal strategies used were completing local qualifications or training, searching for mentors and pursuing advice on how to write CVs for the NZ labour market. This chapter also described the challenges that the participants experienced during their SIE, the main ones being underemployment, challenging first job searches, language barriers and visa restrictions creating work interruptions or limiting their job seeking options, as well as encountering situations where workplace support was not forthcoming.

In the last section, which focusses on participants' career development, the competencies and skills developed, as well as the ways in which they grew their career capital were described. Even though increasing career capital was not a strong motivation to undertake SIE, unexpectedly, all participants accrued career capital during their SIE experience by developing managerial, personal and/or technical skills, as well as by obtaining professional qualifications. Gaining local qualifications and experience, mentoring, networking, as well as receiving employee training and organisational support contributed to their career development in NZ.

In the next chapter, these themes will be further analysed in relation to the relevant SIE theories covered in the literature review chapter, with the intention of further reflecting on the participants' career stories and gaining a deeper understanding of their career experiences and motivations.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter aims to interpret the key themes that arose from the findings, in relation to the self-initiated expatriate (SIE) literature reviewed in Chapter 2. First, the definitions around SIE and how the participants fit this category are discussed. Second, participants' motivations to self-initiate their expatriation to NZ and their career experiences in New Zealand (NZ) are reviewed in relation to the available SIE literature. Finally, the researcher discusses the extent to which the SIE impacted the participants' career development against the literature on career development during SIE.

### 5.1 Re-defining the Self-Initiated Expatriate Term

The participants of this dissertation were Argentinean women who self-initiated (SI) their expatriation to NZ. They led their expatriation without the support of an employer and decided where to live and pursued work by their own means. These are all key components of the definition of SI expatriates (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Andresen et al., 2012; Cerdin & Selmer, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013b; Myers et al., 2017). The participants fall within the definition of SI expatriates often described in the literature as they were professionals with skilled qualifications who chose to move to NZ temporarily (at the start of their SIE) and with the intention of looking for work (Andresen et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013b).

Although SI expatriates are a diverse group (Cerdin & Selmer, 2013), the extant SIE literature usually focuses on professionals and highly skilled employees moving from developed countries to other developed countries (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013b). While the participants of this dissertation were highly skilled professionals, they also differed in that they moved from a developing country (Argentina) to a developed country (NZ). Thus, this dissertation provides a significant contribution to the SIE literature by exploring the career experiences of SI expatriate women who come from Argentina, a developing nation (López Murphy et al., 2003). Moreover, this dissertation involves participants that are part of a minority (and under-researched) group in NZ. Being a minority may have exposed the participants to discrimination as they were pushed to take roles for which they are overqualified at the start of their SIE. The participants seemed to be less privileged individuals when compared to the usual characterisation of SI expatriates in the literature (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013b). The early stages of their career in NZ seemed more akin to the experiences of skilled migrants who are often underemployed when they enter the labour market of a new country (Meares, 2010; Parutis, 2014; Pio, 2005a; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). Nevertheless, and even though none of the participants moved to NZ with the intention of staying long-term, after a few years they all made the decision to stay permanently and applied for NZ residency. At the time of the interview, all participants planned to stay in NZ permanently, making them now skilled migrants (Thorn, 2009).

The participants pursued a flexible career with more autonomy and independence, which is described in the literature as a boundaryless career (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Thorn,

2009). However, this also resulted in a heavier burden for them as they had to take more personal responsibility for their career progression, as organisations took less accountability for their career development and work adaptation. The shift of costs and responsibilities from employers to employees is a common outcome of this new career paradigm (Savickas et al., 2009). The lack of organisational support, and being part of a minority in NZ, situated the participants in a weaker position in the labour market. For the participants, the boundaryless career model resulted in underemployment at the start of their SIE. Therefore, the boundaryless careers concept appears to be suitable for certain individuals but not for all globally mobile individuals generally, and not for all parts of their SIE. This is in line with previous findings (Inkson et al., 2012; Pringle & Mallon, 2003; Suutari et al., 2018).

However, as they progressed in their careers in NZ, they managed to move organisational boundaries, thereby gaining better employment prospects and realising the positive aspects of having a boundaryless careers, such as freedom and independence (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Thorn, 2009). Over the years, participants have all been promoted in their chosen professional fields, advanced their careers and are currently satisfied with their career advancement and choices. Some participants reframed their careers during their SIE, while others have remained in the same field they were in before starting their SIE.

## **Themes**

### **5.2 Motivations for SIE**

The first part of this dissertation explored the participants' motivations for coming to NZ. Participants initiated their expatriation to NZ for various reasons, however all these motivations were driven by personal (rather than career-oriented) factors, such as relationships, experiencing new cultures and leaving unwanted work situations and/or boredom. Likewise, Myers et al. (2017) also identified that participants (who were women as well) were motivated to undertake SIE for personal reasons. They pursued a break from their lives, an escape from boredom and a desire to experience new cultures. There seems to be a complex interaction of motivations when women embark on a SIE experience (Myers et al., 2017).

The way individuals plan their own career reflects their internal worldviews (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009). Each of participants chose a self-directed career, which demonstrates a type of career attitude that is usually motivated by personal values (a 'protean career attitude') rather than organisational commitment (Cao et al., 2013; Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009). The participants (like other individuals with protean career attitudes) were self-driven and proactively managed their careers; they had a comprehensive life mindset, considering non-career as well career factors (Cao et al., 2013). Thus, their motivations for undertaking SIE went beyond their career objectives and were also related to their intrinsic whole-life motivations (Cao et al., 2013). According to the literature on women's motivations for undertaking SIE, personal reasons (like self-enhancement) tend to be more dominant than career-oriented decisions (Myers & Douglas, 2017; Myers et al., 2017; Thorn, 2009).

Overall, the participants were more motivated by their personal interests, less dependent on organisational support and less inclined to follow a linear career path, as is usually found in the studies that explore SI expatriates (Andresen et al., 2012; Suutari et al., 2018). This relates with the self-driven tactics they used to empower their careers and improve their international work experiences.

### *5.2.1 Relationships*

One of the main themes that emerged from the data analysis was that relationships were a key influence in most of the participants' decisions to move to NZ. This is consistent with other studies that highlight that women are often more focussed on relationships and what is best for the family when deciding to undertake SIE (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Tharenou, 2009; Thorn, 2009). The participants did not have children at the time of relocation, however, most of them moved to NZ to pursue (amongst other things) a long-term relationship. This confirms Thorn's (2009) study, which found that a key sub-motivation influencing women to start a SIE was having a partner from the host country.

The participants were highly skilled and adaptable women, whose competencies and bilingualism allowed them to be more internationally mobile than their partners, for whom they decided to relocate to NZ and who, in most of the cases, were monolingual. In their career stories, participants showed considerable flexibility, proactivity and openness to take risks when reframing or advancing their careers. Contrary to the common presumption that women subordinate their careers to their partners', which contributes to employers' gender discrimination (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Moore, 2002), the participants' willingness to self-initiate their expatriation to NZ may be a reflection on their flexibility and skills. Perhaps this can be viewed as a result of being skilled and flexible individuals that can move internationally, rather than the gender-based presumption that women adapt to men's career needs. Undertaking SIE experience for relationships could be seen, at least in the case of these participants, as an outcome of high levels of self-motivation, in addition to high levels of personal confidence that they were able to use their skills and competencies to develop a meaningful career path.

### *5.2.2 Experiencing New Cultures*

Experiencing an English-speaking culture and improving their English were appealing factors for some of the participants. The participants' motivations were similar to those of the participants in the research by Inkson et al. (1997) and Doherty et al. (2011), in which individuals self-initiated their expatriation to experience new cultures. However, the SIE literature often researches the exploration of a new culture as a sub-category of seeking an adventure (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Doherty, 2013; Doherty et al., 2011; Froese, 2012; Inkson et al., 1997; Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Selmer & Luring, 2010; Thorn, 2009). In this dissertation instead, experiencing Anglo-Saxon culture was a main motivation for undertaking SIE to NZ, which was influenced by the fact that the participants felt attracted to the culture after years of learning the English language. Argentineans in general may be incentivised to relocate to NZ because of previous contact with

the English language culture, as many Argentineans start learning the English language since primary or kindergarten (Banfi, Rettaroli, & Moreno, 2015).

Through intensive study of the English language, the participants learnt about the English-speaking Anglo-Saxon culture, as there is an important relationship between language and culture (Jiang, 2000). Their previous exposure to the English language may have familiarised them with the Anglo-Saxon social practices, and consequently helped them to make sense of the culture at the same time. Therefore, learning the English language sparked the participants' interest to experience living in an English-speaking country.

Furthermore, some of the participants (who were in their mid-20s when they started their SIE) were judged by older generations (such as parents) for choosing what for them was an unconventional career path. Parents questioned the participants for not following the more traditional path of staying in Argentina with good career prospects and growing within an organisation. In spite of these pressures, they moved away from their promising careers to pursue their desires for experiencing a new culture. This could be explained by the relationship between women's motivations for undertaking SIE and the career stage. Other SIE studies' findings suggest that women experience an exploratory phase in which they pursue adventure and independence, and sometimes this happens early in their career (Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Tharenou, 2009; Thorn, 2009). Like the participants of this dissertation, during their early career stage, women seek to learn about themselves, explore their potential and experience new cultures, as well as defy the family traditions in their countries of origin (Myers et al., 2017; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Thorn, 2009).

