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THE IMPACT OF CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL MOBILITY ON THE FAMILY WHO STAYS BEHIND

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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Abstract

This thesis considers the impact of contemporary global mobility on the lives of the stay-behind family. Organisations are increasingly utilising flexible modes of global mobility to meet their international obligations, including frequent international business travel, commuting, and short-term assignments. However, research has continued to lag practice. The aim of this study is to understand the work and non-work implications of living with contemporary global mobility. Specifically, the research is guided by two questions: i) how have the home lives of the stay-behind family members been affected by the contemporary global mobility of their partner or parent? and ii) how has the career of the stay-behind partner been impacted by the global mobility undertaken by their partner?

Through a lens of social constructionism, this study uses qualitative semi-structured interviews to give voice to the families of international sailors, who are employed across the continuum of contemporary global mobility. The limitations of the context-specific sample are considered justifiable in exchange for access to the often ignored voice of the child.

The findings make theoretical, methodological and practical contributions to contemporary global mobility, work-family, and career scholarship. They enhance understanding of the demands borne by those who stay behind, and the resources they utilise to manage their ever-evolving situation. The development of the Work Family Mobility Framework, as viewed through the lens of contemporary global mobility, is the overarching contribution of the thesis. The applicability of the Kaleidoscope Career to contemporary global mobility is the primary career contribution. Incorporating children makes a methodological contribution, while the practical suggestions emerging from the findings provide focus for improving the lives of those who stay behind.

Future research is required to test the Work-Family Mobility Framework in other contemporary global mobility communities, and with a sample including both male and female travellers. Longitudinal studies are recommended to investigate the impacts of this global mobility over time. Finally, it is recommended that the Kaleidoscope Career Model be further explored within the global mobility context.

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Publications

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