### *5.2.3 Seeking an Escape*

The need for a 'break from life', a time to seek change, were also important motivating factors for the participants to undertake SIE. The pursuit of a change in life circumstances through SIE is well documented in the literature (Myers et al., 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005; Richardson & Mallon, 2005). As highlighted in literature and demonstrated by the participants in this dissertation, the SIE represented a way to escape from the boredom in their lives. The SIE became a source of energy and a journey of self-discovery that unexpectedly helped them to change their lives (Richardson & Mallon, 2005). When reflecting on the motivations to start their SIE, some participants believed that the SIE was a way to get away from the negative aspects of life and accomplish a radical life change, a new start in life full of excitement and autonomy. Most of the participants were young when starting their SIE and did not have children to look after or strong work commitments in Argentina. This may have allowed them to leave everything behind and seek an escape. Like in the case of the participants, Tharenou's (2009) study found that women with partners and no children in their care may, more often than men, feel more attracted to SIE, particularly in their early and mid-career phase.

Some of the participants felt the need to leave their routines behind and explore a different life. Most of the participants' careers were promising in Argentina, however some of them faced the usual challenges of a developing labour market country, such as low salaries and long working

hours (Brown, Deardorff, & Stern, 2004). Consequently, these participants sought to move away from the lack of work-life balance. Others left behind unfulfilling roles and stalled careers. Irrespective, those participants that left for a change in the work environment pursued not only an international experience, but also an escape from poor working conditions to more attractive work environments. Likewise, Froese (2012) found that one of the key drivers for SI expatriates in South Korea was to leave unstable labour markets and seek better working conditions. Although it was not a key or primary motivation for the participants in this dissertation, leaving behind career obstacles and challenges can be a motivation for SIE (Doherty et al., 2011; Farcas & Goncalves, 2016; Myers & Pringle, 2005), and this was certainly an enticing factor for some of the participants. Lastly, career development is usually identified as a key motivation to embark on SIE. Women may undertake SIE to enhance their career and fast-track their way up the corporate ladder. Studies find that individuals see the SIE as a strategy to improve their career prospects (Andresen et al., 2012; Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Jokinen, 2010; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013; Selmer & Luring, 2010). Even though career development is often found to be a main motivation for individuals to undertake SIE, none of the participants initiated their expatriation specifically for career enhancement. Nevertheless, many of them sought a break from their careers and the SIE experience provided them a time to re-evaluate their lives and reflect on their career-related decisions, which helped them reframe their careers (Tharenou, 2009).

### **5.3 Career experiences**

While the literature on motivations for undertaking a SIE experience is extensive, the research on SIE experiences is limited (Ressia et al., 2017; Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). Thus, this dissertation contributes to the literature by researching the career experiences of women in SIE. More importantly, it explores the career experiences of an under-researched group - Latin Americans in NZ. Due to the lack of studies on the actual career experiences of SI expatriates in NZ and the fact that SI expatriates and skilled migrants share similarities - such as having higher qualifications and self-initiating their relocation to another country - research on skilled migrant women's career experiences in NZ is drawn on. This allows to further inform the discussion of some of the themes, even though SIE is the focus of this dissertation.

This section reflects on the participants' career experiences in NZ. Firstly, the self-driven strategies the participants used, which enhanced their career experiences and development, are analysed in relation to the relevant SIE literature. Secondly, the organisational support they received that improved their experiences is discussed. By researching the (self-driven and organisational) strategies that supported the participants' experiences and adaptation, this dissertation significantly adds to the SIE literature.

Thirdly, the challenges they faced during their SIE are presented. As a reminder to the reader, the challenges the participants experienced were mainly career-related. Nevertheless, they also encountered broader challenges, which affected their careers at times. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the participants in this dissertation proactively sought help and developed self-

driven strategies to support their international career experiences as well as career advancement in the NZ context. Nevertheless, they also experienced some organisational support at certain points, which helped with their workplace adaptation and career development. However, this support was not always forthcoming and the participants had to rely on their own strategies. As a result, the most important support they experienced to improve their career experiences was self-driven.

### *5.3.1 Self-driven Strategies to Enhance the Career Experiences and Career Development*

The participants showed strong individual agency when relocating, managing and reframing their careers. They were also able to operate effectively without organisational support. The SIE literature identifies individual agency as an important factor in successful SIE (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Andresen et al., 2012; Cerdin & Selmer, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013b; Myers et al., 2017). All of the participants demonstrated protean attitudes when planning their careers, supporting their own international work experiences and seeking to adjust to the NZ workplace. The participants actively looked to interact with the new environment and modified their own attitudes to adjust to the new context. Their protean career attitude relates to the way the individuals self-directed their own careers and drove their adaptation to the new surroundings (Cao et al., 2013; Doherty et al., 2011).

The participants' proactive career attitude was also a result of receiving less organisational support. This appears to have pushed them to proactively interact with New Zealanders by completing local qualifications, seeking mentors and relying on community support to better understand the local culture and customs. According to Von Borell de Araujo et al. (2014), the lack of organisational support may encourage SI expatriates to seek more frequent contact with host country nationals and this may lead to a better understanding of the local culture. This study found that the SI expatriates were attracted to the local culture. As a result, SI expatriates were more tolerant to the local work environments and could better develop the necessary skills to adapt to the workplace (Von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014). Even though Von Borell de Araujo et al., (2014) drew on a sample of individuals who moved from a developed country (mainly the USA) to a developing country (Brazil), these outcomes can also be applicable to the participants of this dissertation. This is because the participants used similar strategies when lacking support from organisations and proactively looked for interactions with New Zealanders in order to better assimilate with the local culture and expected behaviours. Thus, the participants' protean career attitudes and the lower level of organisational support may have encouraged them to self-initiate the following strategies to improve their international experiences and career advancement.

#### *5.3.1.1 Local Qualifications and Training*

Most of the participants decided to pursue local qualifications or training to enhance their career experiences and development in NZ. They all agreed that this was greatly valued by NZ employers. Some participants expressed, with frustration, the lack of recognition of their

Argentinean qualifications (and Argentinean experience) by NZ employers. This created a need to obtain NZ university qualifications. Pio (2005a) identified that NZ employers devalued or failed to acknowledge overseas qualifications. The participants of Pio's study (12 skilled migrant women living and working in NZ) were also expected to have local experience for positions for which they had previous relevant overseas experience. Studies in NZ have found that not having local experience and qualifications diminishes skilled migrants' opportunities when applying for jobs, resulting in discrimination when applying for the first role after relocation (Meares, 2010; Pio, 2005a). The experiences of these skilled migrant women mirrors the experiences of the participants of this dissertation, as employers, at times, seemed dismissive of the participants' previous qualifications, experience and training outside of NZ.

Like the participants' experiences at the beginning of their SIE, migrant literature consistently reports that employers disregard or undervalue non-local qualifications, regardless of their qualifications or level of English (Dietz et al., 2015; Manhica et al., 2015; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). The level of this undervaluation is related to the overseas country in which the qualification was gained (Manhica et al., 2015; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). In NZ, the lack of employers' recognition of overseas qualifications still sometimes occurs even after these qualifications have been validated by the NZ Qualifications Authority (Pio, 2005a, 2005b).

### *5.3.1.2 Mentoring and Community Support*

Most participants actively sought mentors in NZ. Some of the participants looked not only for mentors from the organisation they worked in, but also for external mentors. All the participants agreed that mentoring supported their career experiences and development. As the Argentinean culture is significantly different to the NZ culture, mentoring increased participants' cross-cultural awareness, helping them to adapt better to NZ workplaces. This allowed them to interact with a more experienced individual: the 'mentor' (Werner & DeSimone, 2017), who advised them on topics related to their personal and professional growth.

It could be argued that mentoring acted as a replacement for the lack of cross-cultural training, which is usually provided by employers in the case of assigned expatriates (Fontinha et al., 2017; Jokinen et al., 2008; Von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014). The participants needed to support their cross-cultural adjustment, which is the process required to successfully integrate to a new culture (Fontinha et al., 2017). Mentoring supported the participants' work adaptation as well, as it is not only a source of learning for a specific role, but it can also provide a better understanding of the interpersonal interactions associated with a role (Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). Froese and Peltokorpi (2012) identified that when SI expatriates did not receive mentoring (and training) in multi-cultural environments (like NZ workplaces), this resulted in poorer work adaptation. These authors suggested that mentoring is a strategy that may help individuals in SIE to achieve their optimal level of performance faster. Participants not only used mentoring for improving job performance, but also to understand the unspoken social behaviour norms, for example when Carmen used mentoring to improve her relationship with her manager or when

Bianca discussed with one of her mentors how to conduct herself in a performance review. Mentoring increased the interaction between the participants and individuals who have a better understanding of the NZ culture, increasing their cross-cultural awareness and enhancing their understanding of New Zealanders. Previous literature highlights similar benefits of mentoring during SIE (Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

Accessing community support (as well as social networks), like the Citizen Advice Bureau or community centres, also supported the participants' experiences and integration into the workplace and local culture. This increased their interaction with locals and provided them with advice on the NZ recruitment processes, which was essential as the recruitment processes are significantly different in Argentina, as described in the first chapter. This is in line with Cao et al.'s (2014) findings: to adjust to the host country and to compensate for the lack of organisational support, SI expatriates need to rely more on the networks they develop.

Even though the protean career attitude of the participants may have had a positive effect on their career adjustment in NZ (as individuals with protean career attitude are more inclined to seek interaction with locals and to modify their attitudes to the new work environment) ((Cao et al., 2013; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Doherty et al., 2011), the participants' original culture is very different to the NZ culture. This could make the cultural adjustment more difficult and stressful because individuals who were raised in a culture that is significantly different to the culture they seek to assimilate, may experience a more challenging adaptation (Cao et al., 2013; Ceric & Crawford, 2016). Therefore, the participants had to rely on mentoring and community groups to find emotional support and advice and to adapt to the NZ workplace.

### *5.3.1.3 Overcoming Language Barriers*

Language issues were a major challenge for all the participants, as English was their second language. While Vanessa initially found the various English accents confusing and difficult to understand (Auckland, NZ being a diverse city), she also found it a learning opportunity, recognising that it was part of the cross-cultural adjustment process. This is another example of the cross-cultural adjustment that the participants had to overcome without the organisations' support, like language barriers. Assigned expatriates usually receive pre-departure language (and cultural) training before their relocation (Fontinha et al., 2017; Jokinen et al., 2008; Von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014). The participants, like many other individuals in SIEs, did not receive this type of support at any point in their careers in NZ, including in their first jobs, resulting in greater adjustment challenges, which they sought to resolve without any organisational support.

### *5.3.2 Organisational Support*

At times, some of the participants encountered support from their managers or received employee training. This was perceived as helpful for their work performance, workplace adaptation and career development. The findings of other SIE studies also recognised the importance of organisational support, training, mentoring and formal and informal networking to improve the workplace adaptation and job performance, as well as to help with the adaptation of SI expatriates

to the host country (Cao et al., 2013; Cao et al., 2014; Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Fontinha et al., 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Vaiman et al., 2015).

The participants could be a key source of talent for the organisations that employ them because, like other SI expatriates, they are highly skilled individuals whose personal reasons for relocating motivated them to stay in the host country for the long-term (Dickmann et al., 2016; Vaiman et al., 2015). Thus, the organisational strategies to support SI expatriates' work adaptation are important as individuals in SIE may experience obstacles when adapting to new work environments and learning about new workplace expectations and behaviours (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009). However, as mentioned earlier, even though participants received organisational support of some kind during their careers in NZ and this improved their career experiences, when reflecting on their career experiences, most of the support the participants relied on for their career development and workplace adaptation was self-driven. Thus, the most significant support they experienced was proactively sought and actioned by themselves.

#### *5.3.2.1 Supportive Managers, Career Development Support and Employee Training*

When thinking on the organisational support they received, participants focussed on managers that supported their career development and advancement, making their career experiences more enjoyable. Harvey (2009) highlighted that career advancement was a main motivation for highly skilled migrants to stay in the host country. Career development practices that allow SI expatriates to evaluate their career objectives and motivations, such as the discussion of possible future promotions, may support their adaptation in the workplace and host country (Cao et al., 2013; Cao et al., 2014; Fontinha et al., 2017).

Individuals who self-direct their expatriations tend to be driven more by personal and intrinsic reasons when planning their careers. Thus, employers could support their career development and experiences by tailoring employees' career development plans and considering their personal goals, while aligning these objectives with the organisational goals (Cao et al., 2013; Cao et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the participants did not talk about formal organisational policies that supported their individual development; instead they referred to the overall support given by some of their managers for their career advancement. It seems to be a more informal practice at the managers' discretion, rather than a structured organisational practice to support their SI expatriate employees.

Some participants also received technical training from their employers, which supported their career experiences and career advancement. The employee training helped them to be better prepared for social interactions, increased their job performance and organisational commitment, and supported their work adaptation. which was in accordance with the findings of other SIE studies (Fontinha et al., 2017; Takeuchi, 2010). Fontinha's et al.'s (2017) research found that employee training (among other organisational strategies such as career development practices) contributed to creating an environment where SI expatriates could develop local networks and learn about the practical aspects of living in the new country.

Cross-cultural training is highlighted in the SIE literature as an essential practice to support individuals' international career experiences and help them adjust in the country and organisation (Cao et al., 2013; Ceric & Crawford, 2016; Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Vaimanet al., 2015; Von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014). Employers may argue that if the expatriate takes the decision to move overseas by his/her own means, the cultural adjustment should be his or her own responsibility. Nevertheless, if organisations want to benefit from this international talent and all the knowledge and experience it may bring, they need to support SI expatriates' workplace (and country) adaptation (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). Understandably, organisations would not provide cultural training or language support when the SI expatriate has been in the country prior to joining the organisation. Nevertheless, for a SI expatriate's first role in the host country, ideally the organisation would support their cultural adjustment. In this dissertation, none of the participants received cross-cultural or language training from their employers at any point of their careers in NZ.

## **5.4 Challenges**

This dissertation builds on the limited existing research on career experiences of individuals on SIE, by exploring the career experiences of SI expatriates, including the career challenges that SI expatriate women may encounter in NZ. It provides an important contribution to the SIE literature as the experiences of SI expatriate women have been researched to a lesser extent than those of SI expatriate men (Ressia et al., 2017; Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). In addition, this dissertation makes a unique contribution by researching the experiences of SIE women coming from a developing country (Argentina) to undertake SIE. This is because the main SIE literature stream has focussed on the career experiences of SI expatriates from developed countries (Doherty et al., 2013b), and therefore it offers a new perspective and approach.

The key career challenges that emerged from participants' career stories were the need to take jobs for which they were overqualified (at the start of their SIE), difficult initial job searches in NZ, and situations where organisational support was not available for them. Some of the participants also experienced broader challenges like language barriers and visa restrictions, which impacted on their careers. The challenges which participants faced during the first months after relocation were the triggers for career self-reflection, leading the participants to question themselves, at times, whether undertaking SIE had been the right decision.

### *5.4.1 Unchallenging First Roles and Challenging First Job Search*

The participants of this dissertation had (at the start of their expatriation) to take roles for which they were overqualified or accept casual employment. Likewise, research suggests that, during the early employment of skilled migrant women, they face unemployment, underemployment or job insecurity, as well as changes in lifestyle and career of choice (Meares, 2010; Parutis, 2014; Pio, 2005a; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). The experiences of skilled migrant women living and working in NZ are similar to the challenges participants faced at the early stages of their SIE, for instance career interruptions and discrimination when looking for work, that was

also found in Pio's (2005a) research. Meares (2010) reported that skilled migrant women experienced discrimination from employers in NZ due to their different cultural background. In the case of the participants of this dissertation, the combination of their gender, being part of a minority group in NZ and coming from a country that is not a traditional source of skilled individuals, may have placed them in a weaker position in the labour market, as they faced a lack of recognition of their qualifications and previous experience (in part due to employers' demands for 'kiwi experience').

Previous NZ research has also identified that employers often require candidates to have previous local experience in order to start a career in the country (Meares, 2010) and this was noted by Nancy. The obstacle of needing to have 'kiwi experience' puts individuals in a challenging position as they are disregarded for positions for which they have the expertise, and yet just because they do not have 'Kiwi experience', they cannot gain local experience when employers do not hire them. The findings suggest that the participants had to overcome discriminatory recruitment practices at the start of their expatriation.

Three participants also encountered challenges in understanding the job search process in NZ. The recruitment process in Argentina is significantly different as mentioned in the introduction chapter. It does not involve cover letters or curricula vitae (CVs) tailored to the position the candidate is applying for. As is the case for other groups in NZ who are from a different culture, the participants of this dissertation needed to learn and adjust to the NZ recruitment processes. A study of 12 skilled Indian women living in NZ found that 75 per cent of these women needed to submit job applications with 50 companies before gaining their first employment in NZ (Pio, 2005a). Similar findings emerged from an Australian study involving migrants from the Middle East, where most of the participants needed to apply for 50 jobs (without obtaining employment still) after relocation to Melbourne (Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). Even though the focus on these last two studies was the discriminatory practices in the recruitment process, it appears that coming from a culture with significant differences to the host country's culture may exacerbate the difficulties in finding the first role in a new country. Individuals may be less aware of the local recruitment practices and therefore their applications are often less successful.

#### *5.4.2 Visa Restrictions*

Another important finding was that some of the participants faced visa restrictions during the first months of their SIE. As an outcome, participants needed to wait months to obtain a work permit, and therefore not being able to look for employment, or had to face more challenging job-hunting processes because of having a temporary work permit (work and holiday visa), which had negative impacts on them financially and emotionally. Moving to NZ on a work and holiday visa (which allows individuals to seek work for one year) may not provide individuals with a real opportunity to apply for roles for which they have the experience and qualifications. This is another example of the frustrations and discrimination the participants faced at the start of their career in NZ. It seems that there were not always real opportunities to seek work matching the participants' capabilities, even though they had been granted a work visa. Participants were unaware of these

limited possibilities before moving to NZ and it could be argued that local authorities have an ethical responsibility to provide clear information to visa applicants (before relocation) of the possible challenges when looking for work, such as the preference for local experience and qualifications and, as a consequence, the possibility of needing to complete a local degree to work in the chosen professional field.

#### *5.4.3 Lack of Organisational Support*

Although participants did receive some organisational support that enhanced their experiences, they also encountered situations in which organisations did not support their career experiences or career development. This pushed them to undertake more self-driven strategies to improve their workplace adaptation and career advancement. Participants encountered managers who did not appreciate their efforts or were unwilling to discuss career development planning. Like the participants in this dissertation, SI expatriates usually do not receive the same support as assigned expatriates from organisations (including, for example, cross-cultural training, housing and taxing advice) (Fontinha et al., 2017; Jokinen et al., 2008; Von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014). Participants not only had to adjust to NZ culture but also to learn the local work ethic, without their employers' support.

Participants' and other SIE expatriates' career experiences, job performance, organisational commitment and retention can be enhanced if their employers have in place organisational policies and practices aimed at training them, supporting the development of their networks and connecting them with mentors (Cao et al., 2013, 2014; Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Fontinha et al., 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Vaiman et al., 2015). In a study of 147 SI expatriates, Chen and Shaffer (2017) highlighted the importance of organisations supporting SI expatriate employees to increase their organisational (and community) commitment. In the case of the participants of this dissertation, it would be advisable to use practices that support the participant's sense of job security, as they come from a more unstable labour market. This was more so for Carmen who was affected by her manager's lack of support for her career development. According to Fontinha et al., (2017), if organisations provide career development opportunities and planning, SI expatriates may value this as an investment the organisation is making in them, causing them to feel more secure in their roles. This is especially so for individuals coming from struggling economies (Fontinha et al., 2017).

#### *5.4.4 Language Barriers*

The language barrier was one of the key challenges that participants faced during their SIEs. Participants either felt overwhelmed attending meetings in English or stressed about understanding different accents. As discussed earlier, this is another adjustment problem the participants encountered on their relocation, as no formal training was provided at any point. However, highly skilled employees like the participants of this dissertation can be very valuable to multinational enterprises and organisations, as they are a key talent who have greater flexibility in the workplace adaptation, and they may come at a lower cost than assigned expatriates (Al

Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Harry et al., 2017; Von Borell de Araujo et al., 2014). Because of the participants' adaptability, proactivity, qualifications and skills, the organisations that employ them may seek to retain them. Therefore, there could be practical implications for their employers, such as ongoing organisational support in relation to language being essential to supporting their workplace adaptation.

## **5.5 Career development**

This section examines how the SIE experience impacted the participants' career development in NZ and how their the skills, knowledge and competencies were developed. The SIE literature on career development is a field that needs further research, particularly in the case of the career development of women undertaking SIE (Suutari et al., 2018). This dissertation addresses this gap in the literature.

Career development in this dissertation refers to an individual's career experiences that contribute to the growth of career capital and that support the achievement of the desired career outcomes (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010). The third research question in this dissertation focussed on the participants' perceptions of their career development. However, the career development can be seen not only through self-reflection, for example subjective factors like job satisfaction, but also through tangible indicators such as salary or positions held (Cao et al., 2012, 2013; Suutari et al., 2018).

Moreover, it is important to note that the discussion in the previous section around mentoring, employee training and career support from managers were important sources for the participants' career development (and career experiences), and will not be repeated in this section. However, they are relevant factors to bear in mind when considering the discussion on broader career development that follows.

### *5.5.1 Career Capital Developed During SIE*

Through their SIE experience, all participants developed career capital. Self-initiated expatriation as a source of increased career capital is well documented in the SIE literature (Cao et al., 2012; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013). They became more resilient, flexible and confident, developing at a personal level as well as accruing internal career capital (Jokinen et al., 2008). They also developed knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), which were universally valued by employers, increasing their employability, both within organisations that employed them and the wider employment market (external career capital) (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Makkonen, 2015; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013; Suutari et al., 2018). This confirms existing studies that suggest that SIE contributes to the development of career capital: KSAs that can enhance individuals' employability - 'external career capital' (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Makkonen, 2015; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013; Suutari et al., 2018); and personal growth or 'internal career capital' (Jokinen et al., 2008).

During their SIE all participants were actively seeking to develop their career capital, by pursuing qualifications, mentoring and networking. This positively impacted on their career development and future career opportunities as it is often found in studies (Guo, Rammal, & Dowling, 2016). Research recognises that multinational enterprises often value individuals who have worked in challenging international markets and with diverse groups (Suutari et al., 2018). Increasing one's own employability is highly desirable during times when long-term job security within a company is no longer the norm (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2009; Jokinen, 2010). According to recent research and in alignment to this dissertation, SIEs provide valuable learning opportunities that can be applied to different contexts and result in positive career outcomes (Suutari et al., 2018).

Even though participants did not undertake SIE with the objective of increasing their career capital, they all believed that they had gained career capital during their SIE experience. The lack of organisational support that the participants' experienced did not prevent them from enhancing their KSAs. They identified a group of competencies that they developed after starting their SIE: managerial, personal and/or technical competencies. They also completed (or were working towards) professional and educational qualifications (refer to Table 1).

The SIE experiences contributed to the enhancement of the participants' technical skills and capabilities needed to perform in their roles (knowing-how), thereby increasing their external career capital (Cao et al., 2012; DeFillippi et al., 2006; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Jokinen et al., 2008). The career redirection that most of the participants took during their SIE allowed them to gain important new technical competencies. Additionally, the SIE also increased the participants' confidence, and for some of them (like Amanda) it enabled them to better understand their career opportunities (knowing-why), which enhanced their internal career capital (Cao et al., 2012; DeFillippi et al., 2006; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Jokinen et al., 2008). Past studies also found that undertaking SIE results in the development of a broad set of capabilities that are increasingly valued by organisations - knowing-how, knowing-why and knowing-whom (Andresen et al., 2012; Arthur et al., 1995; Cao et al., 2012; DeFillippi et al., 2006; Dickmann et al., 2016; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013).

The participants also benefited from building personal and professional networks in NZ (knowing-whom or social capital), which is important for career development (Cao et al., 2012; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Jokinen et al., 2008; Suutari et al., 2018). These networks helped them to grow their sources of information and advice and to increase their future employment opportunities, which is a common finding with other studies (DeFillippi et al., 2006; Jokinen et al., 2008; Suutari et al., 2018). These networks not only supported the participants' adaptation to their workplaces (and NZ in general) but were also a source of emotional support. This is in accordance with previous research (Cao et al., 2014; Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). The organisational strategies that support the growth of networks help SI expatriates to adjust to the local culture by being in contact with key staff and locals (Cao et al., 2014; Vaiman et al., 2015; Zhang & Rienties, 2017). However, all participants sought to build their networks by their own

means as networking and mentoring was not generally facilitated by the organisations they worked in.

Many of the participants perceived that they developed managerial competencies as they improved their technical and communicational skills, as well as their abilities to develop networks. Growing general managerial competencies has also been identified in the past as an SIE's outcome (Brewster et al., 2014; Jokinen et al., 2008). Even though the existing literature suggests that SIE experiences contribute to the accrual of global competencies (needed to work efficiently in global markets) (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Harry et al., 2017; Jokinen et al., 2008), none of the participants commented on having gained global competencies when reflecting on the career capital accrued. However, two of them considered doing another SIE in the future, so it could be inferred that their first SIE experience in NZ provided them with the global competencies (and confidence) to explore further SIE experiences.

Despite having encountered challenges, most of participants saw these as learning experiences that took them out of their comfort zones. This finding is consistent with other SIE studies involving women (Inkson & Myers, 2003; Jokinen et al., 2008; Myers et al., 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005; Thorn, 2009). International work experiences enhance individuals' career development as it allows the accrual of competencies that are gained by experiences (Myers & Pringle, 2005; Suutari et al., 2018). Overall, the participants gained significant career capital as a result of their own proactivity and agency. In fact, the lack of organisational support they faced during their SIE encouraged them to be more proactive in managing their careers. Self-initiated expatriation provided them with new horizons and opportunities as participants had to mostly find their own way forwards to adapt to the new surroundings.

### *5.5.2 Career Transition and Change*

Women have a more holistic view when reflecting on their career as they consider their personal development when assessing their own careers, as well as the objective career outcomes (like promotions or pay rises) (Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003). All the participants took responsibility for their own career management and were led by a 'whole-of-life' perspective when directing or reframing their careers, as opposed to being guided by fulfilling the more traditional career development model of upward organisational advancement.

Most of the participants reframed their careers during their SIE, some of them opted for a drastic career change by finding a new vocation, while others changed career direction as a result of fewer opportunities in their fields or being unable to use their Argentinean qualification. The participants who found a new passion while on SIE also believed their worldviews changed and as a result, they dared to change their careers to something they love. For some, the new career was the outcome of the new outlook through which they saw the world and although women tend to be more risk averse than men (Myers & Pringle, 2005), the time away from Argentina gave the participants the opportunity to take risks and act outside of their comfort zones, including by reframing their careers, an outcome noted in previous studies (Brewster et al., 2014; Myers et al., 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005).

All participants of this dissertation became stronger, more independent, resilient and determined after their SIE and their general wellness increased resulting in their decision to stay in NZ for the long-term. Studies on SI women expatriates suggest similar findings, that the SIE experience affects women beyond their professional careers (Myers & Douglas, 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005). For the women undertaking SIE in Myers et al.'s (2017) research and for the participants in this dissertation, SIE facilitated meaningful personal change, beyond the development of career capital. Self-initiated expatriation enabled them to envisage how they could live their lives differently. As a result, they all experienced greater and long-lasting wellness due to their SIE experience. Although career development was the focus of this study, it is important to note that participants also gained personal development during their SIE, which confirms the discussion that women can unexpectedly achieve self-enhancement through SIE (Myers et al., 2017). The participants of this dissertation gained enhanced personal skills such as resilience, self-confidence, cross-cultural awareness and flexibility among others (refer to Table 1). They increased their knowing-why or career motivation as a result of the SIE experience (Cao et al., 2012; DeFillippi et al., 2006; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Jokinen et al., 2008).

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter reflects on the participants' career stories in relation to the relevant literature. First, motivations to undertake SIE were discussed. Participants were primarily motivated by personal reasons. The SIE experience was a way for the participants to explore a new culture and lifestyle, to have a fresh start and invest in relationships. They saw SIE as an opportunity to break away from unwanted situations and a way to achieve a new and different life offering greater autonomy and freedom.

Second, the participants' career experiences were explored, including their self-driven strategies to enhance their experiences in NZ, and the more limited occasions when they received organisational support. The challenges faced during expatriation were also discussed, highlighting the need to accept less secure roles (like temping or contracting jobs) or positions for which they were overqualified. The intersection of their gender and being part of a minority group in NZ may have contributed to the lack of recognition of their overseas qualifications and experience, as well as the demand for 'kiwi experience' for roles for which they were overqualified.

Finally, the discussion focussed on the impact of the SIE on participants career development. Gaining career capital was an important contributor for the participants' career development, as this increased their employability and helped them reach their personal career goals, which were common outcomes of SIE in previous studies (Inkson & Myers, 2003; Kirk, 2016; Myers & Pringle, 2005). Their enhanced career capital was a result of developing greater technical expertise, strong networks that in turn further increased career motivation (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013). Not only did they accrue career capital as an outcome of the SIE, but they also experienced significant personal development and transformational change, which is consistent with the SIE literature (Myers et al., 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005).

The following and last chapter contains the final conclusions, and highlights the contributions of this dissertation, as well as its limitations and possible areas for future research.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### 6.1 Overview of the Dissertation

This chapter gives an overview of the dissertation, including research objectives, significant contributions to the self-initiated expatriation (SIE) literature, the limitations of the research and suggestions for potential future research.

The objective of this dissertation is to understand the motivations, career experiences and perceived career development of SI expatriate women from Argentina, residing and working in New Zealand (NZ). The research focussed on the participants' motivations to move to NZ, their career experience in NZ, including the self-driven and organisational strategies that supported their career experiences; the main challenges encountered during their SIE, and the impact of the SIE experience on their career development.

In order to answer the research questions, this qualitative research drew on an interpretivist paradigm (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Narrative inquiry was the chosen methodology to enable the researcher to reflect on the meaning the participants gave to their international career stories (Bujold, 2004; Polkinghorne, 1995). Five in-depth narrative interviews with Argentinean women undertaking SIE in NZ were conducted. During the interviews, open-ended and reflective questions were used as these allow the researcher to gain insights into the individuals' stories (Gray, 2013). The research journey required a level of personal reflexivity from the researcher to enable her to listen to the participant's career stories with an open mind, given that she is of the same ethnicity, culture and gender as the participants. The researcher had lived in Argentina for 28 years and moved to NZ as a self-initiated (SI) expatriate five years ago. Thus, she reflected on her own views about her SIE experience in NZ before developing the research design for this dissertation.

Despite being well-established in their careers in Argentina, all participants sought to undertake SIE experience for primarily two personal reasons: relationships and learning about new cultures. This is consistent with other SIE studies which often find that SI expatriates' key motivations are personal reasons (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Doherty et al., 2011; Inkson et al., 1997; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Tharenou, 2009; Thorn, 2009). Leaving behind negative work environments was also identified as another important motivation for participants to engage in SIE, as they saw the SIE as an opportunity to achieve a fresh start, which is a motivation also found in the SIE literature (Froese, 2012; Massey & Espinosa, 1997; Myers & Pringle, 2005).

Once participants started their SIE experience they all faced underemployment as NZ employers often appeared to devalue their overseas qualifications, despite previous validation by the NZ Qualifications Authority, and their overseas experience. This was so even when they were overqualified for the job. Employers seemed to require them to have 'kiwi experience', even for low entry roles for which local experience did not seem relevant. This pushed the participants to accept roles for which they were overqualified at the start of the SIE. Nevertheless, after a few years they all were able to obtain desired roles in their chosen fields.

The participants took a proactive approach when seeking to adapt to the new surroundings, overcoming obstacles and/or improving their career experiences. They employed a set of self-driven strategies, namely completing local qualifications, networking, mentoring and community support. This dissertation builds on the existing (and limited) research on career experiences of individuals in SIE, by suggesting that SI expatriate Argentinean women in NZ can benefit from the use of mentors and community support to increase their cultural awareness and job performance, as well as networking, which supports their workplace adaptation and enhances their career development. This confirms previous studies (outside of NZ) on the importance of SI expatriates to have access to mentoring (Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Fontinha et al., 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010), community services and to build networks (Cao, et al., 2014; Vaiman et al., 2015; Zhang & Rienties, 2017).

Similar to how previous SIE research has characterised SI expatriates, the participants showed strong individual agency and a protean career attitude (Andresen et al., 2012; Myers et al., 2017), as they were guided by their own personal motivations, seeking to develop their career despite the lack of support from some employers to this end. However, the participants recognised, to a lesser degree, that when they received support from organisations, it was helpful for their adjustment to the NZ workplaces. However, organisational support was not always available to them, and the participants encountered difficult managers or a lack of career development support.

Even though participants did not initiate their expatriation for career development, unexpectedly they all experienced increased career capital as a result of their international career experience. All the participants accrued career capital (Cao et al., 2012; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013) by gaining personal development (internal career capital) and developing knowledge, skills and abilities, which increased their employability (external career capital) (Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017; Makkonen, 2015; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013; Suutari et al., 2018). Participants grew their networks (knowing-whom), their technical skills (knowing-how) and their sense of purpose (knowing-why) (Andresen et al., 2012; Arthur et al., 1995; Cao et al., 2012; DeFillippi et al., 2006; Dickmann et al., 2016; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013).

The findings suggest that SIE is a powerful experience that enhances individuals' career capital as well as facilitates significant and meaningful life change. While personal development was not the focus of this dissertation, the participants experienced personal growth. This confirms previous studies on women undertaking SIE who went through a significant personal change as a result of the SIE experience (Myers & Douglas, 2017; Myers & Pringle, 2005; Richardson & Mallon, 2005).

## **6.2 Contributions to Theory and Implications of this Dissertation**

There are several important findings established in this dissertation that make this study insightful. Despite the increased growth of Latin Americans in NZ, which almost doubled in a seven-year period (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), we know little about their motivations to move to NZ and their career experiences in the country. This dissertation provides a unique contribution to the SIE

literature in NZ by studying the motivations and career experiences of Argentinean SI expatriate women, a Latin American sub-group. The findings of this dissertation would be useful for NZ organisations employing Argentinean women in SIE and for Argentinean women undertaking SIE in NZ, and possibly for other Latin American SI expatriate women.

The study of career experiences of SI expatriates, and particularly the experiences of women during SIE remains under-researched (Ressia et al., 2017; Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012). The SIE experiences of skilled individuals from developing countries have also been largely unexplored (Doherty et al., 2013b). This dissertation fills these gaps by exploring the career experiences of SI expatriate Argentinean women in NZ, who come from a developing country, as Argentina is still recovering from a financial crisis which took place in the early 2000s (López et al., 2003). The findings suggest that women coming from countries which are not a traditional labour source in NZ would benefit from pursuing local qualifications as NZ employers often undervalue their overseas qualifications and experience.

The researcher argues that Argentinean women undertaking SIE in NZ face a lack of real work opportunities at the start of their expatriation, even when they hold a valid work permit. These findings are consistent with studies on skilled migrant women in NZ (Meares, 2010; Parutis, 2014; Pio, 2005a; Ressia et al., 2017; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016). However, this dissertation adds to this body of knowledge as it reflects on the broader obstacles SI women experience, which even though not career-related, affect their career paths.

The participants encountered difficulties in understanding the local recruitment processes, faced visa restrictions and language barriers that, at times, adversely impacted their careers in NZ. Individuals who come from countries that are distant from the NZ predominant work culture and recruitment practices, and who are not native English speakers, have a more challenging start to their SIE. Moreover, by exploring the self-driven strategies (local qualifications, mentoring, networking and community support) to improve women's SIE experiences in NZ, this dissertation provides practical advice on strategies that are often accessible to individuals on SIE. This is an important contribution as this practical approach is not always found in other SIE studies carried out in NZ.

Unlike the limited research of the actual SIE experiences, the literature on SI expatriates' motivations is robust, with an increase in studies in the last decade (Doherty et al., 2013a). Relationships were a key motivation for the participants to undertake SIE to NZ, which are often identified as important motivations for women to start a SIE (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003; Tharenou, 2009; Thorn, 2009). In this dissertation, the participants' mobility was seen to be the result of great adaptability, self-motivation and bilingualism. The participants' other main motivation - exploring new cultures - is often found as a key reason to undertake SIE (Doherty et al., 2011; Inkson et al., 1997). As a new insight, this dissertation found that individuals may feel attracted to New Zealand's culture after learning the English language and having the desire to experience an English-speaking culture, as three participants (out of five) felt drawn to undertake SIE to NZ after years of learning the English language in their native country.

Lastly, the literature on career development during SIE is less developed (Suutari et al., 2018). In contrast to Tharenou's (2009) study, which found that women without family commitments may undertake SIE more for career development, none of the participants of this dissertation started their SIE in order to develop their careers, even though they did not have children at the time. Nevertheless, when they reflected on their SIE experiences, almost all of them recognised that they have increased their career capital by accruing managerial and technical competencies, as well as enhancing their professional networks. This is consistent with the SIE literature, which often finds that SIE results in increased capabilities and competencies (Andresen et al., 2012; Arthur et al., 1995; Cao et al., 2012; DeFillippi et al., 2006; Dickmann et al., 2016; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2013) and professional networks (Myers & Pringle, 2005).

Moreover, this dissertation has practical implications for Argentinean women living and working in NZ (and to some extent, other Latin American women), as it can better inform and prepare them when planning to embark on a SIE experience in NZ. It may also be useful for women who have already relocated to NZ but are facing career difficulties. Argentinean women who are new to NZ and who aim to develop their careers may find it useful to learn about the experiences, challenges, self-driven strategies and career development paths which the participants shared. They can benefit from the key findings, such as the use of mentoring, networking and community support, obtaining local qualifications, and undertaking training to enhance their career experiences and prospects. They may gain a deeper understanding of the possible challenges (described earlier) that they could face during their SIE, preparing them better before relocation and allowing them to make an informed decision. They could also learn about the possible career development outcomes as a result of their SIE and factors that contribute to their career development during a SIE experience in NZ. For this purpose, a summary of the findings will be shared with the Argentinean embassy in NZ so other Argentinean expatriates can have access to this research.

The main findings could also have important implications for NZ employers and human resource (HR) departments which employ Argentinean women in SIE (and possibly other Latin American SI expatriate women). Organisations can use technical training, cross-cultural training, ongoing language training, mentoring, and formal and informal networking to support their workplace adaptation (Cao et al., 2013; Cao et al., 2014; Chen & Shaffer, 2017; Fontinha et al., 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010; Vaiman et al., 2015). These strategies could be worthwhile for employers as they may contribute to employees' retention, improved job performance (Cao et al., 2013; Fontinha et al., 2017; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010) and organisational commitment (Fontinha et al., 2017). Employers could use this information to support their female Argentinean staff members with their workplace adaptation and career development. The Latin American SI expatriates are part of a culture that is significantly different to the culture in NZ, and this could make their cultural adjustment more challenging as, according to Cao et al. (2013), individuals whose home countries are more culturally distant to the host country have a more difficult adaptation. They may experience significant challenges when adapting to the new work environments and may need greater organisational support to positively influence their experiences and organisational commitment.

Nevertheless, from the organisational support perspective, this dissertation found that organisations did not have policies and strategies in place to support their SI expatriate employees. Employers looking for highly skilled, proactive, confident, determined, flexible, resilient and resourceful staff might consider SI expatriates for employment. It is vital to increase NZ employers' awareness of the value of SI expatriates and of the need for more comprehensive training and support programmes. The researcher suggests that NZ employers should develop more policies that support their employees' SIE experience after assessing the individual needs to adopt the most appropriate strategies. In the case of the Argentinean SI expatriates, and other individuals that come from countries with volatile economies, strategies that contribute to their sense of job security would be more effective for their adaptation (Fontinha et al., 2017). After experiencing high levels of job uncertainty, individuals may value increased career security as it is often lacking in their home countries. There appears to be an opportunity for HR departments and line managers to work together with their SI expatriate employees to analyse what is the most appropriate strategy for their adjustment, so that organisations may fully benefit from employing internationally mobile employees.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Research**

While this dissertation is unique, due to its sample of Argentinean SI expatriate women, there are some limitations in relation to the research. This interpretive research is exploratory and draws on a limited sample size of five participants. While the findings shed new light on the SI expatriates' experiences and this contributes to the SIE literature, these findings cannot be applied generally to a wider group of SI expatriates or beyond to other forms of expatriations (Crotty, 1998). Thus, the key findings may not be representative of all SI expatriate Argentinean (and Latin American) women working in NZ. The limitation of the sample relates also to the location of the participants as all individuals interviewed worked and lived in Auckland. Skilled Argentinean women in SIE in other parts of NZ may have a different experience and perspective in respect of the same topics in SIE. It might have been beneficial to include participants from a larger national scale; however, this was not possible due to the dissertation's scale and time frame.

Moreover, all participants have been living and working in NZ for several years, and they are now settled and have adapted to the NZ lifestyle. Thus, they have a positive view of their SIE experience. Even though they experienced challenges during their SIE, the five participants were generally positive about their SIE experience. As the sample only involved individuals who had an overall positive SIE experience in NZ, there may be some limitation to the findings as they may have been biased by their own memories of their career stories.

As the participants shared stories that happened years ago, they may (in some cases) have forgotten or excluded some aspects of the events. While some may critique the effect of narrative smoothing in narrative inquiry (the difficulty to remember all details of a story) (Kim, 2015; Polkinghorne, 1995), it is not expected in storytelling that individuals remember all situations accurately. However, even though participants' memories may not have been perfect, they told

their stories, which were very real to them. Thus, narrative methodology was chosen for this dissertation to allow the participants to express their experiences in their own words and give meaning to them, through the storying of events that impacted their career experiences and development (Bujold, 2004; Clandinin, 2006; Polkinghorne, 1995).

#### **6.4 Potential for Future Research**

The topics explored in this dissertation could be further explored in other studies as there is a need to expand on the research on the career experiences of women in SIE (Doherty et al., 2013b), particularly the SIE experiences of skilled women (and men as well) moving from developing to developed countries (Doherty et al., 2013). It may be of interest to further explore the career experiences of other Latin American sub-groups living and working in NZ, as this is a growing ethnic group in NZ. This will allow a better understanding of the career experiences of the different cultures within the Latin American group. The key findings of this dissertation could be used as a base to develop this under-studied field in NZ.

Future studies could include larger samples to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the motivations, career experiences and development of the Latin American SI expatriate group in NZ. An additional suggestion is to develop studies with Latin American SI expatriates who are more recent arrivals in NZ in order to explore their perception of their overall SIE experience. Another useful direction for future research would be to add employers' perspectives on the career development of the SI expatriates' participating in the research. This would help organisations in NZ develop greater awareness of the discriminatory practices that SI expatriates face, for example, the diminished value that is given to overseas qualifications and the overseas experiences of individuals coming from countries that are not the traditional sources of skilled migrants.

In sum, this dissertation addressed the research questions: "What are the motivations of Argentinean women coming to NZ as SI expatriates?", "What are the career experiences of SI expatriate Argentinean women in NZ?", and "How does the SIE impact the career development of Argentinean women in NZ?". It found that participants' primary motivations to undertake SIE were to pursue a relationship, experience an English-speaking culture and move away from negative work environments. The participants also experienced underemployment, language barriers, unsupportive employers and visa restrictions, and in the main, they developed their own strategies to overcome these obstacles. Lastly, all participants enhanced their career capital during their SIE. Therefore, this dissertation contributed to our understanding of the largely unexplored SIE career experiences of young Latin women in NZ.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Ethics Approval Letter
- Appendix 2: Invitation to Participants
- Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet (English and Spanish version)
- Appendix 4: Consent Form (English and Spanish version)
- Appendix 5: Interview Guidelines
- Appendix 6: Researcher Safety Protocol
- Appendix 7: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

## Appendix 1: Ethics Approval Letter

The logo for Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a black rectangular background.

### AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology  
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus  
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316  
E: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)  
[www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics](http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics)

24 January 2018

Barbara Myers  
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Barbara

Ethics Application:           **18/14 An exploration of the international career experiences of Argentinean women in NZ**

I wish to advise you that a subcommittee of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has **approved** your ethics application.

This approval is for three years, expiring 23 January 2021.

#### **Standard Conditions of Approval**

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

#### **Non-Standard Conditions of Approval**

1. The Committee requests that serious consideration is given to protecting the identity of persons who are not participants in the research in any report, given that participants are being asked to talk about challenging individuals that they have encountered in their career, simply giving a pseudonym for the organisation may not be sufficient protection; masking the nature of the organisation's activities may also need to be disguised in order to avoid inferred risks of harm.
2. Advice in the Information Sheet that the participants can choose where the interviews will take place.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it.. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries please contact [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K O'Connor', written in a cursive style.

Kate O'Connor

Executive Manager

**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

Cc: [nodescol@hotmail.com](mailto:nodescol@hotmail.com); [kravensw@aut.ac.nz](mailto:kravensw@aut.ac.nz)

## Appendix 2: Invitation to Participants

The logo for Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a black rectangular background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

### **Invitation to participate in the research project: An exploration of the international career experiences of Argentinean women in NZ**

Dear participant,

I am a Master of Business in HR student at Auckland University of Technology and as part of my course, I need to complete a final research project. The objective of my research is to understand the career experiences, choices and perceived career development of self-initiated expatriate women from Argentina, residing and working in NZ. This study will focus on the participants' motivations, work experiences and career advancement.

For this, I aim to collect data on the work experiences of Argentinean women that have self-initiated their expatriation to NZ. I am conducting interviews as part of a research study with women from Argentina, residing and working in NZ. I intend to interview Argentinean women that:

- Have self-initiated their expatriation to NZ with a temporary visa
- Have worked in NZ for at least four years

The interview will take approximately 1 hour and you will be asked to share the stories of your career trajectory. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and you may withdraw. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

Your participation will be a valuable addition to my research and could lead to greater understanding of the career experiences of Argentinean women living in NZ. If you know other Argentinean women who could take part in this research, please forward this invitation to them.

You will find attached the Participant Information Sheet (in English and Spanish) where you can find more information about this research. Please feel free to contact me by via Facebook or by email in case you have any questions (nodescol@hotmail.com).

I invite you to take part in this study and share your experience!

**Thanks & regards,**

**Luciana Nodenco**

## Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet (English and Spanish versions)

The logo for Auckland University of Technology (AUT) features the letters 'AUT' in a bold, white, sans-serif font on a black rectangular background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

### Participant Information Sheet (English Version)

#### Date Information Sheet Produced:

12 December, 2017

#### Project Title

An exploration of the international career experiences of Argentinean women in NZ

Dear participant,

I am a Master of Business in HR student at Auckland University of Technology and as part of my course, I need to complete a final research project. The objective of my research is to understand the career experiences, choices and perceived career development of self-initiated expatriate women from Argentina, residing and working in NZ.

For this, I aim to collect data on the work experiences of Argentinean women that have self-initiated their expatriation to NZ. I am conducting interviews as part of a research study with women from Argentina, residing and working in NZ. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and you may withdraw. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

Your contribution will be a valuable addition to my research and could lead to greater understanding of the career experiences of Argentinean women living in NZ.

Please feel free to contact me via Facebook or by email in case you have any questions (nodescol@hotmail.com).

I invite you to take part in this study and share your experience!

Thanks & regards,

Luciana Nodesco

#### What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to understand the career experiences, choices and perceived career development of Argentinean women who have self-initiated their expatriation to NZ and are working in the country. The goal of this project is to explore the participants'

motivation for global mobility and the factors that contributed to individuals' career development and career challenges in their NZ career.

In addition, this study will allow the researcher to complete her dissertation research and, therefore, obtain her Master of Business in HR Management and Employment Relations degree at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Another objective of this study is to contribute to the understanding of the career development of Argentinean expatriate women in NZ.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are an Argentinean women that self-initiated your expatriation to NZ and you have at least four years of experience working in the country. You have been identified as a potential participant through my Argentinean expatriate community living in Auckland. As a potential participant, you have received an invite with this

Participant Information Sheet and the contact details to ask any further questions if needed.

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

Once you have reviewed the information in this document, if you agree to participate in this research, you can express your interest via Facebook message or by emailing me: [nodescol@hotmail.com](mailto:nodescol@hotmail.com). Once you confirm your participation in this project, I will send you the Consent Form for you to read. After that, you will have one week to go through this information and request any further clarification. You can give consent to participate by signing hard copy of the Consent Form the day of our meeting, prior to the start of our interview.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

### **What will happen in this research?**

As a participant, you will be asked to share the stories of your career trajectory (before and after moving to NZ) and you may be asked around 10 questions related to the topic of this research. This will require approximately one hour of your time. I will be recording the interview and taking field notes. All the information that you share will be strictly for use in this study only. After the interview, you will be given the opportunity to review and comment on the transcript of the interview before it is used in this study. You will be given one week to review the interview transcript.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

There are no discomforts and risks associated with this study. Nevertheless, if at any time you feel stressed, feel free to not answer the question or to stop the interview if preferred. Please share as much as you want during the interview. Also, take as many breaks as needed as it is important that you feel comfortable during the entire interview.

Once the transcript of the interview is ready, it will be shared with you so you will have the opportunity to review and comment on it before it is used for this research.

**What are the benefits?**

We know little about the motivations of Argentinean women to move to NZ and their career experiences in the country. Your participation in this research will contribute to study the career development of Argentinean expatriate women living in NZ. Specially, this study may prove useful to Argentinean women who are new to NZ and who are trying to develop their careers in the country, as it will provide insights on the experiences, challenges and achievements of Argentinean self-initiated expatriate women that arrived in the country before them.

In addition, as this research will explore the factors that contributed to individuals' career development and career challenges in their NZ career, organisations may benefit from this as the findings may provide insight into how employers can appropriately support and assist Argentinean employees in their workplace adaptation.

As a participant of this study, you may also benefit by telling your career stories in the interview and therefore reflect on the relationship between your life's events. This interaction may give you greater interpretation of your career path and career development. This may encourage you to gain an enhanced personal understanding of your own experiences.

As the researcher, I will benefit from this research as well, as I will gain a deeper understanding of the work experiences of other Argentinean self-initiated expatriate women in their career development in NZ, helping me to better understand the factors that contributed to their career development and career challenges in the country. Finally, this research will assist me to complete my dissertation research and, therefore, my Master's degree.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

I will use a pseudonym for your name and any names of organisations that may come up during the interview, will not be reported so as to ensure that your privacy is protected. Your details will not be shared in the report that will be produced from this study and your confidentiality will be guaranteed. Once the transcription of the interview is ready, it will be shared with you for your review and comment.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

It will require 60 minutes of your time. There will not be any additional cost.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

Once you have expressed an interest to be part of this study, you will be sent a Consent Form. You will have one week after you receive the Consent Form to consider the invitation to participate in this study. During that week, you will also be given the opportunity to ask any questions regarding your participation in the research project.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes, you will have one week to review and comment on the interview transcript. Also, you can receive a summary of the findings of this study if you wish.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Dr. Barbara Myers*, [barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz](mailto:barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz), 09 921 9999 (extension 5366).

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

***Researcher Contact Details:***

Luciana Nodesto – [nodescol@hotmail.com](mailto:nodescol@hotmail.com)

***Project Supervisor Contact Details:***

*Dr. Barbara Myer*, [barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz](mailto:barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz), 09 921 9999 (extension 5366).

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEK Reference number *type the reference number*.**

**Información para el participante (Spanish Version)****Fecha de realización de este documento:**

12 de Diciembre, 2017

**Título del proyecto:**

Una exploración a las carreras internacionales y experiencias laborales de mujeres argentinas en Nueva Zelanda

Querida participante,

Soy estudiante del Master en Recursos Humanos de la Universidad de Auckland University of Technology (AUT) y como parte de mi curso, necesito completar un proyecto de investigación final. El objetivo de mi investigación es entender las experiencias laborales de expatriadas argentinas que viven y trabajan en Nueva Zelanda y que iniciaron su expatriación por su propia cuenta (y no fueron enviadas al exterior por un empleador).

Debido a esto, necesito entrevistar a mujeres argentinas que auto-iniciaron su expatriación a Nueva Zelanda, que viven y trabajan en el país. Tu participación en este proyecto es voluntaria y podrás retirarte del estudio en cualquier momento antes del análisis de la información.

Tu participación será un gran aporte al proyecto y va a contribuir a un mayor entendimiento de las experiencias laborales de expatriadas argentinas en Nueva Zelanda.

En caso de cualquier consulta, no dudes de contactarme vía Facebook o por email ([nodescol@hotmail.com](mailto:nodescol@hotmail.com)).

¡Te invito a que participes de este estudio y compartas tus experiencias laborales!

Gracias y saludos cordiales,

Luciana Nodesco

### **¿Cuál es el objetivo de esta investigación?**

El objetivo de esta investigación es entender las experiencias laborales, las oportunidades disponibles y el desarrollo profesional de expatriadas argentinas que viven y trabajan en Nueva Zelanda y que iniciaron su expatriación por su propia cuenta (y no fueron enviadas al exterior por una organización). Este proyecto explorará las motivaciones para la expatriación, los factores que contribuyeron para el desarrollo de carrera y los desafíos laborales en Nueva Zelanda de las participantes.

Esta investigación además permitirá a la investigadora completar su tesis y así obtener su diploma en Master de negocios en Recursos Humanos y Relacional Laborales en la universidad Auckland University of Technology.

Por último, otro objetivo de este proyecto es contribuir al conocimiento sobre el desarrollo de carrera de mujeres argentinas expatriadas en Nueva Zelanda.

### **¿Cómo fui identificada y por qué estoy siendo invitada a participar en este estudio?**

Estás siendo invitada a participar en este estudio porque sos una mujer argentina que inicio su expatriación hacia Nueva Zelanda por su propia cuenta (y no a través del traslado de un empleador). Fuiste identificada como una participante potencial a través de mi red de expatriados argentinos viviendo en Auckland. Como un participante potencial, has recibido una invitación con este documento con información para participantes y los contactos en caso de alguna duda.

### **¿Cómo puedo dar mi conformidad para participar de este estudio?**

Si quieres participar de esta investigación, puedes expresar tu interés por Facebook o por email (nodescol@hotmail.com). Una vez que confirmes tu participación, recibirás un formulario para dar consentimiento informado. A partir ahí, tendrás una semana para evaluar participar en este proyecto y realizar cualquier pregunta que tengas. Es importante que leas este documento y el formulario de consentimiento informado. El día de nuestra reunión, se te proporcionara una copia del formulario consentimiento informado para que firmes antes del comienzo de nuestra entrevista.

Tu participación en este estudio es voluntaria (es tu elección) y si elegís (o no) participar, no va a ser una ventaja o desventaja para vos. También, podrás retirarte de este proyecto. Si elegís retirar tu participación, tendrás la opción de que la información que hayas contribuido al estudio sea removida o continúe siendo utilizada. Sin embargo, una vez que se hayan producidos las conclusiones del estudio, la información que hayas contribuido no podrá ser borrada.

### **¿Qué pasara en esta investigación?**

Como participante, se te pedira que compartas la historia de tu trayectoria laboral (antes y después de mudarte a Nueva Zelanda). También, se te harán alrededor de diez preguntas sobre el tema de esta investigación, lo que llevará alrededor de una hora. La entrevista será grabada y tomaré notas durante nuestra reunión. Toda la información que compartas va a ser utilizada para los fines de esta investigación estrictamente. Después de la entrevista, se te dará la opción de revisar y comentar la transcripción antes que sea utilizada para el análisis de datos. Tendrás una semana para revisar la transcripción de la entrevista.

### **¿Qué incomodidades o riesgos puede haber?**

No hay incomodidades o riesgos asociados con esta investigación. De todas maneras, si en cualquier momento te sentís estresada, sentite libre de no responder la pregunta o parar la entrevista. Es importante que compartas hasta donde te sientas cómoda y que tomes recreos que necesites. Lo fundamental es que te sientas cómoda durante toda la entrevista.

### **¿Cuáles son los beneficios?**

Actualmente, sabemos poco sobre las motivaciones de las mujeres argentinas para mudarse a Nueva Zelanda y sus experiencias laborales en el país. Tu participación en esta investigación contribuirá a entender el desarrollo profesional de las expatriadas argentinas en Nueva Zelanda. Especialmente, este estudio puede resultar útil para las mujeres argentinas que son nuevas en Nueva Zelanda y que están tratando de desarrollar sus carreras en el país, ya que proporcionará información sobre las experiencias, los desafíos y los logros de expatriadas argentinas que llegaron al país antes que ellas.

Además, como esta investigación explorará los factores que contribuyeron al desarrollo profesional y los desafíos laborales que expatriadas argentinas encontraron en su carrera laboral en Nueva Zelanda, las organizaciones pueden beneficiarse ya que los hallazgos pueden proporcionar información útil de cómo los empleadores pueden apoyar a sus empleadas argentinas en su adaptación en el trabajo.

Como participante de este estudio, también puedes beneficiarte al compartir tus experiencias profesionales durante la entrevista y, por lo tanto, reflexionar sobre los eventos de tu vida que influenciaron tu carrera laboral. Esta interacción podría proporcionarte una mejor comprensión de tus propias experiencias.

Como investigadora, también me beneficiaré de este estudio ya que obtendré un mejor entendimiento de las experiencias laborales de otras argentinas en Nueva Zelanda. Esto me ayudará a comprender mejor los factores que contribuyeron al desarrollo de sus carreras y los desafíos laborales que enfrentaron en el país. Finalmente, esta investigación me ayudará a completar mi tesis y, por lo tanto, a obtener mi master.

### **¿Cómo se va a proteger mi privacidad?**

Para asegurar tu privacidad, utilizare pseudónimo para tu nombre y cualquier nombre de organizaciones que surjan durante la entrevista, no se utilizará en el reporte. Además, tu información de contacto tampoco será compartida en el informe que se generará a partir de este estudio. Una vez que la transcripción de la entrevista esté lista, será compartida contigo para tu revisión y comentario.

### **¿Cuáles son los costos para participar en esta investigación?**

Se requieren 60 minutos de tu tiempo. No hay ningún costo adicional.

### **¿Qué oportunidad tengo para considerar esta invitación?**

Una vez que hayas expresado tu interés de participar en este estudio, recibirás el formulario para dar consentimiento informado. Después de eso, tendrás una semana para evaluar participar en este proyecto y realizar cualquier pregunta que tengas.

### **¿Voy a recibir una devolución de los resultados de este estudio?**

Si, tendrás una semana para revisar y comentar la transcripción de la entrevista. También, podrás recibir un resumen de los resultados del estudio si lo deseas.

### **¿Qué puedo hacer si tengo alguna inquietud acerca de esta investigación?**

Cualquier duda acerca de esta investigación debería de ser notificado primero a la supervisora del proyecto, *Dr. Barbara Myers*, [barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz](mailto:barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz), 09 921 9999 (extensión 5366).

Inquietudes acerca de la conducta de la investigadora debería de ser notificado al Secretario Ejecutivo de AUTEK, *Kate O'Connor*, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext. 6038.

### **¿A quien puedo contactar para mas informacion sobre esta investigación?**

Por favor guarda una copia de este documento y del formulario de consentimiento para futura referencia. También podrás contactar al equipo de investigación:

#### **Contacto de la investigadora:**

Luciana Nodesco – [nodescol@hotmail.com](mailto:nodescol@hotmail.com)

#### **Contacto de la supervisora:**

*Dr. Barbara Myer*, [barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz](mailto:barbara.myers@aut.ac.nz), 09 921 9999 (extensión 5366).

**Aprobado por el comité de ética de la Universidad de Auckland University of Technology, el (fecha de aprobación), Numero de referencia AUTEK.**

## Appendix 4: Consent Form (English and Spanish versions)

The logo for AUT (Auckland University of Technology) is displayed in white text on a black background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

### Consent Form (English Version)

*Project title: An exploration of the international career experiences of Argentinean women in NZ*

*Project Supervisor: **Dr. Barbara Myers***

*Researcher: **Luciana Nodesco***

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 12 December 2017.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes  No

Participant's

signature:.....

Participant's

name :.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEK Reference number type the AUTEK reference number***

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

# Formulario de Consentimiento Informado

## (Spanish Version)

*Título del proyecto: Una exploración a las carreras internacionales y experiencias laborales de mujeres argentinas en Nueva Zelanda*

*Supervisora del proyecto: **Dr. Barbara Myers***

*Investigadora: **Luciana Nodasco***

- He leído y comprendido la información proporcionada sobre este proyecto de investigación en la Hoja de información del 12 de diciembre de 2017.
- He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y estas fueron respondidas
- Entiendo que se tomarán notas durante la entrevista y que también se grabarán y transcribirá.
- Entiendo que participar en este estudio es voluntario (es mi elección) y que puedo retirarme del estudio en cualquier momento antes de que se hayan producido las conclusiones del estudio sin que esto signifique una desventaja de ninguna manera.
- Entiendo que, si me retiro del estudio, se me ofrecerá la opción de eliminar o permitir que se continúe utilizando la información que haya proporcionado al proyecto. Sin embargo, una vez que se han producido los resultados, la eliminación de mi información no será.
- Acepto participar en esta investigación.
- Deseo recibir un resumen de los resultados de la investigación (por favor marque uno):  

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
---------------------------	--------------------------

Firma de la participante :

.....

Nombre de la participante :

.....

Información de contacto de la participante:

.....

.....

Fecha:

***Aprobado por el comité de ética de la Universidad de Auckland University of Technology, el fecha de aprobación, Numero de referencia AUTEK***

*Nota de pie: La participante debería guardar una copia de este formulario.*

## **Appendix 5: Interview Guidelines**

### **A. Pre NZ Experience**

1. Tell me about your career or professional life before you came to NZ (probe: qualifications, roles, ambitions, etcetera).
2. At what point in your Argentinean based career did you make the decision to move NZ? (probe: why did you make this decision i.e. motivations, thoughts and concerns about the impact on career longer term etcetera).
3. Tell me about your travels once you left Argentina (probe: where did you go and what did you do. Why NZ?).

### **B. New Zealand Career**

1. Tell me the story of your career in NZ (probe: jobs, roles, organisations, any study and/or qualifications, how was the experience or process to find your first job in NZ?)
2. What have been your highlights and achievements? (probe: has there been any person or situation or organisational practices that have supported or helped you in this respect).
3. Tell me about the challenges, the lowlights (probe: has there been any person or situation or organisational practices that contributed to this?)
4. Looking back at your NZ career so far, what could have made your working life easier? (probe: organisational support, government policy, training, relationships, personal situation or any other?)
5. How has your career developed in NZ? (probe: how have you developed competencies, knowledge and skills?).
6. How do you feel about where you are at in your career now? (probe: are you satisfied / dissatisfied, why / why not? (probe: are you where you expected to be? Do you think you may be better or worse off than if you had stayed in Argentina?).
7. At what point did you decide to stay in NZ on a permanent basis? (probe: why?)

### **C. Future Career**

1. Looking forward, tell me about you career dreams and aspirations now that you have decided to stay in NZ (probe: qualifications? Support?)
2. Has this move to NZ been good for you in terms of your career? Tell me why/why not?
3. Any other comments or suggestions?

## **Appendix 6: Researcher Safety Protocol**

1. The researcher will notify the applicant and secondary supervisor, by email, where and when she will be when meeting participants in private homes.
2. The researcher will contact, by text message, the applicant and secondary supervisor when entering and leaving the meeting.
3. The researcher will arrange a time for the applicant or secondary supervisor to contact to her, by mobile phone, in case they have not heard from the researcher after an hour of the scheduled meeting.

## Appendix 7: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

**AUT**

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀNAKI MĀKAU RAU

### Confidentiality Agreement

*Project title: An exploration of the international career experiences of Argentinean women in New Zealand*

*Project Supervisor: Dr. Barbara Myers*

*Researcher: Luciano Nodasco*

- I understand that all the material I will be asked to type is confidential.
- I understand that the contents of the notes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Typist's signature: Sylvia Madden

Typist's name: Sylvia Madden

Typist's Contact Details (if appropriate):

4 Haunui St.  
Paekakariki  
Kapiti Coast  
5034

Date: 26/6/18

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2018, AUTEK  
Reference number: 18/14.

Note: The Typist should retain a copy of this form.

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